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CHINESE EMERGING ADULTS IN A QUICK-CHANGING WORLD:
DISCRETIONARY TIME ACTIVITIES, CULTURAL ORIENTATIONS, AND THE
MEANINGS OF LEISURE

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by
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ABSTRACT

The overarching aim of this qualitative research was to understand the experiences of college students in China, with focus on discretionary time activities, perceived changes in cultural orientations and leisure meanings. Because data collection was in progress partly during the 2003 SARS medical epidemic in China, when restrictions were imposed on students, this research also includes an examination of the impact of SARS on students' discretionary time choices. This research is reported in three separate articles that address three unique sets of research questions, but all data come from time diaries and in-depth interviews of a sample of 16 college students in Xi'an, China, in 2003.

The focus of the first article is how people make choices about activity engagement during discretionary time. Discretionary time choices are of increasing interest to those studying quality of life issues. Assuming choices are made to maximize individual welfare, several factors are believed to influence these choices. Constraints theory from leisure research suggests these choices, within a set of motivations to maximize personal welfare, are heavily influenced by intrapersonal, interpersonal and structural constraints. Leisure affordance theory focuses on these motivations by suggesting the importance of more positive influences on choices within a set of constraints. In this study an inventory of discretionary time activities and reasons for choosing these activities was documented for a sample of Chinese college students. Because of the occurrence of an unanticipated SARS epidemic, the impact of the SARS crisis on students' daily choices was also examined in detail. Findings revealed that, despite the constraints imposed by SARS, particularly the suspension of off-campus activities, some students did not perceive a change in daily life, while others perceived positive changes in attitudes and behavior. Findings are important not only because they shed light on the experiences of college students in China,

but also because decisions made during this very influential time of life may affect future choices related to discretionary time.

The second article focuses on the extent to which Chinese college students perceived globalization impacts on their cultural orientations, or cultural identity. This is an important research topic as college students, or “emerging adults,” are going through a critical life stage of transition from adolescence to adulthood, with active exploration in worldviews and identity as an important characteristic. Worldviews and cultural identity achieved at this stage of life is likely to persist through adulthood. Students with a variety of characteristics were asked to describe western and traditional Chinese cultural orientations towards many aspects of life, and discuss their perceptions of shifts in orientation among young Chinese students as a result of increased exposure to western orientations. A majority of participants thought that the cultural identity of college students in China today is a mixture of some traditional Chinese attitudes and beliefs and some Western attitudes and beliefs. These students believed that the primary sources of traditional orientations are family, community, school, books, and the media, whereas the primary sources of Western characteristics are media, books, peers, school and society. Students reported that they find the mixture of traditional and western cultural orientations is good, or at least acceptable. The competition/cooperation spectrum, one major aspect of citizenship roles, was explored specifically. Competition was believed to be extremely important by these Chinese college students, while cooperation, although also believed important, was observed less in behaviors. Participants identified many contextual factors that encourage competition in the lives of college students in China and identified fewer opportunities to cultivate cooperation. Findings suggest that emerging adults in China, and possibly in other non-Western countries, are susceptible to developing bi-cultural, or multicultural, identities as a consequence of

globalization-caused increase in exposure to other cultures, and that this shift will likely be evident in changing citizenship roles, leaning increasingly towards individualism and away from collectivism.

The focus of the third article is an investigation of how Chinese college students view the role of leisure in their lives. Emerging adults are believed to enjoy more freedom and opportunities to explore identity through leisure activities than during their adolescent years and adulthood, and leisure provides an important context for both individual and social identity exploration. This article explores gender differences in leisure preferences and the self-reported likelihood of persistence of college leisure activities into later stages of life. Women were found more likely than men to orient their leisure toward relationships with others. In contrast, men were more likely than women to report participating in physical activities, structured organizational activities, and playing cards and chess. Men also seemed to show more interest than women in starting new leisure activities or improving skills related to leisure activities. The majority of men in this study perceived that it was unlikely to continue their current college leisure activities after graduation, while the majority of women believed their current college leisure activities would persist into later stages of life. Time spent on leisure activities was also explored through examining shifts in activity choices in and the intensity of participation between high school and college. Findings revealed a substantial increase in engagement in leisure activities in college, suggesting strongly that the transition from high school to college is especially beneficial to Chinese emerging adults in terms of identity exploration through leisure.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

To the Problem

Today, in the U.S. and around the world, China is in the news nearly every day. It is not only the natural disasters of earthquakes, weather-related catastrophes, and human health and safety crises that bring China to the attention of the rest of the world so often. What happens in China each day has financial, security, diplomatic, subsistence and intellectual impacts on the world. China is the most populous nation on earth with over 1.3 billion people in 2007, spread across 3.7 million square miles. With a documented history of over 5,000 years, it is now experiencing rapid change in many ways. The world is watching, partly out of concern for China, partly out of concern for themselves.

Profound industrial, economic, and governmental changes have happened in China over the past two decades (e.g., Lewis & Xue, 2003; Larmer, 2006). For example, the government has closed or partly privatized many industries and used foreign investment to build modern plants (Larmer, 2006). With China's industrial economy growing at an annual rate of over 7 percent in recent years, millions of people now make over \$20,000 per year, a great deal of money in an economy where a meal might still cost 85 cents (U.S.) and the majority of people still are connected to remote rural areas with poor utility, health and education services.

These changes have benefited many in society, such as creative intellectuals, government officials, entrepreneurs and many employees in the private sector who have prospered; however, there have also been social costs such as massive unemployment, corruption, uncontrolled urbanization and overpopulation (Lewis & Xue, 2003). The transformation rocking China today

and over the past quarter-century was summarized by Lewis and Xue in terms of three interlocked and mutually reinforcing changes: modernization, political reform and globalization, and these changes in turn have profound influences on people's attitudes, their behaviors, and their quality of life.

Tremendous economic development in China over the past two decades has also stimulated reforms and remarkable changes in Chinese higher education (Duan, 2003). In recent years, many colleges and universities have been merged in an effort to part from the former Soviet Union's model of single disciplinary universities and draw closer to the Western model of common comprehensive universities. Enrollment has been expanded, partly through incentives offered to universities for accepting more students. Today, students are required to pay tuition for their education, a change that requires family support instead of previously relied upon government subsidies. Universities have also cancelled guaranteed job placement for graduates, which requires all college graduates find their own employment. And, significantly to many Chinese people, age and marital status limits for competing in college entrance examinations have been removed, making it possible for individuals who are older than 25 and/or married to enter common colleges and universities. Certain top universities even began to admit first-year students without assigning them to specific majors (e.g., Duan, 2003; Cheng & Zhou, 2003), a practice previously rare in China. Test scores on the college entrance examinations, however, are still critical in being accepted to desired programs.

These new policies have led to a more diverse student population, as well as more freedom and individual power to make one's own choices, but may subject students to stronger economic pressure and more intense job competition after graduation. A student's total life is likely affected by this transformation of higher education. For example, Duan (2003) observed

that today's college students differ from the previous generation in that they are more cosmopolitan and have many interests; they spend more time on sports and participate in activities such as clubs, competitions, performances and festivals; and many students now try to get work-study positions or other part-time work to help pay for college and increase their future competitiveness in the job market.

As China experiences rapid transformation, higher education is increasingly important to both the government and Chinese families, and there is widespread agreement that today's college students are likely to have a profound influence on China's future (e.g., Lewis & Xue, 2003; Duan, 2003; "Keku Xuexi", 2005). For example, the leader of China's ruling Communist Party called on China to take a new path to industrialization based on *science and education*, sustainable development, and accelerated deployment of information technology (Lewis & Xue, 2003), and higher education has become one of the most popular topics for discussion among Chinese families (Duan, 2003). The media frequently refer to college students as "the future of the nation" (e.g., "Keku Xuexi", 2005), maybe because students will become "zhi shi fen zi" (intellectuals) and members of the social elite. Thus, in keeping with traditional ideals, they will be expected to accept a disproportionate share of social responsibilities.

To this Dissertation

This dissertation is based on an investigation of the role and meaning of discretionary time in students' experience of life in the new contexts of Chinese universities. Research that enhances the understanding of college students' lives and the environmental contexts they experience will help educators, policy makers and service providers improve the quality of higher education and facilitate students' personal development during their college years. The

dissertation consists of three separate articles. Each article has a unique purpose, addresses a unique set of research questions, and is aimed at a different publication outlet. The first article builds upon sociologists' recent efforts to more precisely define the relationship among discretionary time, free time, and personal welfare decisions that individuals make as they allocate their time; this article will be submitted to *Social Indicators Research*. The second article focuses on understanding college students' perceptions of how globalization and increased exposure to western cultural orientations is affecting today's college student cultural identity in China; this article will be submitted to the *Journal of College Student Development*. The third article returns to a focus on college students' time allocation and explores the meanings college students attach to leisure activities and how gender differences among this emerging adult population affect leisure participation patterns and benefits; this article will be submitted to a mainstream leisure journal such as the *Journal of Leisure Research*.

Method of Accomplishment

Research Questions to Guide the Research

Three sets of research questions guide the three articles. These research questions were altered somewhat when China's 2003 SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) medical crisis became a major concern at the same time that the researcher was finalizing the protocols for interviewing college students in China. As a result of the SARS outbreak, questions about the impacts of SARS-imposed constraints on students' activities were added to the interviews.

Specific research questions (indicated as pertaining to articles 1, 2, and 3) are listed below:

- 1.a. How do Chinese university students spend discretionary time (including everything not directly related to class, household chores or personal care tasks)?

- 1.b. What factors influence their decisions regarding participation in these activities?
- 1.c. What impact does an institutionally-imposed structural constraint, such as the SARS-induced closure of campus, have on these choices?
- 2.a. What are Chinese college students' perceptions of the defining characteristics of their own culture?
- 2.b. In students' perceptions, what are the influences on their culture?
- 2.c. How do Chinese college students evaluate their cohort's culture (good or bad)?
- 2.d. How do Chinese college students perceive their citizenship role in terms of competition and cooperation?
- 3.a. What are the leisure preferences of college students in China?
- 3.b. What are the students' perceived meanings of leisure?
- 3.c. Do students perceive differences in engagement in leisure activities from high school to college?
- 3.d. Are there gender differences in students' leisure preferences and perceptions of leisure?

Participants

Participants in this research were a single set of Chinese college students recruited by the researcher. These participants attended a major university located in Xi'an, a thriving urban center in the heart of China, with a metro area population of over seven million people at the time of the study.

To get to know the ordinary life of college students, extreme cases were not the focus of this study; "ordinary" cases were more welcome. Consulting with an experienced cross-cultural

qualitative researcher suggested that a sample of eight students would provide an appropriate level of information for this study. Because both men and women would be studied, and their leisure experiences might differ, the researcher decided to aim for 16 participants, eight of each sex.

Because a mix of semester standings, majors, and places of upbringing (urban vs. rural) was desired, a combination of purposeful and snowball sampling was used. The recruiting process began with a “gatekeeper,” a graduating senior student who, before transferring to this university, once took a class taught by the researcher at a smaller community college. The researcher first explained the purpose of study and sampling procedure to the gatekeeper and answered his questions. The gatekeeper then helped the researcher contact other senior students from different departments, and these senior students helped the researcher contact more students that met the sampling criteria. As a result, sixteen participants (8 men, 8 women) 19 to 25 years old were selected, including three first-year students, four sophomores, five juniors, and four seniors from 11 different majors. Half of the participants were from rural areas, half from urban areas (see Appendix A, p. 118 for the list of participants).

Being an alumna of this university seemed to help the researcher quickly build rapport with participants. The fact that the researcher was pursuing a Ph.D. in a renowned American university seemed to lend respect to the project, and participants appeared to be curious about being interviewed for a dissertation project, which none had done before. Some participants mentioned that they really valued this experience, and that they would answer the questions in earnest to the best of their knowledge.

Study Context

The university had two campus sites, located within Xi'an, the ancient capitol of China, and a thriving urban center of over seven million people at the time of the study. About half of the students, who majored in physical sciences, lived on the older main campus. Students in other majors had been relocated to a new campus in the summer of 2002. Shuttle buses and public transportation were available between the two campuses. Faculty and staff lived in the residential area of the old campus, and traveled by school shuttle from the old campus to work on the new campus when needed. Like most Chinese universities, this university has walled campuses and guards at each gate. Students are required to live in dormitories on campus, with four to six students sharing one dorm room. On old campus, dorm rooms do not have bathrooms; on the new campus, however, each dorm room has a bathroom. Similar to most Chinese universities, this university used a two-semester system, with spring semester in session roughly between February and July.

At the time of this project (spring semester, 2003), a rampant epidemic known as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) spread across much of China. After the Chinese government disclosed on April 20 that the number of SARS cases was many times higher than previously reported, university authorities quickly took measures against SARS. Effective April 25, there was strict control over who was permitted to enter or leave campus. A special pass authorized by school authorities was required; no student was allowed to leave campus, and no visitors were allowed in. This control was relaxed in early June as the threat of SARS seemed to have passed, although the "sealing" of the university was not officially lifted until June 20. During this period, as part of the efforts to "build the body against SARS," school authorities encouraged physical activities.

The researcher arrived in Xi'an on May 19 by flight from the United States via Shanghai, China. Upon arrival at the university faculty residential area, she had a physical exam at the university hospital as required of all visitors by the SARS regulations. She then reported to a registration station organized by community volunteers recording the flow of visitors to the university. Maybe because she was not from an "affected area," maybe because SARS was gradually coming under control, or maybe because no cases of SARS had been reported in the university, people seemed to be relaxed interacting with her. Although she was not asked to do so, to be responsible, she limited her interaction with people after returning to her room in the residential area, and waited for one week before entering the teaching area of the campus. It was an afternoon in late May when she first walked around the campus after arrival.

On this first visit, she did not see any person wearing a medical mask, as she had expected, but did see a lot of people playing actively outdoors on campus (there was no indoor gym on campus) — basketball courts, ping-pong tables and badminton courts were in full use. Near one corner of the cement-paved basketball ball courts, a crowd was dancing aerobics to some loud, lively music. There were around 100 people in this group, mainly students, but a few young children and older people, too — probably families of faculty and staff. Two women students were leading the aerobics in a very casual manner; people who walked by would often stopped to watch or even join in. Everyone looked happy and relaxed.

The peak of physical exercise observed by the researcher seemed to occur during her first two days on campus. In June, the weather getting hotter (easily over 90 degrees Fahrenheit), final exams were approaching, and large-scale exercise became less frequent on the old main campus. In mid-June, when the researcher first visited the new campus to recruit participants and conduct

interviews, it was rare to see people playing outside during the day, although in the cafeteria there seemed to be many students talking during lunch time.

Instruments

Time diaries and in-depth, semi-structured interviews were utilized to collect data. Time diaries documented basic facts about use of discretionary time and provided a framework for further discussion with each participant during follow-up interviews. One advantage of time diary accounts is that participants describe their day as they experience or recall it, rather than being limited by prearranged categories devised by researchers (Robinson & Godbey, 1999). To avoid the bias that could be introduced by a single, atypical day without imposing an unreasonable burden on participants, a 3 to 6 day time diary procedure was used depending on the availability of each participant. For each day, the participant recorded various things done throughout the day by filling out a time diary sheet (see Appendix B, p. 119).

Two interview protocols (see Appendix C, p. 120 and Appendix D, p. 123) were developed to guide the two in-depth, semi-structured interviews with each participant. Interviews were used to collect further information about college students' activities, participants' perceptions of cultural orientations, and their perceived meanings of leisure. Interview questions were adapted from Neulinger's (1978) leisure attitude questionnaire, Arnett's (2001) transition to adulthood questionnaire, and Triandis' (1995) collectivism-individualism questionnaire.

Data Collection

After permission was obtained from the university, data were collected between mid June and early July 2003, when spring semester was still in session. During the first meeting, each

participant was told that the purpose of the study was to understand the life experienced by college students. Questions about the procedure were answered, and each participant was asked to choose a pseudonym to be used throughout the research. Time diary sheets were also explained and given to each participant, to be collected at a later agreed upon date. After the time diary was collected, it was followed by two interviews at campus location chosen by the participant. All time diaries were completed between June 12 and June 21, one day after the date when the “sealing” of school was lifted on June 20. During this time period the threat of SARS seemed to have passed, and regulations loosened — in fact a few students’ time diaries included off-campus activities before the “sealing” of school officially ended, for it had become much easier to get permission to go off campus.

Most follow-up interviews happened after the “sealing” was lifted. First interviews were conducted between June 19 and June 27, each lasting one to three hours. Second interviews were conducted between June 22 and July 2; the length was generally about one hour. All interviews were audio-tape recorded and later transcribed by the researcher.

All interviews were necessarily conducted in Chinese. Audio recordings were transcribed in Chinese and then translated into English for analysis. Because the researcher is highly proficient in both languages (a native speaker of Chinese who had been offered English-teaching positions at major public and private universities in Xi’an because of her reputation and demonstration of English proficiency, and later studied in an American graduate school for four years), back-translation methods were not used. Instead, the translation was checked by a native speaker of Chinese who has majored in and taught English at the university level.

Dissertation Format

This dissertation takes a three-article format, with this introduction, three articles which address the three sets of research questions, and a conclusion with appendices. Chapter 2 (titled “Discretionary time of Chinese college students: Activities and impact of SARS-induced constraints on choices”), chapter 3 (titled “Traditional, western or multicultural identity: Chinese college students’ perceptions of cultural shifts”) and chapter 4 (titled “The meanings of leisure for Chinese college students: gender differences and identity exploration among emerging adults”) were each written as stand-alone manuscripts to be submitted to separate peer-reviewed journals. These articles are referred to as simultaneous studies of Chinese college students, though the methods described above provided the data from which content was extracted for all three studies. Every effort was made to minimize repetition across articles in terms of research questions, literature reviewed and presentation of results.

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CHAPTER 2

DISCRETIONARY TIME OF CHINESE COLLEGE STUDENTS: ACTIVITIES AND IMPACT OF SARS-INDUCED CONSTRAINTS ON CHOICES

Abstract

How people make choices about activity engagement during discretionary time is a topic of increasing interest to those studying quality of life issues. Assuming choices are made to maximize individual welfare, several factors are believed to influence these choices. Constraints theory from the leisure research literature suggests these choices are heavily influenced by intrapersonal, interpersonal and structural constraints. Within these constraints, the individual is motivated to make choices that maximize perceived personal welfare. Leisure affordance theory focuses on these motivations by suggesting the importance of more positive influences on choices within a set of constraints. In this study, an inventory of discretionary time activities and reasons for choosing these activities were documented for a sample of Chinese college students. Because data were collected during an unanticipated SARS epidemic, the impact of the SARS crisis on students' daily choices was also examined in detail. Despite the constraints imposed by SARS and the attendant suspension of off-campus activities, some students did not perceive a change of daily life as a result, while others perceived positive changes in attitudes and behavior. Findings shed light on students' experiences during a time of rapid change in Chinese society and higher education. Decisions made during this influential time of life are important because they may affect students' future choices related to leisure and discretionary time.

Keywords: discretionary time activity, Chinese college students, SARS, constraints, affordance

Target Journal: *Social Indicators Research*

Journal Description: “Founded in 1974, Social Indicators Research has become a leading journal for the publication of research results dealing with measurement of the quality of life. These studies — empirical, philosophical and methodological — encompass the whole spectrum of society, including the individual, public and private organizations, and municipal, country, regional, national and international systems. Topics covered include health, population, shelter, transportation, the natural environment, social customs and morality, mental health, law enforcement, politics, education, religion, the media and the arts, science and technology, economics, poverty, and welfare.” (Springer, n.d.)

Rationale: This journal will be targeted due to the article’s focus on the allocation of discretionary time by Chinese college students. Recent articles about quality of life in this journal argue for differentiating between free time and discretionary time and suggest that discretionary time decisions may be a useful indirect indicator of welfare, thus providing a good connection for this article.

Introduction

A topic closely related to the quality of life and personal welfare literature is how people allocate unobligated time on a daily basis (Goodin, Rice, Bittman, & Saunders, 2005). In studies of how people spend their time, unobligated time has commonly been differentiated from obligated time, and both of these vary across cultures and across the human life cycle within cultures. Obligated time commonly includes specific periods of time consumed for paid work (or class time for students, if their education is their current obligation), household chores and time for personal care. Robinson (1977) referred to these tasks as obligatory tasks. The remaining unobligated time has been described sometimes as free time and sometimes as discretionary time (Goodin et al., 2005). Free time is commonly that time left in the day outside of time *used* for obligatory tasks (Andorka, 1987), and discretionary time is more commonly the time people have above and beyond the time *needed* for obligatory tasks (Goodin et al., 2005), a very fine distinction. Sometimes people spend some of their discretionary time on obligatory tasks, more than is necessary to accomplish the tasks themselves, and commonly by choice (Goodin et al., 2005). A person might cook a much fancier, tastier, or healthier meal than is minimally necessary, because he or she enjoys cooking. Or students may spend more time studying than minimally necessary, partly because they are motivated to succeed and partly because they are in an environment that encourages participation in learning activities. Like free time activities, enjoyable obligatory tasks can consume discretionary time and contribute to quality of life (Goodin et al., 2005).

It has been widely agreed among those who study how college students spend their discretionary time that out-of-class activities can contribute in many ways to valued outcomes of a college education (Kuh, 1995). In U.S. colleges, what takes place outside the classroom has

been found to be the most significant aspect of their educational experience for 40 percent of students (Moffatt, 1988), and participation in extracurricular activities has been found a more accurate predictor of workplace competence than grades (Howard, 1986). As argued by Kuh (1995), out-of-class experiences present students with personal and social challenges, encourage them to develop more complex, nuanced views on personal, academic, and other matters, and provide opportunities for synthesizing and integrating material presented in the formal academic program (classes, laboratories, studios). Research on discretionary time choices generally, and out-of-class experiences of college students specifically, despite its widely acknowledged importance in Western academia, has been scarce in China.

In China, dramatic industrial, economic, governmental and social changes have been happening over the past two decades (e.g., Lewis & Xue, 2003; Larmer, 2006), which in turn have stimulated profound transformation of Chinese higher education (Duan, 2003). In recent years many remarkable changes have occurred in Chinese higher education: the merging of colleges and universities, an effort to part from the former Soviet Union's model of single disciplinary universities and draw closer to the Western model of common comprehensive universities; enrollment expansion, with universities accepting more students than ever; the introduction of tuition paid by families instead of government subsidies; the cancellation of guaranteed job placement for graduates, which requires all college graduates find their own employment; and removal of age and marital status limits to compete in college entrance examinations, opening opportunities for adults older than 25 and/or married individuals to enter colleges and universities. Certain top universities even began to admit first-year students without assigning them to specific majors (e.g., Duan, 2003; Cheng & Zhou, 2003), a practice previously not witnessed in China.

Implications of these new policies may include stronger economic pressure for students, more intense job competition after graduation, more freedom and individual power to make one's own choices, and a student population that is more demographically diverse. A student's life is likely affected by this transformation of higher education in China. For example, Duan (2003) observed that today's college students in China are different from the previous generation in that they are more cosmopolitan with more broad interests, they are more engaged in sports and more likely to participate in clubs, competitions, performances and festivals, and many students now try to get work-study positions on campus or part-time work to help pay for college tuition.

As China experiences rapid transformation in every area, higher education has been regarded increasingly important by both the Chinese government and Chinese families, and there is widespread anticipation that today's college students are likely to have a further transformation influence on the future China (e.g., Lewis & Xue, 2003; Duan, 2003; "Keku Xuexi", 2005). It is important to understand how students experience life in the new contexts of Chinese higher education, and how student life today is anticipated to influence their lives in the future. The study reported here focuses on Chinese college student experiences outside the classroom, or during their discretionary time, and how they make decisions about use of this time.

To understand Chinese college student decisions about discretionary time, a research project was conducted in 2003 on a university campus in China. As plans for the study were being finalized during spring 2003, an alarming epidemic of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) spread rampantly through China, infecting thousands of people, claiming hundreds of lives, and imposing many new constraints on how people allocated their time (Kamps &

Hoffmann, 2003). In an effort to keep SARS under control, China temporarily closed theaters, Internet cafes, discos and other recreational facilities. Many Chinese universities also took strict measures to keep students on campus and keep visitors out. Designing interview protocols in late April and early May, when the SARS crisis was serious, the researcher expected that data collection was likely to be conducted during a time when students were confined to campus. To address this issue, the focus of this research shifted to include an examination of the impact of SARS and related constraints on students' activities imposed by university officials.

To better understand students' choices about out-of-class activities and address constraints imposed on student activities during SARS, the theoretical frameworks of leisure constraints (Crawford, Jackson, & Godbey, 1991) and affordance (Mannell & Kleiber, 1997) have immediate relevance. Although these frameworks originally focus on explanations of leisure behavior choices, as social psychological theories, they can provide a framework for understanding of discretionary time activity participation, also.

The Chinese College Context

Tao, Dong, Pratt, Hunsberger and Pancer (2000) described briefly some differences in the Chinese college context from American universities: Most Chinese universities are in large or medium-sized cities, so many young people travel far away from home to another province or city to attend a university. Unlike individual-based student management in Western universities, the system for student management in Chinese universities is group-based. Most undergraduate students share a room with the same cohort of six or seven other students throughout their university years. The students are usually divided into classes by their majors, and these students then take all or most of their classes together, take part in university activities together (e.g.,

sports competitions), and even live in several dorm rooms together. The number of students sharing a dormitory room has recently decreased to four students at many universities, and campus utilities have improved in many places (Duan, 2003). Nonetheless, the Chinese college context remains very different from that in North America. Therefore, in an exploration of discretionary time choices, it is important to not apply any pre-limited choices developed from Western investigations.

In a typical Chinese university, there are usually four class periods scheduled in the morning, each for 50 minutes, starting at 8 am. It has been a common practice that two class periods are assigned each day for each course meeting. A school-wide lunch and nap break is observed between 12:00 and 2:00 pm (in summer the break extends to 2:30 pm, sometimes even to 3:00 pm). In the afternoon there may be two class periods scheduled, in summer between 2:30 pm and 4:20 pm. In the evening there are also two class periods commonly scheduled for some students, starting at 7:00 pm. Out of class, students may be required to attend group-based activities such as political meetings, other organized class activities, or annual track and field contests which could last several days.

Leisure Constraints

Leisure constraints theory (Crawford, Jackson, & Godbey, 1991) was developed within the leisure context and aimed at explaining some discretionary time choices, particularly leisure participation and nonparticipation. Presented as a hierarchical, sequential model, leisure constraints theory addresses why people do not take part in certain leisure activities, or what hinders people from engaging in particular leisure activities. According to this theory, people experience three types of constraints: intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural. Intrapersonal

constraints refer to factors such as personal attitudes and beliefs. If a person is not hindered by intrapersonal constraints, he or she may have a leisure preference, but may still face interpersonal constraints, such as a lack of an appropriate co-participant, or disapproval from family and friends. If a person is not hindered by either intrapersonal or interpersonal constraints, there may be structural constraints due to lack of time and money or lack of facilities that prohibits the person from participating in the leisure activities he or she desires. Institutionally-imposed constraints, such as imprisonment or regulations imposed to control the spread of SARS, are structural constraints. Constraints may interact simultaneously and reciprocally. For example, even the anticipation of interpersonal and structural constraints may impose intrapersonal constraints in the form of a self-protective lack of interest (Jackson, Crawford & Godbey, 1993). Although leisure constraints theory was developed in North America, a comparison study of Canadian and mainland Chinese students (Walker, Jackson, & Deng, 2007) demonstrated that, despite cultural differences, Chinese students were more intra- and interpersonally constrained than Canadian students, and the hierarchical leisure constraints model was applicable across the two cultures.

Some disagree that a person's participation (or not) in leisure is viewed basically as the result of constraints negotiation. For example, Samdahl and Jekubovich (1997) questioned the premises, objectives, and insights of leisure constraints research; Henderson (1997) argued that dynamic and cumulative effects may be more important. Responding to the many criticisms, Jackson (2000) rightly suggested some changes in leisure constraints research, such as broadening the range of criterion variables related to structural constraints, recognizing broader contextual issues for leisure, investigating processes of leisure constraints negotiation and

circumstances which enhance success in achieving leisure goals, and incorporating qualitative methods into the research to increase depth of understanding.

Leisure Affordance

Leisure affordance, according to Mannell and Kleiber (1997), refers to “conditions that will promote and support satisfying leisure styles” (p. 345). As stated by Mannell and Kleiber (1997), “the potential for facilitating leisure participation and enhancing leisure experiences can be understood through the leisure constraints and leisure affordances that are present in the environment or can be created within the environment, as well as the psychological factors within individuals that influence the perception of constraint or affordance” (p. 346).

Affordance, a term from ecological psychology, characterizes what the environment offers a perceiver; it is defined by the constraints as well as the possibilities for action that are present in a particular situation (Gibson, 1977; Greeno, 1994). As forcefully argued by Kleiber, Wade and Loucks-Atkinson (2005), rather than being the opposite of affordances, constraints serve to define them. For example, elimination of constraints does not guarantee participation. Furthermore, in a context that offers the prospect for an experience that is strongly desired, the constraints recognized as part of that context may simply be accepted. Kleiber et al. (2005) clearly stated that an affordance represents the environmental conditions that elicit motivation (interest, enthusiasm, approach, etc.) in conjunction with felt needs, and affordances are only fully perceived through action that brings the conditions into interaction with the individual.

Kleiber et al. (2005) also argued that specifying affordance in social situations can provide a more complete description of behavior and experience than has been the case in previous leisure research, since social psychology of leisure is concerned with understanding and

studying leisure behavior and experiences of individuals in social situations (Mannell & Kleiber, 1997). They stated that sensitivity to social affordances also changes as a result of a person's characteristics, actions and interactions, which makes social affordance difficult to specify. They believed that specification of affordances for leisure should be an important subject for both research and practice. To summarize, as argued by Kleiber et al. (2005), examining leisure opportunities and participation through both perceived constraints (usually considered negative factors) and perceived affordances (usually considered positive factors) may shed new light on the process of leisure participation and provide new directions for research.

Purpose of Study

The main purpose of this study was to explore discretionary time activity choices of Chinese college students, and how students perceived the impact of an institutionally-imposed, SARS-related structural constraint on their choices. As a full understanding of behavior can only be achieved when a researcher knows what it means to the person who performed it (Mannell & Kleiber, 1997), student-perceived reasons for participation in discretionary time activities were also explored. Research questions that guided this study included: a) How do Chinese university students spend discretionary time (including everything not directly related to class, household chores or personal care tasks)? b) What factors influence their decisions regarding participation in these activities? and c) What impact does an institutionally-imposed structural constraint, such as the SARS-related campus closure, have on these choices?

Methods

Aimed at describing recent choices and understanding these choices from the students' own view rather than from the perspective of an "expert" who passes judgment on participants (Creswell, 1998), this study took the approach of qualitative inquiry and interpretation. Although this study was one of several concurrent projects involving college students in China, the procedures discussed here are restricted to this study.

Participants and Study Context

Participants were recruited from a large university in China. This university was chosen because it was a large, comprehensive university that attracted students nationwide and it was accessible to the researcher during travel and access restrictions imposed in response to the 2003 SARS epidemic. Because understanding the daily life of typical college students was the focus of this study, "ordinary" cases were more welcome than unusual cases. Participants were obtained by a combination of purposeful and snowball sampling. Sixteen participants (8 men, 8 women) 19 to 25 years old were recruited, including three first-year students, four sophomores, five juniors, and four seniors from 11 different majors.

The university had two campus sites, located within Xi'an, the ancient capitol of China and a thriving urban center of over seven million people at the time of the study. About half of the students, who majored in physical sciences, lived on the older main campus. Students in other majors had been relocated to a new campus in the summer of 2002. Shuttle buses and public transportation were available between the two campuses. Faculty and staff lived in the residential area of the old campus, and traveled by school shuttle from the old campus to work on the new campus when needed. Like most Chinese universities, this university has walled

campuses and guards at each gate. Students are required to live in dormitories on campus, with four to six students sharing one dorm room. On old campus, dorm rooms do not have bathrooms; on the new campus, however, each dorm room has a bathroom. Similar to most Chinese universities, this university used a two-semester system, with spring semester in session roughly between February and July.

After the Chinese government disclosed on April 20 that the number of SARS cases was many times higher than previously reported, university authorities quickly took measures against SARS. Effective April 25, there was strict control over who was permitted to enter or leave campus. A special pass authorized by school authorities was required; no student was allowed to leave campus, and no visitors were allowed in. This control was relaxed in early June as the threat of SARS seemed to have passed, although the “sealing” of the university was not officially lifted until June 20. During this period, as part of the efforts to “build the body against SARS,” school authorities encouraged physical activities.

Data Collection

Data were collected between June 12 and June 27, using time diaries and semi-structured interviews. Time diaries, recorded between June 12 and June 21, were used to document discretionary time use to provide a foundation for further discussion between the interviewer and interviewee. Each participant was asked to provide complete accounts of what he or she did for a period of 3 to 6 days. For each single day, the participant filled out a time diary sheet that included items such as time and duration of activity, location, description of the activity, other participants, what else the person did at the same time, and whether the person considered this activity an obligation or something else. Through the time diary, information about the structure

and types of out-of-class activities was obtained for analysis to provide a common ground for further in-depth interviews with each participant.

In-depth interviews, conducted between June 19 and June 27 (shortly before and continuing after the campus “sealing” was lifted on June 20, when the memory of the SARS experience was still fresh), were used to collect further data on activities, perceptions of participants regarding the activities and the impact of SARS on the choices they made. The interview protocol included questions about the participant’s personal background (e.g., age, major, location of family home); probing for activities that might be missing from the time diary (e.g., activities they usually did but were not recorded in the diary and what their friends did that was not included in the activity list); questions about the impact of SARS (e.g., whether SARS had changed their way of life, and what the changes were); and further questions about discretionary time activities (e.g., the most common discretionary time activities among college students, and why they believe students participate in such activities). As interviews were semi-structured, each participant was likely to be asked specific questions based on the information provided in the earlier time diary. All interviews were audio-tape recorded.

Data Analysis

After the time diary from each participant was collected, recorded activities were briefly summarized to provide a foundation for the interviews. After all recorded interviews were transcribed into word-processor files in the original language – Chinese – the data files were read multiple times and examined in Chinese deductively, based on research questions (e.g., what activity choices they made and why) and more particularly, interview questions (e.g., what the most common discretionary time activities were among college students). Answers to each

question from each participant were extracted and translated into English. These answers to activity choice questions were put into a spreadsheet according to participant and interview question. After the data spreadsheet was completed in English, it was further analyzed and interpreted by the author.

As to the impact of SARS, within-case analysis was used to look for possible changes in each student's activity patterns as a result of SARS. Afterwards, a cross-case analysis was undertaken. The data were examined deductively, based on key terms associated with the research questions and the theoretical construct of affordance and inductively, based on terms or concepts evidenced in the data. The first author discussed each case and the common themes with an experienced qualitative social science researcher who also examined the data; and agreement on the coding framework was reached through discussion. The first author then coded all the transcripts according to the coding framework.

Findings

Discretionary Time Activities of Chinese College Students

The combination of time diaries and interviews generated a comprehensive inventory list of out-of-class activities (composed of both obligatory and discretionary time activities) participated in by these Chinese college students, including activities participants were involved in before SARS or activities they would have participated in if SARS had not happened. This inventory list is a compilation of a) activities recorded in the time diaries, b) activities not recorded in the time diaries but reported by participants during follow-up interviews, and c) activities participants said that their school friends or classmates did that were not included in their own activity list, which was also acquired during follow-up interviews.

These activities fall into six categories adapted from activity codes used by Robinson and Godbey (1999): 1) *study* (reading, doing homework, labs, listening to English, using the Internet/computer for the purpose of study, and choosing classes), 2) *other obligatory class-related activities* (class assembly for meetings, having class pictures taken, required morning exercise in sports fields, attending roll-call on Sunday nights, and cleaning up the classroom), 3) *paid work* (tutoring and working for the logistics department on campus), 4) *house work* (cleaning dorms, fetching hot water, hand-washing clothes, and shopping for necessities), 5) *personal needs and care* (eating and drinking, sleeping and napping, washing and taking a shower, and visiting a doctor), and 6) *discretionary time* beyond the time needed for the obligatory activities. In this study, fifty-eight items of discretionary time activities were reported by participants. For simplicity, these activities are presented in Table 2.1 under four sub-categories: Entertainment/Social, Organizational, Recreation, and Communication, which Robinson and Godbey (1999) used to classify free time activities.

Most common discretionary time activities and reasons for these choices.

During the interviews, participants were asked to identify the most common discretionary time activities among college students based on their observations. From their responses, the following themes emerged: *sports* (playing soccer, basketball, volleyball, ping-pong, badminton, tennis, and jogging, as well as walking), *Internet use* (chatting, watching movies, reading news; playing computer games on the Internet), *window-shopping*, *reading and studying for pleasure*, *socializing* (chatting and talking with friends in person, including visiting with friends, hanging out with friends, and eating with friends), *dating*, *involvement with student organizations*, *entertainment* (e.g., watching movies in the auditorium on campus), and *playing cards*. It can be seen in Table 2.1 that these themes fall into all four sub-categories of discretionary time

activities. *Part-time jobs* (e.g., tutoring and working as a sales representative) and *reading and studying for class*, although usually considered obligatory activities and thus not included in the four categories presented in Table 2.1, also emerged as two themes. Possible explanations include the possibility that some students chose to spend more time studying beyond requirements for self-fulfillment, and some students took part-time jobs not mainly for financial necessities but learning experiences.

To understand why these activities were popular choices among college students, participants were asked to offer their opinions and explanations. Main themes (reasons) emerged from the responses of participants such as *age and stage of life*, *natural tendency*, *beneficial outcomes*, *convenience and accessibility*, *emotional needs*, *learning and improving abilities*, and *boredom*. These themes are presented in Table 2.2, along with popular discretionary time activities and selected illustrating quotes.

Activities on which participants spent the most discretionary time and self-reported reasons.

To further understand the reasons behind the choices for discretionary time use, time diaries were reviewed to identify activities that appeared to occupy a considerable amount of each participant's time, and each participant was asked why he or she chose to spend time that way. Responses from participants were analyzed and presented in Table 2.3. In comparison to reasons offered for general popular activities, these self-reported reasons for their own discretionary time use were more detailed.

TABLE 2.1. *An Inventory List of Discretionary Time Activities of College Students in China*

<i>Entertainment/ Social</i>	<i>Organizational</i>	<i>Recreation</i>	<i>Communication</i>
1) Listening to radio, music or songs	1) Working in a university administrative office	1) *Basketball	1) *Reading for pleasure (newspapers, magazines, novels, cartoons, or other books)
2) Watching TV	2) *Duty in a student organization or association	2) *Soccer	2) Conversation with faculty
3) *Watching movie and TV series on computer	3) Duty as a student leader in class	3) *Volleyball	3) *Chatting with friends
4) *Watching movie in auditorium	4) Political Party related activities	4) *Badminton	4) Talking on the phone, or text messaging using a cell phone
5) *Visiting friends or family		5) *Ping-pong	5) Listening to radio (other than music and songs)
6) *Hanging out with friends		6) *Tennis	6) Watching news on TV
7) *Dating		7) *Jogging/running	7) *Using Internet (chatting, checking email, posting, reading news, or browsing web pages)
8) Taking pictures with friends		8) *Walking for pleasure	8) Writing diary
9) Singing with friends		9) Biking	9) Thinking or reminiscing
10) *Eating with friends		10) Hiking	10) Attending speeches
11) Dinner parties/ Birthday parties		11) Traveling in China	
12) Drinking and fighting (during SARS)		12) Rope-skipping	
		13) Roller-skating	
		14) Swimming	
		15) Dancing	
		16) Playing piano	
		17) Aerobics	
		18) Hula-hoop (SARS)	
		19) Kick-shuttle (SARS)	
		20) *Playing cards	
		21) Playing Chinese chess (“Xiangqi”)	
		22) Playing Go (“Weiqi”)	
		23) Playing mahjong (a board game)	
		24) *Playing computer games	
		25) Watching basketball game	
		26) Watching others play chess	
		27) Calligraphy	
		28) Photography	
		29) *Window-shopping	
		30) Trying on clothes	
		31) Cooking	
		32) Dining out	

Note. Items with * are those identified by participants as the most common discretionary time activities among college students. Other “most common” activities identified by participants but not included in this list are *reading and studying for class (study)* and *part time jobs (paid work)*.

TABLE 2.2. *Most Common Discretionary Time Activities among Chinese College Students as Observed and Explained by Participants*

<i>Activities</i>	<i>Explanations for the popularity</i>	<i>Selected quotes for illustration</i>
Sports (12) (Soccer, basketball, volleyball, ping-pong, badminton, tennis, jogging, walking)	Age and the stage of life	“We are young people in our twenties so we like sports.” (Jianchun, man, 25)
	Natural tendency	“Boys like sports.” (Xiaomin, woman, 23)
	Beneficial outcomes	“Sports makes me happy and strong.” (Yiling, woman 23)
	Convenience and accessibility	“[Playing ball games and walking] are convenient... and did not require much investment.” (Xiaoyun, woman, 23)
Internet use (9) (Chatting, watching movies, reading news; playing computer games)	Learning	“You can find all sorts of information there [on the Internet].” (Lulu, woman, 21)
	Boredom	“Using the Internet kills some time. We go on the Internet because we feel bored.” (Xieling, woman, 20)
	Convenience and Accessibility	[Reading, Internet, visiting with friends and window-shopping are] “convenient, affordable, and within one’s control.” (Lilin, woman, 20)
	Emotional needs	“[Using the internet can help one] forget about the unhappiness and frustrations in real life.” (Jianchun, man, 25)
	Natural tendency	“Boys just like playing computer games.” (Zhaoqian, woman, 20)
	Addiction	“It’s easy for people to feel addicted to it, be it playing computer games or chatting [on-line].” (Tongping, man, 20)
Window-shopping (6)	Beneficial outcomes	“[Sports, dating, window-shopping] are relaxing, especially mentally relaxing.” (Hongyi, man, 21)
	Natural tendency	“Girls just like window-shopping.” (Zhaoqian, woman, 20)
	Convenience and accessibility	“[Playing ball games and window-shopping are] the only accessible and affordable activities on campus.” (Xuewei, woman, 22).
	Vanity	“Young people want to look fashionable.” (Lulu, woman, 21)

TABLE 2.2. (continued)

<i>Activities</i>	<i>Explanations for the popularity</i>	<i>Selected quotes for illustration</i>
Reading and studying (6) (For pleasure and for class)	Beneficial outcomes	“[Reading magazines, newspapers and novels in the library] is entertaining.”(Xiaomin, man, 23)
	Convenience and accessibility	[Reading, Internet, visiting with friends and window-shopping are] “convenient, affordable, and within one’s control.” (Lilin, woman, 20)
Interacting with friends (5) (Chatting, talking, visiting, hanging out and eating with friends)	Beneficial outcomes	“...Walking and chatting... are relaxing activities.” (Awen, man, 24)
	Convenience and accessibility	[Reading, Internet, visiting with friends and window-shopping are] “convenient, affordable, and within one’s control.” (Lilin, woman, 20)
Dating (5)	Age and the stage of life	“It is related to the psychological need for a romantic relationship at this stage of life.” (Liusha, man, 22)
	Emotional needs	“Everyone longs for love” (Yiling, woman, 23)
	Beneficial outcomes	“[Sports, dating, window-shopping] are relaxing, especially mentally relaxing.” (Hongyi, man, 21)
Involvement with student organizations (2)	Learning and self-improvement	“...students were encouraged to not only have knowledge but also abilities... it was easy to draw a direct link between ability and participation in student organizations.” (Muzi, man, 22)
Entertainment (1) (Watching movies in the auditorium)	Natural tendency	“People Love movies.” (Jinsheng, man, 25)
Playing cards (1)	Boredom	“[We have] so much free time at week-ends but don’t know what to do, so we play cards.” (Xiaomin, man, 23)
Part-time jobs (1)	Learning and self-improvement	“[Students sought to] improve abilities through practical work experiences.” (Yiling, woman, 23)

Note. Numbers in parentheses under Activities indicate the number of participants who referred to each activity.

TABLE 2.3. *Activities Participants Spent the Most Discretionary Time On and Self-Reported Reasons for Choices*

<i>Activities</i>	<i>Self reported reasons</i>
Chatting/socializing (15)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social needs • Pleasure • Environmental conditions (e.g., because of no air-conditioning in dorm, many stayed outside in the evening to “be cool,” and chatting happened during this time) • Boredom
Study (13)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exam • Having nothing else to do than study • Employment pressure • Responsibility to family • Acquirement of knowledge • Habit
Physical exercises/ sports (11)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enjoyment • Improvement of appearance or personal attraction • Accessibility • Socializing • Family tradition • SARS
Reading for pleasure (9)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enjoyment • Habit • Staying current with news • Recharging one’s self
Computer use (6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Escaping the real world • Interest in computers • Inaccessibility of other activities
Playing cards/Chinese chess (5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boredom • Environmental condition (e.g., It was too hot to sleep, so they played cards)
Listening to radio/music (4) (A dominant secondary activity when staying in the dorm room)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interest • Enjoyment • Relaxation • Emotional expression • Learning
Shopping/Window-Shopping (4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relaxation • Enjoyment
Organizational activities (3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve career-related abilities
Writing diary (1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interest in writing • Desire to “keep records of feelings”

Note. Numbers in parentheses indicate the number of participants who referred to each activity.

Impact of SARS: Constraint and/or Facilitator

To examine how SARS affected participants' lives, they were asked about how they spent their discretionary time both before and after the appearance of SARS and subsequent restrictions imposed by university officials. It was assumed that SARS would severely constrain students' activities because they were confined to campus. Indeed, one salient constraint mentioned by all participants was suspension of off-campus activities that occurred frequently before the sealing of the school, such as window-shopping, visiting friends or family, eating out, going to an Internet café, tutoring, going to classes off campus, and other recreational activities such as roller-skating and photography. Although two students indicated they were severely depressed as a result of the restrictions, most participants stated they got used to it after the first couple of weeks.

Despite the suspension of off-campus activities, half of the participants clearly stated that their daily life was not changed by SARS, while the other half even mentioned positive changes. To make sense of this, a close examination of the profiles of participants was conducted, which revealed that participants who said their daily life was not changed by SARS could be classified into two groups: the *no-change actives* and the *no-change inactives*, whereas participants who stated that SARS did change their daily life in certain ways could also be classified into two groups: the *change commuters* and the *change transformatives*.

No-change actives.

The no-change actives include five men who had been actively involved in physical activities and/or student organizations on campus before SARS occurred; they continued to be active during the sealing of the school. All five participants in this group claimed that there was no change in their daily life as a result of SARS. "Life was similar to the time before SARS,"

said Liusha, a confident 22-year-old sophomore who enjoyed playing soccer a lot and working for the Student Affairs office — an opportunity he won through intense competition against other student applicants. Hongyi, a 21-year-old sophomore who loved the “excitement” of active sports, Muzi, a first-year student aged 22 who worked at the university Radio Station, Tongping, a 20-year-old student leader in his freshmen class, and Xiaomin, a 23-year-old junior who enjoyed playing soccer, basketball and board games with friends, all expressed similar perceptions.

Although not perceiving any SARS-caused changes in daily life, when asked further about any possible changes they wanted to maintain, two participants of this group offered information that could be interpreted as positive changes. Hongyi, the 21-year-old who had always been active in sports, after thinking carefully upon the question, said: “In the period of SARS, I spent my unoccupied time studying and reading more. Over this period, studying gave me a sense of fulfillment. I will take more time to read, or to study.” Xiaomin (23, junior), another man who did not perceive any changes in his daily life, stated that he did experience a change “in the respect of will power. Confined inside here, I become stronger. Never before had I been confined so long. Now I feel it does not matter much to me whether I am confined or not. It is all the same.”

No-change inactives.

The no-change inactives include two women and one man who had not been actively involved in any sports or student organizations; although they might have tried some physical activities during the sealing of school, they did not maintain the change and returned to their former sedentary lifestyle. Xuewei (23, junior) and Xieling (20, sophomore), two women who had always centered their college lives around study, did not perceive much change in their daily

lives, although both of them tried dancing briefly when such opportunities were plentiful and easily accessed during the sealing of the school.

Awen, a 24-year-old junior who defined himself as a loner, also tried some activities temporarily, but like Xuewei and Xieling, did not continue these activities: “In the period of SARS, we kicked shuttle. I was very good at it. I was good at skipping rope, too. I am not playing them nowadays. Now that SARS is over, no one at present plays them anymore.” As a result, Awen did not think SARS changed his daily life.

Change commuters.

The change commuters include two women who had relatives or families in town. Compared to other students, they had a very busy social life in terms of interactions with families and friends outside campus, and did not have to live in the dorm all the time. Although they perceived little change in their on-campus activities, they came to appreciate campus life and said they would not totally return to their former lifestyles. Lulu (20, female, junior), who used to spend a lot of time visiting friends and family, developed a new appreciation for the “regular life” on campus. Yiling, a thoughtful 23-year-old senior, even thought of her previous frequent outings as a “waste of time”:

Never had I lived so long within a single confined area. Yet after two months of such life, I have felt that such kind of life could be lived, and there was nothing bad about it. I even think what I did before like going window shopping and eating out was a waste of time. I am capable of living this kind of life, and I am okay. As long as I have a few close friends, I do not have to return to the former lifestyle. Really. Before, one or two days on campus without going out would have made me depressed. I felt, how could I have

stayed for such a long time in this place without seeing the exciting world outside? So I had to go out. However, now I don't think that way. I think it is okay.

Change transformatives.

The change transformatives, the largest group, included two men and four women who had not been active in physical activities or other leisure activities, but became active in such activities during SARS and developed strong interest in them. They said they would keep these changes even though SARS was over. Jinsheng, a 25-year-old male senior, said joyfully: "I don't think I can restore [to former life style]. ... I did not like sports before; just due to SARS, I took to sports (chuckle). I want to keep this new hobby." Likewise, Yeke (19, first-year), a young woman who was seldom involved in physical activities before, said: "During the period of SARS, I began to play sports, such as skipping rope, which I did not play much even when I was a kid... Now I seemed to take to sports." Xiaoyun (23, female, senior) also developed a newfound interest in physical activities: "I feel I've changed so much recently that I am unlikely to live in the previous way. I really seldom took part in sports before, but now I feel I like sports." Lilin (20, junior) and Zhaoqian (20, sophomore) were two other young women who had newly found interest in physical activities during SARS. On the other hand, Jianchun (25, male, senior) developed a new interest in music: "Before I seldom listened to music. During the period of SARS, I kept listening to music, frequently, and the result is I have become interested in many music styles."

Via discretionary time activities during the sealing of school, potentially enduring *positive social relationships* also developed for some members of this group. For example, Lilin (20, female, junior) felt more interaction with her classmates improved her life: "I used to be so occupied with my own things that I did not have time to interact with my classmates. Now, being

sealed in here, I often go find classmates to hang out together, and then I realize that I can learn a lot from communicating with them. I feel this kind of life is good.” Jinsheng, a senior who started physical activities during SARS also enjoyed his new social acquaintances: “Because of sports I have made many new friends (laugh). ‘Sports Baby’ who I mentioned previously was one of them... I got to know her through playing ping-pong during the sealing of school.”

During a time when the SARS crisis seemed to impose serious constraints on these students’ lives, what facilitated these positive changes? Based on the theoretical framework of affordance, it seems that *university strategies* and *social affordance* on campus played an important role in facilitating new interest in physical activities with multiple benefits.

For example, in order to motivate the students to build their bodies and fight against SARS, the university made great efforts to inform students about the health benefits of physical activities. At the same time, programs were offered to encourage participation in physical activities. The university also increased opportunities by providing equipment and supplies, such as a kick-shuttle (similar to a hacky-sack) and a jump rope, to each dorm room. These strategies seemed to have successfully motivated some previously inactive students to participate in physical activities. By participating, many students found new interests and remained active. Jinsheng (25) demonstrated the effects of his increased knowledge teamed with opportunity:

I didn't like sports (laugh). I hated sweating. Because of SARS, the government publicized the significance of enhancing physical conditions, and we did come to like physical exercise... There was a joke going round about the types of people died because of SARS... (laugh) I belonged to the type who exhausted themselves to death by doing sports... The school also gave each dorm room many things to play with, such as kick-shuttles and jumping ropes.

Yeke (19) found new talents due to encouragement to participate in more activities:

In the period of SARS, lots of physical activities were held on campus, organized by school as well as by class, like mini dance corridor, international standard dance, aerobics, ping-pong, badminton, so we often went out to play... Now I seem to take to sports, playing basketball, ping-pong. I did not know how to play those; I never touched a ping-pong ball before.

When more students came out for physical activities, it provided a welcoming social atmosphere for those who were otherwise uncomfortable participating in physical activities. According to Jinsheng (male, 25), "it was bustling with activities on campus during that period. Dancing in the evening. The music fountain became an open ballroom where a lot of people gathered to dance." Zhaoqian, a previously inactive 20-year-old young woman, said that during SARS, "as soon as we returned to the dorm in the evening, we began to play sports, until the dorm building was about to close... We went out to play basketball.... Sometimes we girls skipped rope in the hall way." That welcoming atmosphere could also be sensed through the description of Xiaoyun (female, 23), a quiet senior who came to like sports during SARS:

Those days it was very hot, and no one would like to come outside in the afternoon. After 6:00 PM, students began to play things such as badminton or hula-hoop. From 6:00 to 10:30 pm, everywhere on campus, including all over the roads, people were seen playing badminton. On the ground around the music fountain, many were throwing sand-sack, jumping rope, and skipping a long rope in groups. What fun! ...During that period, sometimes I felt that I seem to become much younger.

A welcoming social atmosphere, along with the influence of peer behavior, fostered interests and encouraged physically inactive students to try new activities. Yeke, age 19,

described her realization of *taking action and experiencing benefits* by adapting to changes with positive benefits:

During that period we almost went out playing every day. In terms of sports, now that you start doing it now and then, you become interested in it (laugh) ... I started to learn gradually, everybody went to learn, for many did not know how to play, and then we went to learn together, and then become interested.

Discussion

This qualitative study has drawn a picture of discretionary time choices Chinese college students make, reasons provided by participants for popular discretionary time choices, and the impact of SARS on their daily life, especially during their discretionary time. Future studies offer the opportunity for understanding the cultural orientation shift that occurs among Chinese college students during this transition to adulthood and to explore their changing leisure patterns, as well.

Discretionary Time Activities

Although the activity inventory list generated in this study may be somewhat constrained due to the small sample size, it has provided a base for instrument development for more extensive survey research and monitoring in the future. The seemingly small pool of activities found in this study is consistent with the observation made by the majority of participants that they spent time similarly with their friends and classmates. This is likely at least partly due to the purposeful sampling (combined with snowball sampling) method that aimed to obtain ordinary cases in order to understand the ordinary life of Chinese college students. It may also indicate

that opportunities and programs provided by the university were indeed limited and could be improved.

It should be noted that the activity list might be context sensitive. For example, when studying leisure patterns of college students in Taiwan, Yen (1995) used 59 items in his survey. Twenty-four items that occurred on his list were not found in the inventory list generated in this study, including watching video tapes, religious activities, billiards (pool), picnicking, camping, fishing, boating, going to the beach, scouting, driving (car/motorcycle), Chinese gymnastics, Yoga, bowling, Karaoke, joining a study group, watching MTV, visiting museums/galleries, collecting (stamps, etc.), social service, painting, making handicrafts, birds watching, gardening, and visiting a foreign country. On the other hand, twelve items that occurred in this list were not included on Yen's (1995) list, such as using the Internet, watching movie discs, attending dinner parties/ birthday parties, taking pictures with friends, drinking and fighting, talking on the phone/ text-messaging on a cell phone, writing in a diary, cooking, trying on clothes, playing kick shuttle, playing hula-hoop, and political-party related activities.

The reasons behind these differences may include different physical environments, technology change over time, and different socio-economic situations. For example, the specific urban Chinese college context in this study may limit the range of outdoor activities. Some activities, such as boating, fishing, going to the beach, camping and picnicking were more accessible in Taiwan than in the city where participants in this study attended the university. The Internet, cell phone, and movie discs were not common technology in the mid 1990's when Yen's research was conducted. And, most Chinese college students would not have the resources or opportunities to enjoy activities such as driving a car or motorcycle or to visit a foreign country.

To generate a more comprehensive list of activities and get a more broad view of Chinese college students' activity patterns, future research could include universities from different locations, and include universities at different levels and emphases (i.e., arts, sciences, business, music, law, and foreign languages). Future research on Chinese college students' discretionary time activity patterns must also be very sensitive to emerging influences. With such rapid change in China and changing influences on Chinese university students, future research will need to allow for and be designed to capture changes in Chinese university students' discretionary time activities.

Institutionally-Imposed Constraints and Affordance

Results suggest that despite the constraints imposed by SARS, particularly the suspension of off-campus activities, some students did not perceive a change of daily life as a result, while others even perceived positive changes in attitudes and behavior. This real-life exploration of the effects of structural constraints on Chinese college student decisions is in contrast to some leisure constraint research on Chinese college students which is more hypothetical in nature (see for example Walker, Jackson, & Deng, 2007), and therefore some unexpected positive effects of structural constraints emerged. Leisure affordance theory is particularly relevant to understanding these findings on positive changes during SARS.

Affordance is defined by the constraints as well as the possibilities for action that are present in a particular situation (see Greeno, 1994; Kleiber et. al, 2005; Mannell & Kleiber, 1997). As Kleiber et al. (2005) pointed out, while constraints are normally negative factors, a constraint may sometimes be accompanied by an affordance. Affordance represents the environmental conditions (possibly including constraints) that elicit motivation (interest,

enthusiasm, approach, etc.) in conjunction with perceived needs. In this study, participants felt a need to do something to prevent the infection of SARS. However it was the university's public relations efforts emphasizing "building your body to fight against SARS" which initially motivated many students to take part in physical activities. Provision of equipment and supplies made the activities more tempting and accessible. Findings of this study support a) the belief that affordance was only fully perceived through actions that brought environmental conditions into interaction with the individual, and b) the importance of social affordance (Kleiber et al., 2005). As shown in this study, for some participants, changing social situations were instrumental in affording and sustaining new leisure behaviors; however, some participants who got involved in physical activities due to the inviting social atmosphere discontinued their participation when the atmosphere disappeared.

As Kleiber et al. (2005) argued, although constraints are negative factors, examining opportunities offered through the perception of leisure affordance may bring new insights to the process and provide new directions for research. There is potential for more research that utilizes the construct of leisure affordance to understand allocation of discretionary time, especially when positive outcomes from organized programs or interventions are involved.

Future Expectations

Obligatory time for working adults and college students seems very different, though with recent transitions in higher education in China, they may be coming closer together (e.g., requirements to pay tuition, more dependence on part-time jobs, more highly educated work force emerging, etc.). Discretionary time of young people is changing and will continue to change with continuing advances in technology, changes in prescribed skills to be mastered, and

the growing realization of the important role that time spent in college may play in the development of emerging adults as they approach a new set of obligations to society, to family, to employers, and to themselves. Individual and social welfare can be linked to influences over discretionary time activity choices. Greater realization of these influences increase our chances of making better individual and collective choices.

This research should raise awareness of quality of life issues for Chinese college students and lead to more conscientious decision making about discretionary time opportunity planning by college administrators. Recognition that Chinese college students are experiencing substantial shifts in obligatory time commitments as well as nonobligatory opportunities could be an important foundation for planning student support services. Additionally, imposing some crisis-induced institutional constraints, reinforced by appropriate planning for increased nonobligatory activities, can produce very positive results that could contribute to quality of life perceptions into later stages of life for these students.

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CHAPTER 3

TRADITIONAL, WESTERN OR MULTICULTURAL IDENTITY: CHINESE COLLEGE STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF CULTURAL SHIFTS

Abstract

University students, or “emerging adults,” are going through a critical life stage of transition from adolescence to adulthood, with active exploration in worldviews and identity as an important characteristic. Worldviews and cultural identity achieved at this stage of life are likely to persist through adulthood. The primary purpose of this study was to explore, among Chinese university students, the extent to which they perceived globalization impacts on their cultural orientations, or cultural identity. At a large university in Xi’an, China, sixteen students, exhibiting a variety of characteristics, were recruited to describe western and traditional Chinese cultural orientations towards many aspects of life, and discuss their perceptions of shifts in orientation among young Chinese students as a result of increased exposure to western orientations. This study found that the majority of participants thought that the cultural identity of college students in China today is a mixture of some traditional Chinese attitudes and beliefs and some Western attitudes and beliefs. These students believed that the primary sources of traditional orientations are family, community, school, books, and the media, whereas the primary sources of Western characteristics are media, books, peers, school and society. Students reported that they find the mixture of traditional and western cultural orientations is good, or at least acceptable. The competition/cooperation spectrum, one major aspect of citizenship roles, was explored specifically. Competition was believed extremely important by these Chinese college students, while cooperation, although also believed important, was observed less in

behaviors. Participants identified many contextual factors that encourage competition in the lives of college students in China and identified fewer opportunities to cultivate cooperation. Findings suggest that emerging adults in China, and possibly in other non-Western countries, are susceptible to developing bi-cultural, or multicultural, identities as a consequence of globalization-caused increase in exposure to other cultures, and that this shift will likely be evident in changing citizenship roles, leaning increasingly towards individualism and from collectivism.

Keywords: cultural orientation, cultural identity, college students, emerging adults, globalization

Target Journal: *Journal of College Student Development*

Description: “Founded in 1959, the Journal of College Student Development has been the leading source of research about college students and the field of student affairs for over four decades. JCSD is the largest empirical research journal in the field of student affairs and higher education. A journal of international standing, JCSD publishes scholarly articles and reviews from a wide range of academic fields, including student affairs, higher education, sociology, psychology, social work, nursing, business administration, and health sciences.” (The Johns Hopkins University Press, n.d.)

Rationale: This journal is targeted in hopes of reaching university student development professionals in many countries and initiate greater interest in studying and monitoring of shifts in cultural orientation among non-western college students.

Introduction

Extensive evidence suggests that Chinese society is changing rapidly, at least partly due to the influences of globalization (e.g., Lewis & Xue, 2003; Larmer, 2006), i.e., increasing global connectivity, increased exposure to other cultures and growing realization of interdependence in the economic, social, technological, cultural, and ecological spheres (Croucher, 2004). The transformation rocking China over the past quarter-century involves three interlocked and mutually reinforcing changes: modernization, political reform and globalization (Lewis & Xue, 2003). These changes in turn have profound influences on people's cultural identity and behaviors.

Arnett (2002) suggests that the psychological impact of globalization on young people in non-Western cultures includes a shift to a bicultural identity (or even a hybrid identity) and identity confusion. Although some young people may retain a traditional identity in the face of globalization, others may combine elements of local and global cultures, and still others may have trouble integrating the new worldview with that indigenous to their culture. Are cultural characteristics of young people in China being impacted by globalization as suggested by Arnett? This study explores this question by asking Chinese college students how they perceive the relationship of globalization to their culture and how they describe the cultural identity of China's emerging adult population.

Cultural Identity and Emerging Adulthood

While this research does not measure individual identity formation, it does try to increase knowledge about young Chinese people's perceptions of how and why their cultural identities may be changing. A person's sense of identity (individual or cultural) refers to "a variety of

descriptive qualities pertaining to the goals, values, and beliefs that are being advanced” (Waterman & Archer, 1990, p. 34). People are sometimes classified as existing in one of four identity states: diffusion, foreclosure, moratorium, or achievement (Marcia, 1980), which are labels for the four quadrants defined by the intersection of two dimensions: exploration and commitment. Exploration refers to a period of active questioning or struggle in arriving at identity decisions regarding goals, values, and beliefs. Commitment involves making a relatively firm choice regarding identity elements in any given content domain and engaging in significant activity directed toward the implementation of that choice.

Identity diffusion (low in both exploration and commitment) refers to the state of a person who does not have firm commitments and who is not actively trying to form them. *Foreclosure* (high commitment with low/no exploration) refers to people who have never experienced an identity exploration but is nevertheless committed to particular goals, values, or beliefs. Someone in a state of identity *moratorium* (high exploration without commitment yet) is undergoing identity exploration and actively seeking among alternatives in an attempt to arrive at a choice. *Identity achievement* (high commitment after high exploration) refers to individuals who have gone through a period of exploration and have emerged from it with a relatively firm identity commitment. College students are often in a moratorium state, with the potential for globalization to merely accelerate this exploration and introducing new influences in this seeking activity.

From a life-span perspective, individuals between adolescence and adulthood, particularly those attending college, are at a time in the life span particularly well suited to exploring identity concerns (Waterman & Archer, 1990). This stage in the life span was referred to as “youth” by Waterman and Archer (1990) but later as “emerging adulthood” by Arnett

(2000), who pointed out that identity exploration during emerging adulthood make it an especially full and intense time of life for many people. Emerging adulthood, as describe by Arnett (2000), may not be experienced in every culture and circumstance; in the developing countries such as China, college students are most likely to experience emerging adulthood and this moratorium state of identity formation, exploring alternative worldviews in an environment that offers many new opportunities for exposure to new ideas, yet with the family and home environment recently left remaining a dominant influence on existing attitudes and beliefs.

Similarly, Waterman and Archer (1990) point out that college environments provide diverse experiences that can trigger consideration of identity issues and suggest alternative resolutions for them. In college, a person is exposed to a wide array of alternative career goals, belief systems, and lifestyles, both in the classroom and in the larger campus community. Experimentation with various possibilities during college is often actively encouraged. With the span of the college years seen as limited, and a felt need to prepare for the challenges of the “real world” upon leaving school, students often explore alternatives with an urgent desire to form identity commitments. Waterman and Archer (1990) also suggested that the prevalence of the moratorium status (identity exploration) will increase through the high school and early college years and will decrease thereafter, and the prevalence of the identity achievement status will increase with age, at least into the adult years, with the greatest increase occurring during the later college years.

Earlier, Baltes, Cornelius, and Nesselroade (1980) proposed a multi-causal and interactive model that involves three sets of life stage influences on identity formation and change: a) normative age-graded (ontogenetic) influences, b) normative history-graded (evolutionary) influences, and c) nonnormative life events. Normative age-graded (ontogenetic)

influences derive in a predictable sequence from life stages of the individual, while normative history-graded (evolutionary) influences are associated with cultural and historical changes (e.g., economic booms, technological progress, wars), whether these changes occur gradually or rapidly. Nonnormative life events refer to unexpected individual life changes such as a disability or a profession change, not biological, social, or large scale cultural changes. As each life stage is associated with different psycho-social issues, or core conflicts (Erikson, 1963), the normative impacts of history-graded influences will partly depend on their timing with respect to life-stage-related, or ontogenetic, core conflicts. This implies that current economic and social changes in China will have different consequences for college students who are dealing with occupational choices, values and beliefs as issues of identity formation, than for people who are at other life stages dealing with other core conflicts. At the same time, identity formation of college students in different cultures will be impacted by different cultural and historical events.

Cultural Context and Globalization

From one perspective, culture can be considered to be social practices or a social process in which individuals participate (Hall & Du Gay, 1996). In this sense, the individualism/collectivism spectrum provides a helpful framework for understanding practices, i.e., behavior, and the values that underlie it at both cultural and individual levels (Kagitçibasi, 1997). For example, evidence suggests that individualism/collectivism helps explain several aspects of variation among and within cultures (e.g., Chinese Culture Connection, 1987; Schwartz, 1994; Triandis, 1995).

Triandis (1995) described four attributes of an individualism/collectivism spectrum: a) *Self-concept*. In individualism, self is viewed as autonomous and independent. In collectivism,

self is viewed as an intertwined, interdependent part of the group. b) *Goals*. In individualism, individuals tend to put personal goals above group goals; in collectivism, personal goals tend to be consistent with group goals or group goals assigned more importance than personal goals. c) *Guidance of behavior*. For collectivists, behavior is guided by norms, obligations and duties; for individualists, such guidance is provided by pleasure, benefits and contracts. In comparison to individualists, collectivists are socialized to enjoy their obligations. d) *Interpersonal relationships*. Collectivists tend to maintain an established relationships even when is not to their benefit; individualists tend to drop such relationships if costs are viewed as higher than benefits.

As summarized by Kagitçibasi (1997), other characteristics that relate positively with individualism include competitiveness, autonomy, self reliance, individual responsibility and individual achievement, whereas characteristics that relate positively with collectivism include lack of interest in competition, readiness to cooperate with a group, valuing interdependence, yielding to collective responsibility and valuing group achievement (e.g., Hsu, 1983; Triandis, 1990; Janzx, 1991; Ho & Chiu, 1994).

Cultural tightness, which refers to the strength of group norms in a culture, is very closely related to collectivism/individualism (Triandis, 1995; Singelis, Triandis, Bhawuk, & Gelfand, 1995; Carpenter, 2000). In tight cultures, norms are explicit and stringently enforced, individuals must conform to group values, and tolerance for deviation is minimal. In loose cultures, behaviors that constitute proper behavior are relatively more flexible and more freely chosen. Tight cultures tend to be collectivistic, while loose cultures tend to be individualistic. As suggested by Carpenter (2000), interdependent self-concepts are more likely to occur in tight and collective cultures, whereas independent self-concept are more likely to occur in individualistic and loose cultures. It is important to note that cultural tightness is situation specific. As cited by

Triandis (1995), the German scholar Spangler identified six contexts in which tightness or looseness can emerge: social, economic, political, truth, religious and aesthetic. A culture can be tight in some contexts and loose in others. For example, as Triandis pointed out, in Mao's China, culture was tight across all six contexts, but in China today, culture has loosened slightly in political and religious contexts, while loosening far more in economic and aesthetic contexts.

Arnett (1997) suggested that the emphasis on individualism in American society is unusual compared to non-Western cultures. For example, China has a tradition of collectivistic values, with filial piety as one of the highest virtues, and a strict hierarchy of authority existing in workplace and schools (White, as cited by Arnett, 2002). However, in the past two decades, economic changes and increasing contact with the West has shaken China's tradition of interdependence, and values have become notably more individualistic (Li, Zhang, Bhatt, & Yum, 2006). Since the modern world is characterized by intense connection among different cultures and regions, Arnett (2002) argued that globalization impacts how people think about themselves in relation to the social environment:

First, as a consequence of globalization, most people in the world now develop a *bicultural identity*, in which part of their identity is rooted in their local culture while another part stems from an awareness of their relation to the global culture. Second, the pervasiveness of *identity confusion* may be increasing among young people in non-Western cultures. As local cultures change in response to globalization, some young people find themselves at home in neither the local culture nor the global culture. Third, in every society there are people who choose to form *self-selected cultures* with like-minded persons who wish to have an identity that is untainted by the global culture and its values. Fourth, identity explorations in love and work are increasingly stretching

beyond the adolescent years (roughly from age 10 to 18 years) into a postadolescent period of *emerging adulthood* (roughly from age 18 to 25 years). (Arnett, 2002, p. 777)

Globalization is believed to be one of the major influential changes transforming China today (Lewis & Xue, 2003). If Arnett is correct, all of the conditions are present for Chinese college students to experience both the positive and the negative psychological consequences described by Arnett, and it is important to understand shifts in this time of changing influences.

As western cultural orientations affect other cultures through increasing cultural contact, western culture itself and its influences are becoming more difficult to define or anticipate. As Kymlicka (2005) explains, western culture is having profound effects in Asia and around the world, not as a contrasting traditional foreign culture with dominating effects, but as a complex, changing culture that is itself defined by increased multiculturalism and minority rights. Tan (2005) suggests that the growing effects of western cultural orientations around the world will likely have profound effects on defining citizenship in cultures with very different political systems, traditions, religious practices, and cultural identities.

Purpose of Study

In a rapidly changing non-Western society, the extent to which college students are aware of the influence of globalization on the development of their cultural identity is an important research topic. This study addresses the question of whether or not Chinese college students perceive that their cultural identity is shifting in response to globalization. Four specific research questions are posed: a) What are the perceptions of Chinese college students about the defining characteristics of their own culture? b) In their perception, what are the influences on characteristics of college students' culture? c) How do students evaluate their cohort's culture

(good or bad)? and d) How do students perceive their citizenship role in terms of competition and cooperation?

Methods

To explore the cultural characteristics perceived by Chinese college students, a qualitative, in-depth interview study was designed. The study was one of a series of simultaneous studies of Chinese college students, but the procedures described here apply only to this project.

Participants

For this research project, sixteen participants (8 men and 8 women) age 19 to 25 years old were recruited from a large university (admitting students nationwide) in Xi'an, China. A combination of purposeful and snowball sampling was used to obtain a balance of gender, semester standings, majors, and places of upbringing (urban vs. rural). Three first-year students, four sophomores, five juniors, and four seniors were recruited from 11 different majors, but two recruits (1 man and 1 woman, both junior students) failed to participate in interviews, so 14 individuals actually participated in this research.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data for this study were collected between June 22 and July 2, 2003, by in-depth interviews at places chosen by participants. Interviews for this study addressed four questions: 1) whether college students' "value systems" were influenced more by Western or traditional Chinese values, 2) where Western or traditional Chinese influences on values came from, 3) which influences were good or bad, and 4) how college students felt about competition and

cooperation. For students who were unclear what “western and traditional value systems” meant, the researcher explained that she was interested in knowing what the students thought this meant. The remainder of each interview was based primarily on the participant’s description of traditional Chinese values versus Western values.

All interviews were audio-tape recorded. After recordings were transcribed, data were compiled and translated in English for analysis. Transcriptions were read multiple times and examined deductively, based on the research questions, and inductively, based on concepts evident in the data. Common themes and categories were extracted from the data and discussed between two researchers. Coding was conducted by the first author and then was checked by a second researcher.

Results

Traditional Chinese Cultural Values, as Described by Participants

A strict lifestyle was considered by several participants as one traditional Chinese cultural value (Table 3.1). Students explained that maintaining *a strict lifestyle* meant valuing self-control, self-denial, assiduity, self-improvement, and frugality. Other traditional Chinese values mentioned by participants included: *emphasis on social relationships*, which suggests maintaining social harmony (“taking the golden mean”), being tolerant, and placing emphasis on retaining a social network; *family duty and close bonds with family and friends*, such as filial piety, or a sense of responsibility to both parents and children, a close emotional bond with parents and between family members, and family-like emotional attachment between classmates and friends; *the desire for a fixed or stable profession*, which implied a reluctance to change and a need for security; *a lifelong commitment to a single romantic/sexual relationship*, indicating a

desire for staying in a single relationship with a “sole and only” love, and the disapproval of women changing partners often. *Collectivism, respect for older people, and conservative thinking* were also mentioned as traditional Chinese values, but only by one participant each. Several participants linked traditional Chinese values such as working hard (assiduity), taking action to make progress (self-improvement), taking the golden mean (conduct oneself in a way that maintains social harmony), being tolerant, and respecting elders to the “*Confucian philosophy of life.*”

TABLE 3.1. *Cultural Values Described by Chinese College Students*

<i>Traditional Chinese</i>	<i>Western</i>
A strict lifestyle (4)	Individualism (6)
Social harmony/network (4)	Non-seriousness about romantic/sexual relationships (3)
Filial piety/Family bond (3)	Worship of money (2)
Desire for a fixed or stable profession (2)	Equality of women (2)
Lifelong commitment to a single romantic/sexual relationship (2)	Independence (2)
Collectivism (1)	Democracy (1)
Respecting elders (1)	Change jobs frequently (1)
Conservative thinking (1)	Sanitation/Hygiene (1)

Note. Numbers in parentheses indicate the number of participants who referred to each value.

Western Values, as Described by Participants

Individualism was most frequently referred to by participants as a Western cultural value (Table 3.1). *Individualism* was sometimes described in a positive tone but more often in a negative tone. For example, participants spoke about “too much” individual freedom in the Western world, mentioned “extreme” individuality, or described young people being rebellious

to the point of destroying established institutions. Two participants identified campus shootings in Western societies as examples of extreme individual freedom. *Non-seriousness about romantic/sexual relationships* was the second most frequently mentioned Western cultural value. Participants described Westerners as “free,” “casual,” or “too casual” in their romantic or sexual relationships. Several participants identified *worship of money* as a Western value, and one participant perceived that the prevalence of gambling in Western societies as an example. Two women thought *equality of women* and *independence* were Western values. By “*independence*,” one woman explained that she meant an emphasis on independent personality and respect for privacy, while the other woman referred to Western expectations that adult children would live apart from their parents after getting married. Other Western values mentioned by participants include *democracy*, *expectation of job changes* (ready to change occupations and not needing a stable job), and *awareness of sanitation and hygiene importance* – one participant thought Westerners had a better sense of sanitation and hygiene.

Interestingly, when asked what could be considered Western values, several participants referred to *Western festivals* and *Western music*. Although not literally “values,” *Western festivals* and *Western music* were apparently linked to values in these participants’ minds. This may be evidence of how much Chinese young people are influenced by Western festivals and music as part of globalization.

Perceived Cultural Orientations of Chinese College Students

The majority of participants thought that the value system of current Chinese college students was a mixture of traditional Chinese values and Western values, although half of these participants thought college students were influenced more by traditional Chinese values than by

Western ones. For example, Xiaomin, a 23-year-old junior man, described the values culturally as "...neither like Oriental values nor Western values. It is influenced more by traditional cultures, but also deeply influenced by Western values and opinions. It is a mixture." According to Zhaoqian, a 20-year-old sophomore woman, who also defined value systems in the cultural context, "some aspects are influenced by Chinese traditions, some by western cultures; it depends on the person. ... Some think this way, some think that way; you cannot say which has more influence, which has less." Xiaoyun, a 23-year-old senior woman, stated her perception of the integration of traditional and western orientations with Chinese college students when she said: "I have always been sensing that the two are mixed together in the thinking of college students nowadays."

Some participants' responses suggested the absence of a clear mainstream cultural identity among current college students. At the same time, some suggested that college students were influenced mostly by the current government-run educational system and by pop culture. For instance, Jianchun, a 25-year-old senior expressed concern about this tendency when he said:

College students nowadays do not comply with traditional beliefs such as Confucian Classics, nor Western values, such as extremely upholding individual freedom. College students nowadays have no strong, or exact, value standard. Personal belief is more of a reflection of the current government and educational systems. College students nowadays have a serious belief crisis.

Similarly, Jinsheng, another 25-year-old senior, expressed concern about his perception of the intended intrusion into traditional value systems by the pop culture when he said:

I feel college students are more influenced by pop cultures from Hong Kong and Taiwan... to help them escape reality... I feel many people don't know about their own

values... there is even a lack [of a mainstream value system]. As a college student in China one should learn more about the legacy his ancestors have left him, ... but people are deluded by the pop culture in front of their eyes.

Some participants could not easily discriminate between traditional Chinese orientations and Western ones. For example, when asked whether college students currently were influenced more by traditional Chinese values or Western ones, Xiaoyun, a 23-year-old student in her senior year, expressed her confusion: “What are traditional Chinese values? How come I have no idea?” Xieling, a quiet woman age 20 in her sophomore year, also replied with a blank expression: “What are Western values? I am not clear, and do not have an answer. ... Doing things based on the individual self? I feel it is not a traditional value, but what kind of value it is, alas, I don’t know.”

Sources of Influence

Sources of traditional Chinese values.

Participants identified family, community or society, school, books, and the media as the primary sources of traditional Chinese values (Table 3.2). Parents, older siblings, and the way one was brought up by the family were identified as a primary source for instilling traditional Chinese values. For example, 22-year-old participant Muzi, who appeared stylish in his outfit and hairstyle and claimed a passion for Western philosophy and Western arts, stated that he was in fact very Chinese “in the bones,” for his family was “very traditional.” He explained that his family and community had been Muslim for many generations and thus believed in what he described as “Confucianized Islam,” which embraced traditional Chinese values. He believed this was the reason he experienced mental conflicts when reading Western philosophers. Some

participants, using terms such as societal environment, milieu, public opinions, and societal atmosphere, pointed to community or society as the main source of traditional Chinese values. They believed that by living in this social environment/milieu/atmosphere, they were naturally instilled with the traditional values it carried.

School was also identified as a major source of traditional values, which included the influence of teachers, information taught in courses and classes, and classmates, as well as the overall educational and examination system. Books, such as traditional Chinese literature and classic Chinese novels were another source referred to by participants. One woman mentioned media, saying that people were unconsciously influenced by the traditional values conveyed by television programs they watched.

TABLE 3.2. *Sources of Influences Identified by Participants*

<i>Traditional Values</i>	<i>Western Values</i>	<i>“Current” Chinese Values</i>
Family (10)	Media (6)	Media (3)
Community/Society (6)	Books (5)	Governmental system (2)
School (5)	Peers (2)School (1)	School (1)
Books (3)	Society (1)	
Media (1)		

Note. Numbers in parentheses indicate the number of participants who referred to the source.

Sources of Western values.

In contrast, mass media such as magazines, newspapers and television were identified most often as a source of Western values. Several participants expressed the belief that media

convey Western values by conveying Western pop culture. Lulu, a 21-year-old junior woman illustrated this belief by saying:

European and American music today really has great impact on young people. Those are very much idolized. Like, Hollywood movies are just popular. ... People focus on Grammy, Oscar, Euro Cup, and Manchester United, and Beckham. You have no choice. These are big events in the world. They are powerful countries. You have to pay attention. Otherwise you would have nothing to say when chatting with others. ... They are all over television. You would feel you are outdated if you did not talk about these. ... Pop culture has a great influence on our generation.

Besides mass media, participants also recognized the influence of books (e.g., Western literature, philosophy, arts, and some best sellers which mainly conveyed Western thoughts), peers (e.g., things friends were interested in, behaviors of classmates) and school (e.g., some courses were perceived to convey Western values) as sources of Western values. Society was mentioned as a source of Western values by one man, Jinsheng, a 25-year-old senior, who believed worship of money was a Western value but that college students developed money-oriented values by being in contact with Chinese society, including parents and relatives who were part of society.

Sources of “current” Chinese values.

Participants who thought current college students were influenced by neither traditional nor Western values, but by what they called “current Chinese values,” suggested that these “current” Chinese values were conveyed mainly by mass media, schools (the educational system), and the government (political system). Some perceived a link between mass media and government, explaining that by conveying official government opinions, as well as pop culture, mass media have a great impact on college students’ current values. Others believed that current

college students' values were greatly influenced by the government and that the political system enabled politics to penetrate every corner of life. Teachers, older students, and the current educational system were also identified as sources of the "current" values adopted by college students.

Evaluations of Influences on Values

Participants were asked whether they thought the influences on these cultural characteristics they talked about were good or bad. Typically, participants commented that they perceived the mixture of values was good, or at least acceptable, although some specific influences were considered good and some were considered bad, depending on situations and individuals. Participants who said some influences were good and some bad were asked to identify good and bad influences and explain their thinking.

Traditional values that were considered to be good influences included an up-lifting and forward-going attitude toward life and self, collectiveness, filial piety, respect for elders, commitment to marriage, and close family-like relationships between classmates. Traditional values that were considered to have bad effects included slickness and slyness when dealing with people and situations, and conservativeness when it came to new ideas and changes. One participant thought it was a drawback of traditional Chinese values that a person was expected to abide by normality and not think adventurously.

Western values considered to be good influences included democracy, respect for privacy, and high sanitation and hygiene standards. Western values considered to be bad influences included extreme individual freedom, worship of money, and too casual an attitude toward romantic and sexual relationships.

Competition vs. Cooperation

Participants' perceptions of competition and cooperation can be summarized in three statements: 1) competition was believed extremely important; 2) although cooperation was also believed important, the tendency to cooperate was perceived as weak among Chinese college students; and 3) many contextual factors seemed to encourage competition among college students, but few opportunities to cultivate cooperation were recognized.

Competition: extremely important.

All but one participant clearly stated that competition was very important for college students today. One interviewee thought the importance should not be exaggerated, although a tendency toward competition was necessary for college students. Analysis of participants' reasons for their belief in the importance of competition resulted in 5 categories.

Competition is the motivation for human development. Xieling, a quiet woman of 20 years, believed "[competition] is extremely important. Without competition, a person's life would be mediocre and unambitious; the person would not accomplish anything... Competition is a motivation to move forward." Muzi, a 22-year-old man who was very active in the university radio station and Performing Arts Society, also thought competition is very important for college students because "to develop, you have to compete. If a person has lost the willingness to compete, I feel it is a sign that his mind is dying." Yeke, a 19-year-old in her first year in college but already considering graduate school, believed that "it is easy to get lazy if there is no competition. Only with active, fair, and reasonable competition will there be development. We all want to do better than others." Xiaomin, a 23-year-old junior who seemed to be amiable and

reserved in his manner, also clearly stated his belief in the importance of competition when he said, “only competition will motivate a person to go forward.”

Competition is essential in modern society. Xuewei, a 23-year-old junior who thought a college degree would be good enough for a woman, still felt competition was essential in all aspects of modern society. She said, “I feel competition is very important, especially in this current society. If you are unwilling to compete, it is impossible for you to get a foothold in society.” Hongyi, a 20-year-old man who was active in sports, also placed great importance on competition and related that importance to independent thinking when he said the most important things for college students were “first, independent thinking; second, competition — after all this is a modern society.” Xiaoyun, a 23-year-old woman who was graduating with honors and already accepted to graduate school, demonstrated the importance she placed on competition when she said, “in the current society, competition should be very important... If you don’t compete, you will not get much, and you will fall behind others.”

Competition is important for maintaining social status. Lulu, a very social junior age 20, provided insight into the college student culture when she related competition to social status by saying, “If you do not compete with others, you will quickly lose your status. It is hard to explain what this status is... It is how you are seen by others in the group.” This view of the relationship between competition and status can also be seen in the thoughtful comments from Tongping, a first-year student, age 20, who was demonstrating his commitment to civic engagement through involvement in student government and served as a student leader in class: “[Competition] is very important in college years, but not only in college... I feel every moment after a person is born there is competition. Be it study, work, life, competition is everywhere. Even in what clothes you wear there is competition as to who is dressed better, who is worse. I feel it is a

social atmosphere... In my class, there is competition in terms of study and work, not so much competition in terms of clothing, particularly among male students.”

Competition is critical in getting a job. Jinsheng, a 25-year-old who was graduating and going to be a middle-school teacher, expressed his belief that future professional success is deeply dependent upon one’s will to compete. He said, “I feel competition is very important, especially when it’s close to graduation... If there is a [job] opportunity and you don’t compete for it, it will be grasped by others. Employers put a great deal of emphasis on your grades, or some specialties you have, such as computer skills and writing skills, which are shown by those certificates.” Zhaoqian, a bubbly sophomore age 20, also related competition to job success when she said, “You see, it is so difficult to find a good job... According to our teachers, it is getting worse even to us teaching-oriented majors... Our teachers said if you do not study hard, what future do you have? So we need competition. It makes us aware of the crisis.” Xuewei, a 23-year-old woman explained competition more in terms of class standing than grades. She observed, “The employers sometimes don’t value your grade, but your ranking in class. Even though you all got over 90 points out of 100 [in exams], if your ranking was low in class, the employer would not think you did well. It’s employment pressure and societal atmosphere that makes it competitive in grades and ranking.”

Competition is important for one’s future. “If you do not compete,” Jianchun, a graduating student of 25 who knew what he wanted and chose to do well only on things he regarded important, stated confidently, “you will live a life of hardship in the future. It is very dangerous.” Liusha, a 22-year-old sophomore, who had been active in student organizations, also believed that learning to compete successfully was important to one’s future. “In the future,” he said assertively, “you will try to survive in competition.”

Although most participants emphasized the importance of competition, two individuals argued that competition can be over-emphasized. Yiling, a 23-year-old who was graduating, believed that *competition should not be exaggerated* and cautioned against the ramifications if competition becomes dominant in college student culture:

We should have a tendency toward competition, but we should not exaggerate it. After all, it [college] is the only pure land left. If we emphasize too much on competition, it will not be good to the full development of one's humanity. Competition brings a certain degree of pollution. If it is allowed to develop to its extreme, there would be bad results, such as difficulties in interpersonal interactions, and some people may become abnormal psychologically. I admit this may be a little extreme. But I do feel competition should be reasonable... Don't let it bring negative impacts...

Yeke, a 19-year-old participant expressed similar concerns. "Victory should not be gained by degraded means," she said. "We need cooperation in competition. It is better to base competition on good attitude."

Cooperation: conceptually important but realistically weak.

Although the majority of interviewees clearly stated that cooperation was important for college students, most talked about cooperation abstractly and briefly, and several pointed out that the tendency toward cooperation among college students was weak. Participants' opinions of cooperation were classified into four categories:

Cooperation is not important for college students. Hongyi, a 21-year-old sophomore who was active in sports such as soccer and basketball, expressed his belief without hesitation: "[Cooperation] is not very important. Study is the main task in college."

Cooperation may or may not be important for college students. This ambivalent line of thought can be seen in the following quote from Muzi, the 22-year-old man who was actively involved in the university radio station and Performing Arts Society:

Our Economics professor emphasized cooperation to us. But I don't think it is important. I feel cooperation, well, it could be important. I am a loner, but since I am usually a leader, if people who work under me did not cooperate, the whole thing could not work out. So I absolutely dare not to say cooperation is not important. It is very important. But to some people it is not. I think people who were led must cooperate, otherwise nothing could be achieved. (chuckle). I also need to cooperate with others. It is fairly important, indeed. Cooperation is very important.

Muzi began by asserting that cooperation was unimportant but ultimately reversed himself. This example demonstrates the manner in which participants' beliefs about cooperation were often less clear-cut than their beliefs about competition.

Cooperation is important for college students. This was the belief of the majority of participants. Some explained that the nature of some tasks calls for cooperation. For example, Liusha, a 22-year-old sophomore who spent much of his time working in the Student Affairs office, stated: "Cooperation should be very important. It is because in many situations accomplishment of a task needs cooperation of many people. So, to accomplish a task, people need to work together, to cooperate." Along the same line, Tongping, the 20-year-old male freshman who was involved in student government and served as a student leader in class, also said: "After all one person's ability is limited, so whether you are willing or not, you have to cooperate for many tasks to be achieved." Cooperation was also believed by some to benefit social relationships and foster citizenship roles. For example, Xiaoyun, a 23-year-old woman

who deeply enjoyed spending time with friends, stated, “I feel cooperation could get a job done better, plus it is interpersonal interactions. Interpersonal interactions not only let you gain from work, but in terms of life or psychology. It lets you have more friends.”

Although cooperation is important, the tendency to cooperate is weak among college students. Some participants pointed out that students often express a belief in the importance of cooperation but seldom behave in cooperative ways. Zhaoqian, a 20-year-old sophomore, said: “Cooperation, I feel it is important. But now it seems the tendency toward cooperation is very weak.” Yiling, a 23-year-old senior student expressed the same concern: “I feel a tendency toward cooperation is weak. In fact I feel cooperation should be particularly cultivated. However, today in many aspects the job on cultivating cooperation was not good. It was not emphasized.” Lulu, an out-going junior age 20, said:

[Cooperation is] very important. It is because oftentimes one task cannot be accomplished by one person. I cannot think of any examples. I only feel that, for instance, in my class, people do not cooperate. As a result, it is like loose sands. If everyone was willing to do something for the class, as when there was a major event, everybody would not focus on the small individual interests of their own, then everyone would cooperate on the event, and it would be much better.

Xiaomin, a 23-year-old junior man, shared similar perceptions. He stated:

Cooperation is very important. In a sense, cooperation means holding together to each other. In universities, we talk about classes. If a class is loose, and not working for the same goal whatever we do, it is impossible to organize some activities. So, if cooperated, it would be easy to work on something. I feel college life is relatively loose. Everyone is

an adult and has his or her own views. I feel college students tend to be more individualistic.

To summarize, cooperation did not seem to be as important as competition to these college students. One or two stated outright that cooperation was not important. The majority of participants expressed the belief that cooperation was important but the tendency to behave cooperatively was generally weak among college students. Notably, participants tended to talk more concretely about competition and more abstractly about cooperation. With the exception of two classroom events, few could or would provide concrete, “real life” examples of cooperation.

Competition and cooperation: which one is more important?

To probe further about competition and cooperation, participants were asked to compare the importance of competition and cooperation within their own cultural context, and opinions varied greatly. Some believed the tendency toward cooperation should be more important than the tendency toward competition; others believed cooperation and competition should be equally important; still others believed that competition should be most important. For example, Tongping, a first-year student expressed his belief that cooperation should be more important than competition to college students by saying, “I feel cooperation would generate more benefits than competition; therefore it is more important.” Agreeing with him, Xieling, a 20-year-old woman said, “At present, I feel cooperation [is more important]. I feel that cooperation can reveal certain abilities of yours, and improve your social skills as well.” Yiling, a 23-year-old woman, felt cooperation was vital to achieving certain goals. She said, “Cooperation is more important... In fact, many things can only be achieved through cooperation. For example,

during SARS, it was suddenly realized that, alas, people should hold together and fight together; you could not win with only your individual power.”

On the other hand, Liusha, the 22-year-old young man who worked in the Student Affairs office, believed that, for college students, competition was more important than cooperation. He said: “Right now the tendency to competition should be more important, because the main issue right now is competition. It includes many aspects. The one that stands out is seeking employment. As a result, competition is especially important.”

As one of those who believed that competition and cooperation should be equally important, Yeke, a 19-year-old woman said, “There is competition in cooperation... In competition there is cooperation too... The two are equally important. They are not in conflict.” Similarly, Muzi said, “...I feel we should not only encourage any one of the two... We should know when to compete, when to cooperate... We should combine these two parts well.”

Two participants declined to choose between competition and cooperation. Instead they observed that individualism was getting more prevalent among college students, and opportunities for cooperation were becoming scarce. Their observations were consistent with observations made by quite a few other participants.

Competition vs. cooperation: an imbalance in opportunities.

Despite the disagreement about whether competition or cooperation should be more important to college students, participants consistently expressed one belief: *Chinese college students generally have a very strong tendency toward competition, and a very weak tendency toward cooperation.* When asked why, participants related this phenomenon to an imbalance in opportunities. According to these participants, there were many opportunities for college

students to compete but few opportunities to cooperate. For instance, Liusha, a 22-year-old sophomore, made these observations:

To college students today, the tendency toward competition is strong, and the tendency toward cooperation is weak. A strong tendency toward competition is because competition in society is intense. College is just one stage before society; it is to get ready for entering society smoothly, so competition is in need. This point is clearly felt by everyone. However, to all of us, working together to do something, such opportunities are not many. Oftentimes it was only up to a few people, or just one person, to do one task.

Xiaomin, a 23-year-old junior, focused on the relative abundance of opportunities for competition by saying:

For college students, there are more opportunities for competition. Competition is mainly in studying. Second, competition was in extracurricular activities. It was very intense in both. In extracurricular activities, everybody would like to shine. For example, joining a student organization, or participating in work-study, these were all opportunities to let one's self shine, and there was always competition. As to cooperation, it is mainly about class events, and the whole class should cooperate. If there was a party, and nobody wanted to go, nobody wanted to perform, nobody wanted to cooperate, then the party would never happen. To ordinary students, opportunities for cooperation were scarce. Usually all behavior is individual-based. It is difficult to cooperate. Each one has his own opinions sometimes. Every person has his own desire, (chuckle) and his own interest, therefore more competition results. Usually it is really hard to cooperate well. There is too much individualism. Although everyone talked about contribution to society, to the

country, it is in fact just based on one's self. [Contribution to society and country] is too broad. To each person, it still comes down to competition individually.

Zhaoqian, a 20-year-old sophomore elegantly related the competition emphasis to increased individualism in her culture:

I feel that individualism is more prevalent now... I did not think it was good. Humans are social animals... I feel some things could be done better by a group of people... Even I myself tend to do things more individually now... Now there are more opportunities for competition, such as competing for scholarships, (chuckle) and, various assessment activities for honors, and exam grades. In fact, we did cooperate in the lab. Although it was not very frequent, we cooperate in groups of two, groups of four or five. I feel it was a kind of cooperation... In our department, because of lab assignments, we had some opportunities to cooperate; some other people would never have such opportunities.

In summary, two themes were agreed on by participants: First, Chinese college students generally have a very strong tendency toward competition, and a very weak tendency toward cooperation. Second, the college context provides Chinese students many opportunities to compete but few opportunities to cooperate.

Discussion

This study examined perceived college student culture by asking students to describe values and cultural orientations. Findings are consistent with Arnett's statement about globalization resulting in bicultural or mixed cultural identities among young people in non-Western cultures. Traditional Chinese values and Western values identified by participants were largely consistent with characteristics attributed to collectivistic and individualistic cultures

(Triandis, 1995). Although China has been believed to be predominantly a collectivistic culture (e.g., Hofstede, 1993), participants identified influences on young people's value systems from both traditional, collectivistic sources and more recent, Western, individualistic sources. This mixture may be related to students' observations about challenges they experience when attempting to balance group harmony with increasingly urgent pressure for competitiveness.

Results suggest that individualism is increasingly important among college students, indicating a shift to a more loose culture. Competition, a major characteristic of individualistic societies, was identified by all participants as a dominant characteristic of college student culture. In contrast, cooperation, a major characteristic of collective societies, was considered by participants to be weakly held. A majority of participants observed that today's Chinese college students tend to be more individual-oriented than group-oriented, another indicator of growing looseness in Chinese culture.

Participants perceived that the growing emphasis on individualism and competition in modern Chinese reflects both external, Western influences and an internal political emphasis on increased productivity, economic reform, and higher quality of life. To the extent that participants' perception is correct, the trend toward individualism and competition in the university community is likely to continue. As argued by Cai (2005), Chinese society will shift toward individualism and away from collectivism as long as current political and economic goals remain dominant.

These findings raise important questions for educational authorities in China. First, higher education's managerial system, originally designed to nurture collectivism and close social ties (e.g., students organized by classes, official activities based on classes), may no longer serve that purpose effectively. Participants reported that individualism and competition are

outpacing cooperation among today's college students, which is counter to the traditional effort to cultivate collectivism and a tight culture with strong cooperative norms. In a larger picture, if college students today are not learning how to cooperate with others, it is reasonable to doubt their ability to be effective in social cooperation and civic engagement tomorrow when they are the main work force. Study participants pointed out that campus organizations have the potential to foster social cooperation, but they were able to identify few concrete examples of such cooperation, suggesting an inconsistency between the goals and outcomes in this aspect of Chinese higher education.

Although competition was believed to be important, and cooperation was believed to be less important, the findings show that participants experienced some stress resulting from intense competition, and many expressed desires for more opportunities for cooperation. To help create more balance between competition and cooperation for students, authorities could encourage more cooperation in class-related activities. For example, course instructors could give more group-based assignments, providing regular opportunities for students to practice cooperative skills and potentially leading to more effective citizenship contributions in the future. Another possible measure is to make sure there are plenty of opportunities for voluntary extracurricular associations and group leisure activities. According to social capital theories, "leisure provides opportunities for more unfettered social interaction, creating potentially richer social ties in which social capital can be generated" (Glover & Hemingway, 2005). By nurturing values that facilitate social cooperation, voluntary extracurricular activities and associations may enhance civic and social well-being (Putman, 2000).

This study describes how 14 Chinese college students perceived traditional Chinese values and Western values in their own lives, as well as the lives of fellow students. The study

provides, however, limited information on differences in cultural values within or between individuals or over time. Given the accelerating pace of globalization, it would be valuable to conduct larger scale, longitudinal monitoring of potential shifts in cultural values among college students. As emerging adults in the midst of cultural identity exploration, college students may be uniquely susceptible to globalization's effects, and, in most societies, college students are destined to become social leaders. A deeper understanding of how college students respond to traditional and non-traditional cultural influences may demonstrate how to help students find positive ways to integrate traditional values with an emerging multicultural perspective. The potential benefits touch many aspects of quality of life, including family harmony, career choice and success, responsible participation in community and political life, and productive leisure.

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CHAPTER 4

THE MEANINGS OF LEISURE FOR CHINESE COLLEGE STUDENTS: GENDER DIFFERENCES AND IDENTITY EXPLORATION AMONG EMERGING ADULTS

Abstract

College students are going through a life period called emerging adulthood, the transition from adolescence to adulthood. Emerging adults are believed to enjoy more freedom and opportunities than during their other life stages to explore identity through leisure activities, and leisure provides an important context for both individual and social identity exploration. In this qualitative study involving 16 participants, emphasis is on describing the meaning of leisure in the lives of Chinese college students. This article explores gender differences in leisure preferences and the self-reported likelihood of persistence of college leisure activities into later stages of life. Women were found more likely than men to orient their leisure toward relationships with others. In contrast, men were more likely than women to report participating in physical activities, structured organizational activities, and playing cards and chess. Men also seemed to show more interest than women in starting new leisure activities or improving skills for leisure activities. The majority of men in this study perceived that it was unlikely to continue their current college leisure activities after graduation, while the majority of women believed their current college leisure activities would persist into later stages of life. Time spent on leisure activities was also explored through examining shifts in activity choices in and the intensity of participation between high school and college. Findings revealed a substantial increase in engagement in leisure activities in college, suggesting strongly that the transition from high school to college is especially beneficial to Chinese emerging adults in terms of identity exploration through leisure.

Keywords: meaning of leisure, Chinese college students, identity formation, gender difference, emerging adults

Target Journal: *Journal of Leisure Research*

Description: “The *Journal of Leisure Research (JLR)* is a quarterly journal devoted to original investigations that contribute new knowledge and understanding to the field of leisure studies” (National Recreation and Park Association, 2009). This is widely considered to be one of the two leading peer-reviewed U.S. journals that focus specifically on leisure.

Rationale: This article is very focused on expanding our understanding of changes in leisure patterns experienced as Chinese students pass from high school to the college context. An international paper of qualitative design, it provides insight into a little-known aspect of leisure in China and provides a comparison to studies of college students’ leisure patterns that have been conducted almost exclusively in the U.S. and other western nations.

Introduction

The experience of leisure is believed to enhance and reflect the quality of life or well-being of both the individual and the society of which the individual is a part (e.g., Henderson, 1993; Cutler-Riddick & Steward, 1994; Freysinger, 1995). Leisure is usually an important part of a person's total life experience. It is subject to all of the forces, personal or environmental, that impinge on the individual, and in turn leaves its mark on the individual's lifestyle (Neulinger, 1978). Studies of college students' leisure experiences can enhance the understanding of students' lives and the environmental contexts they experience, thereby helping educators, policy makers and service providers improve the quality of higher education and contribute positively to students' personal development during their college years.

Emerging Adults and Leisure

In the past decade some psychologists (e.g., Arnett, 2000) have argued that the late teens and early twenties, referred to as "emerging adulthood," have become a distinct period of the life course. During emerging adulthood, life is highly dynamic, characterized by rapid change and exploration of possible life directions. Identity explorations make emerging adulthood an especially full and intense time of life for many people. Arnett (2000) pointed out that emerging adults are endowed with increasing freedom and opportunities to explore identity through leisure activities because they are less likely to be monitored by parents and not yet fully constrained by adult roles. As a result emerging adults can pursue novel and intense experiences more freely than adolescents or adults. Kleiber (1999) stated that leisure affords the opportunity to explore alternative ways of thinking and being, and that it is often in the liberating context of leisure that identity alternatives are initially considered. He stated that leisure contributes most to identity

formation under certain circumstances (e.g., for some people cooperative encouragement may build confidence), but under some other circumstances leisure may actually constrain identity formation (e.g., leisure activities that isolate people from social interaction may delay social skill development).

Research (e.g., Kivel, 1998; Evans & Poole, 1991; Silbereisen & Todt, 1994) has supported the assertion that leisure provides an important context for young people's (i.e., emerging adults') identity formation, including the development of personal identity (individual, core characteristics) and social identity (self in relation to others, group membership, and social identification with a group). It has been suggested that leisure contexts provide emerging adults with opportunities to successfully integrate personal and social identity, facilitate transition to adulthood, and provide a space for embedding or framing identities (Kivel, 1998). For example, sports contexts were found to provide opportunity for the acquisition and development of new skills and competencies (Danish, Petitpas & Hale, 1990), and activities such as sports, music, drama and art have been shown to provide young people with opportunities to explore and commit to different aspects of identity, thus serving as a link between childhood play and adult responsibilities (Kleiber, 1999). Understanding young people within the contexts in which they live and play has been argued to be critical, because these contexts assist young people in the process of framing different aspects of their identities (Heath & McLaughlin, 1993).

Leisure and the College Context

Research findings in North America (Raymore, Barber & Eccles, 2001) suggest that a) the transition from high school to university life is highly beneficial to young people in terms of leisure because of a decrease in the number of constraints, an increase in the number of facilities,

and the new world of peers, professors, and experiences unique to undergraduates; b) the university provides a near ideal environment for cultivating new interests and perfecting and consolidating leisure behaviors already chosen, as full-time students have an advantage in leisure through privileged access to sports, social, and cultural facilities, and the college context may attract some students because of these leisure resources; c) while college attendance may facilitate the maintenance of involvement in leisure behaviors, time spent in leisure participation declines compared to adolescence, which may be related to responsibilities associated with college attendance. Although there is an overall tendency of high leisure participants in high school to maintain greater levels of participation in college than do low high school leisure participants, all students declined in their extracurricular participation from high school to college (see Raymore et al., 2001 for specific citation sources).

Although helpful to understanding leisure in the college context in North America, the findings described previously may not be applicable to leisure in the Chinese college context. For example, activities chosen by Raymore, Barber, Eccles and Godbey (1999) and Raymore et al. (2001) to study leisure patterns may not be relevant to Chinese students. Tao, Dong, Pratt, Hunsberger and Pancer (2000) described briefly several unique aspects of the Chinese college context. For instance, the system for student management in Chinese universities is group-based, which may be another indication that American models of leisure activities may not be readily applied to the Chinese population.

Recent contributions to the literature by Walker, Jackson and Deng (2007), Walker, Deng and Chapman (2007), and Walker, Jackson and Deng (2008) have explored perceived leisure constraints and leisure attitude differences between Chinese and Canadian college students, with one study comparing the Chinese and Canadian recreating public. Walker and colleagues tested

several leisure theories built largely from North American leisure research and demonstrated the complexity of applying North American leisure theory when studying leisure in the Chinese context. For example, only very general statements about leisure activity participation intentions were possible because of probable differences in activity patterns between the two countries. In a study of leisure motivation differences between Chinese and Canadian college students, Walker and Wang (2008) reported relatively few leisure motivation differences. They recognized, however, limitations caused by sampling difficulty, the challenge of generalizing to comparable populations of interest, and complex logistics that can lead to oversight errors, and they recommended addressing these limitations by conducting more cross-cultural leisure research.

The Meaning of Leisure

In North America the meaning of leisure has been examined from many different perspectives and through a variety of disciplinary approaches (Mannell & Kleiber, 1997). Free time, activity, and a state of mind have been commonly recognized as dimensions of leisure (e.g., Neulinger, 1978; Kelly & Godbey, 1992; Godbey, 2003). Iso-Ahola (1999), however, pointed out that leisure does not occupy all free time. He also argued that, although some obligatory activities can be turned into a kind of leisure, generally speaking, they are not true leisure because they are not activities people found “inherently interesting in the first place” (p. 38).

Unlike Iso-Ahola, some scholars believe leisure is always accompanied by obligations and responsibilities. For example, Kelly (1999) argued that leisure is bound to the roles and developmental requirements of life, and thus cannot be free of obligations and responsibilities. Stebbins (2000) went further, explaining the relationship between obligation and leisure by distinguishing an “agreeable” obligation from a “disagreeable” one. He argued that while

disagreeable obligation has nothing to do with leisure, agreeable obligation is “an attitude and form of behavior that is very much a part of leisure” (p. 154).

Neulinger (1978) identified relatively stable and independent attitude dimensions in the leisure domain, which include factors such as affinity for leisure (the person's liking of leisure as well as self-perceived capacity for it), society's role in leisure planning (dealing with a wide range of potential free time activities and the position that society should take regarding these activities), self-definition through leisure or work (relative importance of work and leisure in a person's life, and more particularly, the degree to which the person defines self either through work or leisure), amount of leisure perceived (the amount of perceived leisure and degree of satisfaction with that amount), and amount of work or vacation desired. As Neulinger (1978) pointed out, the strongest factor in the development of leisure attitudes is a person's cultural background, and it may be impossible to lift attitudes out of the context of one culture and implant them into another.

Many scholars (e.g., Chang & Card, 1992; Deng, Walker, & Swinnerton, 2006) agree that the concept of leisure generally has had a negative connotation traditionally in Chinese culture, and that Chinese people tend to place greater emphasis on education and a strong work ethic than on leisure. Physical activities and masculinity, in traditional Chinese culture, generally were not valued either, and were associated with the lower social class, likely a result of the influential Confucian belief that “those who work with their brains rule; those who work with their brawn are ruled” (e.g., Brownell, 1995). Certain “elite” leisure activities, such as the “four arts” (Si Yi) or the “four leisure time pleasures” (Yan Xian Si Shi), i.e., music, chess, calligraphy, painting (Qin Qi Shu Hua), however, seemed to bear no negative meanings at all; on the contrary, they

were highly desired and actively pursued by scholars through a long period of Chinese history (e.g., Clunas, 1997).

Chang and Card (1992) argue that three specific features of traditional Chinese society (agriculture as the base of living, family as the core of life, and Confucianism as the root of thought) heavily shaped Chinese people's leisure lifestyle, and as a result, students are usually too busy studying to play, people maintain an enjoyable yet easy life, they lack ideals to explore future enjoyment, they spend most of their spare time on relaxing or being with friends or family, and their leisure lifestyle seems to be more conservative than that of Americans. In modern China, however, as a result of more than two decades of rapid social and economic change and increasing exposure to the Western world, many features of traditional Chinese society have inevitably changed, and the values held by Chinese people are also shifting, especially among emerging adults (see Chapter 3). Consequently, leisure attitudes and lifestyles of Chinese young people today may differ from those of previous generations.

Leisure and Gender

Research suggests that gender differences in leisure participation are common. For example, Colley (1984) suggested that while men and women may share similar lifestyles, they may have different leisure needs and preferences, and they may derive different forms of satisfaction from similar leisure activities (as cited by Raymore, et al., 1999). Henderson and Allen (1991) illustrated that women's leisure was more likely than men's to exhibit an "ethic of care" that orients leisure toward relationships with others. Raymore et al. (2001) suggested that, compared to leisure patterns of young men, leisure patterns of young women were more dependent on the contextual variables that accompany the transition from adolescence to young

adulthood. Chen (1998) found that among both American and Chinese college students, men were significantly more likely than women to engage in physical activity and exercise. Jackson and Henderson (1995) suggested that women experienced more constraint than men in physical activity. These findings all point to the importance of including gender as a perspective for studying leisure.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to describe how Chinese college students view the role of leisure in their lives. Research questions included:

- 1) What are the leisure preferences of college students in China? More specifically,
 - a) what leisure activities do students spend most time on?
 - b) what are students' favorite leisure activities?
 - c) what activities do students wish to do but cannot? and
 - d) what leisure activities during college years are likely to persist later in life?
- 2) What are the perceived meanings of college students' leisure?
- 3) Does engagement in leisure activities differ from high school to college? and
- 4) Are there gender differences regarding the previous research questions?

Methods

This study was one of three simultaneous studies conducted with Chinese college students. The participants, context, data collection and analysis methods described here are restricted to this study.

Study Participants and Study Context

Because the researcher's goal was to understand the role of leisure in the lives of typical college student, "ordinary" cases were more welcome than extreme or unusual cases. Participants were obtained by a combination of purposeful and snowball sampling. Sixteen participants (8 men, 8 women) 19 to 25 years old were recruited from a large comprehensive university that admits students from all parts of China, including three first-year students, four sophomores, five juniors, and four seniors from 11 different majors.

The university has two campuses in Xi'an, a city in central China with a population of over seven million people at the time of the study. About half of the university students major in physical sciences and live on the older main campus. The remainder have other majors and were moved to a new campus in summer, 2002. Shuttle buses and public transportation are available between the two campuses. Like most Chinese universities, this university has walled campuses with security guards at each gate. Students are required to live in campus dormitories, with four to six students sharing one room. On the old campus, dorm rooms do not have bathrooms; the new campus has a bathroom in each dorm room. Similar to most Chinese universities, this university uses a two-semester system, with spring semester beginning in February and ending in July.

Data Collection

Data were collected during spring semester, 2003, using time diaries and semi-structured interviews. Between June 12 and 21, participants were asked to complete time diaries for three to six days. They recorded the time, duration, location of extra-curricular and leisure activities, other participants, other things they did at the same time, and whether or not they consider each

activity leisure. The researcher used each participant's time diary information about the structure and types of leisure activities to guide a semi-structured, in-depth interview with that individual. Between June 19 and June 27, interviews were conducted at campus locations chosen by participants. During interviews, participants were asked to provide additional information about their leisure activities and perceived meanings of leisure. All interviews were audio-tape recorded for transcription.

Data Analysis

Data analysis began when the first time diaries were collected. For each time diary collected, recorded activities were briefly summarized to generate information as to how the participant spent time for leisure, and what leisure activities the individual seemed to spend the most time on. This provided a foundation for subsequent interview. Each interview began with a discussion of the researcher's tentative summary of the individual's time diary.

The process of data analysis for this qualitative study went through four phases described by Creswell (1998) — transcribing and organizing data into electronic files; proof-reading data and recording observations; describing, classifying and interpreting data; and presenting data. After transcription (in Chinese), each time diary was read multiple times and examined deductively, based on the research questions (e.g., what leisure activities did the individual participated in?) and interview questions (e.g., what activities did the individual enjoy most?). Answers to each question from each participant were then translated into English and entered into a spreadsheet according to participant and interview question. After the spreadsheet was completed in English, contents were read multiple times and coding was validated by using cross-case analysis to identify common themes.

Results

Out-of-Class Time, Free time and Leisure: Words Mean Different Things to Different People

The participants were asked if the terms out-of-class time (“kewai shijian”), free time (“kongxian”), and leisure (“xianxia”) meant the same to them. Responses suggested that participants understood these three terms in *four* different ways:

1) *Out-of-class time > free time = leisure*. Half of the participants believed that free time was the same as leisure, meaning time put aside for activities or time left to oneself after tasks related to study and work were complete. To these participants, out-of-class time was a much broader term, during which there were things one had to do; it was not just free time or leisure.

2) *Out-of-class time = free time + leisure*. Some participants believed free time and leisure had different meanings. To them, free time meant time when one had nothing to do and felt bored, while leisure meant time when they had something interesting to do, or when one felt comfortable and relaxed even though one did not have anything to do. These participants believed out-of-class time equaled the sum of free time and leisure.

3) *Out-of-class time = free time = leisure*. Some participants believed there was no difference in meanings between the three words. All three were equivalent. All time out of class was free time and all free time was leisure.

4) *Out-of-class time ≠ free time ≠ leisure*. Some participants thought the three terms were totally different from each other. To them, out-of-class time was time right before, after, or between classes; free time might be time when one had nothing to do and felt bored; leisure was when one had a long period of time for recreation such as over a weekend.

These findings indicate that for future research on leisure with a Chinese sample, it is important to clearly define or explain the chosen term to make sure that participants and the

researcher have the same interpretation of the concept. For this research, when necessary (depending on each participant's response) the researcher would explain that "out-of-class time" in the interview questions referred to all time out of class, "free time" in the interview questions was used in a broad way to indicate discretionary time that included both "interesting" recreational time and time when one had nothing to do, while "leisure activities" in the interview questions meant activities participated voluntarily during "free time."

Leisure Preferences: Taking Gender into Consideration

A summary list of activities participants spent the most time on, participants' favorite leisure activities and things they could not do but wished they would be able to do during free time is presented in Table 4.1.

Leisure activities participants spent the most time on.

Although it appeared that both men and women spent substantial time on physical activities or sports, close examination revealed that the types of physical activities or sports and nature of participation differed between men and women in the study. Women tended to combine physical exercises with socializing, and it was often hard to separate the two. For example, some women spent time "walking and chatting with friends" or doing other physical exercises with friends with chatting as an important part of the activity. In comparison to women, men seemed to focus more on the sport per se and less on relationships with others. Men were also more actively involved in physical activities such as playing basketball and soccer. More men than women played cards and chess, although one woman reported spending substantial time playing cards with other women. Men also spent more time than women participating in organizational activities. For example, one man spent a few afternoons each week volunteering at the Student

Affairs Office, another man enjoyed a lot of time working for the university radio station, and a third man spent many of his evenings handing out and collecting materials as a student leader in class.

Favorite leisure activities.

For men, the two favorite activities mentioned most frequently were sports and reading for pleasure. For women, two favorite activities mentioned most frequently were chatting with friends and listening to music. In comparison to men in the study, women showed a distinct preference for activities that facilitated socializing with friends. Using leisure activities to maintain close interpersonal relationships with others appears to be more important to women's activity enjoyment than to men's. Only one man in this study mentioned socializing (visiting friends) as a favorite activity.

Men preferred active sports and reported enjoying these sports for the "excitement," while women who participated in sports emphasized their social function (e.g., "being with friends"). There also seemed to be a difference in this study between women and men in their preference for listening to music. No man in this study identified listening to music as a favorite activity, while it was at the top of the women's list. Was this just a coincidence, or were there important reasons? Lack of supporting evidence, however, makes it impossible to explain this difference without conducting additional research.

Wishes and constraints.

Participants' explanations of why they could not do things they wished to do were analyzed using the leisure constraints framework (Crawford, Jackson & Godbey, 1991), which include three types of constraints: intrapersonal (e.g., lack of confidence), interpersonal (e.g., lack of partner), and structural (e.g., lack of resources). Examples of all three types of constraints

TABLE 4.1. *Leisure Preferences of Female and Male Participants*

<i>Leisure activities participants spent the most time on</i>	<i>Participants' favorite leisure activities</i>	<i>Activities participants wished to do during free time but could not</i>
Chatting/socializing (15) Woman (8) Man (7)	Sports (7) Woman (2) Man (5)	To develop skills for leisure activities (5) Woman (1) Man (4)
Physical exercises/sports (11) Woman (6) Man (5)	Reading for pleasure (7) Woman (2) Man (5)	To develop a closer and responsible relationship with others (3) Woman (3) Man (0)
Reading for pleasure (9) Woman (5) Man (4)	Chatting/socializing (4) Woman (4) Man (0)	To travel (3) Woman (2) Man (1)
Computer use (6) Woman (2) Man (4)	Listening to music Woman (4) Man (0)	Cannot think of anything (3) Woman (2) Man (1)
Playing cards/Chinese chess (5) Woman (1) Man (4)	Wandering around off campus (3) Woman (0) Man (3)	To acquire knowledge (2) Woman (2) Man (0)
Listening to radio/music (4) Woman (2) Man (2)	Window-shopping with friends (2) Woman (2) Man (0)	To improve computer skills (2) Woman (1) Man (1)
Window-Shopping (4) Woman (2) Man (2)	Computer Use (2) Woman (1, Internet) Man (1, computer games)	To watch soccer/ basketball games on TV(1) Woman (0) Man (1)
Organizational activities (3) Woman (0) Man (3)	Hobby (2) Woman (1, photography) Man (1, violin)	To do service learning (1) Woman (0) Man (1)
Writing diary (1) Woman (0) Man (1)	Sleeping (1 woman) Snacking (1 woman) Student organization (1 woman) Writing diary (1 woman) Thinking (1 man) Visiting friends (1 man)	To play whole-heartedly (1) Woman (0) Man (1)

Note. Numbers in parentheses indicate the number of participants who referred to each activity.

were found among participants' explanations.

More men than women expressed wishes for starting new leisure activities or improving skills for leisure activities and identified constraints that prevented them from doing so. For example, Hongyi, a 21-year-old sophomore, said besides traveling, he wished he could participate in "risky activities such as mountain climbing, rock climbing or camping," but now he had neither time nor money for those activities (structural constraints). Jianchun, a 25-year-old senior, wished he could find a Go (a type of chess game known as "Weiqi" in Chinese) master as a teacher to help him improve his skills. Although he could sometimes play with a person who was better than him, both of them "had to have time and be in the right mood to play," which did not always happen (interpersonal constraints). Liusha, a 22-year-old sophomore, wished he could learn to play guitar and participate in Tae Kwon Do. However, he was concerned that these might be too difficult to learn or might "disturb study and other normal activities in life" (intrapersonal constraints). Xiaomin, a 23-year-old junior, wished he could watch soccer and basketball games on television, but cable television was not available in the dorm (structural constraints). In contrast, Xiaoyun, a 24-year-old senior, was the only woman who mentioned wishing to start a leisure activity (tennis), but she said she could not do it because she did not have a racquet, did not have a partner, and was not confident that she had the required physical strength (all three types of leisure constraints).

Women, on the other hand, tended to identify constraints that prevented them from developing relationships with others. Throughout her interview, Xiaoyun, a 24-year-old senior, demonstrated the value she placed on relationships with others. Attending the university from another province, she wished to maintain communications with classmates and thus develop closer friendships. She enjoyed communicating with classmates but it was not easy to have the

opportunity because people went their own ways after class. Yiling, a 23-year-old senior, wished to be able to shoulder responsibilities for other people such as friends, but felt she did not have the financial ability and necessary strength to shoulder real responsibilities. She also wished to start a romantic relationship, but had not yet met the right person. No male participants mentioned interests in additional interpersonal relationships.

In terms of constraints to improving computer skills and acquiring knowledge, structural constraints such as lack of resources (e.g., computers were expensive to buy) and lack of access (e.g., professors in question were at another university and transportation was not readily available), and the intrapersonal constraint of lack of competence (e.g., did not know how to access knowledge from another field and how to teach oneself) were the main obstacles perceived by participants.

Anticipated continuation of leisure activities after graduation.

Men's and women's answers to the question "are you likely to continue the leisure activities you do now after graduation" took opposite patterns. The majority of men answered "not likely (even if I want to)," and the majority of women answered "yes, I will continue." Men explained that after getting jobs they would have less free time, higher job pressure and less access to facilities, that post-college leisure-time resources would be less rich and varied than on the university campus, and that it would be harder for them to find partners to play team sports. Only Jinsheng and Liusha, two young men who anticipated working as middle school teachers, were certain they would continue their college leisure activities after graduation. Jinsheng, a senior who liked playing ping-pong and chess, was the only man who perceived that he would have more free time after taking a job — he planned to work as a middle school geography teacher. Further probing revealed, however, that Jinsheng anticipated continuing to play ping-

pong and listen to music but discontinuing chess. He believed it would be hard to find a chess partner with similar skill levels, and playing chess was too time-consuming for a person with a full-time job. He anticipated resuming chess as a hobby after he retired and had more time.

Liusha, a sophomore who was actively involved in extracurricular activities, said he had already passed the second-level national exam to referee soccer and would like to organize his future high school students to play.

Unlike the men, most women anticipated continuing their current leisure activities after college, such as chatting with friends, listening to music, reading, window-shopping and doing physical exercises. Yeke, a 19-year-old first-year student, described her college activities as “basic” ones that ought to be continued. Lulu, a 21-year-old junior, perceived that she would have more free time after getting a job, and Xuewei, a 23-year-old junior, said she would be able to participate in richer and more varied activities after graduation. Only two women were not certain if their jobs would allow them time to continue the current activities.

One explanation for such a pronounced difference in men’s and women’s answer patterns may be that, compared to the women, the men were actually more active in sports that depended more on leisure facilities (e.g., playing fields and equipment) provided by the university. Women’s activities, on the other hand, focused more on relationships and were less dependent on leisure facilities or partners with specific skills.

Perceived Meanings of Leisure

Study participants were asked to explain the importance of their leisure, their feelings about out-of-class time, self-definition through work versus leisure, and the expression of their talents through work versus leisure. Men and women expressed some systematic differences,

particularly regarding their feelings about out-of-class time and the expression of their talents through work versus leisure.

Importance of leisure.

Leisure was understood to be important for its contribution to work, health, interpersonal relationships and personal development. Participants perceived that leisure provides a balance to life in terms of a work-play relationship. It provides relaxation after work and recharges a person for higher productivity. Leisure also was believed to bring happiness and help individuals keep a peaceful mind and steady mood. Participants believed that individuals need leisure time to reflect and make plans, to communicate with others, and to learn new things.

Two women, however, did not believe leisure was important. Yeke, a 19-year-old first-year student, said that, although leisure time was necessary after a particularly busy period of work, it was not important in daily life. Xieling (21, sophomore) stated “it might be better if there were no leisure. I want to live the kind of life in which you are busy all day, and when you get tired because of study, you go to sleep. You won't have much time to think about other things — [having much time thinking about other things] would make me feel bored. I don't know what to do with so much free time.”

Feelings about out-of-class time.

All men in this study said they generally felt fulfilled by out-of-class time, either because it provided many things to do or because they really enjoyed the relaxation. Women's attitudes, on the other hand, were less uniform. Some women said their feelings fluctuated depending on their emotions and moods — sometimes they felt they had many things to do and sometimes they felt very bored, with their feelings changing over time. For example, Yeke, a 19-year-old first-year student, felt at a loss and bored during her first semester because she did not know how to

deal with the great increase in free time. During the second semester she tried to make her schedule busier and she felt better. Yiling, a graduating senior, on the other hand, said she had taken extra courses and studied all day in her junior year, but now that she was close to graduation she did not have as many things to do and felt very bored.

Xieling, a quiet 20-year-old whose major was decided by her family without considering her interest, admitted that she spent a lot of her out-of-class time studying alone and generally felt bored. She said, “[I am] pretty bored, perhaps because I don't have close friends here. Perhaps I would not be bored if I had a goal in my heart and close friends around me. I have never been interested in my major and don't want to study it if I were to go to graduate school.”

Self-definition through work/study or leisure.

Participants were asked whether they would talk about their work (study) or their leisure activities (or other things) if they were to describe themselves to someone. Findings demonstrated that, for many participants (men and women), leisure provided an important context for development of personal identity (individual, core characteristics) and social identity (self in relation to others). As an example, Yiling, a 23-year-old senior, said, “[I will talk about] leisure. Only leisure belongs to myself and is my own thing. Study is not.” Liusha, a 22-year-old sophomore, was also more inclined to talk about his extracurricular activity than study:

I don't like to talk about study and I don't think others are interested in listening to that.

People may be more interested in my work experience [voluntary organizational service as an extracurricular activity — note by author], and have common interest in sports. I am most different from others in that I have this opportunity to work in the [Student Affairs] office.

Jinsheng, a 25-year-old senior, felt talking about leisure preferences were more likely to help him make friends, something important to him: “Talking about study and work is not very exciting... Talking about leisure, what you liked to do during leisure time, things others share the same interest in, then it is easier to make friends.” Xiaoyun, a 23-year-old senior, also made her decision based on likelihood of forging friendships:

[I will talk about] thoughts in leisure time. Because my grades put me in this situation...

People would say ‘she was recommended to graduate school’ or ‘she excelled in study’...

I hate it when people say that; it creates obstacles for me when I interact with others... I like to be with others.

Two participants reported that they would talk about both work (study) and leisure, and only one man, Hongyi, said he would talk only about study and work. Hongyi was a 21-year-old sophomore who was very active in sports. He explained that he valued study and work more and felt one “had to” talk about it because one needs to work. As the interview question was asked in a way to allow answers free from the work (study) and leisure dichotomy, “life” emerged as a salient theme from participants’ responses, which included personal ambitions, attitudes, values and opinions, feelings and emotions, and personalities. Some participants preferred talking about these individual characteristics directly.

Talents expressed in work/study or leisure.

Half of the women and half of the men felt their talents or capabilities were better expressed in study or work. This was, perhaps, not surprising since to be admitted to the university the students had to be highly competitive in high school academics. Among the women who believed that their talents were better expressed in leisure, a common theme

emerged. They believed their talents were expressed in good interpersonal skills in the context of unstructured leisure. For example, Yiling, a 23-year-old senior, said that although people mostly saw her achievements in study and work, she personally preferred play and thought her talents were better expressed through interacting with people in leisure, emphasizing that she meant “interpersonal relationships in leisure, not interpersonal relationships in work.” Similarly, Lulu, a 20-year-old junior, said her talent was better expressed in leisure because people saw her as someone who was “really good at making friends with different kinds of people, even with people met for the first time.”

The men who did not believe that their talents were better expressed in work, however, had more diverse explanations than the women. Jinsheng, a 25-year-old senior, said his talents were equally expressed in study and leisure, and he felt the same sense of achievement whether it was defeating a competent opponent in Go (a kind of chess) or receiving high praise for an academic paper he wrote for class. Tongping, a first-year student of 20, said he did not know where his talent was better expressed and he was still exploring. Liusha, a 22-year-old sophomore, and Muzi, a 22-year-old first-year student, were both actively involved in structured organizational activities. Liusha worked for the Student Affairs Office and was a member of the Physical Education Club; Muzi worked for the university radio station and was a member of the Performing Arts Society. They both saw their talents particularly expressed in their abilities and leadership skills in extracurricular organizational activities.

Transition from High School to College

All participants in this study clearly expressed the perception that they had significantly more free time in college than in high school. In fact, for some participants discretionary time

had increased so much in college that they did not know what to do with it. Most participants also said they were engaged in more types of free time activities than in high school. The few who participated in the same kinds of free time activities as in high school said they certainly spent much more time on those activities now that they were in college. Participants identified three reasons that their leisure time and activity participation increased in college: 1) relief from the constraints imposed by the highly competitive National College Admission Exams for high school students; 2) access to better leisure opportunities and facilities on the university campus; and 3) the new world of peers and experiences in college. For instance, Muzi, a 22-year-old first-year student, perceived that he studied more in high school:

In high school besides eating and sleeping I just studied. Now I have a lot of time... Life is filled with rich and varied activities now. I have many things to do... In high school [I] did not even dare to think about such [activities], for if you thought about such things you would fail the college admission exams, then you would be done for.

Hongyi, a 21-year-old sophomore, also saw opportunities increase greatly in college: “Activities were too few in high school...[I] only played basketball occasionally in high school, nothing else. In college I try almost every activity I can see on campus.” Reflecting on his college years as they came to an end, Jinsheng, a 25-year-old senior, described the increase in free time and opportunities that had been afforded by college:

[I had] too much more free time now (chuckle)... I had no free time in high school, just studied. Sometimes we had only half a day off a week, which was used to wash clothes. It was really boring (chuckle)... I learned how to play Chinese chess and ping-pong after I came to college...I grew up in a rural village where there was nothing...I first saw a ping-pong ball when I was in high school, but never played with it. After I entered

college, I took a class in my second year learning how to play ping-pong. During my first year in college I did not know how to play Chinese chess yet. I enjoyed watching others play very much. However, in a couple of years I became really good at it (chuckle). I feel I am the top player in my class... of course there is a sense of achievement (chuckle).

Women students also recognized these differences between high school and college. Yeke, a 19-year-old first-year student said:

In high school, under the pressure of college admission exams, I thought everything about play was a waste of time, so I did not go window-shopping, I did not use the Internet, and I refused to join any student organizations. Now already in college, I regard these things as channels to learning about society, even window-shopping is a way to learn about life. And by participating in student organization activities, I learn how to communicate with others, and learn about interpersonal interaction, cooperation, task management, and competition for power.

Some women acknowledged the increase in free time attributable to completing college admission exams, but they also explained that they had more diverse free time opportunities in college. For example, Xiaoyun, a 23-year-old senior, said:

I hardly participated in any activities in high school. Now I have participated more than before... because the facilities are better here than in high school. Another reason is, as the pressure of college admission exams is gone, we have more time for ourselves. We have more time socializing with others. I feel this is very important.

Discussion

Identity Exploration through Leisure Activities

Findings from this study strongly supported the argument that the transition from high school to college affords increased time and opportunity for leisure. All participants in this study stated that they had significantly more free time in college than in high school, engaged in more free time activities or spent more time on leisure activities they had participated in previously. These differences between high school and college are consistent with research findings in North America, which suggest that the transition from high school to university life is highly beneficial to young people in terms of leisure because of a decrease in the number of constraints, an increase in the number of facilities, and a new world of peers, professors, and experiences. Universities provide a near ideal environment for cultivating new interests and perfecting and consolidating leisure behaviors already chosen (see Raymore et al., 2001).

However, the tendency of participants in this study to report a major increase in free time from high school to college appears to be at odds with findings in North America, where leisure time and participation in extracurricular activities decrease when students leave high school and enter college (see Raymore et al., 2001). This may be due to differences in Chinese and North American educational systems that render different pressures for students during high school and college. For example, Chinese students are required to compete in the National College Admission Exams, resulting in a heavy investment of study time during high school. Other differences may be identified in future research.

The increased time and opportunities for leisure experience accompanying the transition from high school to college may be especially beneficial to Chinese emerging adults in terms of identity exploration. Jinsheng, for example, who studied all the time in high school learned to be

a good chess player and ping-pong player in college, which brought him a sense of achievement and a lot of new friends. Like him, during college years many Chinese emerging adults were able to experiment with alternatives in identity through leisure activities, which many did not have opportunities to do in high school. As Kleiber (1999) suggests, the liberating context of leisure often allows people previously unknown opportunities for identity exploration. Lilin, a 20-year-old junior participant, beautifully summed up her belief about the meanings of leisure: “In leisure, everyone can show his/her talent or potential; everyone is different.”

Gender Differences

Women who participated in this study were more likely than men to orient their leisure toward relationships with others, which is consistent with findings in North America (e.g., Henderson & Allen, 1991). In contrast, men who participated in this study were more likely than women to engage in physical activities and structured organizational activities. The contrast between women’s tendency to listen to music and men’s tendency to play cards and chess was not explained by participants and could be explored in future research.

Men in this study were more likely than women to report a general feeling of fulfillment during out-of-class time, while women’s feelings about out-of-class time varied greatly within and across individuals. Women in this study were more likely than men to believe that their talents were better expressed in leisure, specifically in interpersonal skills in the context of unstructured leisure. Such contrasts should be further explored to help with development of gender sensitive, effective programs aiming at improving the quality of life for both men and women.

Opportunities for Leisure Education

There is evidence from this study that the sudden increase in free time when entering college and a perceived lack of knowledge about using free time well created difficulties for many students during their transition to college life. Some senior students also reported boredom or feeling of loss during their last months in school with too much free time at hand but too little to do on campus. Such situations suggest that in the Chinese college context, leisure education has a great potential to enhance students' college success by smoothing the transition from high school, and by helping students explore and strengthen their individual and social identities. College administrators may be able to improve student life quality and success by developing ways to provide leisure education for incoming students, and by providing programs that help graduating students stay involved in campus life and get ready for the "real" world.

Documenting and Understanding Chinese Leisure Experiences

Cultural differences among emerging adults seem apparent from this and other studies, but these differences are not yet well-documented or well-understood. This qualitative study provides new insight into how Chinese college students experience and understand leisure, but the study made no cross-cultural comparisons, nor are the results representative of a larger population. In contrast, Walker and others (e.g., Walker et al., 2007; Walker et al., 2008; Walker & Wang, 2008) have used quantitative methods and larger samples to make cross-cultural comparisons of influences on leisure patterns for Chinese and Canadian students, but have not used qualitative methods to fully understand or document the role of leisure in Chinese emerging adults' life experience or identity exploration. As China's rapid social and political transformation continues, a better understanding of these issues would be valuable. An improved understanding of leisure may be seen as threatening or frivolous by some, but this understanding

has the potential to advance the goals of social reform by facilitating individual and social adjustment during a period of rapid social change.

Limitations and Future Research

One limitation of this research is that the findings on “activities participants spent most time on” may or may not reflect typical activity patterns in ordinary life. Most time diaries were conducted when students could not freely leave campus, a temporary rule imposed on students by school authorities to control the spread of an epidemic. Although this temporary rule had been relaxed when data were collected and some time diaries did include off-campus activities, a bias remains likely. Similarly, because time diaries were conducted near the end of the semester, students were likely to spending more time studying for exams than during the rest of the semester, thus influencing their leisure activities patterns.

As a qualitative study, this research can inform future research on leisure of Chinese college students. Results from this research, in combination with results generated in a previous research project on discretionary time activities of Chinese college students (see Chapter 2), can be used to develop larger-scale, fixed answer surveys that can be used to describe population characteristics among Chinese college students. Future research should be multi-site, taking students from different levels of universities and different physical locations into consideration, since these differences may result in different leisure opportunities. As Chinese college students are living through a time of rapid change, repeated studies are desirable, and researchers need to be attuned to, and prepared to measure, emerging phenomena. There is the need for more broad scale understanding of influences on leisure patterns of Chinese college students and also how leisure contributes to important social and personal development issues in China.

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CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

In a quickly changing world, China is at the forefront. Quality of life is increasing for many people, but there are vast social movements in response to new opportunities emerging in this culture and efforts to protect those in society without the means to ride the coattails of increased affluence. Changes in higher education objectives, policies and management are among the movements aimed at changing the future of China by creating opportunities that will broaden the distribution of benefits.

The articles contained in this dissertation research provide a window to look into the world experienced by emerging adults in China. Opportunities provided to emerging adults affect individual and cultural identity formation that can effectively influence life choices. College students in China are worthy of careful study and monitoring to understand changing influences on these formative years. Leisure patterns and the meanings attached to leisure participation, as well as other activities pursued during discretionary time on college campuses may be one good indicator of quality of life and social change among this population. Additional studies of discretionary time choices at other universities and across a more broad geographic area could be very beneficial to understanding changes in life satisfaction based on efficiency and effectiveness of discretionary time decisions of Chinese workers in the future.

College years offer Chinese students many new opportunities to use their discretionary time. For the first time, many are expected to make decisions that will help them take advantage of institutional support during this transition period, described by the identity literature as a

moratorium state — a time of high exploration of worldviews and low commitment to existing attitudes.

All participants in this study found they had a great deal more discretionary time in college than in high school. And, contrary to findings from the U.S., most of them participated in more kinds of leisure activities in college than in high school, while others participated more intensely in already-established leisure activities. For some participants, only after entering college did they find opportunities to enjoy some activities the rest of the world might associate with China, such as ping-pong and Chinese chess, and activities as basic as ball games and aerobic exercises, which are available to much of the world population.

New leisure interests were inspired during the college years by seeing others play, taking physical education classes, or trying the facilities on campus. Some male participants who were active in leisure activities such as basketball or soccer and chess said they would be unlikely to continue these activities after leaving college because they would have neither the time nor the access to facilities they enjoyed in college. Of course, they realized they would experience substantial job pressure, something increasing rapidly as China strives for world leadership. In comparison to their adolescent years and perceived life after graduation, they saw their college years as a time of exploration and a time to determine what leisure activities to maintain in the face of post-college changes.

Students found that increased free time without increased competence in using that free time can generate problems. Many participants stated that they felt bored during the first semester in college because they did not know what to do with their increased free time. Some senior students who spent the last semester in college waiting for graduation also said they were bored, for they no longer had to take courses and they had so much time available. This provides

evidence for the importance of designing programs that help students increase their competence at using discretionary time and provide activities to “keep idle hands busy.” Well-designed programs would ease the transition to college and help senior students keep engaged in campus life and prepare for the transition from college to society.

Some students reported positive changes in response to SARS restrictions, pointing to the surprising impact of structural constraints on discretionary time decisions. Even when restricted to campus as a result of SARS, students’ leisure participation was increased by changing knowledge and opportunities. University programs designed to fend off SARS actually created environmental conditions favorable for leisure affordance to play a critical role.

Findings from this study on Chinese emerging adults’ perceptions of their cultural orientation appeared to be consistent with the suggestion that bicultural or multicultural orientations are likely to be a consequence of globalization among young people in non-Western cultures. Orientations identified by participants as traditional were consistent with characteristics associated with collectivistic cultures, and orientations identified by participants as Western were consistent with characteristics associated with individualistic cultures. Although China is often characterized as a collectivistic culture, participants identified both traditional, collectivistic influences and Western, individualistic influences on their value systems, and some students observed that balancing these disparate influences was difficult. It seems clear that a shift between traditional collectivism and a new individualism is taken place among Chinese college students.

Competition, a major characteristic of an individualistic society, was identified by all participants as a dominant characteristic of current Chinese student culture. On the other hand, cooperation, an attribute of a collective society, was recognized as beneficial by most

participants but considered weak in their current college culture. This finding was consistent with the observations made by the majority of participants in this study that college students today generally were more individual-oriented than group-oriented in their attitudes and behaviors.

Findings raise important issues for educational authorities in China. First, the managerial system that was designed to nurture collectivism and close social ties (e.g., students organized by classes, official activities based on classes) did not seem to be effective. College students today appear to be increasingly individualistic and competitive, with little sense of cooperation. If today's college students do not learn how to cooperate with others, it is reasonable to doubt their abilities in social cooperation and civic engagement when they play a prominent role in tomorrow's society. Although students report that they value cooperation, their descriptions of campus life suggest that current campus organizations are teaching them little about effective cooperation, an obvious inconsistency between the goals and outcomes of Chinese higher education.

Leisure opportunities were found to provide an important context for identity formation among these emerging adults. For many participants, leisure provided a context for personal development and said a lot about who they were. For example, some participants explained that leisure activities such as sports and student organization involvement provided them with opportunities to develop new skills, experiment with new roles, and be exposed to new norms. For others, leisure provided opportunities to demonstrate social skills and develop close relationships in a relaxed environment. Some other participants reported that leisure helped them distinguish themselves from others.

Men and women Chinese college students apparently experience leisure very differently with different motivations for participation. Men in this study seemed to be more active in

physical activities and more involved in organizational activities than women, while women seemed to orient their leisure toward relationships with others. Understanding these gender differences will assist university program designers to be responsive to student desires and facilitate productive decisions about leisure time among students.

This researcher sincerely hopes that the articles contained within this dissertation collectively can inform educators and service providers about the importance of understanding and monitoring discretionary time use among a new generation of Chinese college students, understanding globalization influences on cultural orientations of college students and proactively facilitating more research and service programs to support leisure activities that allow college students opportunities to grow into healthier, smarter, more confident and more responsible citizens as China transforms inevitably.

Although this research was a qualitative study using a small sample, and the findings cannot be generalized to a larger population, these results provide a starting point for deeper inquiry. To understand more about emerging adults in China, further research with a larger population will be needed. What happens during the period of emerging adulthood has profound influences on young people's identity, attitudes and behavior. Research on emerging adults will not only contribute to the well-being of this group, but has great potential for contribution to the understanding of intergenerational differences, a factor that guides policy making in many fields.

APPENDIX A: DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF PARTICIPANTS

No.	Name	Age	Gender	Major	Semester standing	Place of home
1	Awen	24	Male	Politics	Junior	Urban
2	Hongyi	21	Male	Chemistry	Sophomore	Rural
3	Jianchun	25	Male	History	Senior	Rural
4	Jinsheng	25	Male	Geography	Senior	Rural
5	Lilin	20	Female	English	Junior	Urban
6	Liusha	22	Male	Chemistry	Sophomore	Urban
7	Lulu	21	Female	Chinese	Junior	Urban
8	Muzi	22	Male	Tourism	Freshman	Rural
9	Tongping	20	Male	Chemistry	Freshman	Urban
10	Xiaomin	23	Male	Law	Junior	Rural
11	Xiaoyun	23	Female	Physics	Senior	Rural
12	Xieling	20	Female	Mathematics	Sophomore	Rural
13	Xuewei	23	Female	Chemistry	Junior	Rural
14	Yeke	19	Female	Psychology	Freshman	Urban
15	Yiling	23	Female	Chinese	Senior	Urban
16	Zhaoqian	20	Female	Chemistry	Sophomore	Urban

APPENDIX C: QUESTIONS FOR 1ST INTERVIEW

1

- 1) How old are you?
- 2) What is your semester standing?
- 3) What field do you major in?
- 4) Why did you choose this major?
- 5) What do your parents do for a living?
- 6) Are you the only child of your family? If not, how many brothers and sisters do you have?
- 7) Is your home located in a rural or urban area?
- 8) Who supports you while in college?

2

- 1) Do you think that the week when you kept the time diary is a typical week for you? If not, why not?
- 2) Here is a summary sheet of your time use according to your diary. Is there anything you'd like to comment on?
- 3) Here is a list of activities you do according to your time diary. Are there any other activities you do but are not included here?
- 4) Are there any activities you know that your friends or classmates do, but are not included here?
- 5) Would the Time Diary have looked different if not for SARS?
 - a. If so, what would have been different?
 - b. In what way do you think SARS has changed your daily life?
 - c. Will you totally return to your previous way of life after SARS is gone? What change are you likely to keep?
- 6)
 - a. In what way do you think the way you spend your time is similar to your classmates?
 - b. In what way do you think the way you spend your time is different from your classmates?
- 7)
 - a. According to your time diary, your out-of-class time was mostly spent on _____. Why?
 - b. According to your time diary, you participate a lot in _____. Can you tell me why?
- 8)
 - a. In your time diary, you indicated that _____ are _____ (leisure, obligation, etc.) to you. Can you elaborate a little on that?
 - b. In your time diary, you indicated that _____ are not _____ (leisure, obligation, etc.) to you. Can you elaborate a little on that?

3

- 1) Do you make a distinction between out-of-class time, free time, and leisure time? If you do, a) what are the differences? b) what percentage of out-of-class time is free time for you? What percentage is leisure time?
- 2)
 - a. What do you enjoy doing most when you have free time?

- b. What would you like to do in your free time that you cannot do now? Why can't you do that now?
- c. Is there anything you wish you would not have to do during your out-of-class hours?
- 3) What do you think are the most popular kinds of leisure activities among college students? Can you explain why they are popular?
- 4) Are you satisfied with leisure/recreational opportunities on campus? Please explain.
- 5) a. Do you think it is important to have sufficient recreational resources on campus?
- b. What recreational facilities do you currently use frequently?
- c. What facilities/programs would you like to have on campus but are not in existence at present?
- d. Are you a member of any clubs on campus, especially recreational clubs? If you are, can you briefly describe what your club does? If you are not, can you explain the reason?
- 7) What would you like to see happening on campus regarding leisure/recreational activity?

4

- 1) Do you think you have more, or less, free time now than in high school?
- 2) Are the leisure activities you do now different than that in high school? If yes, what are the differences?
- 3) Do you think you are likely to continue doing the leisure activities you do now after graduation?
 - a. What activities do you think you are likely to continue? Why?
 - b. What activities do you think you are likely to discontinue? Why?

5

- 1) If you were to describe yourself to someone, would you talk more about your work/study, or your leisure activities (or other things)?
- 2) How do you feel about your out-of-class time (e.g., have many things to do, have nothing to do, excited, bored)? Can you offer any explanations as to why you think this way?
- 3) Is leisure important to you? To what extent, and in what way?
- 4) Where are your talents and capabilities better expressed, in work, study or in leisure?
- 5) Do you believe what a person does in his/her free time is none of society's concern, or do you believe society should actively encourage or discourage what a person does in his/her free time?
- 6) What kinds of leisure/recreational/free time activities do you think society should strongly encourage?
- 7) What kinds of leisure/recreational/free time activities do you think society should strongly discourage?
- 8) If someone believes that premarital sex for pleasure only is fine, what would be your comment on that?
- 9) It is reported widely by mass media that cohabitation among college students is on the increase. a) Is this true according to your observation? b) What do you think about this? c) What role do you think universities should take regarding this issue?

6

- 1) What do you enjoy most about your college life? Why?
- 2) What do you hate most about your college life? Why?

- 3) Was it difficult for you to adapt to college life when you entered college?
 - a. What were the difficulties?
 - b. How did you cope with them?
 - c. Who could you get help and support from?
- 4) Do you think there are plenty of things for you to do on campus?
- 5) Do you like the way by which students are supervised?
 - a. What do you think that is good?
 - b. What do you think that should be changed?

7

- 1) Is there any thing you'd like to bring up or comment on regarding what we talked about up to now?
- 2) Are there any other things you'd like to talk about regarding the life of college students?

APPENDIX D: QUESTIONS FOR 2ND INTERVIEW

1

- 1) Do you think you are an adult?
- 2) What do you think must be achieved before a person can be considered an adult?
- 3) Do you think any of the following must be achieved to reach adulthood? (There are no right or wrong answers)
 - 01 Accept responsibility for the consequences of your actions
 - 02 Decide on personal beliefs and values independently of parents or other influences
 - 03 Establish a relationship with parents as equal adults
 - 04 Financially independent from parents
 - 05 No longer living in parents' household
 - 06 Capable of keeping family physically safe (man)
 - 07 Capable of running a household (woman)
 - 08 Capable of keeping family physically safe (woman)
 - 09 Capable of supporting a family financially (man)
 - 10 Capable of caring for children (woman)
 - 11 Capable of caring for children (man)
 - 12 Capable of supporting a family financially (woman)
 - 13 Avoid committing petty crimes like shoplifting and vandalism
 - 14 Use contraception if sexually active and not trying to conceive a child
 - 15 Avoid drunk driving
 - 16 Avoid using illegal drugs
 - 17 Drive an automobile safely and close to the speed limit
 - 18 Have no more than one sexual partner
 - 19 Avoid becoming drunk
 - 20 Avoid using profanity/vulgar language
 - 21 Capable of fathering children (man)
 - 22 Capable of bearing children (woman)
 - 23 Grow to full height
 - 24 Reached age 18
 - 25 Reached age 21
 - 26 Obtained driver's license
 - 27 Employed full-time
 - 28 Settle into a long-term career
 - 29 Married
 - 30 Have at least one child
 - 31 make lifelong commitments to others
 - 32 Not deeply tied to parents emotionally
 - 33 Have had sexual intercourse
 - 34 Purchased a house
 - 35 Committed to a long-term love relationship
 - 36 Learn always to have good control of your emotions
- 4) If you were to describe yourself to someone, what would you say about yourself?
- 5) What are your personal ambitions?

Among the ambitions you talked about, could you rank them according to their importance to you?

- 6) What are the goals you want to achieve during your college years?
- 7) What are the most important things to you right now?
- 8) Are you happy with your interpersonal relationships with others, such as parents, other friends, classmates, or significant others?
- 9) In general, are you happy with your current life? Please explain.

2

- 1) What do you think is more important: individual happiness, or the benefits of the collective?
- 2) What is more important to you, personal happiness, or obligations to your family?
- 3) For college students, how important do you think competition is? Why?
 - a. Do you believe competition is the law of nature?
 - b. Do you believe that without competition, it is not possible to have a good society?
 - c. Do you believe winning is everything, or are you one of those people who don't emphasize winning?
 - d. Do you enjoy working in situations involving competition with others?
 - e. Is it important to you that you do your job better than others?
 - f. Would it annoy you when other people perform better than you do?
- 4) For college students, how important do you think cooperation is? Why?
 - a. Which is more important, competition or cooperation?
 - b. Why? (Depending on the answer, may ask "under what situations")
- 5) Do you believe that your happiness depends very much on the happiness of those around you?
 - a. Is it important to you to maintain harmony within your group?
 - b. Do you think pleasure is spending time with others?
 - c. Do you feel good when you cooperate with others?
 - d. If your classmate gets a prize, would you feel proud?
 - e. Do you think the well-being of your co-workers/roommates/classmates is important to you?
 - f. If a classmate of yours were in financial difficulty, would you help within your means?
- 6) Would you usually sacrifice your self-interest for the benefit of your group?
 - a. Do you hate to disagree with others in your group?
 - b. Do you think children should be taught to place duty before pleasure?
 - c. Would you do what would please your family, even if you detested that activity? Can you give an example?
 - d. Do you think children should feel honored if their parents receive a distinguished award?
 - e. Do you think we should keep our aging parents with us at home?
 - f. Before taking a major trip, would you consult with most members of your family and many friends?
 - g. Would you sacrifice an activity that you enjoy very much if your family did not approve of it? Any example?
- 7) Do you believe what happens to you is our own doing?

- a. Do you believe that when you succeed, that is usually because of your abilities?
 - b. Do you believe one should live one's life independently of others?
 - c. Do you enjoy being unique and different from others in many ways?
 - d. Do you often do "your own thing"?
 - e. Do you think you are a unique individual?
 - f. Do you like your privacy?
- 8) Do you think most college students today are more individual-oriented or group-oriented?
- 9) Do you think the values and beliefs of college students today are influenced more by traditional values of Chinese society, or by Western values?
- a. Where do these influences come from?
 - b. What do you think of such influences? (e.g., good or bad)

3

- 1) Is there any thing you'd like to bring up or comment on regarding what we talked about up to now?
- 2) Are there any other things you think relevant and would like to talk about?

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Education

Ph.D. RPTM, The Pennsylvania State University (University Park)
M.S. Regional Geography, Shaanxi Teachers University, Xi'an, China
B.Ed. Tourism, Shaanxi Teachers University, Xi'an, China

Teaching

Visiting Lecturer, University of Montana
Introduction to Recreation Management; Recreation Administration and Leadership
Summer Course Instructor, The Pennsylvania State University
Leisure and Human Behavior
Teaching Assistant, The Pennsylvania State University
*Recreation Resource Planning and Management; Leisure and Human Behavior;
Senior Management Seminar*
Assistant Professor, Xi'an United University, China
Hospitality Management; Practical English
Course Instructor, several public and private universities in Xi'an, China
*Tourism Psychology; Tourism Resources; Basic Knowledge for Tour Guides;
Practical Writing in English; Spoken English*

Selected Presentations

Yang, H., Hutchinson, S., Zinn, H., & Xing, Y. (2005). *Living through SARS: Leisure experience of college students in China and possible explanations using affordance theory*. Paper presented in the 11th Canadian Congress on Leisure Research, Nanaimo, British Columbia, May 17-20, 2005.

Yang, H., Zinn, H., & Xing, Y. (2005). *Traditional values or western ones? Perceptions of emerging adults in China*. Paper presented in the 2nd conference on Emerging Adulthood, Miami, Florida, February 18-19, 2005.

Yang, H., Lefkowitz, E., Feng, W., & Xie, L. (2004). *An exploratory study of the leisure attitudes of Chinese emerging adults*. Poster in the 2004 NRPA Leisure Research Symposium, Reno, Nevada, October 12-16, 2004.

Yang, H., & Zinn, H. (2001). *City parks in People's Republic of China: Influential factors, current problems and directions of construction*. Poster in the 2001 Northeastern Recreation Research Symposium, Bolton Landing, New York, April 1-3, 2001.

Selected Awards

Fellowship for 8th World Wilderness Congress, September 30—October 6, 2005, Anchorage, Alaska

George Melendez Wright Student Scholarship for The George Wright Society Biennial Conference on Parks, Protected Areas, and Cultural Sites, March 2005, The George Wright Society

Travel Stipend Award for 2nd Conference on Emerging Adulthood, February 2005, Society for the Study of Emerging Adulthood