

IMMIGRANT COPING PROCESSES: A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF FILIPINA
IMMIGRANTS IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

A Dissertation presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School
University of Missouri

In Partial Fulfillment for the Requirements of the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

by

CATHERINE HSIEH

Dr. P. Paul Heppner, Dissertation Advisor

July 2012

The undersigned, appointed by the Dean of the Graduate School, have examined the dissertation entitled

IMMIGRANT COPING PROCESSES:
A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF FILIPINA IMMIGRANTS
IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

Presented by Catherine Hsieh,

A candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of Counseling Psychology,

And hereby certify that, in their opinion, it is worthy of acceptance.

Professor P. Paul Heppner

Professor Lisa Flores

Professor Kenneth Wang

Professor Stephen Jeanetta

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The successful completion of my dissertation is a reflection of the amazing family, friends, and mentors who supported and guided me along the way. I am grateful for my parents' trust in me, who let me choose my own path. Thank you to Jennifer, Erin, Nick, and Aunt Christine. My family's endless encouragement and love provided the foundation for all my academic and personal pursuits.

I owe my deepest gratitude to Dr. Puncy Heppner, who I shared many moments of excitement, curiosity, and determination throughout my graduate training. His dedication to rigorous scholarship in multicultural counseling psychology inspired me to continue to ask questions that others are not asking. His commitment to social justice through training, teaching, and practice motivated me to serve those who felt powerless.

Although he was not on my dissertation committee, Dr. Alex Morales was instrumental in shaping my thinking about my project and who I am as a scholar. To the wonderfully supportive Counseling Psychology family at University of Missouri, thank you Drs. Mary Heppner, Lisa Flores, Steve Jeanetta, and Kenneth Wang for your feedback on my writing. Hsiu-Hui Chen, Jasmine Tilghman, and Marsha McCartney, thank you for all the stimulating questions, delicious snacks, and wholehearted laughter.

And finally, to Tony Irons, my dearest friend. Thank you for always being there when I needed a hug, a sandwich, a latte, or a drink. And of course, a word of encouragement or accountability on all those long nights. Without you, this would not have been possible.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ii
LIST OF ILLUSTRATION AND TABLE	v
ABSTRACT	vi
Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION	1
Fundamental Filipino Cultural Values	
Salient Psychological Issues Pertaining to Immigrants	
Immigrants and Coping	
2. METHODS	9
Grounded Theory Approach	
Research Team Members	
Recruitment and Sampling	
Participant Demographic Information	
Data Collection	
Data Analyses	
3. RESULTS	18
Causal Conditions and the Decision to Migrate	
Contextual Influences on Challenges and Support in the U.S.	
Strategies for Coping with Living in Rural Midwest	
Consequences of the Interactions between Coping Strategies and Stressors	
Central Phenomenon of the Sociocultural Transition Process	

4. DISCUSSION	35
Limitations and Future Research Directions	
Counseling Considerations	
5. CONCLUSION	44
REFERENCES	47
APPENDIX	
A. Integrative Literature Review	54
B. Interview Protocol	70
VITA	72

LIST OF TABLE AND ILLUSTRATION

Table/Figure	Page
Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Participant	45
Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of Filipina Immigrants Coping Experiences	46

ABSTRACT

This qualitative study investigated the immigrant coping experiences of 16 Filipina women in rural communities using grounded theory methodology. A conceptual model was developed based on themes emerged from the data to describe (a) causal conditions that contributed to Filipina women's immigration decision, (b) contextual influences on challenges faced in the U.S., (c) coping strategies in response to adjustment challenges, (d) outcomes and consequences of on-going coping, (e) central phenomenon of continuous coping, adaptability, and hardship in Filipina immigrants' lives in the U.S. Subcategories and themes of the conceptual model illustrated the cultural context on Filipina immigrants' coping strategies that are reflective of values of acceptance, optimism, strong faith, and interpersonal connectedness. Implications for counseling psychology research and practice are addressed.

Key Words: Coping, acculturation, Filipina immigrants, rural, relational support.

Immigrant Coping Processes:
A Qualitative Study of Filipina Immigrants in Rural Communities

Introduction

Currently, the United States receives a continuous flow of immigrants from Asia with 39% of the newly arrived immigrants in 2010 coming from Asia and 13% of the newly arrived Asian immigrants in 2010 were from the Philippines (U.S. Census, 2012; Monger, & Yankay, 2011). With 3.4 millions individuals of Filipino descent in the U.S., Filipino immigrants and Filipino Americans are the second largest Asian ethnic group. While the majority of the Filipino Americans are concentrated coastal states and major metropolitan areas, Midwestern states and rural communities are witnessing a steady influx of immigrants in the recent years (U.S. Census, 2012). In fact, there are over three million people who identified as foreign-born living across eight Midwestern states (Jones & Yousefzadeh, 2006). Moreover, over 700,000 of the individuals living in the Midwest identified as of Asian descent (Jones & Yousefzadeh, 2006).

Reflective of the growth of the Asian immigrant population, there is an increased interest in the literature on immigrant health and psychological well-being (Salant & Lauderdale, 2003). Yet, the diversity and heterogeneity within the Asian immigrant communities are seldom addressed by the current literature. Specifically, most empirical findings on Asian American psychology are based on the pan-ethnic experiences of college students in urban and metropolitan areas with limited focus on the intersection of gender, ethnicity, and geographic differences (Suinn, 2009). Subsequently, the existing

literature lacks information on Filipino American experiences in general and woman immigrants in rural communities in particular.

Fundamental Filipino Cultural Values

Aspects of the Filipino cultural values can influence individuals' psychological well-being, perceptions of mental health, and coping strategies. Nadal (2011) described four fundamental Filipino cultural values included *Kapwa* (fellow being), *Utang ng loob* (debt of reciprocity), *Hiya* (shame), and *Pakikasama* (social acceptance). Values of *Kapwa* and *Utang ng lo* centered on the importance of social connectedness, interdependence, interpersonal relationships, and emotional bond with both fellow Filipinos as well as members of the out-groups. These values heavily influenced the creation of pseudo-family as a coping strategy as well as preference for relational-support (Sanchez & Gaw, 2007). Moreover, *Hiya* and *Pakikasama* dictate Filipino individuals preference for extending generosity, helping others, building community, as well as presenting oneself with honors, bringing respect to the family, and avoiding embarrassment for the family and community. These values could facilitate the utilization of social support for coping as well as denial of problems and hesitancy to seek help when dealing with psychological distress.

The colonial past of the Philippines also contributed to values regarding religion, gender roles, and beliefs. The values of Catholicism as well as the promotion of strong faith play an essential role in Filipinos' coping experiences (Sanchez and Gaw, 2007) . For example, adversity may be interpreted through the lens of one's faith (i.e., God's plan) and that Filipinos may be more likely to rely on support from their religious

community instead of seeking professional mental health care. The Spanish influence on Filipino culture extends beyond religion to defining gender roles such as *machismo* (male-dominant) and *marianismo* (female submissiveness; Nadal, 2011). These values lead to gender role inequalities with men maintaining higher power over women, and expectations for women to be religious, pure, and spiritually strong. United States' military and political presence in the Philippines also contributed to cultural values of Filipinos. Two notable U.S. cultural influences on Filipino society are the value of education attainment and emphasis on individualization and competition (Nadal, 2011). Moreover, the ideal of the American dream has also been transported to the Philippines. Within the Filipino cultural context, the American dream described the ideal for “immigrants to achieve financial and material prosperity in the U.S.” (p.50, Nadal, 2011). U.S.'s culture value of high education attainment can lead to individual pursuit of prosperity has shaped the belief that to be successful means to be independent, self-sufficient. The goal-directed individual pursuit may influence Filipina's decision to immigrate to the U.S.

Salient Psychological Issues Pertaining to Immigrants

Empirical evidence indicated Asian Americans and immigrants experience acculturative stress, discrimination and racism, intergenerational conflicts, vocational, and psychological distress related to immigration (Alvarez & Juang, 2010; Chung, 2001; Leong & Chou, 1994; Salant & Lauderdale, 2003; Sodowsky & Wai, 1997).

Considerations of the acculturation process and impact of acculturative stress may offer insight to the experiences of Filipina immigrants in rural communities. Acculturation

refers to the sociological and psychological processes when two cultures interact with each other (Redfield, Linton, & Herskovits; 1936; Olmedo, 1979; Berry, 1990). The acculturation process has been linked to various stressors including social isolation, language barrier, financial displacement, loneliness, and racism. These specific challenges are also known as acculturative stress (Berry, 1970, 2006a, 2006b). Berry, Kim, Minde, and Mok (1987) further categorized acculturation challenges into five categories into physical (e.g, new living environment and surroundings), biological (e.g., new foods and diseases), cultural (e.g., new language, norms, and customs), social relationship (e.g., loss of social capital, shift to minority status), and psychological (e.g., changes in attitudes, values, and beliefs).

Yet, research on immigrant psychology has found inconsistent findings between the relationship between acculturation and emotional well-being. For example, based on the data from the Filipino American Community Epidemiology studies (FACES), Mossakowski (2007) found that foreign-born Filipinos experienced significantly less depressive symptoms when compared to U.S.-born Filipinos. Furthermore, depressive symptoms among Filipino immigrants were partially mediated by ethnic identity, racial/ethnic discrimination, employment status, gender, and location of residence. In a critical analysis of 24 studies published between 1985 - 2006 on older Asian immigrants and depression, Kuo, Chong, and Joseph (2008) found that depression is most likely to be found among those who are women, recent immigrants, lack proficiency in English, low in acculturation in their host societies, perceived difficulties in accessing social and community services, suffer from poor physical health, receive minimal family support,

and experience impaired social support. These findings suggest the complex experiences of immigrants with sociocultural transition and that contextual as well as personal factors, such as coping may influence individuals' acculturation experiences.

Racial prejudice and discrimination pose another challenge for Filipina immigrants' adjustment to living in the U.S. Racism is a complex phenomenon with multiple manifestation including individual, cultural, and institutional forms of racism (Carter, 2007). One manifestation of racism is expressed by racial microaggression. Sue et al (2007) referred microaggression to verbal and non-verbal exchanges based on racial worldview as racial microaggression. The accumulation of microaggressions can have detrimental effect on individuals' sense of self (Constantine & Sue, 2007). It is well documented that Asian Americans experiences racism and xenophobic prejudice for being perceived as culturally different and less patriotic when compared to other American ethnic groups (Gee, Ro, Shariff-Marco, and Chae; 2009; Goto, Gee, & Takeuchi, 2002). The literature showed a clear link between perceived prejudice and racism-based stress are associated and psychological well-being of people of color (Neville & Carter, 2005; Pieterse & Carter, 2007; Franklin-Jackson & Carter, 2007; Carter, Yeh, & Mazzula, 2008). For Asian Americans, racial discrimination was associated with trait anxiety, clinical depression, psychological distress, lower self-esteem, interpersonal problems, and career concerns (Hwang & Goto, 2008; Liang & Fassinger, 2008). The homogeneity of the racial landscape in rural U.S. may contribute to the experiences with perceived racism, xenophobia, and discrimination for Filipina immigrants.

Immigrants and Coping

Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) stress and coping model defined coping as the "constantly changing cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person" (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984, p. 141). Since then, the coping literature has expanded to include coping efforts that are trait-dependent as well as situation-specific. Furthermore, scholars also distinguished coping into problem-focused and emotion-focused (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), direct and avoidance (Suls & Fletcher, 1985), behavioral versus cognitive, escapism, cautiousness, minimization, self-blame, meaning seeking, (Adwin & Revenson; 1987). Skinner, Edge, Altman, and Sherwood (2003) pointed out that the categorical distinctions is insufficient in capturing the complexity of the coping process and outcome. In fact, the biggest critic of the current coping literature suggested the influential role of culture in coping is not well understood, understudied, and almost forgotten (Heppner, 2008).

As evident in the empirical evidence findings of racial group differences in coping style, the cultural context in individuals' coping experience warrants further investigations. Specifically, the literature showed that European Americans' sense of self focuses on autonomy and independence influenced their coping style, whereas Asian Americans prefers coping activities that are more congruent with the value of interdependence and emotional regulation (Bjork, Cuthbertson, Thurman, & Lee, 2001; Mossakowski, 2003; Lee & Liu, 2001; Yeh, Arora, & Wu, 2006). Therefore, for individuals from collectivistic cultures that values interdependence and social harmony

may prefer coping strategies that focus on internal processes, such as emotional regulation, cognitive reframing, over direct actions for the benefit of the individual.

In addition to cultural norms, gender roles and expectations also influence individuals' coping experiences. Liang, Alvarez, Juang, and Liang (2007) found that Asian American men and women approach racism-related stress differently. Specifically, they found that men tend to seek support to cope with racism-related stress while women used active coping strategies to attempt to address the situation. The different coping strategies employed by men and women resulted in the different level of stress experienced. Specifically, Asian American women who approached the racism-related event experienced higher level of stress than men who sought support. The finding supports Lazarus and Folkman's suggested mediating effect of coping and further suggested that different stressful situations influence the effectiveness of coping strategies. Moreover, the findings are indicative of the importance of the consideration of gendered experience of coping.

Empirical studies of Asian immigrants and Asian Americans in coping with various challenges including acculturation (Thomas & Choi, 2006), trauma (Yeh, Inman, Kim & Okubo, 2006), caretaking of family (Stewart, Neufeld, Harrison, Spitzer, Hughes, & Makwarimba, 2006), and intergenerational conflicts (Lee, Su, & Yoshida, 2005), and racial discrimination, Wei, Heppner, Ku, & Liao, 2010) consistently found that social support is a major coping strategies that buffers negative outcomes. Specifically, social support came in the forms of advice giving, confide in a member, and connecting to community resources. In regards to racism and discrimination, Noh, Beiser, Kaspar, Hou,

and Rummens (1999) found that for Southeast Asian refugees, the practice of culturally congruent coping strategy, forbearance, was an effective buffer against psychological consequences. Wei et al (2010) found that perceived racial discrimination stress was predictive of depressive symptoms in Asian American college students and helpful family support moderated the relationship between the stressor and its impact. These findings suggested the versatile and functional role of social support for Asian immigrants. However, additional investigation is needed to examine how Filipina immigrants in rural communities utilize social support as a coping approach or if other coping strategies may be more salient and effective for their situations.

Filipina immigrants living in the rural Midwest are a minority group within the minority population. As they attempt to rebuild their lives in the new culture, Filipina immigrants face many challenges that require constant efforts to cope and to adapt to the new culture. Of all the possible stressful challenges, acculturation, discrimination, and community integration presented the salient experiences for immigrants in a new society. Current literature indicated that recent immigrants are at higher risk for greater psychological distress associated with acculturation. However, little is known about how the cultural context of the rural communities may contribute to unique challenges in Filipina immigrants' acculturation process. Moreover, coping approaches mediate the relationship between stressors and perceived distress. Therefore, it is imperative to examine how Filipina immigrants cope with the perceived stressors in rural communities in order to understand how individuals are integrating into their local communities.

Consequently, this study explored the coping process and outcome of challenges faced by Filipina immigrants when adjusting to lives in rural communities. Using the constructive grounded theory approach of inquiry, we explored the influences of contextual factors such as Filipino cultural values, familial and interpersonal ties, and U.S. rural communities, on the unique challenges and coping process experienced by Filipina immigrants. More specifically, this study investigates the following questions: (a) what is the process of community integration for Filipina immigrants? (b) What are the challenges faced by Filipina immigrants living in rural communities? (c) How do Filipina immigrants cope with perceived challenges?

Methods

Grounded Theory Approach

Glaser and Strauss (1967) developed grounded theory methods to provide a systematic approach to qualitative data analysis and theory construction. Grounded theory's use of an inductive approach to knowledge construction is particularly suited for the exploration of the processes in individuals' subjective experiences. This study adopted the constructivist approach to grounded theory as outlined by Charmaz (2006) for its nonlinear research process and rigorous analytic process that is based on the immersion of the data. Given the exploratory nature of the study and the complexities of the cultural contexts surrounding coping, grounded theory was deemed as an appropriate method because of its inductive approach to knowledge and relevance for theoretical contributions to future research.

The Research Team Members

The research team consisted of the primary investigator, Catherine Hsieh, and three graduate students. The primary investigator is a fourth year doctoral student in counseling psychology, self-identified as Taiwanese American heterosexual woman. Hsieh grew up in urban cities in Taipei and Los Angeles. The personal experience of living in a mid-size city in the Midwest has motivated Hsieh to investigate the experiences of Asian immigrants in rural places. Hsieh conducted all the interviews to minimize interviewer bias due to inconsistency and variability. In addition, Hsieh's relationship with the community gatekeeper, identity as an Asian American woman, and student-status facilitated rapport building with the participants.

Three graduate students from the Educational, School, and Counseling Psychology department were recruited to assemble the research team. Individuals with knowledge, experiences, and sensitivities with Asian cultures, immigration issues, Midwestern culture, and rural communities were invited to join the team. The members consisted of a first-year doctoral international student in counseling psychology from Taiwan who grew up in urban Taiwanese cities with previous experience in phenomenology research and coursework in qualitative research; a first-year doctoral student in counseling psychology who identifies as an African American woman who grew up in the Midwest had previous experiences in quantitative research and phenomenology methods; a first-year Caucasian doctoral student in educational psychology, with coursework in qualitative research, and grew up in rural Midwestern city. All members are women. While the members vary in their experiences and

knowledge in qualitative research, all members completed training efforts through reading and discussion that ensured team members' knowledge in grounded theory methods. The research team met regularly throughout data collection and analysis with the goal of maintaining consistency amongst coding.

Recruitment and Sampling

Purposeful sampling is used in qualitative research in order to allow researchers to select a small group of participants fitting particular criteria to investigate a particular phenomenon in depth (Patton, 2002). According to Glaser and Strauss (1967), process of data collection is controlled by the emerging theory and started with a central research question. Theoretical sampling dictated recruitment efforts based on emerging themes from initial data collection with the goal of reaching data saturation (Charmaz, 2006; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In other words, data collection is completed when no additional data is contributing to the development of novel themes in the emerging theory.

This study started recruitment broadly targeting individuals identified as first-generation immigrants from Asia living in rural communities. Participants were recruited through ethnic and religious organizations, university extension field agents, and networks of local business owners. When potential participants were identified, Hsieh contacted the individuals and set-up meetings. Both verbal and written information of informed consent were provided with explanation of the study's procedures. Participants received a twenty-dollar gift card to a national-chain retail store to compensate for their time.

The study initially recruited 5 individuals with diverse age, ethnicity, gender, and immigration history. Theoretical sampling guided subsequent sampling of focusing on the individuals of same gender and ethnicity. With snowball sampling, a gatekeeper of the Filipino community identified potential participants and recruited 16 participants who self-identified as Filipina woman immigrants. Recruitment and data collection was completed at 16 interviews with Filipina immigrants because the data met theoretical saturation.

Participant Demographic Information

Participants included 16 adult women identified as first-generation immigrants from the Philippines currently living in communities with populations less than 20,000 (see Table 1). According to the 2000 Census guideline on urban/rural categorization, places with populations less than 20,000 are considered to be rural. All participants immigrated to the U.S. through marriage with a White U.S. citizen. Participants' ages ranged 31 to 63 (Mean = 44) and length of time in the U.S. ranged from 2 to 34 years (Mean = 14.7). All participants are currently married to a White man with the exception of one woman who was divorced. The majority of the participants have children (12 women, 75%). Of the women who are mothers, seven women have biological children with their current husbands (43%), three women have children from a previous relationship (18%), and seven have stepchildren (43%). Participants' education level ranged from completion of high school to having a master's degree. All individuals reported working full-time in the Philippines prior to immigration, and 12 women (75%) are employed part-time/full-time in the U.S.

Data Collection

Interview Protocol. The semi-structured interview protocol (see Appendix A) was created allowing for flexibility to the flow of the conversations while addressing all the subtopical areas. Guiding, probing and follow-up questions ensured an accurate understanding of the participants' reports, as well as encouragement for participants to elaborate and to provide specific examples to deepen their narratives. The interview protocol included questions pertaining to the following topic areas: (a) immigration history, (b) experiences living in the community, (c) perceived challenges and benefits of their community of residence, (d) coping strategies for difficult situations they encountered in their life in the U.S., (e) perceptions of in-groups and out-groups, and (f) social networks in their community of residence. The subtopical areas were chosen based on triangulation of extensive discussions amongst the research team, two pilot interviews with immigrants from Asia, and a review of the relevant literature. The interview protocol was reviewed again for its relevancy and sensitivity to emerging themes after three interviews with Filipina participants. Questions regarding religion and spirituality as well as advice to newcomers were added in order to explore additional culturally and contextually relevant experiences of the immigrants.

Date Sources. Each Filipina immigrant participated in a 40 to 90-minute semi-structured interview. The investigator conducted all interviews to ensure consistency in the interview process. Interview locations were selected by the participants with the intention of finding a place that was comfortable, safe, and sufficiently private. Subsequently, three participants hosted social gatherings of their friends at their homes

on three different occasions. This investigator was invited to the gatherings and participated in the social function as well as met with each participant privately and individually to conduct the interviews in a separate room. All the interviews were conducted in English, audio-recorded, and later transcribed by the research team. Some limitations of the interview include the limited time spent with the respondents, the retrospective nature of the information provided, and the lack of direct observations of the information.

Researcher's self-reflectivity refers to the engagement of continuous examination of one's beliefs, reactions, and assumptions that may influence the data analysis process. In qualitative research, the investigator is also an active member in the construction of knowledge. Subsequently, memo-writing has been a central feature of the analysis as recommended by qualitative researchers (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Throughout the research process, memos were kept to document the investigator's reactions and thoughts upon completion of each interview. The investigator's subjective reflections of the content shared during the interviews, reactions to interactions with the participants, and feelings about the process in general were regularly documented in a journal. Memos were also kept with questions and observations regarding emerging themes from the data.

Data Analyses

Coding. The data analysis process is a circular progression with the constant comparison between newly collected data with previously coded data (Charmaz, 2006). Coding is a major part of the data analysis process that allows researchers to break down

the data into segments and to begin to see beyond the presented statements. There are three stages of coding in grounded theory: initial coding, focused (or selective), and axial coding. The initial phase of data coding involves naming each line of the interview transcript (e.g., “meeting first Filipina friend”) and segmenting the data (i.e., multiple codes for a paragraph of content). The goal of initial coding is to stay open to all possible theoretical directions indicated by the data that will guide subsequent data collection and focused coding.

During the focused phase of coding, we used the most significant codes generated during initial coding to sort, synthesize, integrate, and organize large amounts of data. The significance of the codes were first determined by the occurrences of the codes within and across interviews and identified by each research member independently. Then the team came together for lengthy discussions to reach a consensus regarding which codes are the most salient to the emerging themes. In other words, the research team engaged in constant discussions of how the codes fit with the data, how the codes from interview 2 compared to interview 1, and did the significant theme fit the data and subcategories across interviews? Similarly, codes were compared within the data obtained from the same participants, as well as data obtained from different participants. The constant comparisons ensured the codes and themes stayed true to what was reported by the participants. This comparison process became the basis for forming analytical frameworks for the data.

The third phase of coding in grounded theory is axial coding, which related categories to subcategories. The purpose of axial coding is “to sort, synthesize, and

organize large amount of the data and reassemble them in new ways after open coding” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 60). After the completion of initial and focused coding, all research team members were well-versed in the data and the categories of concepts emerged from the data. Each research team member identified salient themes independently using different approaches including recurring conceptual themes, compiling frequencies of the codes, and referencing the literature. After extensive discussions to reach a consensus regarding the salient codes, two interviews were focus-coded using the identified codes to ensure that the subcategories identified by the team were reflective of the data. The research team sorted codes into the following general subcategories: a) backgrounds and life in the Philippines, b) meeting husband and his family, c) initial adjustments (i.e., food, weather, driving, homesickness), d) vocational issues, e) life in the U.S., f) Filipina community in the U.S., g) racism/discrimination, h) communities, and i) coping. Using these subcategories, the research team analyzed the data by sorting the subcategories based on the relationship of the concepts in order to capture the process of coping with community integration as described by the participants. The axial coding process facilitated the development of a theoretical framework based on the current data. The research team engaged in several extensive discussions and constant comparisons of data to inform the construction of the theoretical framework.

Memo Writing. Reflectivity is essential in the process of grounded theory research. Strauss and Corbin (1998) advocated that researchers keep a journal to record their thoughts and reactions to the research, and how they may influence the data analysis. Memo writing is a reflective process that provides the researcher with vital

information for the construction of meaning from the data. Each member of the research team was asked to keep a journal and to document thoughts and reactions to the data throughout the coding process. Memo writing is a circular process with the researchers reacting to the data, the meaning construction process; moreover, the memo writing also influences the researchers' interpretation of the data and ideas. The information recorded in the reflective journal provided valuable resource for validation of the codes, categories, and theory to ensure all analyses are grounded in the data.

Validity and Trustworthiness of Data. Trustworthiness of the data refers to the authenticity, quality, and the consistency of our interpretations grounded in the data (Yeh, et al, 2008). The validity and trustworthiness of the data analysis was achieved by the following methods. First, full disclosure of the researchers' personal bias facilitated critical examination of the how the researchers' lens may influence the data analysis process (Charmaz, 2006). Therefore, efforts such as team-building activities fostered a research team environment that welcomed disclosure and discussion of individuals' cultural identities, beliefs, and bias. Second, conscious efforts of building rapport with the participants throughout the research process fostered a sense of trust in the researcher. Recognizing any contact with the participants is an opportunity to build rapport, conscious efforts were made to ensure the participants felt comfortable talking to the investigator. Third, the research team provided peer-review of the codes, categories, and diagrams generated from the data to ensure all findings were grounded in the data. The peer-reviews occurred throughout the entire research process with constant comparison and discussions to reach consensus on coding. Fourth, the findings are supported by

content-rich descriptive and quotes for every significant codes, themes, and categories generated from the data analyses.

Results

The following section describes the central phenomenon of coping, adaptability, hardship inherent in the process of sociocultural transitions for Filipina immigrants. The cyclical process of coping with sociocultural adaptation started with causal conditions that contributed to the decision to immigrate, which lead to contextual conditions that posed specific challenges upon arrival in the United States, actions and strategies employed in response to the contextual difficulties, and consequences of coping efforts. The grounded theory model of coping with sociocultural transitions for Filipina immigrants in rural communities is presented in Figure 1. The conceptual model presented a framework to better understand the contextualized adjustment processes of Filipina immigrants and their coping strategies within a cultural context.

Causal Conditions and the Decision to Immigrate

The causal conditions emerged from the data that contributed to Filipina immigrants' eventual decision to immigrate to the U.S. were: (a) growing up in rural Philippines, and (b) corresponding with White American men. Over half of the women described growing up in rural Philippines and experienced poverty, education barriers, and restricted gender expectations on women. One woman described growing up with seven siblings on "a very small island that there's no electricity...and my father is a fisherman on a small island town." In addition to the impoverished condition in rural

areas, growing up in villages also meant that access to education was a barrier to overcome. Education persistence was a significant hardship as well as accomplishment for the participants. For example:

We lived in a rural area, we were really poor, yeah, and I was the oldest and acted like one of the parents too. Yeah, I managed to graduate high school; and in my elementary, I had to walk over an hour to go to school. During that time, because it was in the 1970's, it was really bad. The economy was really bad. So I graduated grade school I should say up to sixth grade, and then my parents could not afford me to go to high school during that time.

Filipina immigrants also discussed the restricted gender expectations they received from their parents. Specifically, education and career aspiration was not encouraged for women in the Philippines. One woman described the messages she received about her gender role: "We are brought up in the Philippines. If you're a woman in my time, you don't do very much. We think the guys do more than the girls. We are just there to get married and have babies. That's what is expected of us to do that just get married and obey your husband." At the same time, despite the restricted gender expectation of women described by many of the participants, the majority of the women reported college and beyond education attainment. Furthermore, most of them held professional careers and relocated to major metropolitan areas in the Philippines during their young adulthood prior to their move to the U.S.

Correspondence with White American Men. All the participants discussed beginning correspondence with their future husbands through dating services, or family and friend referrals, as well as meeting American men at places frequent by American military servicemen. The methods of correspondence ranged from traditional mailing

practices to online chat room conversations. The following quote exemplified Filipina's experience of initiating correspondence with her future husband.

I found this guy in a little magazine, which is my husband, and so I started writing him. I started writing him and I had really poor English. One of my friends started helping me with the letters, like a correspondent you know, and so she's helping me and everything.

Some women expressed that their initial intention for corresponding with American men was for fun and did not intend to seek marriage. As one woman shared, "No, in my life I hadn't even thinking about becoming to an American. Even at the start, it seems like it just a joke." Gradually, many women talked about increased frequency of written correspondence, online chat, and telephone calls. Eventually, many women talked about how their future husbands planned a visit to the Philippines to meet each other in person. Often the visit entailed meeting the potential spouse in person, meeting family members, and a wedding proposal:

No, first he come and see me. He came to see me to get to know me, and propose if I want to marry him and I said "no, let me think about it." Then after one month when he comes back here, I said "okay, yes". So he sent me this ring. The engagement ring.

In sum, the impoverished background of the women motivated them to overcome socioeconomic limitations by pursuing education and relocating to major metropolitan areas in the Philippines for employment opportunities. The U.S. cultural influences on values placed on education attainment and self-sufficiency contributed to the desire for upward mobility on the social ladder (Nadal, 2010). The colonial mentality and ideal of the American dream may have also contributed to women's consideration of immigration

through marriage with White American men. These factors combined provided the context for decision to immigrate.

Contextual Influences on Challenges and Support in the U.S.

Through the lens of the social ecological model (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), the challenges Filipina immigrants experience during their daily lives in U.S. rural communities can be thought of as situated in the context of four layers of social systems. Upon their arrival in the U.S., Filipina immigrants faced numerous challenges in adjusting to their new community. For example, the immigrants adjusted to many environmental changes such as the rural landscape as well as the weather. The loss of relationships also meant that many of the sociocultural transitional challenges manifested in the context of different relationships as well as adjustment of individuals' expectations.

Contextual Issues Pertaining to the Rural Community. A salient aspect of the experiences shared by Filipina immigrants in this study is their adjustment to the physical environment of the Midwestern rural landscape. The discrepancies between their perceptions of the U.S. as well as moving from urban cities to U.S. rural communities posed an initial shock to many of the women. One woman aptly noted, "as far as adjusting, I lived in Manila. It is the capital, a big city. The first time we met I went to his house and see where it is. And it's a farm. It's out in the country. Gravel road. Like two and a half miles away and it's all gravel." Similarly, another woman said, "this is not my life this is not the life I was looking for I'm in the U.S. I'm in the farm and living nowhere. It's hard. It's just like I cry everyday." While some women reacted to the rural community with disappointment, other women also described acceptance and optimism.

For example, one woman recalled: “so when I saw this, I thought “wow, this is early retirement.” So, no, at the time I don’t have any regrets or say “oh, I don’t want to live here.” It’s just so peaceful, so quiet.”

Adjusting to the weather also was marked by surprise, difficulties, and excitement. Many of the women arrived to the U.S. during winter and they described the initial shock with the cold temperature, snow, and the winter landscape.

The first day when I got here, it was twenty degrees below zero. I met him at the airport and he brought me the big coat. I did not bring any big coat; we do not need it back home. He said you need this. I said “why”, and he said “because it is cold.” I did not realize how cold it is, you know the first time you see the snow. When I got up that morning, I said, MAN! It is so pretty outside. It is so white. But wintertime is so depressing. You cannot go outside. And sometime especially you get sick. What can you do, your husband is at work. You cannot call him all the time. But you know sometimes you feel bad that you wish you had somebody talk to.

In addition to the disappointment and surprise with the rural landscape, the wide-open space was different from home and contributed to feelings of social isolation, loneliness, and homesickness for some newly arrived immigrants. One woman described, “It was scary, because you don’t know the area, you don’t know anybody. Sometimes, I can hardly get some sleep. Because you don’t know anything, I was scared. It was an old house and I was alone.” The physical distance and separation from neighbors can amplify the feelings of loss and disconnection that Filipina immigrants experiences in the new country. Coupled with the cold weather during winter months, feelings of loneliness and homesickness would challenge the emotional well-being of some of the newly arrived Filipina immigrants.

Contextual Issues Pertaining to Family/Work. Building relationships with husband's family members and interactions with coworkers increased Filipina immigrants' contacts with other White Americans in their community of settlement. Depending on the husband's relationship with his family and their receptivity of immigrants, forming relationships with husband's family can be both challenging as well as supportive.

With your family you have to adjust the environment. You have to adjust your husband and the people surround you. It's kind of hard. It is really hard. The thing is that you make that far. Luckily my husband's family is really supportive. They call me and ask "Do you want to do this and that? Do you want to get something to eat?"

Blending of family can also pose challenges to Filipina immigrants' transitional process. Some of the women had children from their previous relationships, while others married White American men who have adult children from their previous marriages. The negotiations of different parenting practices and values can contribute to the stress and complexity of Filipina immigrants' adjustment in the U.S. As one woman explained: "But it was a shock to [my husband] and it also forced my son. He was used to just having me and all of the sudden he has a step-dad telling him "this is what you have to do." So that was a difficult adjustment for both of them. For all of us."

The work place provided Filipina immigrants the opportunities to form friendships with White Americans and increase their ties to the community. Many of the women talked about the desire to seek employment upon their arrival in order to help out with household expenses. At the same time, some women also wanted to send money home to their family back in the Philippines. One woman explained: "after I got a job, I

sent a little money...if I came to a country where I can work. I know we need some income here too, but if I have a little extra, I can help my family.” While work can provide financial stability for Filipinas, the increased contact with others at work also contributed to the experiences of racial microaggression and overt racism.

They always called me shorty even though I already told them that it offends me and I had a name. They said “well, why it offends you? You are short anyway.” I said, “you better be careful what you say.” I said, “How tall are you?” and I said, “You’re only five-six and you call yourself an American? When you are in different country they call people who are American if you are six-one. Five-six is not considered to be an American.” I said, “That’s Filipino height.” That’s what I told them. It is like the small things that sometimes it adds up and makes you mad.

The negative experiences associated with race and immigrant status can negatively impact Filipinas’ emotional well-being. Furthermore, these race-based exchanges can communicate hostility, and “otherness” towards Filipina immigrants. Another woman described: “But the only thing is obviously, you’re not American because of your color of skin.”

Contextual Issues within the Marriage. Filipina immigrants from this study all immigrated to the U.S. through marriage with a White American man. The immigrant status as correspondence brides contributed to the unique sociocultural adjustment their marriage. The quality of the relationship with their husband as well as characteristics of the husband can determine the level of support and hardship involved in Filipina immigrants’ adjustment. For example, one woman said: “Luckily for me, I had a good experience coming over because I’m with my husband. But if my husband was bad, it’ll be very different; would be very hard.”

Of the 16 women in this study, only one woman reported experiencing domestic violence upon her arrival to the U.S. She shared that after a few years of emotional and physical abuse; she filed for divorce and is now living by herself. While the other women spoke positively about their relationship with their husbands, many of them alluded to the awareness of risk for domestic violence when marrying a White American man within the Filipina correspondence brides' community.

And my husband, he may not have money, but he is a good husband. He is a good guy. That's all. Just think about it. If it happens to you in a tough time, and you wanna say you wanna marry someone else because he have this and that. He might have this and that, but you might not have freedom from him. He might treat you like a slave, like shit, like trash. He can just tell you what to do, or make you slave. But because of money? It's not worth it.

Individual Factors that Influenced Adjustment Challenges. On a personal and psychological level, Filipina immigrants shared adjustment challenges involving their expectations for the new life, behavioral changes, and emotional reactions to immigration. Most of the Filipina immigrants talked about being surprised by the discrepancies between their expectation and perception of the U.S., and their actual experience. Adjusting their expectations and perceptions of the U.S. was a long gradual process that started at the moment of Filipina immigrants' arrival to the U.S.

In the beginning I thought that everybody's very rich. That's for one thing because that's what I thought; because that's what they said: American is so rich. [I heard people] talk about it. I didn't you know my expectation wasn't right until I move here. [I thought every American] to be rich and that's what I was thinking. I don't think everyone is rich [now]. They're just hard worker.

In addition, Filipina immigrants were also confronted by other realities that required behavioral changes, such as transportation, language, and food preferences. On an emotional level, the unfamiliarity with the community, food, language, and people can

amplify the feelings of homesickness. Demands of the multitude of changes and adjustment can significantly impact Filipina immigrants' emotional well-being. For example, one woman reported:

You have to face the reality of your life. So you have to adjust everything. Especially here, you have to face a lot of things. Especially, how to go to store, how to eat, the food. Just the food! I told my husband for the first time: "I have to look for my food!" I'm gonna die. I cannot eat this! That's what you look for. Yeh, that's the number one thing, the food.

Another woman corroborated the challenge with homesickness:

Connection to the family, being so far away from home, it's really hard. As I said, when I first got here, it was really, man it was really hard. It took me awhile to get adjusted being far away from home and I'm so emotional just crying.

As described by all of the women, Filipina immigrants' transitions to the U.S.

rural communities were complicated by a multitude of challenges across layers of social systems. On an individual level, Filipina immigrants adjusted their expectations and misperceptions with the reality of new lives. Within the social contexts of their marriage, family, co-workers, and the community, Filipina immigrants were faced with the task of building new relationships while dealing with discrimination and prejudice. The unfamiliarity with the U.S. culture, people, and environment contributed to the feelings of homesickness, isolation, loneliness, and loss. In response to these adjustment challenges, Filipina immigrants talked about their coping strategies to overcome these acculturative hardships.

Strategies for Coping with Living in Rural Midwest

Faced with multiple layers of sociocultural and psychological transitions, participants discussed a range of coping approaches to adjust to their new life in the U.S.

The emerging themes of Filipinas' coping strategies included: (a) developing new life skills, (b), building new relationships, and (c) coping within one's self. The myriad of coping strategies described by Filipina immigrants reflected the flexibility of utilizing different coping approaches according to a specific problem or stressor. Also, during the first few years of Filipina immigrants adjustment, much of the coping efforts were focused on practical, problem-specific, and skill-oriented solutions (i.e., driving, language, job search). As time went on, the reliance of social network and emphasis on interpersonal connections became a main source of support for many of the immigrant women.

Developing New Life Skills. In attempts to adjust to the rural community, Filipina immigrants talked about coping strategies aimed at developing new life skills that included learning to drive, cooking American food, and knowing how to access resources. One woman shared advice for newcomers: "First, you have to learn how to drive. Because you cannot go to places if you don't know how to drive. That is the first thing you learn in America." The sparse rural landscape required Filipina immigrants to acquire driving skills because public transportation is not an option in their communities of settlement. Moreover, while learning to drive is a functional and practical necessity, it also has an important psychological impact on alleviating social isolation and loneliness. One woman described the emotional benefit of driving: "A little bit of independence. It gives you're a little bit of independences. Especially when you live in the country when you can't see anybody. When you get out, you can get out."

Similar to driving, food preferences were another salient challenge during the initial years. In addition to finding grocery stores and becoming familiar with different food items, learning to cook American-style meals for their husbands also demanded Filipina immigrants to acquire a different set of life skills. “That first two years was like my adjustment time because I don’t know how to cook American food. I only know how to cook rice. That’s it, and it was an adjustment. Plus you work during the day. It was an adjustment I had to learn how to like the food because I don’t know how to eat these leaves, you know salad and everything.”

Building New Relationships. Building relationships in the U.S. can both be a challenge as well as coping resources. As one woman recalled: “find friends. That’s a main thing. If you believe in God, go to church. That’s the one thing that makes you adjust. Your feelings, your inner feelings...find your friends.” Filipinas also talked about the importance of building relationships with their husband, in-laws, church members, neighbors, and other Filipinas. The emphasis on interpersonal connections was particular salient for Filipina immigrants, which reflects of the Filipino cultural values of *Kapwa* (fellow being) and *personalismo* (Nadal, 2011). These values facilitated immigrants’ strong emotional bond between each other as well as the desire and value to develop interpersonal connectedness with White Americans through church, neighborhood, and extended family.

It was very different; when I moved here, I didn’t know a Filipina, no Filipina. I was crying to my husband and said I move here and I don’t have anyone here; I don’t have no friends.....and finally I meet, the first time I meet a Filipina around here. We met at Walmart; then she come over and she asked, “are you Filipina?” I said yes and we started talking, and we went to church because we are the same religion, we’re Catholics. There, I meet [another Filipina]. So there’s a lot of

Filipinas around, and I went home and my husband said, “oh you’re happy now?” Life is much better.

Relational support was central to Filipina immigrants’ coping because it served multiple functions including emotional support, forming community ties, and affirming cultural identity. Quality relationships with their husband were often a source of emotional support and relationships with White Americans at work or church can foster a sense of belongingness in the community for many Filipina immigrants.

Well, like I go to church over there...I go to the same Catholic Church. And when I go, I feel welcome. And [it’s similar at] where I work. I know everybody, so most of the people there are my friends now. When I get sick, everybody keeps asking me how I’m doing or everything.

Relationships with other Filipina immigrants also provided emotional and instrumental support (i.e., getting a ride to work or information about the community). But perhaps the most important function of social support from fellow Filipina women was affirmation of cultural identity.

That’s is the only way that we can feel like we are in the Philippines, not in the U.S., not in this community that we don’t belong. It’s different when we get together; can speak our own dialect. It’s easy you know. And then it’s like, it’s like your family, your real family; so it’s make your life easier when we see each other.

Coping within One’s self. The third theme of coping involved strategies directed towards one’s self with the goals of regulating emotion, adjusting expectations, and relying on faith to endure hardship. Unlike coping approaches aimed at changing their situations, or acquiring skills to overcome the challenges, Filipina immigrants shared numerous internal coping strategies reflective of the cultural values of *Bahala na* (fatalistic passiveness), *lakas ng loob* (inner strength). Specifically, *Bahala na* is best

translated as “leave it to God” and describes Filipinas who are optimistic, low locus of control, and accept things as they were. For example, one woman shared:

Well, I would tell them [pause] this is not the same where we came from; this is a different life. I learned also, once you’re married, if you’re really dedicated to your marriage life, you have to deal with everything, not matter what happens, but always think positive.

Moreover, the women’s Catholic faith also provided a source of strength for Filipina immigrants when coping with situations they cannot alter or to regulate their emotions. As one woman described her faith and coping: “if you’re down and suddenly, sometimes you don’t know what to do and you cannot adjust yourself something. Just pray and have faith in God, look at the light in you and do something so you feel better.” The reliance on their faith as a way to cope may be particular helpful with the acculturation process for many Filipina immigrants as many rural Midwestern communities also share similar values in leaving it to “God’s will” as a coping strategies.

On the other hand, *lakas ng loob* described Filipinas’ tendency to be courageous in the midst of problems, resilient, and believe in one’s ability to overcome challenges (Nadal, 2011). One woman described an encounter with a co-worker who has been repeatedly teasing her and she responded to him by emphasizing her strength in overcoming adversity.

I just look at him. I said, “guess what? Remember this;” I said, “I was not born on this country. I’m ten thousand miles away from there. I came over here by myself. I’m not scared of anything.” I said, “I want you to back off” and he did back off. Sometimes you have to say that. You have to be tough. Yes, because if you’re not, it’s gonna be tough. People can run over you.

Another strategy used by many Filipina immigrants, especially when dealing with racial discrimination or prejudice, was to ignore the person or the comments. The

preference to not confront others when faced with unfair treatment may be reflective of another Filipino cultural value of *pakikasama*. Specifically, *pakikasama* refers to Filipinos inclination to get along with others without making waves or causing conflicts (Nadal, 2011). Ignoring prejudicial comments as well as reframing the situation was often used to deal with challenging relationships in Filipina immigrants live. For example, “I just ignore when I see it. I’m just doing what I’m doing, you know? I am just doing my job good, so I don’t care if anybody else like that. If I look, she’s mean, and so I ignore...I just ignore, it looks like I don’t hear what she said.”

In sum, faced with a wide range of adjustment challenges, Filipina immigrants responded by engaging in coping strategies that relied on their inner strengths (i.e., acceptance, optimism, faith), tenacity of acquiring new life skills, as well as relational support. The flexibility of coping activities within the context of acculturative adjustment facilitated a sense of adaptability. Consequently, Filipina immigrants described a sense of connectedness and greater well-being over time.

Consequences of the Interactions Between Coping Strategies and Adjustment Challenges

Over time, Filipina women described a range of adjustment outcomes based on their coping experiences with living in rural communities as immigrants married to White American men. Themes emerged suggested changes with: a) connectedness in the relationships, b) bicultural integration, and c) shifts in perception, attitude, and behaviors. While most women shared that their sense of well-being improved over time, they also continues to negotiate with on-going financial and cultural hardship and the question of “where is home.”

Connectedness in the Relationships. A salient consequence of the on-going sociocultural transition for immigrants was the relationships they built in the U.S. These relationships formed over the years facilitated a sense of connectedness and belonging for Filipina immigrants.

I get more, more connected with the people here than with people back home. Well aside from the family, you could hardly do anything there anyway. They are the way back, they are still in the mountain, but like I said I got more, more people connected to me here than over there aside from the family.

Although many women felt that the U.S. has become like home because of the family they created through marriage and children, there was a sense of loss shared among the women because of distance and time away from their family of origin and the Filipino culture. As one woman shared about her dilemma of where is home:

I still feel like this is home [U.S.], but when I go back home [the Philippines], that's really my real home, but it's like when you have a family, it's like this is your home and that's your home, it's kind of divide... Over there because it's your brothers and sisters, but then you have your husband here with whom you live with for all your life and your daughter is here too, it's just like half and half.

Bicultural Integration. Another on-going consequence of Filipina immigrants' coping efforts was the bicultural negotiation. One woman's descriptions of her parenting values and daily-life routine exemplified the balance of bicultural identity:

You have a kid and you fix two different foods, for you and for your family or for your husband or for your kids. I do it because although my daughter eats Filipino food, but not all the time, and my husband don't really care about Filipino food or Chinese food or something; so it's hard.

In essence, food represented a tangible component of one's culture and cultural identity. The act of preparing two different foods for the family illustrated one way that

Filipina immigrants negotiated the balance between maintaining her cultural identity, her role as a wife of a White America man and mother of a biracial daughter.

Shifts in perception, values, and behaviors. The adjustment experiences of Filipina immigrants not only involved both psychological shifts in their perceptions and values regarding Americans and the culture, but it also involved behavioral changes such as food preference and familiarity with the environment. A common misperception shared by Filipina immigrants regarding Americans was regarding the wealth in the U.S. Overtime, many women shifted their misperception about the American dream and talked about how they worked hard to pay bills, the realization of the cost of living in the U.S., and also how some Americans mismanage their finances.

Another salient example of the change over time experienced by Filipina immigrants was their food preferences and how each individual approached their adjustment differently. While some women talked about the importance of eating rice and cooking Filipino food as a way of maintaining their cultural identity, other women shared a different outcome.

I used to like the tuna...then it probably was in '98 when I went home to visit family and friends. My neighbors fixed me some fish and said, "oh, eat some fish." I tried to because I don't want to hurt their feelings. Then I guess that's when I realized I cannot eat fish. I said it's too fishy...I used to buy big bags of rice and now I hardly eat it!

Thus, gradually over time, Filipina immigrants all described improvements in their lives in the U.S. The relational changes, shifts in their attitudes and perceptions, as well as behaviors allowed them to adapt to their environment and to foster fulfilling and meaningful relationships in the U.S. At the same time, Filipina immigrants' lives in rural

communities continue to be marked by financial hardship and bicultural negotiations that required on-going coping efforts.

Central Phenomenon of the Sociocultural Transition Process

The central phenomenon in Filipina immigrants' experiences was characterized by adaptability, hardship, and coping. Although many of the women reported feeling happy, content, and satisfied with their lives in the U.S., the advice they shared to newcomers expressed the hardship of their adjustment experiences. Themes emerged about their hardship included loneliness, loss, discrimination, and financial pressure. One woman said: "if you're not a skilled person, don't come. Just stay where you are. You're happier there. That's what I feel. Well, personally I'd never bring my family because I don't want them to be lonely. It's very lonely here." Her advice to a newcomer alluded to the hardship associated with vocational difficulties, financial pressure, and prejudice.

The perseverance of coping with hardship was central in the narratives of Filipina immigrants. As one woman who has lived in the U.S. for over 20 years nicely depicted the critical role of perseverance in her advice to the newly arrived women: "Don't give up. Keep on learning, and then you have to try to think: 'Why can others do it? And I can do it?' That's one thing, you have to be strong. So that's what I say to everybody, to the new ones." The persistence and inner strength demonstrated in Filipina immigrants' coping with living in rural communities contributed to a sense of growth from their experiences. As one woman described her coping, "you just talk to yourself. I said, I still can do this don't worry about it, 'cause I am used to it. Even in the Philippines, I came home, I cooked, I cleaned the house. It was hard to wash clothes there, you wash it by

hands. Here, it is so easy.” Thus, immigrant resilience and adaptability were not unique to the U.S. context. Rather, immigrants’ sense of adaptability was constructed based on previous experiences of overcoming hardship in their home country. In addition, this example also illustrates that coping efforts do not happen in isolation of each other. In fact, the accumulation of coping efforts towards positive outcomes contributed to a sense of self-efficacy in one’s ability to adapt.

Discussion

The results of this study provided a contextualized understanding of the cyclical and dynamic processes of coping of Filipina immigrants married to White American men in rural communities in the U.S. Qualitative investigations, such as this one, can provide contextualized perspectives on immigrants’ adjustment, coping, and outcomes that include the sociocultural context that is often lost with cross-sectional research based on U.S. college student samples. The conceptual model presented based on our findings was consistent with recent coping models that emphasize on the transactional and bi-directional dynamics in individuals’ coping experiences (Heppner, Wei, Neville, & Kanagui-Munos, 2011; Wang & Heppner, 2011). The central and recurring theme of the experiences of Filipina immigrants was their continuous coping with, and adjustment to a wide array of hardships. From an ecological perspective, Filipina immigrants faced adjustment challenges within the context of their own expectations and attitudes, their marriage with White American men, work and community relationships, as well as the climate and landscape of rural America. Subsequently, Filipina immigrants relied on a

wide range of coping activities to respond to the innumerable acculturative demands surrounding them. Over time, the accumulation of effective and positive coping experiences with sociocultural adjustment further facilitate Filipina immigrants' on-going coping efforts with a wide range of stressors associated with living in rural communities (i.e., financial hardship, racial prejudice, bicultural negotiations).

The central phenomena of this study underscores the strength and fortitude of Filipina immigrants in adapting to a wide range of hardships as well as the dynamic process of coping activities in their on-going cross-cultural adjustment and adaptation. The rural cultural context as well as identity as immigrant brides to White American men posed layers of challenges to the acculturation process for the women in this study. They experienced stressors such as financial hardship, marriage and parenting, cultural adjustments, vocational transitions, building new relationships, and racial discrimination in their daily lives. Yet, all of the Filipina immigrant women drew strength from Filipino cultural values such as *Bahala na* (fatalistic passiveness) and *lakas ng loob* (inner strength) as well as their Catholic faith to help them cope with each challenge. Furthermore, previous experience of overcoming hardships (i.e., education persistence in the Philippines, immigrate to the U.S.) further contributed to Filipina women's subsequent confidence in their ability to cope with hardship. Moreover, the cyclical processes of stressors, coping, outcome, and successive coping within a cultural context described by the conceptual model broadens our understanding of the re-occurring, repetitive, and contextualized coping experiences of individuals.

Upon arrival to the U.S., developing new life skills was imperative to adjustment to lives in their community of settlement. Problem-focused coping reflected the resourcefulness and determination of Filipina immigrants to adapt to the new American lifestyle. One particular new life skill, driving, illustrated the effect of instrumental coping on immigrant women's emotional well-being. Learning to drive, which is a new set of knowledge and behaviors, facilitated coping aimed at managing the sense of isolation and guilt of being dependent on others. Consequently, Filipina immigrants' independence, autonomy, and the increase of social contacts associated with being able to drive were linked to a more positive psychological adjustment. Furthermore, acquisition of driving skills facilitated coping with other challenges such as maintaining a social life (i.e., meeting Filipina friends), securing employment, and navigating in the community. The interconnectedness between developing new life skills as a way to cope with practical challenge (i.e., driving), and the subsequent emotional and psychological benefits (i.e., decrease of loneliness and a sense of independence) exemplified the complexity of coping experiences that a targeted problem-solving on one challenge can have a multitude of social, psychological, and emotional outcomes.

The relational coping strategies reported by Filipina immigrants in this study are consistent with the literature regarding the preference of social support for Filipino Americans in particular (Sanchez & Gaw, 2007), and Asian Americans in general (Taylor et al., 2004). Their reliance on social support is reflective of the collectivistic orientation of Filipino cultural values that emphasize the importance of interpersonal connections and relationships. Consequently, the relational orientation of Filipina immigrants was

instrumental in establishing a network of immigrant women across different rural communities. Furthermore, the value in maintaining positive interpersonal relationships was particularly functional in building new relationships in their communities of settlement and fitting with the rural cultural context that emphasizes close-knit relationships. The formation of a strong social support network overtime provided Filipina immigrants invaluable coping resources when they were faced with hardships and acculturative challenges.

In addition to the salience of social support in Filipina immigrants' coping, findings of the study also suggested that social support provided multiple functions in immigrants' coping. Consistent with the literature on social support, Filipina immigrants described relying on their social network for instrumental, informational, and emotional support (Thoits, 1995). A unique aspect of the experiences of Filipina immigrants is the overlap between the cultural match of their relationships (i.e., White American friends and Filipina friends) and the function of the social support. For example, their relationships with White American friends from church were often able to provide instrumental support, but only their Filipina immigrant friends provided emotional and cultural affirmative support. Thoits (1995) stated that structural support, or the organizational ties of one's social network, frequency of contacts, and the density or multiplicity of relationships, is directly related to one's social isolation and integration. In the case of Filipina immigrants, the structural aspect of their social support became increasingly complex with multiple social roles as wife, friend, co-worker, mother, and

grandmother. The increase number of relationships they build in the U.S. also contributed to their sense of belonging in the communities.

The prominent role of relational support contributed to a sense of connectedness in the U.S. and increased their psychological adjustment. The loss of interpersonal connections from their home country marked a significant social and psychological component of the immigrant experience (Berry 2006). Combined with the Filipino cultural values of *Kapwa* and *personalismo*, which place emphasis on interpersonally connectedness, the loss of interpersonal connections for many Filipina immigrants were particularly challenging upon their arrival in the U.S. Their coping efforts toward building new relationships as well as a cultural orientation that extended reciprocal generosity to fellow Filipina immigrants facilitated an increase in satisfying relationships in the U.S. Furthermore, their marriage with White American men also increased Filipina immigrant women's contact with members in their community. The ample opportunities for social contacts over time contributed to the Filipinas' relationship building. Consequently, positive relationships and the formation of complex social network formation over time marked the positive outcome of Filipina immigrants' effective coping with sociocultural adjustment to rural communities. The sense of connectedness with members of their settlement communities significantly contributed to emotional well-being of Filipina immigrants.

When faced with stressors perceived as unchangeable, such as racial discrimination or cultural differences, Filipina immigrants relied on coping within themselves. Coping strategies described by Filipina immigrants included changing one's

expectations, taking different perspectives, ignoring, focus on their faith. These coping strategies reflected Filipino cultural values of *Bahala na* (fatalistic passiveness) and *lakas ng loob* (inner strength), and paralleled secondary control strategies. Weisz, McCabe, and Dennig (1994) defined secondary control as coping efforts aimed towards oneself with the goal of accepting or adjusting to the existing situation. Coping approaches such as avoidance, forbearance, acceptance, cognitive reframing, and emotion-regulation have all been conceptualized as ways to exercise secondary control (Morling & Evered, 2006). For Filipina immigrants, ignoring individuals who held racist and xenophobic prejudice towards them was a frequently reported coping strategy. Previous finding of coping with racism found the Filipina women were more likely than men to engage in avoidant coping when faced with perceived racism, which is suggestive of the gendered experience of coping (Alvarez & Juang, 2010). At the same time, the majority of the women in this study talked about the intentional choice of ignoring, re-directing their attention, and not reacting to certain stressors such as racial prejudice. They also reported changing their expectations, relying on their faith, and optimism to help them accept the hardships in their lives in the U.S. The extensive use of coping strategies aimed at shifting one's perspective and expectations as well as emotion-regulation are consistent the collectivistic cultural orientation. As Sanchez and Gaw (2007) stated, "the open display of emotional affliction is discouraged in favor of social harmony" (p.812). Thus, this contextualized investigation of Filipina immigrants' coping experiences indicated the interconnectedness of the cultural context with individuals' coping strategies.

The on-going coping efforts in sociocultural adaptation also contributed to outcomes such as shifts in perceptions, attitude, behaviors, and identity. The consequences of on-going sociocultural adaptation are consistent with the conceptualization of acculturation that describes behavioral, cultural, and psychological changes as a result of the interactions of two cultures (Berry, Kim, Minde, & Mok, 1987). Filipina immigrant women found ways to negotiate the bicultural experiences of being married to White American men. For example, the act of cooking American and Filipino meals can be conceptualized as a form of cross-cultural “code switching” with the goal of maintain one’s bicultural identity. Molinsky (2007) described cross-cultural code switching as “the task of moving between culturally ingrained systems of behavior” (p.623). Similarly, Filipina immigrant women’s experiences of adapting to different social interactions with their Filipina friends and their white American friends also illustrated the complex behavioral changes the women engage in on a daily basis to cope with their cross-cultural interactions. Over time, the internalization of these behavioral changes led to values and identity shift in Filipino immigrant women.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

The findings of this study are unique to the experiences of Filipina immigrants in rural U.S. communities who immigrated through the marriage with White American men. Additional qualitative research should be conducted with Asian immigrants of different ethnic groups, immigration history, and gender in order to expand our understanding of the immigrant experiences in rural communities. Investigation of the husbands’ perspectives regarding their marriage to immigrant brides as well as their children will

add to a multidimensional understanding of this unique segment of the immigrant population. From this study, we found that social relationships served multiple functions and different types of friendships seemed to fulfill different coping needs. Future research should address the complexity of social relationships within ethnic communities and how members from the host society can hinder or facilitate immigrants' coping with an array of challenges and stressors in immigrants' lives. Filipina immigrants in this study reported that employment experiences facilitated relationship building by increasing contact with White Americans. At the same time, it also contributed to experiences with racial discriminations in the work place. Future quantitative studies should further examine the complexities among immigrants' vocational experience, racial discrimination, and relationships with ethnic communities as well as members from the host society.

The strength of qualitative research is in the richness of the data gathered to inform the researchers of the examined phenomenon. Although semi-structured interviews of 16 participants provided saturation within the reported data, additional data sources from observations, focus groups, and participants' feedback would provide triangulation of data. Furthermore, the researcher's identity as a cultural and community outsider may have prevented full-disclosure of difficult topics such as domestic violence, marital difficulties, and the multiple motives for immigration through marriage. While many of the women in this study alluded to the concerns of domestic violence within their community, all of the Filipina immigrants (except for one woman) did not speak directly about marital violence and abusive relationships. The reluctant to speak about

domestic violence issues may reflect impression management as the researcher represented an outside group. Repeated and prolonged interactions with the members of the community at social, cultural events may have allowed for more insight into this painful side of the Filipina immigrant experience.

Counseling Considerations

The findings of this study illuminated several salient issues pertaining to the adjustment and coping processes for Filipina immigrants and provided implications for counseling professionals when serving the immigrant brides population. First, assessing the quality of the Filipina immigrants' relationships and identifying potential relational stressors may clarify the appropriate interventions. As the findings suggested, Filipina immigrants' acculturation experience included adjustment of being a wife, a step-mother, as a daughter or sister-in-law, and a co-worker or community member. Establishing these new relationships as a result of the cross-national marriage can contribute to Filipina immigrants' overall stress level, but positive relationships with new family members can buffer other acculturative stress transportation barrier and social isolation. Second, gathering information regarding Filipina immigrants' length of stay in the United States can inform counseling professionals of the salience of different types of stressors. Specifically, for recently arrived immigrant women, coping with practical problems such as driving, getting around the communities, language and communications, and job search may deserve more immediate attention. As the duration of time spent in the U.S. increases, coping with building relationships, interpersonal conflicts, parenting differences, and microaggression or racism manifested in the relational context may

become the focus of the therapy. Finally, efforts aimed to foster community development amongst immigrants and to connect Filipina immigrants to the local community can address the common experience of social isolation that many newcomers reported. Resources and information about formal and informal community events, churches, and holiday celebrations may provide opportunities for immigrants to make connections with other residents.

Conclusion

The present study provided a contextualized understanding of the coping experiences of Filipina immigrants in rural communities. One of the strengths of this study is the examination of coping within the cultural context of Filipina immigrants, and the documentation of the complex ways that cultural values influence individuals' coping approaches. From this study, we also gained a better understanding of the experiences of Filipina immigrants in rural communities and the unique acculturative challenges they faced which may differ from immigrants settling in urban environments. Finally, the resilience of Filipina immigrants in their continuous coping efforts to overcome financial, social, cultural, and personal hardships speaks to the importance of counseling professionals to recognize the strengths in the clients we serve.

Table 1*Demographic Characteristics of Participants (N = 16)*

Characteristic	Mean	Range
Age		
Current	44	31-63
Arrival	28.3	21-53
Length in U.S.	14.7 (yr.)	2-34 (yr.)
Length of Correspondence	17.1 (mo.)	3-48 (mo.)
	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Education		
High School	2	12.5%
College	6	37.5%
Beyond College	2	12.5%
Unknown	7	43%
Employment in U.S.		
Employed	12	75%
Homemaker	2	12.5%
Retired	1	6%
Unknown	1	6%
Children		
Previous Marriage	3	18%
Current Marriage	8	50%
Step-Children	7	43%
No Children	4	25%

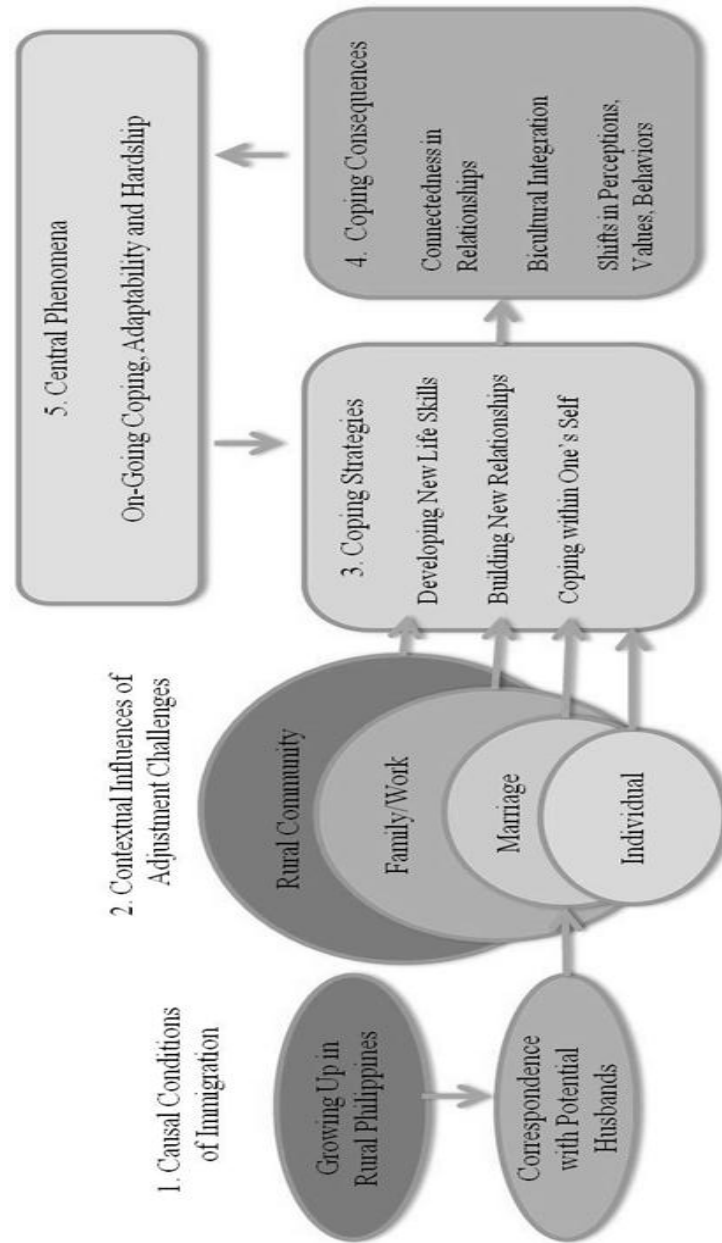


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Coping Experiences of Filipina Immigrants in Rural Communities

References

- Adwin, C. M. & Revenson, T. A. (1987). Does coping help? A reexamination of the relation between coping and mental health. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 53(2), 337-348. doi: 10.1037/0022-3514.53.2.337
- Alvarez, A. N. & Juang, L. P. (2010). Filipino Americans and racism: A multiple mediation model of coping. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 57(2), 167-178. doi: 10.1037/a0019091
- Berry, J. W. (1970). Marginality, stress and ethnic identification in an acculturated Aboriginal community. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 1, 239-252. doi: 10.1177/135910457000100303
- Berry, J. W. (1990). Psychology of acculturation: Understanding individuals moving between cultures. In R. W. Brislin (Ed.), *Applied Cross-Cultural Psychology*. (P.232-253). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Berry, J. W. (2006a). Acculturative stress. In P. T. P. Wong & L. C. J. Wong (Eds.). *Handbook of Multicultural Perspectives on Stress and Coping* (pp. 55-72). New York: Springer.
- Berry, J. W. (2006b). Stress perspectives on acculturation. In Sam, D. L. & Berry, J. (Eds.). *The Cambridge Handbook of Acculturation Psychology*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Berry, J. W., Kim, U., Minde, T., & Mok, D. (1987). Comparative studies of acculturative stress. *International Migration Review*, 21(3), 491-511. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2546607>
- Bjork, J. P., Cuthbertson, W., Thurman, J. W., & Lee, Y. S. (2001). Ethnicity, Coping, and Distress Among Korean Americans, Filipino Americans, and Caucasian Americans. *Journal of Social Psychology*, 141(4), 421-442. doi: 10.1080/00224540109600563
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Chang, E. C., Tugade, M. M., & Asakawa, K. (2006). Stress and coping among Asian Americans: Lazarus and Folkman's model and beyond. In Wong, P. T. P. & Wong, L. C. J. (Eds) *Handbook of Multicultural Perspective on Stress and Coping*. (p. 439-455). New York: Springer.

- Carter, R. T. (2007). Racism and psychological, and emotional injury: Recognizing and assessing race-based traumatic stress. *The Counseling Psychologist, 35* (13), 13-105. doi: 10.1177/0011000006292033
- Carter, R. T., Yeh, C. J., Mazzula, S. L. (2008). Cultural values and racial identity statutes among Latino students: An exploratory investigation. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences, 30*(10), p. 5-23.
- Charmaz, K (2006). *Constructing Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide through Qualitative Analysis*. SAGE: Thousand Oak.
- Chung, R. H. G. (2001). Gender, ethnicity, and acculturation in intergenerational conflict of Asian American college students. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology, 7*(4), 376-386. doi: 10.1037/1099-9809.7.4.376
- Constantine, M. G. & Sue, D. W. (2007). Perceptions of racial microaggressions among Black supervisees in cross-racial dyads. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 54*(2), 142-153. doi: 10.1037/0022-0167.54.2.142
- Dalla, R. L., Ellis, A., & Cramer, S. C. (2005). Immigration and rural America: Latinos' perceptions of work and residence in three meatpacking communities. *Community, Work, and Family, 8*(2), 163-185. DOI: 10.1080/13668800500049639
- Edgington, D. W., Goldberg, M. A., & Hutton, T. A. (2006). Hong Kong business, money, and migration in Vancouver, Canada. In Li, W. (Ed). *From Urban Enclave to Ethnic Suburb*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
- Fitzpatrick, J. P. (1966). The importance of "community" in the process of immigrant assimilation. *International Migration Review, 1*(1), 5-16. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3002231>
- Franklin-Jackson, D. & Carter, R. T. (2007). The relationships between race-related stress, racial identity, and mental health for Black Americans. *Journal of Black Psychology, 33*(5), 5-26. doi: 10.1177/0095798406295092
- Gee, G. C., Ro, A., Shariff-Marco, S. & Chae, D. (2009). Racial discrimination and health among Asian Americans: Evidence, assessment, and directions for future research. *Epidemiologic Reviews, 31*(1), 130-151. doi: 10.1093/epirev/mxp009
- Glaser, B. G. and Strauss, A. L. (1967) *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. Chicago.: Aldine.

- Goto, S. G., Gee, G. C., & Takeuchi, D. T. (2002). Strangers still? The experience of discrimination among Chinese Americans. *Journal of Community Psychology, 30*, 211-224. doi: 10.1002/jcop.9998
- Heppner, P. P. (2008). Expanding the conceptualization and measurement of applied problem solving and coping: From stages to dimensions to the almost forgotten cultural context. *American Psychologist, 63*, 805-816. doi: 10.1037/0003-066X.63.8.805
- Heppner, P. P., & Krauskopf, C. J. (1987). An information processing approach to personal problem solving. *The Counseling Psychologist, 15*, 371-447. doi: 10.1177/0011000087153001
- Heppner, P. P., Heppners, M. J., Lee, D.-G., Wang, Y.-W., Park, H.-J., & Wang, L.-F. (2006). Development and validation of a collectivistic coping styles inventory. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 53*, 107-125. doi: 10.1037/0022-0167.53.1.107
- Heppner, P. P., Wei, M., Neville, H. A., & Kanagui-Munoz, M. (in press). A cultural and contextual model of coping and health. In F. Leong, L. Comas-Diaz, G. N. Hall, V. McLoyd, & J. Trimble (Eds.), *APA Handbook of Multicultural Psychology* (pp.). Washington, D. C.: American Psychological Association.
- Hovey, J. D., Magana, C. (2000). Acculturative stress, anxiety, and depression among Mexican immigrant farmworkers in the Midwest United States. *Journal of Immigrant Health, 2*(3), 119-131. DOI: 10.1023/A:1009556802759
- Hurh, W. M., Kim, K. C. (1990). Adaptation stages and mental health of Korean male immigrants in the United States. *International Migration Review, 24*, 456-479.
- Hwang, W-C. & Goto, S. (2008). The impact of perceived racial discrimination on the mental health of Asian American and Latino college students. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology, 14*(4), 326-335. doi: 10.1037/1948-1985.S.1.15
- Hwang, W-C & Myers, H. F. (2007). Major depression in Chinese Americans: The roles of stress, vulnerability, and acculturation. *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology, 42*(3), 189-197 DOI: 10.1007/s00127-006-0152-1
- Jones, C. & Yousefzadeh, P. (2006). Victims of human trafficking in the Midwest: 2003-2005 Needs assessment and program evaluation. The Mid-America Institute on Poverty of Heartland Alliance.
- Kuo, B. C. H., Chong, V. & Joseph, J. (2008). Depression and its psychosocial correlates among older Asian immigrants in North America: A critical review of two

decades' research. *Journal of Aging Health*, 20(6), 615-652 doi: 10.1177/0898264308321001

- Laux, H. D. & Thieme, G. (2001). Koreans in Greater Los Angeles: Socioeconomic polarization, ethnic attachment, and residential pattern. In Li, W. (Ed). *From Urban Enclave to Ethnic Suburb*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
- Lazarus, R. S. & Folkman, S. (1984). *Stress, Appraisal, and Coping*. New York: Springer.
- Lee, R. M. & Lui, H. T. (2001). Coping with intergenerational family conflict: Comparison of Asian American, Hispanic, and European American college students. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 48(4), 410-419. doi: 10.1037/0022-0167.48.4.410
- Lee, R. M., Su, J., & Yoshida, E. (2005). Coping With Intergenerational Family Conflict Among Asian American College Students. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 52(3), 389-399. doi: 10.1037/0022-0167.52.3.389
- Leong, F. T. L. & Chou, E. L. (1994). The role of ethnic identity and acculturation in the vocational behavior of Asian Americans: An integrative review. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 44(2), 155-172. doi: 10.1006/jvbe.1994.1011
- Li, W. (2006). *From Urban Enclave to Ethnic Suburb*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
- Liang, C. T. H., Alvarez, N., Juang, L. P., & Liang, M. X. (2007). The role of coping in the relationship between perceived racism and racism-related stress for Asian Americans: Gender differences. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 54(2), 132-141. doi: 10.1037/0022-0167.54.2.132
- Liang, C. T. & Fassinger, R. E. (2008). The role of collective self-esteem for Asian Americans experiencing racism-related stress: A test of moderator and mediator hypotheses. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 14(1), 19-28. doi: 10.1037/1099-9809.14.1.19
- Molinsky, A. (2007). Cross-cultural code-switching: The psychological channelges of adapting behavior in foreign cultural interactions. *The Academy of Management Review*, 32(2), 622-640.
- Monger, R. & Yankay, J. (2011). Annual flow report: U.S. Legal permanent residents: 2010. U.S. Homeland Security. Retrieved from <http://aomarticles.metapress.com/content/v188206825jm4711/>

- Moore, R. M. (2001). *The Hidden America: Social problems in rural America for the twenty-first century*. Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press.
- Morling, B. & Evered, S. (2006). Secondary control reviewed and defined. *Psychological Bulletin*, 132(2), 269-296. doi: 10.1037/0033-2909.132.2.269
- Mossakowski, K. N. (2003). Coping with perceived discrimination: Does ethnic identity protect mental health? *Journal of Health and Social Behaviors*, 44 (3), 318-331. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1519782>
- Mossakowski, K. N. (2007). Are immigrants healthier? The case of depression among Filipino Americans. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 70(3), 290-304. doi: 10.1177/019027250707000307
- Nadal, K. (2011). *Filipino American Psychology: A Handbook of Theory, Research, and Clinical Practice*. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons.
- Neville, H. A. & Carter, R. T. (2005). Race and Racism in Counseling Psychology Research, Training, and Practice: A Critical Review, Current Trends, and Future Directions. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 33(4), 413-418. doi: 10.1177/0011000005276733
- Noh, S., Beiser, M., Kaspar, V., Hou, F., & Rummens, J. (1999). Perceived Racial Discrimination, Depression, and Coping: A Study of Southeast Asian Refugees in Canada. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 40(3), 193-207. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2676348>.
- Olmedo, E. L. (1979). *Acculturation: A Psychometric Perspective*. American Psychologist, Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*. Beverly Hills : Sage Publications
- Pieterse, A. L. & Carter, R. T. (2007). An examination of the relationship between general life stress, racism-related stress, and psychological health among black men. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 54(1), 101-109. doi: 10.1037/0022-0167.54.1.101
- Redfield, R., Linton, R., & Herskovitz, M. (1936). Memorandum on the study of acculturation. *American Anthropology*, 38, 149-152. doi: 10.1525/aa.1936.38.1.02a00330
- Ro, M., Park, J. J., & Jang, D. (2009). Language access. In C. Trinh-Shevrin, N. S. Islam, & M. J. Rey (Eds.) *Asian American Communities and Health: Context, Research, Policy, and Action*. Hoboken, NJ: Jossey-Bass.

- Salant, T. & Lauderdale, D. S. (2003). Measuring culture: A critical review of acculturation and health in Asian immigrant populations. *Social Science & Medicine*, 57, 71-90.
- Sanchez, F. & Gaw, A. (2007). Mental health care of Filipino Americans. *Psychiatric Services*, 58(6), 810-815.
- Skinner, E. A., Edge, K., Altman, J. & Sherwood, H. (2003). Searching for the structure of coping: A review of the category system for classifying the Ways of Coping. *Psychological Bulletin*, 129(2), 219-269. Doi: 10.1037/0033-2909.129.2.216
- Slavin, L. A., Rainer, K. L., McCreary, M. L., & Gowda, K. K. (1991). Toward a multicultural model of the stress process. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 70(1), 156-163. doi: 10.1002/j.1556-6676.1991.tb01578.x
- Smith, C. F. & Logan, J. R. (2001). Flushing 2000: Geographic exploration in Asian New York. In Li, W. (Ed). *From Urban Enclave to Ethnic Suburb*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
- Stewart, M. J., Neufeld, A., Harrison, M. J., Spitzer, D., Hughes, K., & Makwarimba, E. (2006). Immigrant women family caregivers in Canada: Implications for policies and programs in health and social sectors. *Health and Social Care in the Community*, 14(4), 329-340. DOI: 10.1111/j.1365-2524.2006.00627.x
- Strauss, A. L. & Corbin, J (1998). *Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques*. (2nd, Ed). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Sodowsky & Wai (1997). Asian immigrant variables and structural models of cross-cultural distress. *Immigration and the family: Research and policy on U.S. immigrants*. (pp. 211-234) Hillsdale, NJ, England: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc. Booth, Alan (Ed); Crouter, Ann C. (Ed); Landale, Nancy S. (Ed), (1997). viii, 307.
- Sue, D. W., Bucceri, J., Lin, A. I., Nadal, K. L., & Torino, G. C. (2007). Racial microaggressions and the Asian American experience. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 13(1), 72-81.
- Suls, J. & Fletcher, B. (1985). The relative efficacy of avoidant and non-avoidant coping strategies: A meta-analysis. *Health Psychology*, 4, 249-288. doi: 10.1037/0278-6133.4.3.249
- Suinn, R. (2009). Acculturation: Recommendations for future research. (pp. 65-80). In Trinh, N. Rho, Y. C., Lu, F. G., & Sanders, K. M. (Eds.) *Handbook of Mental Health and Acculturation in Asian American Families*. New York: Humana Press.

- Taylor, S. E., Sherman, D. K., Kim, H. S., Jarcho, J., Takagi, K., & Dunagan, M. S. (2004). Culture and social support: Who seeks it and why? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 87*(3), 354-362. DOI: 10.1037/0022-3514.87.3.354
- Thoits, P. A. (1995). Stress, coping and social support processes: Where are we? What next? *Journal of Health and Social Behavior, 35*, 53-79.
- Thomas, M. & Choi, J. B. (2006). Acculturative Stress and Social Support among Korean and Indian Immigrant Adolescents in the United States. *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare, 33*, 123.
- Wang, Y-W; Heppner, P. P. (2011). A qualitative study of childhood sexual abuse survivors in Taiwan: Toward a transactional and ecological model of coping. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 58*(3), 393-409. doi: 10.1037/a0023522
- Wei, M.; Heppner, P. P.; Ku, T.; Liao, K. (2010). Racial discrimination stress, coping, and depressive symptoms among Asian Americans: A moderation analysis. *Asian American Journal of Psychology, 1*(2), 136-150. doi: 10.1037/a0020157
- Weisz, J. R. ; McCabe, M. A.; Dennig, M. D. (1994). Primary and secondary control among children undergoing medical procedures: Adjustment as a function of coping style. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 62*(2), 324-332. doi: 10.1037/0022-006X.62.2.324
- Yeh, C. J., Kim, A. B., Pituc, S. T., & Atkins, M. (2008). Poverty, loss, and resilience: The story of Chinese immigrant youth. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 55*(1), 34-48.
- Yeh, C. J., Inman, A. C., Kim, A. B., & Okubo, Y. (2006). Asian American families' collectivistic coping strategies in response to 9/11. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology, 12*(1), 134-148. doi: 10.1037/1099-9809.12.1.134
- Yeh, C. J., Arora, A. K., & Wu, K. A. (2006). A new theoretical model of collectivistic coping. In P. T. P. Wong & L. C. J. Wong (Eds.). *Handbook of Multicultural Perspectives on Stress and Coping* (pp. 55-72). New York: Springer.
- Yoo, H. C., & Lee, R. M. (2005). Ethnic identity and approach-type coping as moderators of the racial discrimination/well-being relation in Asian Americans. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 52*, 497-506.
- U.S. Bureau of the Census (2012). Race reporting for the Asian population by selected categories: 2010 census summary. Retrieved from <http://factfinder2.census.gov>

Appendix A. Integrative Literature Review

This extended review of the literature examines relevant scholarship regarding the coping experiences of Filipina immigrants in rural communities. Due to the limited empirical findings on the psychological experiences of Filipina immigrants, review of literature included findings pertaining to Asian Americans and Asian immigrants in general as well as Filipino psychology in particular. First, a brief review of fundamental Filipino cultural values that may influence individuals' emotional well-being and coping provided a back-drop to the literature. Second, a review of salient issues for immigrants included acculturation, discrimination, and community integration suggested common themes in immigrant experiences. Third, the literature of coping and culture outlined the complexities of the coping process and immigrants' psychological well-being. Fourth, empirical findings on Asian Americans and Asian immigrant coping provided considerations for understanding Filipina immigrants' coping process with community integration. Finally, a summary of the review indicated gap in literature that provided the rationale for the conceptualization of the current study.

Fundamental Filipino Cultural Values

In order to understand the experiences of Filipina immigrants within their cultural context, several fundamental Filipino cultural values provides insight to individuals' psychological well-being, perceptions of mental health, and coping strategies. Nadal (2011) identified four fundamental cultural values central to individuals of Filipino descent. These included *Kapwa* (fellow being), *Utang ng loob* (debt of reciprocity), *Hiya* (shame), and *Pakikasama* (social acceptance). Values of *Kapwa* and *Utang ng loob*

centered on the importance of social connectedness, interdependence, interpersonal relationships, and emotional bond with both fellow Filipinos as well as members of the out-groups. In combination, *Kapwa Utang ng loob* can manifest in Filipina women's tendency to extend generosity to fellow Filipinas with the expectation that others will return kindness in times of need. These values heavily influenced the creation of pseudo-family as a coping strategy as well as preference for relational-support (Sanchez & Gaw, 2007). *Hiya* and *Pakikasama* dictate Filipino individuals preference for extending generosity, helping others, building community, as well as presenting oneself with honors, bringing respect to the family, and avoiding embarrassment for the family and community. These values could facilitate the utilization of social support for coping as well as denial of problems and hesitancy to seek help when dealing with psychological distress.

Sanchez and Gaw (2007) noted the role of religion in shaping Filipino communities as well as faith and spirituality in Filipinos' perceptions of mental health and coping. 85% of the Filipinos identify as Catholic and the values of Catholicism as well as the promotion of strong faith play an essential role in Filipinos' coping experiences. For example, adversity may be interpreted through the lens of one's faith (i.e., God's plan) and that Filipinos may be more likely to rely on support from their religious community instead of seeking professional mental health care. Additionally, the Spanish influence on Filipino culture extended beyond religion to defining gender roles such as *machismo* (male-dominant) and *marianismo* (female submissiveness; Nadal, 2011). These values lead to gender role inequalities with men maintain higher power over

women and expectations for women to be religious, pure, and spiritually strong. When Filipina women do not adhere to gender role expectations, they may experience guilt or shame and other psychological distress.

United States' military and political presence in the Philippines also contributed to cultural values of Filipinos. Two notable U.S. cultural influences on Filipino society are the value of education attainment and emphasis on individualization and competition (Nadal, 2011). After the U.S.'s arrival to the Philippines in 1899, the education system in the Philippines is primarily modeled after the U.S.'s system. Unlike the Filipino education system that focused on practical skills and trades, the imposed U.S. educational system reflected the values in writing, reading, and mathematics. With education as a marker of success, English fluency and accent has become associated with social class in the Philippines. Moreover, the idea of the American dream has also been transported to the Philippines. Within the Filipino cultural context, the American dream described the ideal for "immigrants to achieve financial and material prosperity in the U.S." (p.50, Nadal, 2011). U.S.'s culture value of high education attainment can lead to individual pursuit of prosperity that is defined by the belief that being successful meant being independent and self-sufficient. The goal-directed individual pursuit may influence Filipina's decision to immigrate to the U.S.

Salient Issues Pertaining to Immigrants' Psychological Experiences

Acculturation. A salient psychological experience of immigrants is acculturation, or the process that occurs when two cultures come in contact and interacts with each other (Suinn, 2009). Research on acculturation was pioneered in the field of

anthropology and sociology, and later adopted by psychology. The definition of acculturation has generated a plethora of discussion due to the complexity of the phenomenon. Acculturation was first defined by Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits (1936) as “those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact with subsequent changes in the original pattern of either or both groups” (p.149). The early definitions of acculturation are rooted in anthropology and sociology with a focus on the group level processes when two cultures interact with each other. The psychological perspective differs from the anthropological and sociological perspectives on acculturation lay in its focus on the intrapersonal processes and experiences that included changes in attitudes, values, behaviors, and identity (Olmedo, 1979). Because Filipina immigrants are socialized in their culture of origin, they must constantly negotiate, learn, and adapt to the new culture as they rebuild their lives in the rural Midwest.

The acculturation process has been linked to various stressors including social isolation, language barriers, financial displacement, loneliness, and racism. These specific challenges are also known as acculturative stress (Berry, 1970, 2006a, 2006b). Berry, Kim, Minde, and Mok (1987) further categorized acculturation challenges into five categories into physical (e.g, new living environment and surroundings), biological (e.g., new foods and diseases), cultural (e.g., new language, norms, and customs), social relationship (e.g., loss of social capital, shift to minority status), and psychological (e.g., changes in attitudes, values, and beliefs). In their study of 334 Korean male immigrants living in Chicago area, Hurh and Kim (1990) found that immigrants are at most

vulnerable to psychological distress during the initial years of immigration, and they observed a general trend of increased life satisfaction with the length of residence. Consistent with Hurh and Kim's finding, research with different ethnic groups found similar links between immigrant experience, acculturation, and mental health. In a critical analysis of 24 studies published between 1985 - 2006 on older Asian immigrants and depression, Kuo, Chong, and Joseph (2008) found that depression is most likely to be found among those who are women, recent immigrants, lack proficiency in English, low in acculturation in their host societies, perceived difficulties in accessing social and community services, suffer from poor physical health, receive minimal family support, and experience impaired social support. Kuo, Chong, and Joseph (2008)'s conclusion corroborate the relationship between acculturation and mental health by demonstrating that the increase of acculturative stress is associated with poor mental health outcome. The literature suggested that recent immigrants are most at-risk for mental health concerns in the context of sociocultural adjustments.

The relationship between acculturation and mental health of Asian immigrants is not always linear. For example, based on the data from the Filipino American Community Epidemiology studies (FACES), Mossakowski (2007) found that foreign-born Filipinos experienced significantly less depressive symptoms when compared to U.S.-born Filipinos. Furthermore, depressive symptoms among Filipino immigrants were partially mediated by ethnic identity, racial/ethnic discrimination, employment status, gender, and location of residence. Hwang and Myers (2007) examined risk factors including past history of depression, recent life events, and acculturation among 1747

first and second generation Chinese Americans living in Los Angeles County. They found that level of acculturation moderated the effects of recent negative events in predicting depression. However, negative life events presented greater risk for Chinese Americans who were more acculturated than those who were less acculturated. Furthermore, level of acculturation did not influence the level of depression under low stress conditions. Hwang and Myers (2007) speculated that when immigrants become more acculturated, they might have lost certain protective cultural factors that might buffer the stress of negative life events. It is also likely that as individuals become more acculturated, they may become more aware of the sociocultural stressors related to their minority status.

The current literature on acculturation and the impact of the acculturative stress on Asian immigrants provided insight to the possible experience of Filipina immigrants living in rural places in the Midwest. The challenge of negotiating between cultures as well as trying to change one's self to adapt to the new culture can be a stressful experience for immigrants. While some immigrants may find ways to effectively cope with the stress of acculturation, others may experience greater impact on their daily functioning. These findings of the process and impact of acculturation provided the current study conceptual considerations of understanding Filipina immigrants' acculturation experience in rural places.

Racial Discrimination and Mental Health. Racial prejudice and discrimination pose another challenge for Filipina immigrants throughout their lifetime in the United States. Racism is a complex phenomenon with multiple manifestation including

individual, cultural, and institutional forms of racism (Carter, 2007). Furthermore racism is a multidimensional experience and different historical, social, and political history of the minority groups dictates the qualitative experience of people of color with racism. One manifestation of racism is expressed by racial microaggressions. Sue et al (2007) referred microaggressions to verbal and non-verbal exchanges based on racial worldview as racial microaggressions. The accumulation of microaggressions can have detrimental effect on individuals' sense of self (Constantine & Sue, 2007). Sue et al (2007) interviewed Asian Americans about their experiences with microaggressions and the study found 8 themes that categorized the experiences of the participants: (a) alien in own land, (b) ascription of intelligence, (c) exoticization of Asian women, (d) invalidation of interethnic differences, (e) denial of racial reality, (f) pathologizing cultural values/communication styles, (g) second class citizenship, and (h) invisibility. The findings by Sue et al (2007) indicated that while all people of color experience some form of racial microaggressions, the themes of microaggressions are qualitatively different for Asian Americans than from other ethnic groups.

It is well documented in the literature that perceived prejudice and racism-based stress are associated with psychological well-being of people of color (Neville & Carter, 2005; Pieterse & Carter, 2007; Franklin-Jackson & Carter, 2007; Carter, Yeh, & Mazzula, 2008; Hwang & Goto, 2008). Carter (2007) suggested that scholars not only need to study the social, economic, and political effects of racism, but also to recognize the emotional and psychological cost of racism. Slavin, Rainer, McCreary, and Gowda (1991) proposed the multicultural stress model to include the influence of the racial-

cultural and social contexts for the experiences of people of color. Slavin et al (1991) included types of events that may be particularly stressful for persons of color related to their minority status, and they made the distinctions between the stresses caused by primary or secondary appraisal. Primary appraisal refers to the judgment about the meaning or significance of the event. Considering that individuals vary in their attitude and identification with their racial/ethnic background, the event would be appraised differently thus indicating different level of stress. Secondary appraisal involves one's perception of what can be done about the event. Persons of color may have a different notion of what can and cannot be done when faced with racism and discrimination. People's choice of actions or inactions to cope with the perceived stressful event also influences their stress experience.

Asian Americans are often perceived as the "model minority" and a common misperception is that Asian Americans do not experience racially-based discrimination. Convincing evidence from recent literature supported the prevalence of racism and discrimination experienced by Asian Americans. In a review of several social surveys of general Americans' perceptions of Asian Americans, Gee, Ro, Shariff-Marco, and Chae (2009) showed negative popular perceptions towards Asian Americans' patriotism to the U.S., Asian Americans are most culturally different when compared to other racial groups, and increase of immigration from Asia is bad for America. Similarly, the 2002-2003 National Latino and Asia American Study found that majority of the Asian Americans reported some form of unfair treatment in their life and 62% related their mistreatment to their Asian descent. Goto, Gee, and Takeuchi (2002) surveyed over 1,500

Chinese Americans living in the greater Los Angeles area and found that almost one in five Chinese Americans experienced discrimination based on race, ethnicity, language, or accent. Moreover, as high as 43% of the respondent stated these types of incidents occurred within the past year. Furthermore, Goto et al (2002) found that more acculturated individuals were more likely to encounter discrimination and those Chinese Americans living in areas with few other Chinese Americans were 2 to 3.5 times more likely to report acts of discrimination than those living among many other Chinese. They concluded that more acculturated individuals are more likely to come in contact with people outside of their ethnicity, thus increase the chances of discriminatory encounters. Finally, retention of cultural practices is also associated with racial discrimination. These findings suggested that regardless of one's acculturation level, Asian immigrants are likely to experience some form of discrimination based on their race, ethnicity, or language.

In addition to experiencing racial discrimination, strong evidence also suggested the link between race-based stresses and psychological adjustment for Asian Americans. Hwang and Goto (2008) examined a sample of 186 Asian American college students in the Rocky Mountain region in regards to experiences with discrimination and psychological outcome and found that discrimination was significantly correlated with trait anxiety, clinical depression and, psychological distress. Similarly, Lee (2003) found that perceived racism negatively affected community well-being, social well-being, depression, and psychological distress in a sample of Asian American college students in Texas. In Liang and Fassinger's (2008) sample of Asian American college students in the

Mid-Atlantic region, they found racism-related stress was positively associated with self-esteem problems, interpersonal problems, and career problems. Gee et al (2009) reviewed 62 empirical studies that examined the relationships between racism and discrimination among Asian Americans and the impact on their health. They found consistent relationships between experiences of racism and reported poorer mental as well as physical health. The findings on Asian Americans' experiences of racism consistently indicate the negative impact of prejudice on mental health despite the popular portrayal of Asian Americans as the model minority.

The findings from studies of Asian Americans and racism in large metropolitan areas consistently indicate the prevalence of racism towards Asian Americans. While literature on the experiences of Filipina immigrants in the rural Midwest with racism is not available, some findings of Latino/a immigrants in the Midwest suggested the prevalence of discrimination associated to one's racial background as well as immigration status (Hovey & Magana, 2000; Dalla, Ellis, & Cramer, 2005). Therefore, it is likely that Filipina immigrants living in rural places may also experience discrimination and prejudice due to their cultural and racial identity as well as immigration status.

Unique Challenges of the Rural Context. The availability and access to ethnic enclaves and both formal and informal resources significantly shape the experiences of newcomers. The historical and steady immigration trend in major urban areas and coastal states allowed for the development of flourishing ethnic enclaves (Li, 2006). Ethnic communities serve as a buffer for newly arrived immigrants to the shock of resettlement

with community resources and support in their native languages and the availability of familiar ways of life (Fitzpatrick, 1966; Smith & Logan, 2006; Laux & Thieme, 2001; Li, 2006). For example, ethnic enclaves offer stores and restaurants with the materials and goods from the immigrants' culture of origin (Breton, 1964). In addition, these businesses also provide job opportunities for immigrants with limited English proficiency (Edgington, Goldberg, & Hutton, 2006). These resources allow for immigrants to be integrated into a new community quicker through accessibility to the existing structures similar to their cultural origin, and to be connected with social networks and job opportunities. The large concentration of a particular ethnic group also increases the demands and the availabilities of social services that cater to the needs of the immigrant community (Ro, Park, & Jang, 2009). For example, a search of social services for Asians in the San Francisco area on the internet yield over 6,000 results with agencies such as Asian Women's Shelter, Asian American Community Services, Chinese Newcomers Services Center, Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California, and Salvation Army: Asian American Corps (World Wide Web, Dec 2011).

On the other hand, rural communities pose different challenges for immigrants with the limited access to ethnic networks and the lack of available social services in general. The lack of formal helping systems, such as social services, in rural communities fosters an extensive informal system that relied on relationships that has been passed down for generations. In addition, the culture of rural America tends to emphasize private, close-knit relationships, and agricultural industries may pose additional challenges for immigrants as they try to become part of the community

(Moore, 2001). As Moore (2001) puts it, “being considered an insider is often impossible if you were not born in the community” (p.7). Therefore, by studying the process of how immigrants, a newcomer to the country, culture, and community of rural America, become (or not) part of the community, we can gain further understanding the process rural communities respond and incorporate new members.

Coping and Immigrants

Lazarus and Folkman’s (1984) stress and coping model is perhaps the most researched framework in the literature. Specifically, coping has been defined as “constantly changing cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person” (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984, p. 141). Similarly, Heppner and Krauskopf (1987) defined applied problem-solving as highly complex, goal-directed sequences of cognitive, affective, and behavioral activities for responding to stressful internal and external demands. In other words, coping is the action, both observable and non-observable, taken by the individual as a response to a perceived stressor. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) further distinguished coping into two general categories: problem-focused or emotional-focused. Problem-focused coping involves activities, both internally and externally, directed at changing the stressful situation. On the other hand, emotional-focused coping involves activities intended to regulate emotions resulted from the stressful situation. Skinner, Edge, Altman, and Sherwood (2003) pointed out that complexity of coping spans far beyond the two-category distinctions. In fact, many coping scholars later identified other dimensions of coping including direct and avoidance coping (Suls &

Fletcher, 1985), behavioral versus cognitive, escapism, cautiousness, minimization, self-blame, meaning seeking, (Adwin & Revenson; 1987). Skinner et al (2003) concluded that the dichotomous classifications of coping activities are insufficient to capture the complexity of the coping experience. In fact, the biggest critic of the current coping literature suggested the influential role of culture in coping is not well understood, understudied, and almost forgotten (Heppner, 2008). As some empirical evidence support that there are group differences in preferred coping style and the role of culture in individuals' coping experience warrant further investigations.

Empirical findings of group differences in coping preferences between European Americans and Asian Americans are suggestive of the role of culture in coping (Heppner et al, 2006; Heppner, 2008; Chang, Tugade, & Asakawa, 2006; Wong & Wong, 2006). Chang, Tugade, and Asakawa (2006) highlighted that the majority of the research in coping is based on European Americans' experience, and while some findings are transferable to Asian American experiences, notable differences exist between the different cultural groups. Specifically, the literature showed that European Americans' sense of self focuses on autonomy and independence influenced their coping style, whereas Asian Americans prefers coping activities that are more congruent with the value of interdependence and emotional regulation (Bjork, Cuthbertson, Thurman, & Lee, 2001; Mossakowski, 2003; Lee & Liu, 2001; Yeh, Arora, & Wu, 2006). Therefore, for individuals from collectivistic cultures that values interdependence and social harmony may prefer coping strategies that focus on internal processes, such as emotional regulation, cognitive reframing, over direct actions for the benefit of the individual.

In addition to cultural norms, gender roles and expectations also influence individuals' coping experiences. Liang, Alvarez, Juang, and Liang (2007) found that Asian American men and women approach racism-related stress differently. Specifically, they found that men tend to seek support to cope with racism-related stress while women used active coping strategies to attempt to address the situation. The different coping strategies employed by men and women resulted in the different level of stress experienced. Specifically, Asian American women who approached the racism-related event experienced higher level of stress than men who sought support. The finding supports Lazarus and Folkman's suggested mediating effect of coping and further suggested that different stressful situations influence the effectiveness of coping strategies. Moreover, the findings are indicative of the importance of the consideration of gendered experience of coping.

Empirical studies of Asian immigrants and Asian Americans in coping with various challenges including acculturation (Thomas & Choi, 2006), trauma (Yeh, Inman, Kim & Okubo, 2006), caretaking of family (Stewart, Neufeld, Harrison, Spitzer, Hughes, & Makwarimba, 2006), and intergenerational conflicts (Lee, Su, & Yoshida, 2005) consistently found that social support is a major coping strategies that buffers negative outcomes. Furthermore, social support included multiple relational-oriented coping strategies such as receiving advice, confiding in a group member, and connecting to community resources. In regards to racism and discrimination, Noh, Beiser, Kaspar, Hou, and Rummens (1999) found that for Southeast Asian refugees, the practice of culturally congruent coping strategy, forbearance, was an effective buffer against psychological

consequences. Similarly, Wei, Heppner, Ku, and Liao, (2010) found that high helpfulness of family support moderated the relationship between racial discrimination stress and depressive symptoms among Asian American college students. Yoo and Lee (2005) found that social support, problem-solving coping were associated with Asian Americans with strong ethnic identity. However, the effective buffering of negative impact of discrimination was only found when the racial discrimination was perceived to be low. These findings suggested the versatile and functional role of social support for Asian immigrants. However, additional investigation is needed to examine how Filipina immigrants in rural community utilize social support as a coping approach or if other coping strategies may be more salient and effective for their situations.

Filipina immigrants living in the rural Midwest are a minority group within the minority population. As they attempt to rebuild their lives in the new culture, Filipina immigrants face many challenges that require constant efforts to cope and to adapt to the new culture. Of all the possible stressful challenges, acculturation, discrimination, and community integration presented the salient experiences for immigrants in a new society. Current literature indicated that recent immigrants are at higher risk for greater psychological distress associated with acculturation. However, little is known about how the cultural context of the rural communities may contribute to unique challenges in Filipina immigrants' acculturation process. Moreover, coping activities moderate the relationship between stressors and perceived distress. Therefore, it is imperative to examine how Filipina immigrants cope with the perceived stressors in rural communities in order to understand how individuals are integrating into their local communities. The

lack of considerations for the cultural context of coping limited the conceptualization and understanding of the complexities in the coping process.

Qualitative research offers a diverse set of methodologies designed to investigate social phenomenon, such as coping with community integration. The research questions of this study called for constructivist paradigm that allowed for the existence of multiple constructed realities. Furthermore, the relationship between the researcher and the participants is transactional and essential to the process of capturing the experience. Subsequently, grounded theory method was chosen for this study for its focus on the emergent themes grounded in the data and systematic approach to data analysis. The central research question of this grounded theory study is to understand the process of coping with community integration for Filipina immigrants living in Midwestern rural places. More specifically, this study investigates the following questions: (a) what is the process of community integration for Filipina immigrants? (b) What are the challenges faced by Filipina immigrants living in rural places? (c) How do Filipina immigrants cope with perceived challenges?

Appendix B: Interview Protocol

Thank you for meeting with me today. I hope to get to know you a little better today and about your experience living in _____ and becoming part of the community. I will be asking you questions about your experience moving to the United State and _____, your life in _____, such as people you know and things you do, and what you think about your life.

[Informed consent]

Questions about immigration history

1. Tell me about yourself and how you came to the United States.
 - a. What was it like at the beginning? Did you experience any difficulties?
 - i. What did you do?

Questions about community integration

2. Tell me what it is like to live in this city/town/place. For example, what do you like or dislike about living here?
 - a. How was it in the beginning?
 - b. How it is now?
 - c. What did you do to make it better?
 - d. In what ways did you have to change in order to adapt to your life here?

Coping strategies for challenges

3. Can you describe any difficult situation you encountered here?
 - a. What did you do to make things better?
 - b. What was helpful? What was not helpful?
 - c. Were you able to ask for help from anyone?
 - d. How it is now?
 - e. In what ways did you have to change in order to improve the situation?

Questions about social network

4. Tell me about important people in your life who live in this community.
 - a. Can you give me an example of what makes them important to you?
5. How has it been to meet people in this community?
 - a. What did you do to meet people?
 - i. What was helpful? What was not helpful?
6. Do you know other people from your country in the United States?
 - a. How did you meet them?
 - b. What do you do with them? For example, how often do you see them?
What do you do when you meet?

Questions about in-group and out-group perception (linked to community integration experience)

7. What do you think Americans who live in this city/town/place think of people like you?
 - a. Tell me about that. Give me examples.

Coping Strategies

- b. How did/do you handle what you just described?
 - c. What was helpful?
 - d. What was not helpful?
 - e. In what ways did you change to adapt to what you just described?
8. Tell me about what you think about Americans who live in this city/town/place?
 - a. Tell me more. Can you give me examples?

Coping Strategies

- b. How did/do you handle what you just described?
 - c. What was helpful?
 - d. What was not helpful?
 - e. In what ways did you change to adapt to what you just described?

Questions about self-assessment of integration

9. Overall, how much do you feel that you are part of the community here?
 - a. Can you describe a moment that made you feel like you are part of the community here?

Ending Question

10. Is there anything else about your experience that you think it's important for me to know that I did not mention?

VITA

Catherine Hsieh was born in Northridge, California to immigrant parents from Taiwan. Her educational journey took her to urban cities in Taiwan, the British countryside, the metropolis of Southern California, and rural communities in Mid-Missouri. She graduated from the University of California, Irvine with Honors in Bachelor of Arts. She received the degree of Master in Education from the University of Missouri. In 2012 she earned a Doctor of Philosophy in Counseling Psychology at the University of Missouri. She currently resides in Santa Monica, California.