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Latent transitions to learning at university: A latent profile transition analysis of first-year Japanese students / Luke K. Fryer

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Abstract

During the past decade, quantitative researchers have examined the first-year university experience from both variable-centred and person-centred perspectives. These studies have, however, generally been cross-sectional and therefore often failed to address how student learning changes during this transition. Furthermore, research has been undertaken chiefly with Western students, creating a significant gap considering the fact that students from a Confucian cultural heritage are a significant portion of the international higher education population. The present study seeks to address these weaknesses in the existing literature by employing a longitudinal person-centred approach to understanding the latent subgroups within a first-year student population at one Japanese university. Survey and achievement data from students (n = 920) attending one private university in western Japan at the beginning and end of their first academic year were analysed. Latent profile transition analysis (LPTA) identified three latent groups at time 1 and at time 2. LPTA mover-stayer modelling highlighted a pattern of students moving towards less adaptive groups over time. In particular, the

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least adaptive group increased in size, and no students from the low group managed to transition to the highest group during the course of their first year at a university. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)

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