

20.1.2025

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Title

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

Publication year

2017

Source/Footnote

In: Higher education. - 73 (2017) 3, S. 519 - 537

Inventory number

45286

Keywords

Ausland : Japan : Studenten, Studium, Lehre ; Ausland : Japan : einzelne Hochschulen

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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