

Abstract

The study examined the contribution of acculturation experience and behavioral aspect of adaptation to the psychological well-being of undergraduate students in Hong Kong from mainland China upon the first six months of their transition. The sample of 168 (72 male, 96 female) first year mainland students recruited from three leading universities completed a questionnaire which examined their identification with host culture, identification with home culture, socio-cultural adaptation and measures of depression, anxiety, stress and somatic symptoms. Regression analysis showed that strong home cultural identity was associated with better psychological well-being, mediated by socio-cultural adaptation. More behavioral adaptation problems predicted lower psychological well-being. The salient role of socio-cultural adaptation in the relationship between home cultural identity and psychological well-being was discussed in the stress-coping framework. The small contribution of host cultural identity and the non-significant interaction effect of home and host cultural identity in predicting psychological well-being suggested that global identity might be a more appropriate measure of the students' acculturation experience. Theoretical and practical implications were also discussed.