

[Special Issue: *Internationalization and Career Counselling*]

## **Career Counselling and Internationalization**

Mary McMahan

The University of Queensland

Mantak Yuen

The University of Hong Kong

The purpose of this article is to introduce the theme of this special issue: Internationalization and Career Counselling. It begins with a brief history of career counselling in order to contextualize the subsequent discussion on internationalization, first in psychology and then specifically in career counselling. The article then introduces invited papers from Australia, South Africa, India, Japan, and Taiwan, and also the reflection paper contained in this special issue.

A frequent topic of the discourse in career counselling in the first decade of the 21st century has been about its capacity to address the complex needs of diverse client groups and its appropriateness to cultures and countries outside its traditional Western Euro–American

origins in the vocational guidance movement. Such discourse has gained momentum in the context of an increasingly globalized world where the influence of technology and the movement of people, services, and fields of study across national borders and across cultures has been growing exponentially. Career counselling is one such service and field of study and, for over a decade, it has been urged to revise itself in order to remain relevant (e.g., Savickas, 1993).

In 2009, the 100th anniversary of vocational guidance (Savickas, 2009), career counselling found itself in the paradoxical situation of simultaneously facing opportunities for expansion of the discipline and its sphere of influence and also facing questions of relevance and appropriateness. For example, in Europe, significant opportunities for expansion of career counselling have emerged as a result of European authorities determining that it is the right of all citizens to have lifelong access to guidance (Vuorinen, 2009). By contrast, in considering career counselling in the South African context, Watson and Stead (2006) asked “What should our theory base be? Are our theories sufficiently sensitised to local cultural, socioeconomic, and social conditions? What should our role be and who are the clients? What values should be promoted?” (p. 8). Watson and Stead’s questions emanate out of a developing country and are illustrative of the challenging issues facing career counselling in the context of internationalization. Such questions have also been reflected in recent debate about the future of career counselling, much of which has ensued in its traditional Western Euro–American base. Themes that have received attention in this debate have included multicultural career counselling, diversity, social justice, indigenous psychology, and also the merits and pitfalls of modern and postmodern approaches. However, in the context of rapid globalization, debate about the future of career counselling has begun also to focus explicit attention on internationalization (e.g., Savickas, Van Esbroeck, & Herr, 2005; Trusty & Van Esbroeck, 2009; Van Esbroeck, Herr, &

Savickas, 2005; Van Esbroeck, Palladino Schultheiss, Trusty, & Gore, 2009).

This special issue of the *Asian Journal of Counselling* considers career counselling and internationalization in the context of broader revision of the discipline. Perspectives on career counselling in Australia, South Africa, India, Japan, and Taiwan are presented in the hope that converging themes may be identified. A reflection paper concludes this special issue, considering challenges and suggestions related to career counselling and internationalization, and presenting tentative suggestions for a way forward for career counsellors, theorists and researchers.

The purpose of the present article is to introduce the theme of this special issue “Internationalization and Career Counselling,” and to provide background for the subsequent discussion in the reflection paper. The article first presents a brief history of career counselling in order to contextualize discussion on internationalization. Then internationalization is considered in the field of psychology, following which it is considered specifically in relation to career counselling. Finally, the contributions to this special issue are introduced.

### **Career Counselling: A Brief History**

In considering career counselling, internationalization and possible future directions of the field, it is helpful to consider first the historical development of career counselling which has substantially been based in the United States (Niles, 2003). Savickas (2008) contended that as the organization of work has changed, so too has the predominant method of assisting people to make vocational choices, thus career theories reflect the times in which they were constructed (Watson & Stead, 2006). Savickas (2008) views vocational guidance as a response to the industrialization of cities in the early 1900s, and career counselling as a response to the needs of individuals in corporate societies in the second

half of the 20th century. Until this time, career counselling was not differentiated from vocational or career guidance, and did not emerge as a profession in its own right until the 1960s and 1970s (Herr, 1997).

In the global economy of the 21st century, Savickas (2008) views self-construction as the way forward for career counselling. The shift to self-construction and life designing (Savickas, Nota, et al., 2009) is illustrative of the growing influence of constructivist philosophy in the theory and practice of career counselling. In essence, the more widespread emergence of constructivist approaches may be viewed as a response to calls to revise career counselling (Savickas, 1993) and to construct a new identity for it (Watson & McMahon, 2005).

Despite the comparatively recent influence of “constructivisms” (Young & Collin, 2004), such as constructivism and social constructionism, and the resultant promulgation of narrative and storied approaches, the dominant philosophical influence in career counselling theory, research and practice to the present time has been, and still remains, that of logical positivism. Emanating out of the work of Parsons (1909), career counselling has been widely viewed as a “test and tell” or “matching” process in which career decisions were based on matching self-knowledge and world of work knowledge. Significantly, in the context of the present article, much work still needs to be done to test the relevance and appropriateness of theories and practices emanating out of both philosophical traditions in countries and cultures outside their Euro–American bases.

In searching for a theory base for his work, Parsons collaborated with Münsterberg who developed the first vocational theory and thus located vocational guidance in the discipline of applied psychology (Porfeli, 2009). Much later, vocational guidance evolved into the field of counselling (Herr, 1997; Savickas, 2009). Of interest in this regard

is career counselling's continuing close relationship with vocational psychology and counselling psychology. The more recent practice of career counselling is founded on this historical base, and to date remains embedded in the field of psychology and its sub-disciplines. Thus, prior to considering career counselling and internationalization, it is appropriate to consider internationalization in the field of psychology.

### **Psychology and Internationalization**

A useful starting point for considering internationalization and psychology is provided by the findings of two reviews of the content of significant journals (Arnett, 2008; Gerstein & Ægisdóttir, 2005). First, in a review of four American counselling journals, Gerstein and Ægisdóttir (2005) concluded that less than 5% of articles presented data gathered from international samples. Similarly, in a review of six influential American psychology journals, Arnett (2008) found that most articles were written by American authors, and that editorships and editorial board memberships were held primarily by Americans. Even more telling was Arnett's conclusion that the focus on Americans in these journals attended to only 5% of the world's population. Consequently, Arnett urged that psychology become less American in order to attend to the "neglected 95%" (p. 602). In this regard, Pedersen (2003) observed that since approximately 2000, more psychological research has been conducted outside the United States than within it. It is against this background that Gergen, Gulerce, Lock, and Misra (1996) observed that: "When one understands psychological science to be a by-product of the Western tradition, fashioned by particular cultural and historical conditions, the door is opened to a fresh consideration of the practice of psychology in the global context" (p. 496).

Opening the door to consider psychology in a global context may prove challenging. For example, counselling psychology has been described as being culturally encapsulated in the United States (Leung,

2003). Further, Arnett (2008) claimed that psychology is “mainly an enterprise of, by, and for Americans, with an occasional contribution from another voice among the most privileged in the Western world” (p. 613). In this regard, Marsella (1998) suggested that the fundamentals of Western psychology, specifically, individualism, rationality and empiricism, may not resonate with many cultures throughout the world. Kim, Park, and Park (2000) concurred and suggested that the scientific paradigm of psychology may provide a limited view of human functioning which is, by nature, complex and dynamic. They suggested that existing psychological theories may “aid or limit our understanding of the world” (p. 72) and that indigenous psychologies may provide an alternative scientific paradigm.

As the world has become increasingly more globalized and interconnected, increased attention has also been focused on internationalization of counselling psychology. For example, in the United States, Leong and Blustein (2000) advocated appreciating cultural diversity within their country and also developing a global perspective open to the cultures of other countries. Of interest, in a special issue of the *Journal of Vocational Behavior* (Savickas, 2001a) on envisioning the future of vocational psychology, internationalization received relatively little attention but importantly was noted by Savickas (2001b) himself in setting out a mission for the field. Leong and Ponterotto (2003) further considered the need to move beyond a national multicultural perspective towards a global vision for the field in which they concluded that the field needs to undertake the task of internationalizing. Thus, in the American context, Marsella and Pedersen (2004) advocated internationalizing counselling psychology curricula and proposed a number of practical steps for doing so in order to develop a new professional and global consciousness.

The rapid and rising importance of internationalization was

evidenced more recently in a special issue of the journal *Applied Psychology: An International Review* which specifically considered international perspectives on counselling psychology in 12 countries using a SWOT analysis (Leong & Savickas, 2007). Savickas (2007), in synthesizing the SWOT analyses, concluded that four themes could form the basis of a plan for internationalizing the field, specifically: “(a) defining counseling psychology from an international perspective, (b) crystallising a cross-national professional identity, (c) encouraging construction of indigenous models, methods, and materials, and (d) promoting international collaboration” (p. 183).

In counselling, internationalization has been defined as “a continuous process of synthesizing knowledge generated through research, scholarship and practice from different cultures and using this knowledge to solve problems in local and global communities. Internationalization involves collaborations and equal partnerships in which cultural sensitivity and respect are required for success” (Leung et al., 2009, p. 115). Internationalizing counselling psychology necessitates discovering and preserving indigenous aspects of psychology within cultures worldwide (Hwang, 2009; Leung, 2003). For example, in the field of psychotherapy, Hwang and Chang (2009) considered the construct of self-cultivation within the Confucian, Taoist, and Buddhist traditions. While differing between these three cultural traditions, the goals of self-cultivation also differ from Western psychotherapy’s goal of searching for the client’s real self and thus suggest the need for counselling approaches that are culturally sensitive. In this regard, Hwang and Chang also questioned the appropriateness of the Western one-on-one model of counselling for people of East Asian societies. Such examples suggest that internationalization of career counselling warrants much more than the adoption or adaptation of Western models. Rather, they suggest that local philosophical and cultural traditions may provide a base for the development of culturally aware and culturally

sensitive practices. The resultant multiplicity of indigenous psychologies should not be viewed as local attempts at isolation from the influence of other countries and cultures, but rather as an opportunity to discover “the unique ‘colors’ of the world, so that there are more colors to be used and a more colorful picture to be appreciated” (Leung & Chen, 2009, p. 962). Thus, indigenous psychologies, including those of the Western countries, have the potential to enrich the field.

In this regard, Arulmani (2007, p. 80) cautions that Western psychology has strengths such as “rigour and unbiased objectivity” but that the issue in relation to internationalization lies in its “dismissive” attitude towards methods and approaches emanating out of non-Western settings and a prevailing view that it is the only approach. Indigenous perspectives on counselling contribute to the internationalization of counselling. For example, Chen (1999) confirmed that filial piety, social roles and relation orientation are important issues in understanding the counselling mechanism and in the development of indigenous counselling models and practices in Taiwan. Shek (1999) reviewed the development of counselling in four Asian communities and pointed to the need to “understand the predicament of people in economic disadvantage and to construct counseling models that are sensitive to their needs” (p. 110). Further, Lam (1999) suggested that the counsellors in Asian communities are to respond to the needs of their clients within their diverse cultural and social contexts.

### **Internationalization and Career Counselling**

The thoughts of Arulmani (2007) provide a useful backdrop to consideration of career counselling and internationalization. It is not surprising that just as counselling psychology has been described as culturally encapsulated in the context of the United States (Leung, 2003), so too has career counselling been described in this way (Pope, 2003). In a special issue of the journal *The Career Development Quarterly*



(Savickas, 2003b) that celebrated the 90th anniversary of the National Career Development Association of the United States, Savickas (2003a) proposed internationalizing career counselling as an objective for advancing the field of career counselling in the following decade. He noted that career counselling no longer “exports” its models and methods to other countries and that numerous other countries are developing indigenous culturally appropriate methods and approaches.

However, the psychological “matching” or “trait and factor” approach, predicated on the use of career assessment, remains deeply entrenched in career counselling in many countries and cultures. Logical positivism and the “trait and factor” approach are also pervasive influences that perpetuate Western dominance in career research, career literature, training programmes, international organizations, and in the socialization of students into the profession (Gergen et al., 1996; McMahon & Watson, 2007). Reflecting concerns about Western dominance, Chung (2007) acknowledged the contribution of American psychology and also claimed that what is needed in the field is globalizing rather than Westernizing in order that a range of perspectives and greater cultural sensitivity be encouraged.

Debate about much needed revision in the field of career counselling has ensued for many years. Following Savickas’s (1993) seminal article on career counselling in the postmodern era that called for revision of the field in order to remain responsive to the needs of the 21st century, considerable attention has been paid to the development of postmodern and narrative approaches to career counselling. To some extent, debate on the future direction of career counselling has become polarized through “either/or” positions related to logical-positivist or constructivist positions. However, a stronger discipline could be achieved through cultivating the complementarities of the two philosophical traditions (McMahon & Watson, 2007; Sampson, 2009). Moreover, it is likely that

to be truly responsive to local needs in the globalized society, career counselling will become a multi-storied discipline (McMahon, 2006, 2007) or a colourful picture of opportunities (Leung & Chen, 2009) that values “the many traditions of Western psychology — empiricist, phenomenological, critical school, hermeneutic, social constructionist and more — as well as those extant in other cultural traditions” (Gergen et al., 1996, p. 502).

As evidenced in the comments of Gergen et al. (1996), potential revision of career counselling also warrants attention to internationalization if the future of the field is to take account of a broad range of cultural traditions and practices informing theory, research and practice in a diverse range of settings. Since 2004, considerable progress has been made in drawing attention to the need for greater internationalization in the career field. For example, three international symposia that brought together international researchers and others in the career field focused specifically on advancing the field in an international context. A by-product of these symposia was the publication of special issues of journals focusing on the content of the symposia and internationalization (e.g., Savickas, Van Esbroeck, et al., 2005; Trusty & Van Esbroeck, 2009; Van Esbroeck, Herr, et al., 2005; Van Esbroeck, Palladino Schultheiss, et al., 2009). Contained within these special issues are a range of recommendations and suggestions about a way forward. Four themes that have emerged through the symposia are “culture and context in theory and practice, research as a process within a contextual system, partnership and collaboration, and social responsibility and public policy” (Palladino Schultheiss & Van Esbroeck, 2009, p. 366). At a more practical level, these authors suggested that strategies to advance internationalization in the career field could include further international dialogue through face-to-face contact, international research teams, disseminating knowledge through distributing tables of contents of major journals in several languages, international liaisons across

professional associations, and the inclusion of professionals from a larger group of the world's nations.

To date, a primary medium for enabling voices of internationalization to be heard by a wider audience than those attending the symposia occurred through special issues of journals (e.g., Savickas, Van Esbroeck, et al., 2005; Trusty & Van Esbroeck, 2009; Van Esbroeck, Herr, et al., 2005; Van Esbroeck, Palladino Schultheiss, et al., 2009). Such a process has been important in raising awareness of the issues surrounding internationalization. However, it is interesting to note that in these journal special issues, most of the authors are from Europe and America. Although the contributions of these authors to the field cannot be understated, the authorship of the articles does necessarily not reflect the broader membership of the symposia whose contributions provided the basis for the articles and it serves as a reminder that the agenda of internationalization needs to be constructed by representatives from a broad range of nations and cultures. Essentially, it is important that internationalization does not become another Western construct in the field of career counselling.

At the eve of the second decade of the 21st century, it is important for the field to move beyond awareness raising towards more concrete steps that will advance internationalization in the field of career counselling. In this regard, some steps have already been taken. For example, Savickas, Nota, et al.'s (2009) paradigm for life designing is an example of international collaboration albeit between Euro–American authors. Thus the appropriateness of the paradigm in non-Western countries remains to be investigated. In the African context, Watson, McMahon, Mkhize, Schweitzer, and Mpofo (in press) considered the African cultural tradition of Ubuntu and how it may be used to inform culturally appropriate approaches to career counselling for people of African ancestry.

In the Chinese context, Wang and Wei (1998) observed economic development, industrialization, and technological advancement making inevitable changes in job selection and occupational placement. Law, Wong, and Leong (2001) advocated that Chinese career researchers and practitioners should consider the role of cultural characteristics in their vocational models. Zhang, Hu, and Pope (2002) used Pope's (2000) Social Transitions Stage Model in their analysis of the rapid development of career counselling services in the Chinese mainland. Leung (2002) discussed convergence and divergence in career counselling between Hong Kong and the United States with reference to the freedom to choose and compromise, collectivism and individualism, school-to-work transition, use of tests, and types of career intervention. Wong and Wong (2006) developed a career interest assessment questionnaire for Chinese university students and found that a modified Holland's hexagonal model was more applicable for Chinese in the Chinese mainland, Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan. Collaborating between Hong Kong and the United States, Yuen, Gysbers, et al. (2005) developed a career development self-efficacy instrument for Chinese adolescents. The implementation of the comprehensive school guidance programme was studied in Hong Kong schools (Yuen, Chan, Lau, Gysbers, & Shea, 2007). Responding to the curriculum reform in Hong Kong schools and inspired by Gysbers's (2003, 2008) Comprehensive Guidance Program, the Hong Kong Association of Careers Masters and Guidance Masters initiated a project guiding secondary school students in their individual education and career planning (Ho, 2008). Drawing from the Choice Model of Social Cognitive Career Theory (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 2000), researchers found that personality and filial piety, mediated by career decision self-efficacy, contributed to vocational commitment and the tendency to foreclose among Chinese university students (Jin, Watkins, & Yuen, 2009; Jin, Yuen, & Watkins, 2007).

Further, the authors of this special issue all provide examples of

what internationalization could offer the field of career counselling. Finding avenues for hearing the voices of authors from countries and cultures less well represented in the dominant career journals remains an important challenge. Thus international journals such as the *International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance*, the *Asian Journal of Counselling*, the *Australian Journal of Career Development* and the *International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling* have a valuable role to play in internationalization. Even so, concerns have been expressed about the potential “voicelessness” of authors who are less proficient in English, the dominant language of the international journals (Hou & Zhang, 2007, p. 47). Finding ways to address Hou and Zhang’s concerns about language remains an important and much needed challenge in order that internationalization in career counselling achieves a multi-directional flow of philosophy, theory, practice, and research across cultures and cultures.

### **The Special Issue**

In the context of a discipline that has been challenged to revise, this special issue considers career counselling and internationalization. In doing so, it builds on a growing tradition of journal special issues focusing on internationalization in the career field. Importantly, the present special issue provides a medium to hear perspectives on internationalization from individual voices from international settings that have previously been less well represented in the literature. The call for papers for this special issue invited reflection on the cultural relevance and appropriateness of career counselling’s underpinning philosophies, theories, and practices including assessment and consideration of possible indigenous approaches to career counselling in particular settings (McMahon & Yuen, 2008). This special issue of the *Asian Journal of Counselling* offers a collection of articles on the theme of career counselling and internationalization from authors based in

Australia, South Africa, India, Japan, Taiwan, and Hong Kong. The authors were invited to describe the development of career counselling in their own countries and to identify current issues related to the special issue theme. These articles are of value in stimulating reflection on converging themes within the general context of internationalization.

In the first article, Peter McIlveen outlines the field of career development in Australia, summarizes public and private models for the delivery of career counselling, and presents themes within the scholarship, research, and development aspects of the field. Mark Watson examines the cultural relevance and appropriateness of career counselling in South Africa in the second article. The influences of South Africa's apartheid era on the present and future directions for career psychology in South Africa are examined. Similarly in the third article, Gideon Arulmani explores the career counsellor's role at the interface between deep-rooted cultural processes and labour market demands in India. He uses the construct of social-cognitive environments and provides data from a large Indian survey to discuss ways in which social cognitive variables create occupational prestige hierarchies in the mindsets of Indian career choosers and their families, as well as their choice of educational pathways.

In the fourth article, Agnes Watanabe-Muraoka, Rie Michitani, and Masaki Okada outline a brief history of the evolution of career practitioners in Japan, and the issues of professionalization of career counselling practitioners in that country. In Taiwan, the focus of the fifth article, Hsiu-Lan Shelley Tien tested the applicability of Holland's hexagonal model. Her data suggested that Gati's model was better than Holland's model in interpreting the interest structure of Taiwanese college students. The reflection paper by Raysen Cheung focuses on the roles of career professionals in enhancing theoretical and professional

advancement in their respective countries, and discusses the themes of macro context, cultural appropriateness, and professionalization.

The articles contained in this special issue draw attention to the many complex issues embedded in internationalization and career counselling. Importantly, they provide a thought-provoking special issue which makes a valuable contribution to the discourse on career counselling and internationalization in the context of the need for revision of the field.

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### 事業輔導國際化

本文旨在介紹本專輯的主旨：事業輔導國際化。文章首先簡介事業輔導的歷史，繼而分別從心理學和事業輔導兩個層面探討與國際化的關係。接着，文章簡述本專輯中來自澳洲、南非、印度、日本和台灣的特邀文章，以及香港的反思文章。