The Impacts of Acculturation Strategies and Social Support on the Cross-Cultural Adaptation of Mainland Chinese Students in Hong Kong

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The Hong Kong government would like to enhance Hong Kong's status as a regional education hub. It is argued that if we do not consider how to help the non-local students to adapt to the Hong Kong society, it may influence the students' mental heath and academic performance. In turn, this may affect the development of a reputed regional education hub. In recent years, most of the non-local graduates and postgraduates come from Mainland China. It is expected that this trend will continue.

Therefore, this research intends to understand the relationships between cross-cultural adaptation, acculturation strategies (integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization) and social support (local friend support, non-local friend support, family support, and university support) among this kind of students. The findings showed that cross-cultural adaptation may relate to social support and integration positively, but it may relate to marginalization and separation negatively; and social support did significantly predict cross-cultural adaptation rather than acculturation strategies. Accordingly, it is suggested that the government and universities should encourage the students' cross-cultural adaptation through enhancing their social support networks with their local and non-local friends, family, and the university.

Key words: cross-cultural adaptation, acculturation strategies, social support

Cross-Cultural Adaptation: Implications to the Development of a Regional Education Hub

In the Policy Address 2007–2008, Donald Tsang, the Chief Executive of HKSAR, expressed that the Hong Kong government would like to enhance Hong Kong's status as a regional education hub. To accomplish this goal, the government has considered to relax the requirements to allow more non-local students to pursue studies at degree level or above in Hong Kong. However, if the government really wants to transform Hong Kong into a reputed regional education hub, it is necessary to consider how to help the non-local students adapt to the Hong Kong society. This is because the students may suffer from different problems, like mental health illness, that may affect their academic performance if they cannot adapt adequately (Berry, Trimble, & Olmedo, 1986; Guillemin, Bombardier, & Beaton, 1993; Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups, 1995; Hwang & Ting, 2008; Vega, Hough, & Miranda, 1985). For example, a recent study conducted by Wang and Mallinckrodt (2006) indicated that the Chinese and Taiwanese students

in America would have a more serious attachment anxiety and worse psychological adjustment if they could not adapt to the new cultural context. As a result, investigating the cross-cultural adaptation of non-local graduates and postgraduates in Hong Kong is necessary.

In addition, it is expected that the relaxation will attract more and more Mainland Chinese students. In recent years, most of the non-local graduates and postgraduates have come from Mainland China. According to the statistics, students from Mainland China have accounted for 90% among the non-local graduates and postgraduates since 2002 (University Grants Committee, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009). Moreover, according to Liz (2009), most of the applicants of the recently launched Hong Kong PhD Fellowship Scheme were Mainland students. Thus, it is also significant to study the cross-cultural adaptation of this population.

As a result, we will first review the concept of cross-cultural adaptation and its relationship to acculturation strategies and social support, which are identified as the key moderating factors of cross-cultural adaptation (Berry & Sam, 1997). After that, the research method and findings will be presented and discussed.

Cross-Cultural Adaptation

Generally, cross-cultural adaptation, some may refer it to acculturation (e.g., Berry, Kim, Minde, & Mok, 1987), is a concept describing a wide spectrum of individuals' possible responses to a new cultural context ranging from complete adoption to complete rejection of the receiving social values (Eisikovits & Shamai, 2001; Sigad & Eisikovits, 2009). According to Berry and Sam (1997), cross-cultural adaptation has two dimensions, including psychological adaptation and socio-cultural adaptation. Psychological adaptation refers to "a set of internal psychological outcomes including a clear sense of personal and cultural identity, good mental health, and the achievement of personal satisfaction in a new cultural context" (Berry, 1997, p. 17). On the other hand, socio-cultural adaptation refers to "a set of external psychological outcomes that links individuals to their new context, including their

ability to deal with daily problems, particularly in the areas of life, and work and school" (Berry, 1997, p. 17).

In addition to the conceptualization, Berry and Sam (1997) also proposed a framework of acculturation model. According to their framework, acculturation strategies and social support are two key moderating factors that influence acculturation process at individual level. Therefore, it is meaningful to understand the relationship of these two factors to cross-cultural adaptation.

Cross-Cultural Adaptation and Acculturation Strategies

Indeed, one's cross-cultural adaptation level may be different from others who are placed in the same new cultural context. One explanation to this is everyone may use different acculturation strategies. Berry (1990, 1997) and Berry & Sam (1997) indicated four acculturation strategies, including integration (high degree of cultural integrity maintained and active participation in the new cultural context), assimilation (low degree of cultural integrity maintained but active interaction with other cultures), separation (holding the original culture and avoiding interaction with others), and marginalization (no interest in cultural maintenance and no interest in having relations with others). Many studies showed that integration should be the best position of strategy for cross-cultural adaptation and marginalization should be the worst (Berry, 1997; Berry, Trimble, & Olmedo, 1986; Chan, 2001; Dona & Berry, 1994; Hurh & Kim, 1984). As a result, those non-local students who employ the strategy of integration may adapt to the Hong Kong society better; on the other hand, those who employ the strategy of marginalization may adapt to the Hong Kong society worse.

Cross-Cultural Adaptation and Social Support

Cross-cultural adaptation may be influenced by social support besides acculturation strategies (Berry, 1997; Berry & Sam, 1997). Here, social support is defined as the degree to which the non-local students' needs

(e.g., needs for affection, identity, belonging and security) given by friends, family and the university where they are studying (Winefield, Winefield, & Tiggemann, 1992). University support includes the support from teaching staff and student service provision, like student counseling services and student development programs, provided by the university. Friend support can be divided into local friend support, which is the social support given by friends who are the citizens of the dominant society, and non-local friend support, which is the social support given by friends who are not the citizens of the dominant society.

Social support works, to some extent, because it is a kind of social capital. This means social support can be considered as a kind of social resources embedded in social relations and networks (Lin, 2001). Therefore, greater social support implies more resources for non-local students to adapt to a new cultural context. That is why social support is an important factor influencing individuals' cross-cultural adaptation (Digman, 1990; Munroe & Munroe, 1997; Phinney, 1990). Because of this reason, if non-local students receive more social support, it is possible for them to have better cross-cultural adaptation in Hong Kong.

Method

Participants

The Mainland students who lived in the school hall of a Hong Kong university were identified through the help of the Chinese Students and Scholars Association of the university. Based on the list of the students provided by the Association, questionnaires were posted to all of these Mainland students. The questionnaire in electronic version was also emailed to them in order to increase the response rate. To avoid duplication, the email stated that those who had returned the posted questionnaire did not need to return the electronic one. Finally, 218 Mainland students in the university were interviewed.

Among the participants, 52.1% was female and 47.9% was male. Most of them were studying postgraduate programs (91.5%). The

remaining 8.5% of the participants were undergraduate students. In addition, over half of the participants (54.5%) were aged between 18 and 24 and near 40.0% of them were aged between 25 and 29. Furthermore, only 19.3% of the participants had relatives who lived in Hong Kong, but 80.7% of them did not.

Measurements

To measure cross-cultural adaptation of the Mainland students, Chan's AL-C-HK scale (2001) was used. This scale measured two dimensions of cross-cultural adaptation, including psychological adaptation and socio-cultural adaptation. This was originally a 5-point scale, but it was modified into a 4-point scale in order to avoid the problem of that respondents inclined to choose the options in the middle. If the mean score of the participants was higher than the median of the 4-point scale (2.5), their cross-cultural adaptation was regarded as adequate.

Acculturation strategies were measured by Chan's AS-C-HK scale (2001). AS-C-HK consisted of 12 items and assessed four strategies of acculturation, including marginalization, separation, assimilation and integration. Each item stated one hypothesized situation. The participants had to state what they would do if they were in that situation by choosing the options provided. There were four opinions in each item. Each opinion represented one acculturation strategy and counted for one mark. The scores of the options of each acculturation strategy were summed up and then the total scores of each strategy were divided by 12. The higher the strategy scored, the higher tendency for the participants to use that strategy.

Winefield, Winefield, and Tiggemann's multi-dimensional support scale (1992) was employed to measure social support, including local and non-local friend support, family support, and university support. If the mean score of the participants was higher than the median of the 4-point scale (2.5), the respective sources would be regarded as supportive.

Results

Reliability

To understand how reliable the used measurements were, reliability with Cronbach's alpha was computed. Table 1 indicated that the Cronbach's alpha of each measurement was over .70. That meant all of the measurements were reliable.

Table 1: Internal Reliability of Each Measurement

Measurement	Measured variable	Number of items	Cronbach's alpha
AL-C-HK	Cross-cultural adaptation	76	.91
Sub-scale of AL-C-HK	Psychological adaptation	46	.89
Sub-scale of AL-C-HK	Socio-cultural adaptation	30	.83
AS-C-HK	Acculturation strategies	12	.72
Multi-dimensional support scale	Social support	28	.91
Sub-scale of multi-dimensional support scale	Local friends support	6	.91
Sub-scale of multi-dimensional support scale	Non-local friends support	6	.91
Sub-scale of multi-dimensional support scale	Family support	6	.92
Sub-scale of multi-dimensional support scale	University support	10	.87

The Level of Cross-Cultural Adaptation, the Use of Acculturation Strategies and Social Support

First, this study tried to learn the current Mainland students' cross-cultural adaptation, the use of acculturation strategies, and social support. According to Table 2, the mean scores of cross-cultural adaptation, psychological adaptation and socio-cultural adaptation among the Mainland students were 3.02 (*SD* = .28), 3.00 (*SD* = .31) and 3.09

(*SD* = .33) respectively. That meant the Mainland students did adapt to the Hong Kong society psychologically and socio-culturally.

Table 2 also illustrated that integration might be the most common strategy the Mainland students used for cross-cultural adaptation (*M* = .66, *SD* = .23). The next common strategy might be separation (*M* = .22, *SD* = .15). Assimilation might be a strategy that the students seldom used (*M* = .07, *SD* = .11). Finally, marginalization might be the least famous strategy (*M* = .05, *SD* = .09).

Furthermore, Table 2 described the mean scores of local friend support, non-local friend support, family support and university support among the students were respectively 2.51 (*SD* = .68), 2.74 (*SD* = .65), 3.17 (*SD* = .59) and 2.86 (*SD* = .67). In other words, the students could get reasonable support from their local friends, non-local friends, family and the university. It was noted that family might be the largest source for their social support, but local friends might be the least one.

Relationships Between Cross-Cultural Adaptation and Acculturation Strategies

This study also investigated the relationship between cross-cultural adaptation and acculturation strategies. After controlling age, gender and education level, cross-cultural adaptation was positively related to integration (r = .45, p < .01) and negatively related to marginalization (r = −.41, p < .01) and separation (r = −.30, p < .01) (Table 2). This implied if the Mainland students employed the acculturation strategy of integration, it would be easier for them to adapt to a new cultural context; while if they used the acculturation strategies of marginalization or separation, it would be more difficult for them to adapt to a new cultural context. However, the results showed that cross-cultural adaptation was insignificantly related to assimilation. Therefore, it was possible that the cross-cultural adaptation of the Mainland students would not be influenced by this strategy.

Furthermore, Table 2 also showed the relationships between the two dimensions of cross-cultural adaptation and the acculturation strategies. Similarly, psychological adaptation and socio-cultural adaptation were negatively related to marginalization (r = −35, p < .01, and r = −.40,

$p < .01$) and separation ($r = -.34$, $p < .01$, and $r = -.28$, $p < .01$), while they were positively related to integration ($r = .41$, $p < .01$, and $r = -.42$, $p < .01$). However, there was no relationship between these two dimensions of cross-cultural adaptation and assimilation. Consequently, the use of marginalization and separation might decrease the level of psychological adaptation and socio-cultural adaptation, but the use of integration might increase the level of both.

Relationships between Cross-Cultural adaptation and Social Support

Besides acculturation strategies, it was found that cross-cultural adaptation was significantly and positively related to local friend support ($r = .26$, $p < .01$), non-local friend support ($r = .35$, $p < .01$), family support ($r = .35$, $p < .01$) and university support ($r = .22$, $p < .01$) after controlling age, gender and education level. As a result, if the Mainland students received more social support from their local and non-local friends, family and the university, it was positive for them to adapt to a new cultural context (Table 2).

Similarly, Table 2 also suggested that psychological adaptation and socio-cultural adaptation were significantly related to local friend support ($r = .33$, $p < .01$, and $r = .20$, $p < .01$), non-local friend support ($r = .35$, $p < .01$, and $r = .29$, $p < .01$), family support ($r = .27$, $p < .01$, and $r = .33$, $p < .01$), and university support ($r = .23$, $p < .01$, and $r = .21$, $p < .01$). Thus, all of the social support might be contributive to psychological adaptation and socio-cultural adaptation.

Relationships Between Social Support and Acculturation Strategies

As Table 2 depicted, only local friend support was positively related to integration ($r = .20$, $p < .01$) and negatively related to separation ($r = -.24$, $p < .01$). That meant if the Mainland students had more social support from the local friends, it would be more likely for them to integrate into the new cultural context rather than separation. Nevertheless, other kinds of social support may not be related to the use of the acculturation strategies.

Table 2: Intercorrelations, Means, and Standard Deviations for Variables

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	M	SD
1. Across-cultural adaptation	—											3.02	.28
2. Psychological adaptation	.80**	—										3.00	.31
3. Socio-cultural adaptation	.88**	.58**	—									3.09	.33
4. Marginalization	-.41**	-.35**	-.40**	—								.05	.09
5. Separation	-.30**	-.34**	-.28**	.12	—							.22	.15
6. Assimilation	-.13	-.04	-.11	.30**	-.11	—						.07	.11
7. Integration	.45**	.41**	.42**	-.63**	-.70**	-.52**	—					.66	.23
8. Local friends support	.26**	.33**	.20**	-.12	-.24**	.07	.20**	—				2.51	.68
9. Non-local friends support	.35**	.22**	.29**	-.06	-.06	.02	.08	.53**	—			2.74	.65
10. Family support	.35**	.27**	.33**	-.11	-.03	-.02	.10	.35**	.51**	—		3.17	.59
11. University support	.22**	.23**	.21**	-.05	.04	.05	-.01	.21**	.29**	.30**	—	2.86	.67

Note: Participants' gender, age and education level were controlled.

** $p < .01$

The Impacts of Acculturation Strategies and Social Support on Cross-cultural Adaptation

Although the correlation analyses showed that most of the acculturation strategies and social support were significantly related to cross-cultural adaptation, it did not mean they would cause cross-cultural adaptation. Moreover, Table 2 indicated that there were no or low correlations between the acculturation strategies and social support. That means there was not the problem of multicollinearity. In other words, it was suitable to conduct multiple regression analyses in order to identify their effects on across-cultural adaptation.

Table 3 showed that when the four acculturation strategies and the four kinds of social support were combined to predict cross-cultural adaptation, 34.2% of variance in cross-cultural adaptation was explained (F (8, 201) = 13.04, $p < .01$). The beta coefficients indicated that only family support could statistically significant affect cross-cultural adaptation ($\beta = .24$, $p < .01$).

When the two dimensions of cross-cultural adaptation were treated as the dependent variables respectively, it was found that the four acculturation strategies and the four kinds of social support explained 28.6% (F (8, 201) = 11.49, $p < .01$) and 30.2% (F (8, 201) = 12.28, $p < .01$) of variance in psychological adaptation and socio-cultural adaptation. The beta coefficients suggested that only university support could significantly affect psychological adaptation ($\beta = .17$, $p < .01$), while only family support could significantly affect socio-cultural adaptation ($\beta = .21$, $p < .01$) (Table 3).

The Effects of Relatives In Hong Kong to Cross-Cultural Adaptation and Acculturation Strategies

t test analyses were used to understand the differences between those Mainland students who had relatives in Hong Kong and those who did not on the level of cross-cultural adaptation and the use of acculturation strategies. The findings indicated that there was no difference between these two groups of people (Table 4).

Table 3: Multiple Regression Analyses Summary for Social Support and Acculturation Strategies Predicting Across-Cultural Adaptation and Its Dimensions

Variable	B	SEB	B
Local friends support	.001	.03	.001
Non-local friends support	.02	.03	.04
Family support	.11	.03	.24**
University support	.05	.03	.12
Marginalization	−.56	.38	−.20
Separation	−.03	.36	−.02
Assimilation	.24	.39	.09
Integration	.43	.35	.35

Note: Cross-cultural adaptation is the dependent variable

R^2= .319; F (7, 202) = 14.96

** p < .01

Variable	B	SEB	B
Local friends support	.06	.03	.14
Non-local friends support	−.01	.04	−.03
Family support	.07	.04	.13
University support	.08	.03	.17*
Marginalization	−.75	.43	−.23
Separation	−.33	.41	−.17
Assimilation	.13	.44	.04
Integration	.22	.39	.16

Note: Psychological adaptation is the dependent variable

R^2= .284; F (7, 202) = 12.86

* p < .05

Variable	B	SEB	B
Local friends support	−.05	.04	0.1
Friends support	.07	.04	.14
Family support	.12	.04	.21**
University support	.06	.03	.11
Marginalization	−.75	.46	−.21
Separation	−.11	.44	−.05
Assimilation	.34	.47	.11
Integration	.45	.42	.31

Note: Socio-cultural adaptation is the dependent variable

R^2= .292; F (7, 202) = 13.31

** p < .01

Table 4:   Comparison of Those Mainland Students Who Had Relatives in Hong Kong and Those Who Did Not on Cross-cultural Adaptation and the Four Acculturation Strategies

Variable	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*df*	*p*
Cross-cultural adaptation			.58	210	.57
Relatives in Hong Kong	3.01	.31			
No relatives in Hong Kong	3.03	.27			
Psychological adaptation			.94	210	.35
Relatives in Hong Kong	29.1	.35			
No relatives in Hong Kong	2.96	.29			
Socio-cultural adaptation			−.15	210	.88
Relatives in Hong Kong	3.10	.38			
No relatives in Hong Kong	3.10	.32			
Marginalization			−1.66[a]	44.30[a]	.10
Relatives in Hong Kong	.10	.19			
No relatives in Hong Kong	.05	.09			
Separation			.45	206	.65
Relatives in Hong Kong	.21	.17			
No relatives in Hong Kong	.22	.15			
Assimilation			−1.90[a]	50.24[a]	.06
Relatives in Hong Kong	.10	.13			
No relatives in Hong Kong	.06	.10			
Integration			1.50[a]	49.35[a]	.14
Relatives in Hong Kong	.60	.29			
No relatives in Hong Kong	.67	.21			

[a] The *t* and *df* were adjusted because variances were not equal.

Discussion

This study finds out that the Mainland students may be able to adapt to the Hong Kong society psychologically and socio-culturally. The findings also show that they may be most likely to use integration as the strategy to adapt to Hong Kong culture and life. In addition, this study indicates that cross-cultural adaptation, including its two dimensions, should be positively related to integration. However, the results also suggest that separation may be the second famous acculturation strategy

among the Mainland students. According to the analysis, separation, similar to marginalization, is negatively related to cross-cultural adaptation. As such, it is possible that some of the Mainland students may encounter difficulties of cross-cultural adaptation due to the use of this strategy.

Similar to the previous studies (e.g., Berry, Trimble, & Olmedo, 1986; Dona & Berry, 1994; Hurh & Kim, 1984) and the prediction of acculturation theory (Berry, 1990, 1997; Berry & Sam, 1997), this study identifies that integration should be the best position of strategy for cross-cultural adaptation, but marginalization should be the worst. Differently, assimilation may not be related to cross-cultural adaptation. There are two possible explanations for this issue. First, assimilation is a strategy that attempts to participate in the new cultural context with low degree of cultural integrity maintained (Berry, 1997). On the one hand, the participation tendency may increase the level of cross-cultural adaptation. On the other hand, low degree of cultural integrity maintained may decrease the level. Therefore, the overall impact on cross-cultural adaptation may be cancelled out by the increase effects and the decrease effects. As a result, the relationship between cross-cultural adaptation and assimilation becomes insignificant. Second, Berry's theory and most of the previous research focus on immigrants' cross-cultural adaptation or acculturation. Nevertheless, the population of this research is the Mainland graduates and postgraduates who study in Hong Kong. This population is not really immigrants. This difference may cause such variation. In other words, Berry's theory may not be totally fit to understand the cross-cultural adaptation of this kind of people.

Furthermore, the findings also indicate that all kinds of social support may benefit cross-cultural adaptation. It is not surprising. The students may receive social support from local and non-local friends, family, and the university such as information, emotional and interpersonal attachment, psychological and personality stability, and other helps and favors. Moreover, according to social capital theory, social support as a social capital can be transformed to other forms of capital like financial capital, human capital and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1988; Lin, 2001; Portes, 1998).

Consequently, social support may offer more and richer social resources for the students in order to enhance their adaptation.

Interestingly, the findings show that the students may receive more social support from family than local and non-local friends and the university. Moreover, family support may be the best predictor among all kinds of social support and acculturation strategies to cross-cultural adaptation, especially socio-cultural adaptation. Some may explain that the Mainland students could get support from their relatives in Hong Kong for adaptation. Nevertheless, this explanation may be incorrect based on the research findings. The findings show that there are not many Mainland students having relatives in Hong Kong. Even they have relatives in Hong Kong, this may not significantly influence their cross-cultural adaptation. To some extent, it makes sense. In fact, the relationship between the students and their relatives in Hong Kong may not be very close. In some cases, the students have not met their Hong Kong relatives until they come to Hong Kong. According to *chaxugeju* (差序格局), the characteristic of Chinese social network, such relationship may not be really significant for both parties (Fei, 1947/1992). Therefore, the relatives in Hong Kong may not give much support to the students.

Nevertheless, it still raises a question how the Mainland students receive support from their families for cross-cultural adaptation. To some extent, they may seek for psychological support, attachment and encouragement from their families through the advanced technology with low cost. For example, they may call their families or communicate with them by using the Instant Manager (e.g., MSN and QQ) or toll-call. Moreover, if the students are lack of materials for their living such as money, it is also easy and cheap for the families to transfer the materials to them nowadays. As such, the students may sufficiently get psychological and material support from their families.

On the other hand, university support should be a powerful predictor to psychological adaptation among all kinds of social support and acculturation strategies. Every university in Hong Kong has the student development unit or other units providing services and activities like student counseling to help the students. Most of the services and activities are not limited to local students. These services and activities

may provide opportunities for the Mainland students to reconstruct their personal and cultural identity in Hong Kong, maintain mental well-being, and become satisfied with the new environment. Therefore, the Mainland students may improve their adaptation through such services and activities.

Although local and non-local friend support may not be a good predictor for cross-cultural adaptation, it does not mean these two kinds of social support are useless. As we have seen, local friend support and non-local friend support are positively related to cross-cultural adaptation. Local friend support should relate to psychological adaptation, while non-local friend support should relate to socio-cultural adaptation. In addition, the findings also note that local friend support would encourage integration rather than separation. Therefore, friend support should also be contributive to the Mainland students' cross-cultural adaptation.

As a result, the relationships between cross-cultural adaptation, acculturation strategies and social support are dynamic. It may not be easy to identify which is the leading factor affecting cross-cultural adaptation of the Mainland graduates and postgraduates in Hong Kong. Nevertheless, it is arguable that social support should be important to the students to adapt to the Hong Kong culture and environment during their study years. Therefore, if we want to provide a better continuous education to attract oversea students, at least the Mainland students, in order to enhance Hong Kong's status as a regional education hub, it is necessary to consider how to build social support networks for them.

This study suggests that the Hong Kong government should provide more funding for universities to enhance the student services and activities that may help students' cross-cultural adaptation. In addition, the government and universities should build friendship networks for the students. The friendship networks should include local students, because receiving local friend support may not only enhance the level of cross-cultural adaptation, but also increase the possibility of using the acculturation strategy of ingratiation. Indeed, family support should be very essential, so the government and universities should think about how to enhance the connection between the students and their families. For example, they may offer free toll-call for the students to contact

their families; or they may provide more computers for the students to communicate with their families with Instant Manager.

Indeed, there are some limitations in this study. First, this study only interviewed the students of a Hong Kong university. Moreover, most of the participants are postgraduates. Therefore, the findings may not be essentially generalized to the students, especially the undergraduates, from other institutions. Because of this reason, it is suggested that further studies investigate cross-cultural adaptation of the students, both undergraduates and postgraduates, from other institutions in Hong Kong. In addition, this study does not compare the differences between research students and taught postgraduate students. In fact, these two kinds of students may represent different populations. For example, the former are financially supported by the Hong Kong government, but the latter are self-financed; the former are more selective than the latter, and etc. In this sense, these two groups of Mainland students may face different challenges. Therefore, it is meaningful for further studies to do separate and comparative analysis between them.

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Appendix 1: Sample Items of AL-C-HK Scale

Items for the dimension of psychological adaptation:
1. I come from China, but I am the same as people from Hong Kong as they are Chinese too.
2. I think Hong Kong people don't want to be my friends.
3. Usually, I don't really understand what my Hong Kong friends are thinking.
4. I really wish I could live like before.
5. I like my school life now compared with that in the past.
6. I believe I will live in Hong Kong happily.
7. I get bad grades in Hong Kong no matter how hard I try.
8. Learning English is very difficult.
9. I believe I will study better in the future.

Items for the dimension of socio-cultural adaptation:
1. I accept the housing type now.
2. I am not satisfied with the place I am living in now.
3. I am willing to talk about my feelings with my family.
4. It is difficult to communicate with my family.
5. All of my best friends come from China.
6. It is not important whether my friend is brought up in Hong Kong or not.
7. I have a good relationship with my teacher.
8. My new classmates like to be my friends.
9. I like to join the activities and services provided by the society.
10. I am still not familiar with the Hong Kong area.

Appendix 2: Sample Items of AS-C-HK Scale

1. To communicate with others, I will:
   A. I use my own dialect (Putonghua) to communicate with my friends from the same homeland as well as people of the local community. This gives me a sense of belonging.
   B. I try not to use my own dialect (Putonghua) to communicate with others as I think I have become part of the local community.

C. I'm not sure if I should still use my own dialect (Putonghua) for communication. Therefore, I try not to talk with anyone in a group of event.

D. The language (dialect/ Putonghua or Cantonese) for communication is not an important issue. The most important thing is to understand the uniqueness and specialties of the two languages, and to use them naturally.

2. I always think that:
   A. Although I am living in Hong Kong, I try to keep my old life style.
   B. There is great discrepancy between my expectations towards Hong Kong and the reality. I can neither adapt to the present life style nor live my life the same way as in the past.
   C. I am living in Hong Kong and so I will live my life in the local life style.
   D. Hong Kong people have their unique style of living. I will not force myself to follow, but I will consider it as a reference for my living.

3. I always think that:
   A. Both my local friends and myself could discover each other's strengths.
   B. I feel being overlooked on my strengths, which are not possessed by local people.
   C. I hope I could acquire local characters, and thus I should learn from local people.
   D. I don't possess any local characters and my original characters have been dissipating. I don't know how to face this problem.

4. If someone asks me who I am, I will:
   A. I will reply with no doubt: I belong to Hong Kong.
   B. I will reply with no doubt: I am Chinese from the Mainland residing in Hong Kong.
   C. I will be doubtful about the reason to ask such a question and the hidden purpose to distinguish people in this way.
   D. Besiege, I don't know the answer, but I want to escape from the scenario and never meet such a person again.

Appendix 3: Sample Items of Multi-dimensional Support Scale

A. Think of your family, especially the 2–3 who are most important to you:
1. How often did they really list to you when you talked about your concerns or problems?
2. How often did they really make you feel loved?
3. How often did they help you in practical ways, like doing things for you or lending you money?

B. Think of your close friends who are not Hong Kong people:
1. How often did you feel that they were really trying to understand your problems?
2. How often they help you in practical ways, like doing things for you or lending you money?
3. How often could you use them as examples of how to deal with your problems?

C. Think of your close friends who are Hong Kong people:
1. How often did you feel that they were really trying to understand your problems?
2. How often they help you in practical ways, like doing things for you or lending you money?
3. How often could you use them as examples of how to deal with your problems?

D. Think of the university's teaching staff and units like Student Development Services, School Library, Student Residence Office, Chinese Students and Scholars Association, and etc:
1. How often did they really listen to you when you talked about your concerns or problems?
2. How often did you feel that they were really trying to understand your problems?
3. How often did they fulfill their responsibilities towards you in helpful practical ways?