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EXPLORING CHINESE INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' UNDERSTANDING OF AND ATTITUDES TO "CAREER" AND CAREER COUNSELLING SERVICES
Yina Wang

ABSTRACT
The purpose of this study was to explore Chinese international students' understanding of the term "career" and their attitudes toward career counselling services. This research is situated in social constructionism which emphasizes the importance of cultural influences, social interactions and language in the construction of meanings. A qualitative inquiry using in-depth, semi-structured interviews was employed with eight senior undergraduate Chinese international students. Participants had differing ideas about "career" ranging from a functional view to formation of identity and talent development. Different attitudes towards career counselling were revealed as in expressing emotions and varied preferences for types of counsellors.

INTRODUCTION
The demographics on Canadian campuses have become internationalized following the adoption of the policy to globalize Canadian higher education (AUCC, 2007). Among the top support services offered by Canadian universities to attract international students are "on-going counselling and non-academic support" (AUCC, 2007). Yet, for a variety of reasons, "international students typically do not utilize counselling services as a resource" (Popadiuk & Arthur, 2004, p. 126).

Chinese international students account for 23% of full-time visa students in Canadian universities (AUCC, 2007). Although career related issues are a major concern for Chinese international students who want to stay in Canada and those who plan to return to China, studies about their career needs and perceptions of career counselling are limited. Researchers (e.g. Arthur, 2008; Arthur & Hiebert, 1996; Arthur & Stewart, 2001) argue that existing research tends to ignore the dynamic social and economic changes occurring in international students' countries of origins and treats international students as a homogenous group. Typically, uniform quantitative methods are employed in the
literature with regard to international students (Reynolds & Constantine, 2007).

Thus, the purpose of this paper is to explore how Chinese international students define career and to examine their attitudes toward seeking help from career counselling services. This inquiry focuses on career counselling because this campus-based service could benefit Chinese international students; yet, it is not well understood and is underutilized (Leong & Sedlacek, 1989). Although the study is service specific and country specific, it illustrates broad issues that might apply to a range of human services offered to all international students on Canadian campuses.

This research is situated in a social constructionist theoretical framework that emphasizes the importance of social processes and interactions in the production of knowledge (Burr, 1995; Young & Collin, 2004). Social constructionism provides a new perspective within the literature of cross-cultural and career development research. Social constructionism challenges mainstream viewpoints and discovers new perspectives and meanings behind them (Stead, 2004). Reality and knowledge are socially constructed through dialectical interactions by those who share a culture (Xu, 2010). In the process of knowledge construction, language, which is "the collective generation of meaning as shaped by conversations of language and other social processes" (Schwandt, 1994, p. 127), is central to meaning-making. Social constructionism treats development as an ongoing process influenced by diverse factors rather than identifiable stages that appear sequentially and predictably. Culture and history are conceived as dynamic rather than static and important for understanding the world (Burr, 1995). A social constructionist perspective recognizes that career conceptions are influenced by cultural and historical backgrounds, and are subject to evolving feelings plus ever-changing and embedded contextual factors. Thus, social constructionism will be used as a theoretical frame to discuss how Chinese international students define career, and how they perceive career counselling services.

MEANINGS OF WORK, JOB AND CAREER

What is a career? How can it be distinguished from work or jobs? Tolbert (1980) defines work as "purposeful mental, physical, or combined mental-physical activity that produces
something of economic value [and that] may produce a service to others as well as a material product" (p. 32) and jobs as "a group of similar positions in a business, industry, or other place of employment" (p. 31). In terms of the difference between a career and a job, Adamson, Doherty and Viney (1998) suggested that "a career is not simply a job" but "embraces notions of development and logical progression" (p. 253). MacMillan (2007) noted that a job just means making money for people to secure their needs for living, but a career requires more of their emotional investment and attachment and is part of the meaning of a person's life. One's career may also influence one's lifestyle, including leisure activities.

These perceived differences are considered primarily by career specialists but are seldom discussed in research studies. If professionals are to perceive how individuals understand their careers, it is important to consider how people talk about their careers (Cohen, Duberley, & Mallon, 2004). Without knowing clients' perspectives on career-related issues, educational and psychological professional support may fail to help clients (Chaves, Diemer, Blustein, Gallagher, DeVoy, & Casares, 2004).

Through the lens of social constructionism which focuses on the on-going cultural and historical process, the meaning of career has changed several times throughout Chinese history. The Chinese character for career reflects the influence of ancient Confucian doctrine to portray a focus on duty and the hierarchical structure of the society at the time of feudalism in China (Schulte, 2003). After the founding of the People's Republic of China, career meant "an individual's total contribution to communism and social improvement" (Zhang, Hu, & Pope, 2002, p. 227). In the past three decades, influenced by a market-oriented economy, the idea of career has changed to embrace the question of how to survive in a large population with keen competition. The meaning of career has become just as important as financial income or the means to support family's material well-being (Westwood & Lok, 2003).

According to Westwood and Lok (2003), the younger generation of Chinese who grew up in a transitional economic period seem more open to changes and challenges and more influenced by intrinsic factors for choosing careers such as interest and challenge. In 2005, a Chinese national online survey (www.Chinahrd.net) revealed that more than 80% of Chinese
participants emphasized that intrinsic factors of work (such as "meaningful," "influential," "sense of achievement" and "recognition") are more essential than extrinsic ones (such as "income," "bonus" or "job security"). This finding corroborated Western and Lok's suggestion that ideological change is occurring in Chinese society. Therefore, Chinese international students brought up in China's expanding economic development might express different ideas about the meaning of career compared to older generations. For Chinese international students, the contextual situation of living in a different culture might bring further challenges as well as reflections and reconsiderations about the meaning of career-related issues.

Not only did a literature search reveal ideas about understanding of career and the historic evolution of meanings for Chinese international students, but perceptions towards career counselling and counsellors were also explored. Among areas considered relevant to this inquiry were perceptions of career counselling, emotional expression in counselling settings, counselling style and divergent preferences for counsellors.

ATTITUDES TOWARD CAREER COUNSELLING SERVICES

The literature often suggests that Chinese people mistrust and avoid professional help services because of the Chinese family-bounded tradition (Leong, Wagner & Tata, 1995; Sue & Sue, 1990). However, recent research (Goh, Xie, Wahl, Zhong, Lian, & Romano, 2007) revealed that both Chinese high school and university students hold positive perceptions of professional counselling services. The study also points out that student counselling services are still limited in China today—even in Shanghai and Beijing, the two largest cities, only 50% of schools from elementary level to university level have counselling services. Thus, the probability that mainland Chinese international students will underutilize counselling services on Canadian campuses could be attributed to a number of reasons. For example, if Chinese students' prior perceptions or knowledge about career counselling are not taken into account, these services may be considered distant or detached. In addition, the lower admission to counselling services might be caused by unfamiliarity with such services rather than distrust of outsiders of the family.
EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION IN COUNSELLING SETTING

On issues about emotional expression of Chinese or Asian clients, cross-cultural psychologists have different views. Some researchers (Leong & Hartung, 1997; Sue & Sue, 1990) believe that Chinese clients are more inclined to handle personal and emotional issues within rather than outside of the family because disclosure might bring shame and disgrace to their families. Based on respect for an Asian tradition that values self-restraint rather than self-disclosure (Leong, Lee & Chang, 2008), counsellors are advised to purposefully avoid "talk-cure" and be cautious of exploring emotional topics when counselling Asian clients (Paniagua, 1998). However, other researchers disagreed with this standpoint. A body of literature suggested that international students experience similar stresses and confusions as local students (Arthur & Hiebert, 1996; Popadiuk & Arthur, 2004). First generation international students in Canada might endure greater mental health difficulties than second and third generations (Sharir, 2002). Spencer-Oatey and Xiong (2006) and Chen (2004) reported that Chinese students do suffer from psychological stress or experience social adjustment difficulties. Yi, Lin and Kishimoto (2003) revealed that academic difficulties, confusion about the future, relationship problems, loneliness, and low self-esteem could also cause international students to develop depression and anxiety. Some international students may experience reentry transition issues that cause worries and anxieties towards their home countries and a sense of loss after leaving the host country (Arthur, 2008). Arthur (2008) found that international students need to talk about these feelings. Yi et al. (2003) advocated that "it is important for academic and career counsellors to assess each international student's overall functionality even though their initial presenting concerns may not be personal issues" (p. 339).

COUNSELLING STYLE

In terms of directive or non-directive counselling styles applied in career counselling settings, the viewpoints are also diverse. Compared to directive counselling which is more task-focused, goal-oriented, straight-forward and structured, nondirective counselling entails unstructured processes filled with ambiguities and focused on clients' emotional states (Leong et al., 2008). Rather than being counsellor-prescribed,
nondirective counselling is client-centered with an emphasis on discovering one's own solutions to problems. Leong et al. suggested that because Asian cultures highly value conformity, obedience and subordination to authority, therefore, directive counselling styles are considered to be more appropriate than the nondirective styles to be employed in counseling Asian clients. However, Arthur (2008) challenged that directive counselling style is not preferred by all international students. She said "as students gain experience with the host country, they may become more comfortable in working in more collaborative ways" (p. 284). Lau (1995) suggested that directive styles might transform into non-directive styles following the development of a relationship between the counsellor and students. Lau also believed that non-directive styles have long-term rewarding effects.

DIVERGENT PREFERENCES FOR COUNSELLOR

Researchers provide practitioners and professional service providers in working with Asian clients with various suggestions and recommendations. For instance, Paniagua (1998) recommended that counsellors show their professionalism by exhibiting their certificates or awards in order to enhance clients' trust and preferences. Mao and Jepson (1988) found that Chinese students expressed a preference for counsellors with the same racial background. Leong and Hartung (1997) suggested that the lack of racially diverse bicultural staff might be another reason for underutilization of career counselling services by international students. However, Hom (1998) revealed that more acculturated students were more likely to express a preference for an AngloAmerican counsellor over an Asian-American counsellor. Sue and Sue (1990) indicated that there are mixed findings regarding clients' perceptions of the identity set of counsellors. Similarly, Arthur and Stewart (2001) claimed that clients do not have uniform preferences for types of counsellors in multicultural counselling settings.

METHOD

This research inquiry is based on a social constructionist theoretical framework which looks into deep layers of individuals' specific cultural and social experiences as well as cultural and contextual factors in order to present multiple aspects of certain phenomena. More important, this research aims to explore the
individual's understanding and perceptions on the meaning of career and their attitudes towards career counselling services. Compared to quantitative methods, qualitative approaches are more likely to explore and discover the in-depth understanding and perceptions of an individual (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005) and interview is one of the key qualitative methods (Polkinghorne, 2005), therefore, a qualitative inquiry was employed using indepth, semi-structured interviews. The advantages of interviewing include revealing rich and thorough information for data interpretation, and knowledge of the context of social interaction between the researcher and the participants.

Eight Chinese international students who were in the senior year of their undergraduate studies were selected for this research study through a purposive or snowballing technique (Polkinghorne, 2005). All eight were from Mainland China and enrolled in three different universities in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

Three to four hours were spent with each participant over three interviews. In the first interview, rapport was established and the interview questions were introduced. In-depth conversations took place in the second interview and ideas were clarified in the third interview. In the interviews, participants preferred to talk in English. Social constructionism believes that language functions within social roles (Gergen, 1994). Their perceived social roles might have influenced their decision on their choice of language in communication (Gergen, 1994) For example, (1) they might consider their roles as students first and Chinese second and/or (2) they might regard their roles as participants in a traditional type of academic research and/or (3) they see themselves as people with an ability of conveying ideas clearly in English and so on. Sometimes, participants inserted a couple of words or phrases in Chinese. I provided several alternatives for translations of the specific words or phrases for the participant to choose in order to make sure that the English version was as close as possible to the meaning of their Chinese expression. This process of translation and confirmation was a joint process between the participant and me. Their expression sometimes differed from standard English. However, I considered their unedited quotes to be more authentic so made the decision not to transform them into standard English but to report them as spoken.
All conversations were audiotaped verbatim and summaries of interviews were sent to participants for member checks (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The transcriptions were coded and analyzed for emergent themes, noting similarities and differences.

Profiles of each of the eight participants are highlighted in Table 1.

Table 1: Profile of Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name (pseudonym)</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Field of Study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jessie</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>&gt; 25</td>
<td>1st year</td>
<td>Nutrition &amp; IT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liang</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>&lt; 25</td>
<td>2nd year</td>
<td>Commerce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linda</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>&lt; 25</td>
<td>3rd year</td>
<td>Finance &amp; H.R.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mingmig</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>&gt; 25</td>
<td>1st year</td>
<td>Hospitality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ping</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>&lt; 25</td>
<td>3rd year</td>
<td>Commerce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qiang</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>&lt; 25</td>
<td>3rd year</td>
<td>International Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yangyang</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>&lt; 25</td>
<td>1st year</td>
<td>Business</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
RESULTS

Three of several themes that emerged from the interview data in the larger study will be explored: (1) Multiple comprehensions of the meaning of career versus job and work, (2) Perceptions of career counselling services, (3) Diverse needs and preferences for career counselling and counsellors. Excerpts of these themes are intentionally reported in the present tense to capture the social constructionist process. They serve as a snapshot in the moment for the evolving stories of the eight participants.

MULTIPLE COMPREHENSIONS OF THE MEANING OF CAREER VERSUS JOB AND WORK

Different responses are generated by participants when they are asked to describe what career means and how it is distinguished from job and work. For some participants, such as Ping and Liang, career meant an industry or vocation, such as the food industry, service industry, health care industry and so on. This view is predominately functional; that is, it focuses on a group of related tasks. Some other participants, such as Linda, her view of career is more holistic. She addresses emotional and personality dimensions and appears to view career as part of one's identity.

You are doing it for your whole life in those industries, maybe not in the same company. But you really love it. You have a lot of skills and experience and you want to contribute a lot of time to those things. That is career.

Some other participants, such as Yvon, associate career with pursuing interests, developing talents and adopting lifestyles. Some participants are readily able to distinguish career, job and work but one saw no difference: "They sound the exact same meaning to me" (Qiang).

Participants also differ in the level of generality that they apply to the notion of job, work and career. Some regard career as a bigger and broader term compared to job and work. For example, Ping related that career stands for "a broad future and a person's life". In contrast, he views job as a title such as catering supervisor that he has in his part-time job and work as a set of
tasks that he must perform in that job. Jessie speaks similarly:
"Career is a big thing. It is related with your future; what your
life will get into. If you choose this kind of career, your life will
relate with this." Rather than use concrete examples, Yvon uses
a metaphor of a person as a hunter who shoots at multiple targets
or jobs over time that collectively add up to a career. For some
participants, such as Yangyang, his view of career is far-reaching
and extends to the idea of building a legacy. He says: "Career is
something I can spend my whole life to do that. I can leave
something for my children."

Multiple comprehensions, contradictions and ambiguities
with regard to the understanding of career present their
independent thinking which are not unified with their parents'
values and the traditional teachings as the literature suggests
(Leong & Hartung, 1997; Schulte, 2003; Sue & Sue, 1990; Zhang,
Hu, & Pope, 2002) and also reflect the cultural changes which are
occurring in a society.

PERCEPTIONS OF CAREER COUNSELLING SERVICES

When discussing what career counselling services are about,
participants' answers are varied. Three of eight have "never heard
about it." The reason might be that career counselling is still
relatively new in China. Liang explains: "In China, in my city,
there are not too many people who are doing this job".

Since most participants have no clearly informed knowledge
about career counselling services in China, their perceptions of
career counselling are largely informed by their initial experiences
of dealing with these services in Canada. Jessie had an unhappy
experience with the people who defined themselves as career
counsellors. Since then, she has difficulty developing trust in
career counselling services. She says:

Two years ago, some job agents, they opened a
lecture in University 2. They were saying you
have to pay 30 thousand US dollars for them to
process. After you find a job and you have to pay
ten percent or twenty percent every month for
them.

Her reaction is "they were cheating people." In contrast, Linda
has positive perceptions of career counselling services since one
of her friends works in "a hunter company." However, Linda's
definition of career counselling services is quite different from any theoretically defined career counselling services. Her understanding of career counselling services includes services that post jobs and help employers to hire the people who are interested in the positions. One of the few participants who had actual experiences with career counselling services on campus, Mingming described her experience as helpful. She speaks about getting help with resume writing, learning how to highlight personal strengths, and exploring expectations and interests:

I think it's very professional and based on my answers, she gave me the suggestions and told me that I need to prepare this and that in case there are something happen in the future.

These conversations demonstrate that if participants' experiences are limited, their perceptions are more likely to be distant, detached or biased. If their experiences are rewarding, their perceptions are more likely to be positive. Within the group of eight, only one had an experience with university-based career counselling.

DIVERSE NEEDS AND PREFERENCES FOR CAREER COUNSELLING AND COUNSELLORS

Participants also discussed their preferences for different counselling styles. Liang, Jessie and Ping suggest that they like explicit directions although others prefer indirect ways. For instance, Liang says that he loves to hear a counsellor's personal stories so that he can learn something from them. As he states,

Normally, most counselling services provided the basic ability or personal skills for your career life, how to look for a job, how to get an interview. But sometimes if you meet very good counsellors, they have a very rich experience, and very rich life stories, they probably can teach you or share their work experiences or personal experiences with you. Then, you can learn much more useful stuff on how to deal with your career life in the future.
Participants also differ in their comfort level for expressing or sharing their emotions and personal concerns with career counsellors. Linda, Yvon and Yangyang appear to be more likely to launch topics with regard to their emotional struggles and personal difficulties in dealing with career related issues. Yangyang recognizes that finding a job is a complex issue: "You have to make a lot of decision regarding on your family or friends or current financial situation. I prefer to talk about my current situation and help me find a better way to deal."

Others tend to be comparatively conservative about engaging in deeper and more private discussions. For example, Liang feels that it is risky to express his feelings on issues not directly related to career. He prefers to talk with his parents or friends because "they can protect the privacy." Similarly, Jessie relates: "Probably, they (career counsellors) can help me with financial problem but not family problem." These who prefer not talking about their emotions are also more inclined to have a positive attitude toward directive-counseling style which can offers them with structured and directive solutions, for example, Ping says, "If I was at certain age or stage, he should give a general job title for me and provide me with general long-term solutions."

In addition, there is no consensus on career counsellor preferences among the eight participants. Some emphasize the importance of professionalism, a concept that has different meanings for different people. Mingming regards the counsellors she met as professionals who offered suggestions "base on your personality and base on your interests and background." For Linda, professionalism goes beyond teaching people how to write a resume or cover letter, skills that can be learned from books or the internet: "But internet and books cannot tell me what kind of person I am and what kind of personality I have. So I need some professional people to tell me what kind of person I am, and in what industry I may have a better career."

Linda also implies that career counselling can be complementary to on-line psychology tests:

I know there are some psychology tests online but I do not really like it because they are more like robot. You may get 10 to 20 of 100 percent, 20 to 30, I may get 10.5, you know, at the curve.
So I need counsellors who tell me specific things that fit me.

Others focus on the counsellor's experiences. Some participants value a career counsellor with similar experiences as well as an understanding of their cultural background. As Quiang relates: "He [career counsellor] will have similar experiences with mine. We will have more things in common. He will know what feelings I have. Probably he went through some psychological stages as me." Yvon also valued someone with similar experiences and cultural background: "I will choose . . . a person who grew up in China, immigrate to Canada or whatever. I think, at this point, we have some common things and we can feel [empathize with] each other."

However, for other participants, a career counsellor who has insightful knowledge of local society and culture might be more desirable than the one who shares their ethnic or social identity. Ping, Jessie and Mingming express the view that neither ethnic nor social identity matter, "as long as they are career experts" or "as long as they know my inquiry, it's O.K." or "I trust them if they already have accepted counselling education and background, so they know in which way they can help me."

DISCUSSION

Overall the three themes explored in this article reflect diversity in the perceptions, experiences, concerns and needs of participants. Such diversity not only reflects social constructionist theory but it also provides insight into the mixed and contradictory findings located in the literature which offers different suggestions and recommendations on counselling minority groups of people.

Participants talked about their own understandings about the meaning of career. Participants' concepts of career range from a functional dimension to an emotional one. Participants' construction and way of framing the meaning of career are individualized and diversified. Different concepts of career implicitly or explicitly manifest their ideas about their future lives. In addition, participants' emphasis on emotional and personality dimensions of career also revealed aspects of sociocultural changes influencing Chinese society in recent decades.
Lau (1992) indicated that Chinese are no less individualistic than Americans. However, many cross-cultural studies essentialize culture as a moderating or antecedent variable that can be generalized (Stead, 2004). Traditional quantitative approaches to understanding career decisions in different cultural groups often depict collectivism and individualism as two opposite camps. Collectivism is defined as a worldview based on the assumption that groups such as family, clan, ethnic, religious and other groups "bind and mutually obligate individuals" and that "the personal is simply a component of the social, making the in-group the key unit of analysis" (Oyserman, Coon, & Kemmelmeier, 2002, p. 5). Individualism is defined as "a worldview that centralizes the personal personal goals, personal uniqueness and personal control—and peripheralizes the social" (Oyserman et al., 2002, p. 5). However, Draguns (2008) indicated that it was difficult to separate individualism and collectivism. He noted that individualists may have collectivistic needs to avoid their loneliness and alienation and "some people in collectivistic societies feel stifled by social pressures and obligations and have a sense of being thwarted in the realization of their personal aspirations" (p. 28). According to social constructionism theory, this dualism tends to "oversimplify complex phenomena" (Stead, 2004, p. 396) and limits the breadth and depth of culture. In this study, as Mingming stated,

I think, for the foreigners, we all have the Asian face we have black hair and black eyes. They think we are Asian or Chinese. They think Asian people, or Chinese are all the same. But for the individuals in the group, we are different persons.

Differences among the eight participants are most evident as contradictions and multiple ways that participants construct the meaning of career, motivations for work, personal goals and so on. Thus, it is inappropriate for counsellors to stereotype clients with regard their racial or ethnic membership (Osipow & Fitzgerald, 1996).

Even though students showed a certain degree of resilience, some still expressed a need for professional help. However, in talking about their perceptions of career counselling services,
students displayed confusion or misunderstandings about accessibility and expenses associated with these services. Some of them didn't know that universities actually offer this type of service. Some could not believe that this service is available for free. However, this finding does not coincide with the idea that Chinese people do not trust career counselling services because of traditional Oriental culture with family-bounded characteristics (Leong, Wagner & Tata, 1995; Sue & Sue, 1990). Goh et al. (2007) indicated that student counselling services are still limited in China. This study reveals that owing to a lack of previous experience and knowledge about career counselling, participants' perceptions of the concept and purpose of career counselling services are most likely distant. After they were introduced to a basic knowledge about what services career counselling centers normally provide for university students, most participants showed a great interest and expressed a willingness to visit it sometime in the near future.

Students also expressed their different needs for counselling styles. Some participants would like to share their personal stories with counsellors and some feel that it is important to express their emotions in front of counsellors. Not all participants desire a straightforward directive counselling style as some cross-cultural psychologists (Leong, Lee, & Chang, 2008) recommend for cross-cultural skills. Finally, not all participants have preferences for the same racial or ethnic background as themselves as suggested by Mao and Jepson (1988). Some international students would prefer local counsellors who would better explain local cultural tendencies. This finding supports findings in Hom's (1998) research. Although some students prefer talking with a counsellor born in the local Canadian culture and some expect to have career counsellors with similar cross-cultural experiences, all were interested in gaining lessons from the positive experiences and personal stories that counsellors could share. This finding implies that career counsellors can have a more far-reaching impact on the lives of international students than these professionals might realize.

IMPLICATIONS

It is not the intention of this inquiry to produce claims that can be generalized. Rather, the purpose is to reveal deeper
understanding and insights into the unique experiences, needs
and concerns of participants. However, the study still has the
potential to inform cross-cultural research and counselling.

Cross-cultural research in counselling should keep current
with social and cultural changes happening in particular
countries or regions. Cross-cultural counsellors could combine
contemporary approaches with some consideration of cultural
and traditional influences rather than simply follow the ancient
doctrine and philosophies when examining and analyzing issues
of concern. The within-group differences reflected in this study
once again suggest that it is unreliable to generalize Chinese
international students as a unified group of people. These
students do not have identical thinking, behaving and adjusting
patterns with regard to their study skills, living abilities and
ideologies.

In addition, although participants elaborated their knowledge
about the meaning of career affirmatively, they still appeared
slightly concerned and bewildered by career choices they might
face in the near future. However, this feeling of uncertainty
cannot be seen simply as a transition from school to work
(Mortimer, Vuolo, Staff, Wakefield, & Xie, 2008). Participants'
feeling of uncertainty grew primarily from their considerations
of many issues such as parents, family, political and economical
environment and individual interest. It is important for
counsellors to have an awareness of the students' cultural and
social background as well as a grasp of individual's characteristics, familial background, and social perceptions.

Universities should organize orientation programs several
times a year to introduce career counselling services to Chinese
international students. This practice would encourage more
Chinese students to learn about career counselling services and
what kind of help is available.

When local Caucasian counsellors are working with Asian
students, they should not be overly concerned with the possibility
of cross-cultural distrust and barriers. Based on their knowledge
of the host culture, local counsellors should consider themselves
as mentors for international students in their learning process. On
the other hand, bicultural counsellors should consider themselves
as both role models and mentors who, based on their personal
experiences, can guide international students through various
cultural transitions.
REFERENCES


