

Abstract

This study investigated the relationship between self-construal and coping pattern for Chinese students by comparing independent and interdependent self-construals, and coping patterns of participants in two different Chinese communities, Hong Kong and Guangzhou. Several instruments, the SCS, a stress scale and a coping scale adopted from both western and eastern sources were included. Participants were 240 (male = 110 and female=130) and 218 (male=49 and female =169) undergraduates from Hong Kong and Guangzhou, with mean age 20.3 and 21.2, respectively. With effects of overall stress level controlled for, participants with high interdependent self-construal (IT) used more self-reliant and passive coping strategies than those with low IT. Those with high independent self-construal (ID) used more direct and self-reliant coping strategies than those with low ID. A global Chinese coping pattern was identified in which self-reliant coping is used most, followed by social support and passive coping. Avoidance is the least popular coping strategy. Although there were no differences in overall stress or IT and ID self-construals, some differences in coping strategies and patterns of coping in different situations were found between the Guangzhou and Hong Kong samples. The relationship of self-construals and coping pattern was thus moderated by culture.