



The Interplay of Culture Mixing Aversion and Acculturative Flourishing: An Exploration among Mainland Chinese Sojourners in Hong Kong

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Abstract: This research investigates the impact of disgust towards culture mixing on acculturation and life satisfaction among mainland Chinese sojourners adapting to life in Hong Kong. In Study 1, drawing from previous research, we developed a measurement tool for assessing disgust towards mainland China-Hong Kong culture mixing and validated it in a sample of mainland Chinese students. We then conducted two longitudinal studies (Study 2 and 3) to examine the effects of disgust towards culture mixing on life satisfaction over 3-month and 6-month periods. Consistent with prior findings, our results showed that mainland Chinese sojourners perceived mixed cultural symbols as more disgusting compared to standalone ones. Cross-lagged analyses revealed that disgust towards culture mixing negatively predicted life satisfaction after 3 and 6 months of stay. Our findings indicate that initial disgust reactions towards culture mixing may have a causal influence on subsequent life satisfaction during the acculturation process. In conclusion, our study highlights the negative impact that disgust towards cultural mixing has on the acculturation process for Mainland Chinese immigrants in Hong Kong. The findings underscore the importance of promoting greater cultural awareness, understanding, and inclusiveness for the acculturative well-being of immigrants.

Keywords: Culture Mixing, Disgust, Life Satisfaction, Sojourner, Hong Kong

1. Introduction

1.1 Culture Mixing

In diverse cultural environments, individuals often experience a blend of two or more sets of cultural symbols in their daily lives (Harush et al., 2016). Culture mixing is a prevalent phenomenon, often illustrated in logos and international brands that display various cultural symbols coexisting or even merging and fusing (Chiu et al., 2009; Hao et al., 2016). In simple terms, culture mixing can include the blending of any aspects or representations of a culture, not just the cultural fundamentals. For instance, a Western-style meal served in a Chinese restaurant and accompanied by chopsticks exemplifies culture mixing. As a result, culture mixing can appear in everyday cultural items and expressions, such as languages, food, fashion, and behaviours (Cheon, 2019). Research has documented both positive (Bao et al., 2020; Shokey & Erez, 2015) and negative effects (Cheon et al., 2016; Yang et al., 2016) of culture mixing. For example, how individuals maintain a balance between identifying with local and global culture may result in different responses towards culture mixing, ranging from inclusive to exclusive responses (Harush et al., 2016).

Unfortunately, negative reactions towards culture mixing are frequently observed. Studies relating culture mixing to sensitivity to physical contamination have demonstrated that even in symbolic representations, fused cultural icons from two cultures are perceived as more disgusting than their standalone counterparts (Cheon, 2019; Cheon et al., 2016). These adverse responses to culturally blended images are thought to be a form of cultural defensiveness, heightened when the mixing is perceived as invasive or influenced by local identification (Cui et al., 2016; Yang et al., 2016). For instance, stronger identification with Singapore or Hong Kong identities was correlated with increased disgust towards fused local-nonlocal images (Cheon et al., 2016). In addition, these studies also found that Americans and Filipinos rated mixed cultural symbols as the most disgusting compared to standalone or side-by-side presentations, a main effect that was replicated in several other studies (Cheon & Hong, 2020; Shi et al., 2016; Yang et al., 2016). Similarly, in Hong Kong, local identification predicted elevated disgust towards any images featuring mainland Chinese cultural elements (Cheon & Hong, 2020; Ye & Buchtel, 2021). In conclusion, these findings highlight the complexity of reactions to culture mixing, emphasizing

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The need to address and mitigate the negative perceptions associated with blending cultural elements in order to foster greater intercultural understanding and acceptance.

In the following studies, we will examine whether Mainland Chinese students' disgust towards images mixing Hong Kong and mainland China cultural symbols is associated with non-integrative acculturation attitudes, and, using cross-lagged analyses, whether their longitudinal satisfaction with life in Hong Kong can be negatively predicted by their early-days aversion to mixed images.

1.2 Culture Mixing in Hong Kong

As a former British colony, Hong Kong is a typical example of a culturally mixed society and presents a unique blend of Eastern and Western cultural influences (Morris et al., 2015). Its colonial past significantly shaped its cultural landscape, introducing Western elements into its predominantly Chinese culture, which is evident in various aspects of Hong Kong life, such as language, cuisine, architecture, education system, and legal system that are different from mainland China (Lau, 1992). For example, even after more than two decades of handover and curriculum implementation of Mandarin (the official language in mainland China), Cantonese is still the predominant language in Hong Kong, alongside English (Bauer, 2016). Additionally, Hong Kong, under the "one country, two systems" principle, practices a capitalist economy with minimal government intervention, known for its free trade, low taxation, and established international financial market, while mainland China operates a socialist market economy with Chinese characteristics, where the state plays a significant role in the economy (Yahuda, 1996). Further, psychological research also demonstrates that ethnic Chinese in Hong Kong have internalized both Chinese and Western culture, forming unique ways that guide their behaviors and thoughts. For example, some priming studies (Hong et al., 2000) show that Hong Kong Chinese can switch their attribution style based on cultural cues, reflecting their dual cultural influence. Studies by Lee, Oyserman, and Bond (2010) also reveal that Hong Kong university students display collective mindsets when exposed to Chinese primes and individualistic mindsets with English primes, highlighting their bicultural adaptability. These findings illustrate the complexities and diversity of Hong Kong culture, which maintains a distinct identity within the broader Chinese cultural sphere.

Following the 1997 transfer of sovereignty from Britain to the People's Republic of China, Hong Kong has experienced heightened integration and interaction with mainland China. As Hong Kong becomes increasingly assimilated into the economic and political frameworks of mainland China, and mainland Chinese immigrants have contributed significantly to population growth in the city, animosity and prejudice towards mainland Chinese in the city have escalated (Hong et al., 2006; Lam et al., 2006; I. F. S. Ng et al., 2017). Consequently, immigrants from mainland China may experience challenges integrating into the local Hong Kong culture, including discrimination and adaptation problems living in Hong Kong (Chou, 2012; Hue, 2008; I. F. S. Ng et al., 2017). Under such circumstances, immigrants' negative reactions toward culture mixing may be linked to prejudice and discrimination against outgroups (Rottman et al., 2018; Shi et al., 2016; Yang et al., 2016; Ye & Buchtel, 2021). Therefore, understanding the dynamics of psychological reactions to cultural mixing is crucial for fostering a more inclusive and harmonious society that can embrace diversity and facilitate the integration of immigrants.

1.3 Culture Mixing and Acculturation

In order to adapt or assimilate into a host society, immigrants must navigate the dynamic cultural interactions between their heritage culture and that of the host society. Considering the cultural context previously discussed, mainland Chinese immigrants in Hong Kong are likely to encounter a blend of both cultures. Does aversion to cultural mixing predict poorer adjustment among mainland Chinese immigrants to Hong Kong culture? In order to understand perceptions of culture mixing, it is essential to consider their impact on intergroup processes as well.

Amid the cultural mix of Hong Kong, mainland Chinese individuals grapple with integrating both mainland and Hong Kong identities as they acculturate to Hong Kong society. Examples can be drawn from studies of mainland students living in Hong Kong throughout their school years. Due to linguistic barriers, political and ideological differences, and discrimination, adaptation challenges persist for mainland Chinese students, making it difficult for them to blend in with the local culture (Gu, 2011). Some even report feeling like a "mainlander" after living in Hong Kong for several years (Hue, 2008). Consequently, mainland Chinese students, particularly those from non-Cantonese-speaking regions, may choose to confront identity conflicts head-on. Adopting a "separating" strategy and maintaining their original "mainland Chinese" identity can be a simple and potentially comfortable option. As a previous study highlights, without significant engagement with locals, some mainland Chinese students form their own social circles (Yu & Zhang, 2016). When one's heritage cultural identity faces discrimination, both maintaining it as-is and integrating it with the local Hong Kong identity become challenging processes for mainland immigrants, resulting in barriers to interactions with local communities. Ngo & Li (2016) demonstrated that a strong Hong Kong local cultural identity positively predicted life satisfaction and sociocultural adaptation in the city, while a strong mainland identity had the opposite effect.

Moreover, in a culturally mixed society like Hong Kong, the way local residents respond to non-local cultures could shape the acculturation context for immigrants (Berry, 2006; Berry et al., 2006). As the dominant group in the immigrant society, local residents' perceptions of the cultures brought by immigrants influence the acculturation expectations they have for immigrants; as the minority group, the way immigrants perceive the host

culture and majority group attitudes also plays a crucial role in the acculturation process (Hui et al., 2015). For instance, research examining mainland Chinese university students in Hong Kong discovered that the effects of integration on sociocultural and psychological adaptation varied depending on the levels of social support individuals received from locals (T. K. Ng et al., 2017). Ultimately, depending on the inclusivity of one's local community, embracing the fusion of heritage culture and host culture could yield adaptive outcomes.

After decades of Hong Kong's integration into China, mainland Chinese's perceptions of Hong Kong culture, as well as the blending of Hong Kong and mainland cultures as a result of the integration, are topics of interest. Within the Chinese context, Bao et al. (2020) have previously found that the mixing of regional cultures from different ethnic minorities tends to foster improved intergroup perceptions. However, existing studies in the field of culture mixing predominantly focus on the mixing of Western and Chinese cultures (e.g., Cheon et al., 2016; Cui et al., 2016; Keh et al., 2016; Yang et al., 2016), offering limited insights into the regional cultural dynamics between Hong Kong and mainland China. Notably, some recent research, such as Cheon & Hong (2020), indicates that the mixture of Hong Kong and mainland Chinese cultures elicits negative responses from Hong Kong participants, suggesting a distinct perception of Hong Kong culture within the region. Still, research focusing on cultural fusion within both Hong Kong and the broader Chinese context is notably limited, and the existing literature has given limited attention to the impact of perceptions of culture mixing on the acculturation process, especially from the perspective of minority groups or immigrants. We anticipated that the aversive reactions to cultural mixing, particularly among mainland Chinese sojourners in Hong Kong, would negatively impact their acculturation process.

2. The Current Studies

The objective of the research was to investigate how disgust towards the mixing of regional heritage and host cultures affects the acculturation process, specifically among mainland Chinese sojourners in Hong Kong. In Study 1, we first replicated and validated measures of disgust towards culture mixing adapted from a previous study (Cheon et al., 2016) to assess sojourners' ratings of images depicting mainland China-Hong Kong culture mixing. We then examined the cross-sectional associations between disgust, current life satisfaction, and acculturation attitudes. In Study 2 and 3, we carried out two-time-point studies among first-year university students to evaluate the longitudinal impact of disgust on life satisfaction.

Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed: 1) Mainland Chinese sojourners will on average perceive the mixing of mainland China and Hong Kong cultures as aversive (Study 1), and 2) this aversive perception of the culture mixing between mainland China and Hong Kong will negatively influence the acculturation process of mainland Chinese sojourners (Studies 2 & 3).

3. Study 1

3.1 Methodology

3.1.1 Participants

A total of 110 mainland Chinese students (92 females, Mage = 22.05, SD = 2.82) were recruited from two universities in Hong Kong to complete a 15-minute online questionnaire. The ideal sample size for the study was calculated using G*power (Faul et al., 2009). To detect a medium effect size ($r = .30$), 84 participants were required to achieve 80% power for a two-tailed bivariate correlation test. Thus, the sample size in the current study was considered adequate. It should be noted that the data collection was conducted in May 2017, before the social unrest in 2019.

3.1.2 Measures

3.1.2.1 Disgust

To develop a measure of disgust towards culture mixing, five pairs of cultural symbols (Hong Kong and mainland China) were selected through interactive discussions and a pilot study prior to conducting the survey. Firstly, ten pairs of images were chosen through group discussions, achieving consensus among both Hong Kong and mainland Chinese students. Next, a small-scale pilot study ($N=11$) was conducted to evaluate the cultural representativeness of these images on a scale from 1 ("Typically represents Hong Kong") to 6 ("Typically represents mainland China"). The five images most representative of each culture were then selected. Further group discussions confirmed that these images were perceived as distinct and representative of their respective cultures. Finally, these images were paired and manipulated using Photoshop to create both "side-by-side" and "mixed" images, following the methodology outlined by Cheon et al. (2016), with the mixed images showing a mainland Chinese symbol in the background and a Hong Kong symbol integrated into part of the scene. As a result, a total of 20 images were selected and presented in 5 groups, each group containing two blocks. The standalone mainland Chinese and Hong Kong cultural symbols were presented in Block 1, each followed by a question assessing its cultural typicality ("To what extent do you think this picture typically represents Hong Kong or mainland China?"; rated 1-6 as described above), and another question assessing disgust ("To what extent do you feel disgusted when you see this picture?"; from 1 = "not at all" to 6 = "extremely"). The side-by-side symbols

and mixed symbols were presented in Block 2, each followed by the question assessing disgust as above. $\omega = .89$. The ratings of the mixed images were used in CFA and correlational analyses.

3.1.2.2 Acculturation Attitude

Developed by Berry et al. (2006), this 16-item scale measured attitudes toward heritage culture and host culture with four subscales: integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization. A Chinese version from Hui et al. (2015) was used in the current study. Items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree), ω of four subscales ranging from .65 to .80.

3.1.2.3 The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)

Life satisfaction was measured with the five-item scale developed by Diener et al. (1985). Sample items included "In most ways, my life is close to my ideal." Items were rated on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree). $\omega = .91$.

3.2 Data Analysis

To assess the validity of the disgust measure, we first conducted one-sample t-tests on typicality ratings, confirming that all standalone symbols significantly deviated from relevant cut-off values in the anticipated directions (i.e., the scale point indicating the incorrect group; for instance, where 3 = "slightly represents Hong Kong" and 4 = "slightly represents mainland", a Hong Kong symbol should be rated significantly lower than 4). This result suggests that the images were perceived as accurately representing their respective cultures.

Regarding disgust, similar to the findings in Cheon et al. (2016), repeated-measure analysis of variance revealed that image type had a significant main effect, $F(3, 327) = 63.81, p < .001, \eta^2 = .37$ (see Figure 1). As expected, post hoc comparisons indicated that the mixed symbols were rated more disgusting than side-by-side symbols, $M_{dif} 95\% CI = [.15, .51], d = .46, p_{bonf} < .001$, which in turn were rated more disgusting than outgroup symbols, $M_{dif} 95\% CI = [.32, .68], d = .70, p_{bonf} < .001$. However, outgroup symbols (standalone Hong Kong) did not differ from ingroup symbols (standalone mainland China), $M_{dif} 95\% CI = [-.26, .10], d = .12, p_{bonf} = 1.0$. The above analyses were conducted in JASP (JASP Team, 2018).

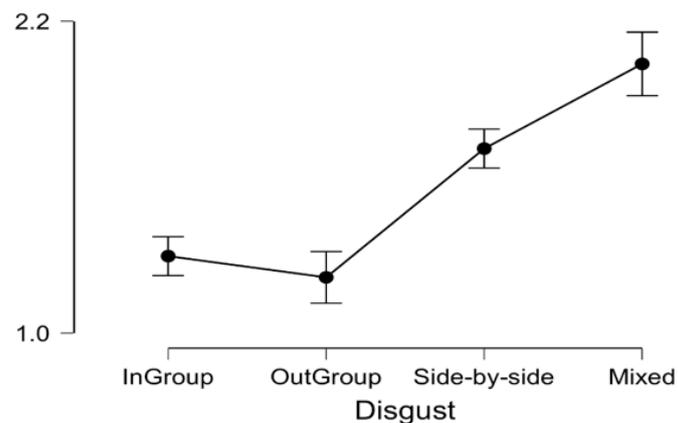


Figure 1: Disgust ratings of four types of image stimuli in Study 1

We also conducted a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to test the construct validity of the disgust measure towards culture mixing (henceforth called "disgust"). The five items assessing mixed cultural symbols were included in a single-factor model and estimated with a WLSMV estimator using Lavaan (Rosseel, 2012) in R (R Core Team, 2020). Model fit was evaluated using the conventional cut-offs for acceptable fit: $CFI \geq .90, SRMR \leq .08$ (Little, 2013). The results suggested the measurement model demonstrated adequate fit, $\chi^2(5) = 8.67, CFI = .94, SRMR = .05$, and all factor loadings were significant, ranging from .61 to .80.

Table 1 shows the cross-sectional association of disgust with SWLS and acculturation-attitude variables. Disgust at culturally mixed images was significantly positively correlated with both marginalization and assimilation and negatively with integration, suggesting that it is related to explicit attitudes towards combining vs. rejecting two cultural backgrounds. However, it did not significantly correlate with SWLS, indicating that disgust at culture mixing does not have an association with life satisfaction in our cross-sectional data.

Table 1: Bivariate Correlations in Studies 1, 2, and 3.

	SWLS	Separation	Marginalization	Integration	Assimilation
Study 1					
Disgust	-.12 [-0.30, 0.07]	.04 [-0.15, 0.23]	.23* [0.04, 0.40]	-.32*** [-0.48, -0.15]	.28** [0.10, 0.45]
SWLS	-	-.12	-.01	.12	.05

	SWLS	Separation	Marginalization	Integration	Assimilation
		[-0.30, 0.07]	[-0.20, 0.18]	[-0.07, 0.30]	[-0.14, 0.24]
Study 2 & 3 (at Time 1)					
Disgust	-.15	.14	.26*	-.23*	-.08
	[-0.35, -.07]	[-0.07, 0.34]	[0.06, 0.45]	[-0.42, -0.02]	[-0.28, 0.14]
SWLS	-	-.21*	-.18	.17	.08
		[-0.41, -0.01]	[-0.38, 0.03]	[-0.04, 0.37]	[-0.13, 0.29]
Symptoms	-.28**	.03	.07	.02	-.06
	[-0.46, -0.07]	[-0.19, 0.24]	[-0.15, 0.28]	[-0.20, 0.23]	[-0.26, 0.16]

Note. Disgust = disgust towards culture mixing, SWLS = Satisfaction with Life Scale, Symptoms = psychological symptoms. T1 Data from Study 2 and Study 3 were combined for cross-sectional bivariate correlations. 95% CIs were reported in the brackets.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

4. Study 2 and 3

Does disgust towards culture mixing between one's heritage culture and host culture affect acculturation outcomes? Study 2 and 3 examined the longitudinal effects of disgust on acculturation outcomes, i.e., SWLS and negative psychological symptoms, after 3 months (Study 2) or 6 months (Study 3).

4.1 Methodology

4.1.1 Participants

Study 2 and 3 recruited two different cohorts of first-year university students (self-identified as never having lived in Hong Kong before) who came from mainland China during the period of 2017 to 2018. The first (T1) time of assessment was within two months upon their arrival, and the second time (T2) of assessment was either 3 months later (Study 2) or 6 months later (Study 3). Students were asked to complete an identical 20-minute questionnaire at both time points. Two attention check questions were randomly inserted into the questionnaire. Participants who failed either of the two were excluded from the subsequent analyses. The final sample of Study 2 included 38 participants (30 females, $M_{age} = 18.02$, $SD = .59$; after excluding two dropouts and two inattentive participants) and 48 for Study 3 (44 females, $M_{age} = 21.77$, $SD = 4.1$; after excluding 47 dropouts and 13 inattentive participants). We conducted a Monte Carlo simulation using *simsem* (Beaujean, 2014); 84 participants were required to achieve 80% power to detect a small-to-medium size cross-lagged effect ($\beta = .3$). Thus, the current studies were underpowered to detect such effects if analyzed separately. To overcome this limitation, we also combined the samples from the two studies and performed additional analyses.

4.1.2 Measures

4.1.2.1 SWLS

Same as Study 1. At T1, $\omega = .88$; at T2, $\omega = .90$.

4.1.2.2 Psychological Symptoms

A 15-item instrument (Berry et al., 2006) that measures depression, anxiety, and psychosomatic symptoms was rated on a 5-point Likert scale. At T1, $\omega = .91$; at T2, $\omega = .90$.

4.1.2.3 Acculturation Attitudes

Same as Study 1. ω ranged from .52 to .67.

4.1.2.4 Disgust

Same as Study 1, except the "side-by-side" symbols were removed. The ratings of the mixed images were used in subsequent analyses, at T1, $\omega = .72$, and at T2, $\omega = .73$.

4.2 Data Analysis

We first combined the T1 data of Study 2 and 3 and conducted CFA to test the factor structure of disgust towards culture mixing. The results showed that the measurement model fit the data well $\chi^2(5) = 3.27$, $CFI = 1.00$, $SRMR = .04$. The correlations of disgust, SWLS, psychological symptoms, and acculturation attitudes at Time 1 are summarized in Table 1. Similarly, we found that in the cross-sectional data, disgust was not correlated with SWLS, but it was significantly positively correlated with marginalization and negatively correlated with integration; however, unlike Study 1, disgust was not associated with assimilation.

To test if Time 1 disgust was longitudinally associated with acculturation outcomes, two cross-lagged panel models, one for each study, were estimated with path analysis in *Lavaan* (Rosseel, 2012) in R (see Table 2). As demonstrated in Figure 2, in both studies, disgust towards culture mixing showed a negative cross-lagged effect on satisfaction with life after 3 or 6 months of stay. As studies 2 and 3 had different durations, we chose to analyze them separately here and show that the effect of disgust on SWLS replicates. However, we additionally combined Study 2 and 3 ($N = 86$) and tested the cross-lagged panel model. The results in the combined sample also showed

a significant overall cross-lagged effect of T1 disgust on T2 life satisfaction, $\beta = -.33$, 95% CI $[-.94, -.38]$, $p < .001$. The effects persisted even after controlling for disgust toward standalone outgroup symbols in the same model. However, cross-lagged effects were not observed on psychological symptoms nor on acculturation attitudes.

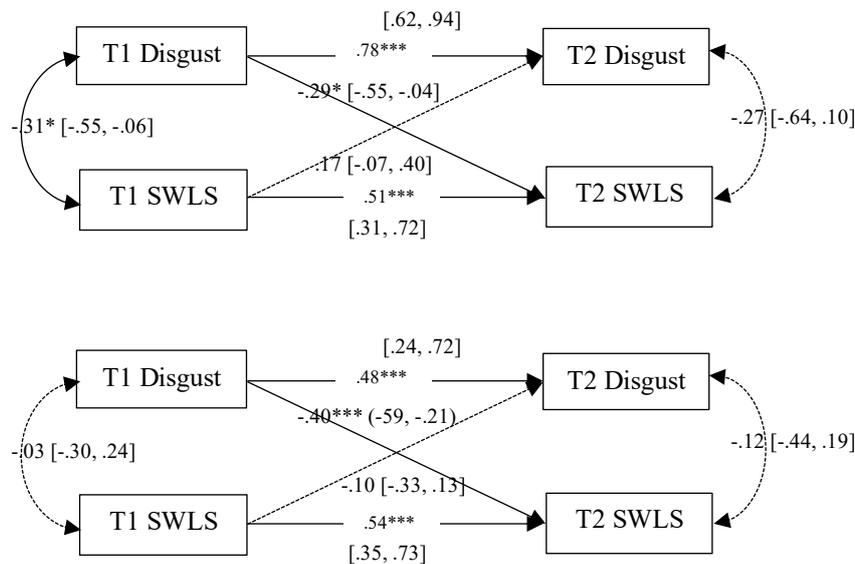


Figure 2: Cross-lagged panel models in Study 2 (top) and Study 3 (bottom) demonstrating the casual effect of disgust towards culture mixing on satisfaction with life.

Note. All path coefficients were standardized. Dashed lines indicate non-significant paths. The 95% CI of the path coefficients is shown in brackets. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Table 2: Separate Summary of Cross-lagged Panel Models in Study 2 and 3.

DV	T1 DV predicting T2 Disgust β	T1 Disgust predicting T2 DV β	Cross-lagged Effect
Study 2			
SWLS	0.165 [-0.069, 0.399]	-0.294 [-0.549, -0.039]	Yes
SWLS (controlling for outgroup disgust)	0.155 [-0.086, 0.397]	-0.285 [-0.544, -0.026]	Yes
Symptoms	0.042 [-0.115, 0.199]	0.122 [-0.044, 0.288]	No
Assimilation	0.059 [-0.131, 0.249]	0.038 [-0.163, 0.240]	No
Integration	0.122 [-0.032, 0.277]	-0.245 [-0.368, 0.002]	No
Separation	0.071 [-0.105, 0.248]	0.122 [-0.146, 0.390]	No
Marginalization	-0.062 [-0.231, 0.107]	0.163 [-0.021, 0.348]	No
Study 3			
SWLS	-0.101 [-0.333, 0.132]	-0.399 [-0.593, -0.206]	Yes
SWLS (controlling for outgroup disgust)	-0.114 [-0.343, 0.114]	-0.330 [-0.539, -0.121]	Yes
Symptoms	0.104 [-0.048, 0.255]	0.069 [-0.109, 0.247]	No
Assimilation	0.078 [-0.132, 0.288]	-0.085 [-0.330, 0.160]	No
Integration	-0.026 [-0.366, 0.315]	-0.083 [-0.325, 0.159]	No
Separation	0.102 [-0.112, 0.316]	-0.038 [-0.296, 0.219]	No
Marginalization	-0.113 [-0.403, 0.178]	0.075 [-0.238, 0.389]	No

Note. For all variables, T2 scores were significantly and positively predicted by T1 scores of the same variable in cross-lagged panel models.

5. Discussion

Our studies revealed a longitudinal, negative effect of initial disgust at heritage-host culture mixing on the well-being of mainland Chinese sojourners in Hong Kong. The consistent cross-lagged effect of disgust towards culture mixing in Study 2 and Study 3 demonstrated that mainland Chinese sojourners who entered Hong Kong with high levels of disgust towards host-heritage culturally mixed images were more likely to experience lower life satisfaction after living in Hong Kong for several months. This finding supported our hypothesis, highlighting the negative impact of disgust at culture mixing on the acculturation process. For immigrants, maintaining negative perceptions of the host culture mixed with their heritage culture is undesirable, as it is associated with non-integrative acculturation attitudes and can lead to lower life satisfaction in the process of acculturation. The adverse effect of aversive reactions to mixed cultural symbols persisted even after accounting for disgust towards host-

culture symbols, signifying a unique role of negative reactions to symbolic culture mixing. However, this effect did not extend to psychological symptoms, suggesting that the negative impact was maladaptive in terms of reducing positive feelings rather than causing additional problems.

In the cross-sectional data from all three studies, we found evidence that disgust towards culture mixing is associated with explicit acculturation attitudes relevant to culture mixing, specifically endorsing marginalization and rejecting integration. However, while disgust had a longitudinal effect on life satisfaction, the absence of such a negative relationship in the cross-sectional data suggests possible implications. Firstly, the cross-sectional association between disgust and life satisfaction may be counterbalanced by other coping strategies or personality differences, as indicated by the small effect sizes identified ($r = -.12$ and $-.15$), and the challenges in the acculturation process might not be apparent in a cross-sectional analysis. The cross-lagged design of Studies 2 and 3, which account for Time 1 levels and potential reciprocal influences, clarifies the effect of disgust at cultural mixing as a source of later acculturation problems. The results imply that disgust has a longitudinal, rather than a contemporaneous, impact.

Overall, disgust towards culture mixing appears to negatively impact acculturative flourishing among mainland Chinese immigrants in Hong Kong. The studies discussed above suggest that aversive reactions to the blending of heritage and host cultures can lead to less successful acculturation and challenges in adapting to the new environment. To promote acculturative flourishing among mainland Chinese immigrants, it is crucial to address the negative reactions to culture mixing. Future research can explore various approaches, such as fostering cultural awareness and understanding, as well as promoting cultural compatibility through early exposure to culture mixing (Bao et al., 2020). Another suggestion is to incorporate polyculturalism concepts into educational programs and community events, highlighting the interconnectedness and mutual influences of cultures (Bernardo & Presbitero, 2017). By acknowledging that cultures are dynamic and interconnected rather than static and separate, both immigrants and locals can cultivate a more flexible and open-minded perspective on culture mixing. Additionally, future research might examine the role of cultural tightness, as it has been linked to intolerance towards foreign cultures (Cheon, 2019).

Our studies make significant contributions to the field. First, compared to previous studies on culture mixing that examined fusion between foreign and local cultures (Cheon et al., 2016; Shi et al., 2016; Torelli et al., 2011; Yang et al., 2016), our findings provide further supporting evidence for the existence of disgust towards culture mixing in a regional cultural setting (Cheon & Hong, 2020). Specifically, within the Chinese cultural context, our studies discovered that the mixture of mainland and Hong Kong cultures also elicited disgust among mainland Chinese individuals. Second, the cross-lagged impact of disgust on life satisfaction offers insights into the role that culture mixing plays in the acculturation process. To date, acculturation research has not explored the impact of attitudes toward culture mixing, and our findings suggest that different attitudes toward the fusion of heritage and host cultures can lead to distinct adaptation outcomes. It is particularly notable that the longitudinal effect of disgust towards mixed images influenced acculturation outcomes beyond mere disgust towards host-culture images, implying that a "contamination" response to mixed images may play a unique role distinct from prejudice.

The findings of this study suggest that within the broader Chinese context, the fusion of regional cultures often elicits negative reactions. This tendency is not unique to the present study. For example, Gibbons (1983) reported that university students in Hong Kong had unfavorable views towards the combination of English and Cantonese languages, indicating an early resistance to culture mixing. Further supporting this trend, Cheon and Hong (2020) discovered that participants from Hong Kong had stronger adverse reactions to cultural fusions involving mainland Chinese symbols than those involving American culture. Similarly, our studies revealed that mainland Chinese participants, even as sojourners in Hong Kong, exhibited negative responses to cultural mixing involving Hong Kong culture. These findings spotlight the complex and often divided attitudes toward cultural integration within Hong Kong's cultural context. On the other hand, certain aspects of cultural fusion in Hong Kong are not generally perceived as disgusting. For example, the shopping experience in Hong Kong, which combines the luxury and style of Western brands with traditional Chinese aesthetics, is highly appealing to mainland Chinese tourists. Additionally, Hong Kong's unique blend of Eastern and Western architectural styles also draws the admiration and interest of tourists from mainland China. These examples indicate that reactions to culture mixing extend beyond those measured here, with disgust likely representing only one aspect of people's responses to this phenomenon. In the current study, the stimuli consisted of representative cultural symbols from both Hong Kong and mainland China, and the assessment focused exclusively on measuring the disgust reaction among participants in response to these symbols. Therefore, the reasons behind varying degrees of negative reactions to different forms of cultural mixtures and questions such as why some forms enjoy popularity while others evoke disgust are not well-understood. A more in-depth exploration in a multicultural context is needed to uncover the factors influencing these perceptions, whether positive or negative.

Our study has limitations that should be acknowledged. The longitudinal studies were conducted with relatively small sample sizes due to significant dropout rates and limited resources. While this may compromise the strength of our findings, the consistent pattern observed in both studies regarding the negative impact of disgust on life satisfaction suggests a promising direction for further research on the role that attitudes towards culture mixing play in the acculturation process. Future research should delve deeper into the specific role of disgust at

culture mixing on sociocultural adaptation, as well as further examine how perceptions of contamination relate to other attitudes and outcomes.

6. Conclusions

In conclusion, our study highlights the significant impact of disgust towards culture mixing on the acculturation process of mainland Chinese immigrants in Hong Kong. The longitudinal negative effect of initial disgust at heritage-host culture mixing on the later well-being of these immigrants indicates that holding negative perceptions towards the host culture mixing with heritage culture can hinder successful acculturation. Furthermore, our findings contribute to the growing body of research on the role of culture mixing in acculturation, emphasizing the importance of understanding the dynamics of cultural interactions in diverse societies. To promote acculturative flourishing among immigrants, it is essential to foster cultural awareness and understanding, encourage cultural compatibility through early exposure, and emphasize the interconnectedness of cultures. Future research should continue to investigate the role of attitudes towards culture mixing in the acculturation process and explore strategies to address the challenges faced by immigrants in adapting to new cultural environments.

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