

Abstract

Just like many aspects of research in psychology, there is a cross-cultural challenge in the area of personality-coping- mental health. In past research there is not enough data to demonstrate the cultural relevance of the adaptive values of personality and coping strategy.

616 university students (318 from Hong Kong and 298 from Hawaii) were invited to complete a series of questionnaires including 19 Chinese Personality Assessment Inventory (CPAI) personality and clinical scales, Life Satisfaction Questionnaire, Self-Construal scale, and NEO-FFI. Meantime, two scenarios were presented to the participants and they were required to fill in the C-H Way of Coping Inventory. Multivariate comparisons were conducted among the 2 X 2 cultural by gender groups. Constructs in the domain of personality, coping, and mental health were compared in their strength as well as the associations among constructs.

A Relationship Concern factor in the CPAI was extracted in both cultural groups. Results indicated that the personality factor of Relationship Concern has different association with mental health in the Chinese and the American culture via the paths of coping styles. Moreover, the combination of Relationship Concern and high Social Potency leads to a healthy personality profile. On the other hand, the combination of Relationship Concern with low Social Potency is related to Somatization.

The present study improves our understanding in the criterion to define adaptive personality traits and coping styles in a collectivist culture, as compared to those in individualistic culture. The results have implications to the practice of education and counseling in Asian countries.