Differences in Planned Happenstance and Career Adaptability: Cluster Analysis of Career Engagement and Career Stress Pingping Cao, Eunhye Jang

### **I** Abstract

Career preparation is not easy for Chinese overseas students in South Korea, the lack of employment information and career guidance, and the academic stress make it difficult for Chinese overseas students to prepare for career behaviors(Hou et al., 2022; Lim, 2021). The present study explored the characteristics of Chinese overseas students, who actively engage in their career development even when going through high levels of career stress. This study applied cluster analysis among 187 Chinese overseas students in South Korea using career stress and career engagement as cluster classification criteria and examined how group differences are related to planned happenstance and career adaptability. Three clusters were identified: Cluster 1(Low career stress, High career engagement), Cluster 2(Low career stress, Low career engagement), Cluster 3(High career stress and High career engagement). When comparing the three clusters, Cluster 3 differed from Cluster 1 and Cluster 2 in terms of flexibility subscale of planned happenstance. Otherwise, Cluster 1, Cluster 3 did not show significant differences. Cluster 2 showed the lowest score of all subscales of career happenstance and career adaptability. Based on these results, directions for assisting Chinese overseas students with high career stress are discussed.



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Table 2 Comparisons of career adaptability's subscales of three clusters									
	Low stress High engagement (N=47)		Low stress Low engagement (N=70)		High stress High engagement (N=70)		F	$n^2$	Post hoc test
_	М	SD	M	SD	M	SD			
Conc	4.42	0.56	3.56	0.70	4.25	0.68	29.63***	.24	1,3>2
Cont	4.50	0.58	3.97	0.79	4.36	0.74	$8.90^{***}$	.10	
Curio	4.52	0.55	3.88	0.74	4.43	0.64	17.55***	.16	
Conf	4.42	0.55	3.78	0.77	4.35	0.64	$17.70^{***}$	.16	
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*Note.* \*\*\* *p*<.001 Conc =Concern, Cont=Control, Curio=Curiosity, Conf=Confidence

### II. Theoretical basis

• Career stress had a negative association with career behaviors, which means that the higher career stress was, the less career behaviors the individual would have (Zhang, Yu & Liu, 2022). However, for some people, the positive psychology capital including resilience, hope, and optimism could help them better deal with stress (Kara, 2023; Zhuang et al., 2021), which could help them better engage in career behaviors (Zhang, Zhu & Yu, 2022).

- Unexpected events, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, have significantly impacted people's lives. Planned happenstance involves actively transforming unplanned events into opportunities through individual effort, planned happenstance skills are of great importance in a world full of uncertainties (Mitchell et al., 1999). Planned happenstance skills were also found to be positively related with career engagement(Kim et al., 2014).
- As for the adolescent who are experiencing the career transition, courage and career adaptability were important positive resources for their flourishing(Parola & Marcionetti, 2022).

#### 4.40 Low stress High engagement 4.20 Low stress Low engagement 4.00 High stress High engagement 3.80 3.60 3.40 3.20 3.00 Curiosity Flexibility Optimism Risk taking Persistence Fig 2 Comparisons of planned happenstance's subscale of three clusters 4.70 Low stress High engagement 4.50 Low stress Low engagement High stress 4.30 High engagement



## III. Method

• Objectives

191 Chinese overseas students in Korea participated in the online questionnaire,187 samples were used for analysis after excluding invalid data. The sample consisted of 83 men (44.4%) and 104 women (55.6%).

#### • Measurement

The scale of career engagement(Sou et al., 2022), career stress(Choi, Park et al., 2011), career adaptability(Yu et al., 2020), and planned happenstance inventory(Chan, 2020) have been used in this research.

#### • Data Analysis

This research used K-Means Cluster analysis in SPSS 26.0 to group research sample based on career stress and career engagement. Descriptive statistical analysis and MANOVA were also conducted to explore whether all clusters were different in terms of planned happenstance and career adaptability.

# $\ensuremath{\mathbb{W}}$ . Results





Fig 3 Comparisons of career adaptability's subscale of three clusters

- The results showed three clusters are identified : Cluster 1(Low career stress, High career engagement), Cluster 2(Low career stress, Low career engagement), Cluster 3(High career stress and High career engagement).
- In terms of subscales of planned happenstance, Cluster 3 significantly differed from Cluster 1 and Cluster 2 in flexibility(*F*(2, 184)=13.45, *p*<.001), Cluster 1 and Cluster 3 also differs from Cluster 2 in Curiosity(*F*(2, 184)=8.68, *p*<.001), Persistence(*F*(2, 184)=12.74, *p*<.001), Optimism(*F*(2, 184)=17.98, *p*<.001) and Risk taking(*F*(2, 184)=9.72, *p*<.001).</li>
- In terms of subscales of career adaptability, Cluster 1 and Cluster 3 significantly differed from Cluster 2 in Concern(*F*(2, 184)=29.63, *p*<.001), Control(*F*(2, 184)=8.90, *p*<.001), Curiosity(*F*(2, 184)=17.55, *p*<.001), Confidence(*F*(2, 184)=17.70, *p*<.001)</li>

# **V**. Conclusion

• It is particularly important to note that the career flexibility of Cluster 3 who are under high career stress is higher than Cluster 1 and Cluster 2. Such results show that career stress is an obstacle for some students, but some students will respond to career development with a more open attitude. They will actively seek

various possibilities to support their career growth. In career counseling and career guidance, it is very

important to provide more programs to improve the career flexibility of Chinese overseas students.

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