

Abstract

The present study was one of the first attempts in understanding the specificity of depression and anxiety among Chinese and in testing the validity of the two prevailing models, namely the tripartite and cognitive content-specificity (CCS) model, among Chinese. Attempt was made on integrating the two models in order to depict a more comprehensive picture of depression and anxiety. 941 Hong Kong Chinese were interviewed using the DASS-21, PANAS, and CCL and 483 of them were selected by median-split method for further analyses. Both tripartite and CCS model received partial support. Depressive cognition, rather than anxious cognition, demonstrated stronger specificity. Consistent with the previous findings, negative affect was found to be the shared characteristics of depression and anxiety. However, positive affect failed to demonstrate its specificity to depression. Upon the integration of the two models, affective components, namely positive affect and negative affect, and stress were proposed as the mediators of the effects of cognition on depression and anxiety. The proposed theoretical framework yielded a satisfactory fit (CFI = .94, NNFI = .93, RMSEA = .06). Findings pointed to the importance of testing the validity of explanatory models in different cultural contexts before they are applied to a different population.

Keywords: Depression, Anxiety, Tripartite model, Cognitive content-specificity hypothesis