How effective are traditional Western approaches to career counseling in Asian cultural contexts?

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at the
Asia Pacific Career Development Conference
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Beijing, China
Students from different cultural contexts act differently, as groups and as individuals.

- Student Leadership – BYU-Hawaii, Utah
- New Student Orientation – BYU-Hawaii, Utah
- Honor Code – BYU-Hawaii
- Career/Academic Advising – BYU Utah

[Research paper for K-State/BYU class + interviews of students & colleagues]
The number of first-time students from abroad in 2016 [in the US] fell by 3%, or about 10,000 students.

The total number of international students still grew. US institutions with the largest numbers of international students still "posted robust enrollment gains" in 2016.

(Chronicle of Higher Education, 2017)

From China to America. Then What?

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Western advisors may tend to see all Asian students as having the same needs/traits.

"Priest and McPhee's research (2000) found that although international students are actively recruited — indeed enticed — to study in America, . . . these students may find themselves on the doorsteps of institutions ill-equipped to handle their special needs." (Lamont, 2005)
Western (US) Asian (China) Implications for Asian Students in US

HS → College
Easier → Harder
Harder → Easier'
May violate expectations

Admission Tests
Determine 'quality' of college
Determine tier of HS AND college AND major options

Majors
Many, personal choice
Moderate, based on tests/others
May be overwhelmed or not aware of options

Grades
Homework, assignments, tests
Tests
May not see importance of timing w/homework

Classroom
Questions, discussion
Lecture
May be seen as not participative, not smart

Faculty
Can question, meet with them
Cannot question, need good reason to meet

May not connect w/faculty

Student Success: 3 Groups of Students:
- Intellectual achievement most important
  → frustrated, low self-efficacy (big fish/small pond → little fish/big pond)
- Constrained by HS/looking forward to expansion in college
  → sudden diversity of learning goals → feel lost, lose motivation to study
- Satisfy 'others'
  → find teachers, parents, self have different values — how do please everyone? Or, who is more important to please?

Trait Factor: Holland
Life Mission: Bolles
Construction/Happenstance: Savickas/Krumboltz
Informative vs. Developmental Approach

Mediated by Culture:
Relationships/Filial Piety
Collectivism/Social Good
Student Success: Prestige

“In general, most of these theories were verified, but they require certain modification and further examination for the Chinese context.”

(Tian & Wang, 2016, referring to Holland's typology, Savickas' career adaptability and life design, and others)
Asia
Large role of family expectations/support regardless of socio-economic status
- find answer to please, or at least get support of, family
- find individual answer; manage family

US

Cultural Mediator: Family

Implications
- On measures of career maturity, Asian students score lower (Leong, 1991) — biased assumptions
- "Pleasing family" may go against implicit bias of advisor
- Research shows "high parental support" and "parental career engagement" (w/low interference) can enhance adaptive career abilities

Cultural Mediator: Student Success

"Many individuals still hold fast to traditional beliefs in Chinese Societies today.

For instance, most college applicants prefer to choose a university by its reputation rather than the specific academic programs and opportunities the university can offer."

"The challenge of overcoming career development beliefs and attitudes might be the most serious problem facing career intervention in Chinese societies today." (Fan & Leong, 2016)
**Cultural Mediator: Student Success**

**Sample from East**

"All-round development in moral, intellectual, physical, aesthetic, and labor qualities"

Strongest focus on:

- **Moral Quality**—“responsibility for nation, community, and family; a commitment to the world and humankind, a dedication to solving realistic problems in China and worldwide”

- **Intelligence Quality**—“excellent academic performance and achievement in scientific research”

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**Cultural Mediator:**

**Student Success**

**Sample from West**

**What’s the purpose of college: A job or an education?**

(Washington Post headline, 2015)

“Critical thinking, problem solving, working in diverse teams, ethical reasoning, communicating—these make both good employees and good citizens.”

(Association of American Colleges)

**The Aims of a BYU Education:**

- **Character Building**
- **Intellectually Enlarging**
- **Spiritually Strengthening**
- **Leading to Live long Learning and Service**

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**Trait factor: holland**

**Interest Structure (RIASEC) and distance**

- Many have similar structure but not as close a fit as US students
- Others differ:
  - IRASEC—Taiwan men and women (Tien, 1994, 1997)
  - RISAEC-Chinese men; IRSAEC-Chinese women (Tang, 2001)

**REALISTIC FACTOR:**

**HOLLAND KEYS for Practitioners:**

- Realistic (US) = High prestige (e.g., Eng, Military) and Low Prestige (Construction, landscape)
- Realistic (PRC) = Manual labor in/outside is same category

- Low prestige = Inside vs. outside are separate categories

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"I didn’t get my parents’ approval to bid for the chairman of our student union. To them, it seemed to be a waste of time... Even when I won the election and... gained some achievements they didn’t change their minds... They wanted me to focus on TOEFL [and] go abroad... At last, I gave in to them." (Zhan, 2018)
KEYS for Practitioners: Appreciate Cultural Differences

- Medical Services (US) = Doctors, Nurses (Social)
- Medical Tech (US) = MRI, Lab Tests, Research (Investigative)
- Medical (PRC) = Both one category

(Tang, 2001)

KEYS for Practitioners: “Seek 1st to understand, then to be understood” (Covey, Habit 5)

- Business (US) = Leading/Persuading (Enterprising)
- Data, clerical (US) = Organizing/Efficiency (Conventional)
- Business (PRC) = No difference (e.g., secretary =

(Tang, 2001, 2009)

LIFE MISSION/CALLING

Roots in western religion
- “This is what I was made for”
- “This is what God meant me to do”

In Asian contexts?
- This is what I should do.
- This is the mission I am expected to fulfill.

1. Know who gave you the mission
2. In general, do good/contribute to society
3. Find your unique way to contribute, develop it, do it (Bolles)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEST</th>
<th>EAST</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>God/Heaven</td>
<td>Family or Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golden Rule</td>
<td>Family/society needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God given talents</td>
<td>Genetics/hard work</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cherry-calling</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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(Tang, 2001)
IN PRACTICE

- Sense of ‘calling’ not uncommon
- Source of calling/mission differs
- May be (+), neutral, or (-)
- Wealthier/more educated may be more individualistic
- Calling helps students persist in low-support learning environments (Yu Guo, et al, 2014)
- Hope mediates calling related to Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS) consistent across countries, incl. Taiwan

Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS) consistent across countries, incl. Taiwan

- “Career self-efficacy was more important than barriers in predicting [Chinese] high school students’ career choice behavior.”
- “During the 20th century career theories and techniques were based mainly in person-environment fit. Today, the social and cultural contexts ... are critically important.”

CAREER CONSTRUCTION

Life Design (Savickas) is culturally inclusive, but still based on WEIRD samples.

Hope linked to positive career exploration behaviors
- from career interventions
- Planned Happenstance
- Bolles’ ‘Flower’ (helps w/connection to world and broadens sources of fulfillment)

PRESCRIPTIVE VS. DEVELOPMENTAL

- Broaden from Job Placement to include Self-Exploration/World-of-Work Exploration
- Japanese students expect advisors to inform and direct
  CAUTION: be authoritative, not authoritarian (Lamont, 2005)
  I.e., authoritatively direct to do developmental tasks

(Zhang, et al, 2014)
Prescriptive vs. Developmental

1st “inform students of the evaluation system for success . . . as defined by social culture, especially in their own college.”

2nd help students “establish their goals on both academic performance and other fields . . . to pursue their own individual development.”

3rd discuss “the path and detailed technical skills needed.”

(Zhan, 2018)

Summary: Individuals

1. Treat each as an individual
   - There ARE general differences
     - between US and Asian students
     - AND between Asian students from different areas
   - Be aware of our stereotypes/bias
     [https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html](https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html)

Summary: Individual

“Individuals in Taiwan, immersed in collectivist culture, still need to have the opportunities to be aware of their personal needs and the relationship between their needs and their obligation related to the family and society in order to develop their own career meanings.”

(Tien & Wang, 2016)

Summary: Culture

2. Culture Mediates Experience
   - Relationships: Family
   - Worldview: Collectivist
   - Prestige: Money/Power/Honor
   - Gender: Changing Roles/Definitions
   - Job Market: Do we know?

[Miji Korea Job Market Youtube](https://www.youtube.com)
3. Check understanding

☐ Is their understanding of job types the same as yours? (e.g., business, manual labor, etc.)

☐ Of ‘calling/life mission/passion’? (Is it “+” or “-” to them? Who ‘gave’ them the mission?)

☐ Of ‘interest’? (Whose interest? Personal? Family? Society? Is there a difference?)

SUMMARY: UNDERSTANDING

“Polite and respectful students in this population defer to authority figures and are apt to appear to be listening and learning from an advisor. . . . may even sign documentation. . . . Still, they can leave offices frustrated and confused because real communication did not take place.” (Lamont, 2005)

1. Write one perspective and one practice you will start/stop/change.
   Perspective:
   Practice:

2. Choose a colleague back home to share this with.

3. Share with a new colleague in this room.

invitation

 jeżeli w stanie

(Dao De Ching, chapter 8)