

## **Personal Ability and Career Development: A Case Among International Students in China**

Collins Boakye, Yang Jingzhao,

*Master candidate, School of Management, Jiangsu University,*

*Professor, School of Management, Jiangsu University:*

*Corresponding Author: Collins Boakye*

---

**ABSTRACT:** *We live in a changing world and we need to respond to it differently than we did 20 years ago. Students need different sets of skills, different spheres of knowledge, and most of all the personal attributes that will help them adapt to and be successful with the unpredictability of the world they face. Creating clarity on our vision for a life and creating an implementation plan that will help us meet personal and professional goals in the future should be the top most priority of educators. The study primarily focused on the international students in China personal abilities and their career development. 148 students were conveniently sampled for the study and a standardized questionnaire was used in the data gathering. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used in analyzing the data. The results indicated personal abilities and career development are significantly positive related. Also personal ability was found to have a positive effect on career development of students. Finally, the study revealed that there is no significant gender difference in career development among international students. The findings of the study were discussed in relation to available literature and recommendations were made for both practice and academia.*

**KEY WORDS:** *personal abilities, career development, career planning*

---

Date of Submission: 30-03-2019

Date of acceptance: 13-04-2019

---

### **I. BACKGROUND OF STUDY**

We now live in a world where change is inevitable and students are being prepared for jobs that don't yet exist, exploring technologies that have not yet been invented, in order to solve problems that we don't know are problems yet (OECD, 2018). In short, educators have a duty to prepare students for a lifetime of uncertainty, change, challenge and self-created opportunity.

Preparing students for a lifetime of working, learning and living in uncertain and unpredictable worlds that have yet to be revealed is perhaps one of the greatest obligations and tasks facing universities all over the world (Johnston, 2016).

Thinking about such things raise different questions as to how one as a student can develop their personal abilities to face this fast and drastic changing world.

Generally, when such talks arise, the public mostly concentrate on talk about employability, that is what students know and understand now, rather than the sorts of capability, attitude, thinking and creativity that will enable them to prosper in an unstipulated and unknowable future (Barley, Bechky, & Milliken, 2017).

Nolting et al., (2013) criticize universities for its obsession with a knowledge and skills agenda, while ignoring the fact that what really matters is an individual's will to get themselves out of bed in the morning to tackle the challenges the day will bring and have the confidence to do something useful with their knowledge and skills. This has therefore call for the need for research to dig more into student's abilities and how these may foster their career development since most students have more than one career options (Tanoli, 2016).

Talking about achievement, success, proficiency and acquaintance, it is clear that personal ability is a key variable that cannot be omissioned when dealing with career development which is an individual affair. Personal abilities generally are viewed as the capability of an individual to make certain things happen whether according to set standards or not (Heise, & Meyer, (2015). In other words, understanding one's ability and capacity is complex and crucial because to succeed in one's career, one needs to have a mental robustness to commence intellectual challenges related with such career although students differ greatly with regards to their abilities (Barley, Bechky, & Milliken, 2017).

According to Tanoli (2016), career planning is part of career development which is the process of setting individual career objectives and creatively developing activities that will be achieved by them. This implies that individual's career development is a lifetime process that incorporates the growth and change process of childhood, the formal career education at school, and the maturational processes that continue throughout a person's working adulthood and into retirement (Antariksa, 2017).

A common pattern of multiple careers during individuals' adult years requires that they evaluate, make personal decisions and implement career transition actions at several points during their lifetime (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2006). Tanoli (2016) therefore associate this to the need to explore individual interests and abilities in creative ways. Individuals are ultimately responsible for the development of their own career and this awareness compels them to construct plans that will enable them to accomplish goals, analyze potential career areas, and determine if they possess the skills, competencies and knowledge necessary to be considered serious candidates for such positions (Antariksa, 2017).

In early empirical work, researchers used the number of years of education as a proxy for human capital. But recent research frequently measures variation in worker skill using capabilities. Hence, there is the need for intensive research into such area of student's life and abilities. The rate of graduate unemployment and lack of career development has been an issue for students especially those from developing countries (Olszewski-Kubilius, 2018). The role of guidance in helping students adapt to new and changing environments is critical, not just in the area of careers, but in all facets of living especially when many are having difficulty adjusting to the constantly changing world in which we live. Unfortunately, such information is not readily available to fall on for many institutions and ministries of education of many countries that offers international exchange programs (Baer, Flexer, Luft & Simmons 2008).

It is in light of the above situations that the researcher seeks to examine students personal abilities and the impact it has on career development particularly international students in China.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1. Personal Abilities

Personal abilities and qualities are important to employers, colleges, work based learning providers and universities (Johnston, 2016). Personal ability is generally viewed as the capability of an individual to make certain things happen whether according to set standards or not perform (Tanoli, 2016). Abilities will focus on two major types: intellectual abilities which simple means intelligence: which involve the capacity to perform various cognitive tasks, and physical abilities, which refer to the capacity to perform various physical actions (Kumar, 2007)

#### 2.1.1. Intelligence or Intellectual Abilities:

It generally referring to one's capacity to understand complex ideas. This is made up of 3 major types (Kumar, 2007)

(a) **Cognitive Intelligence:** This involves the ability to understand complex ideas, to adapt effectively to the environment, to learn from experience, to engage in various forms of reasoning, and to overcome obstacles by careful thought. Such abilities may include:

Verbal comprehension—The ability to understand written material quickly and accurately

Verbal reasoning—The ability to examine verbal information so as to make valid judgments on the basis of logical implications of material

Word fluency—The ability to express oneself rapidly, easily, and with flexibility

Numerical ability—The ability to perform basic mathematical operations quickly and accurately

Numerical reasoning—The ability to analyze logical relationships and to recognize the underlying principles underlying them

Space visualization—The ability to visualize three-dimensional forms in space and to be able to manipulate them mentally

Symbolic reasoning—The ability to think and reason abstractly using symbols rather than words or numbers to make logically valid judgments based on them

(b). **Practical Intelligence:** The ability to devise effective ways of getting things done. The secret to such success resides in what is known as tacit knowledge: knowledge about how to get things done. Such knowledge is far more practical in nature than the known memorizing definitions, formulas, and other information in formal academic knowledge. A classical feature is action-oriented; knowing how to do something as opposed to "knowing that" something is the case.

(c) **Emotional Intelligence:** the ability to recognize and regulate our own emotions, the ability to recognize and influence others' emotions, self- motivation and the ability to form effective long-term relationships with others.

#### 2.1.2. Physical Abilities: Capacity to Do the Job

When we speak of physical abilities, its referring to people's capacities to engage in the physical tasks required to perform a job. Although different jobs require different physical abilities, there are several types of physical ability that are relevant to a wide variety of jobs. These include the following.

Strength: The capacity to exert physical force against various objects

Flexibility: The capacity to move one's body in an agile manner

Stamina: The capacity to endure physical activity over prolonged periods  
Speed: The ability to move quickly

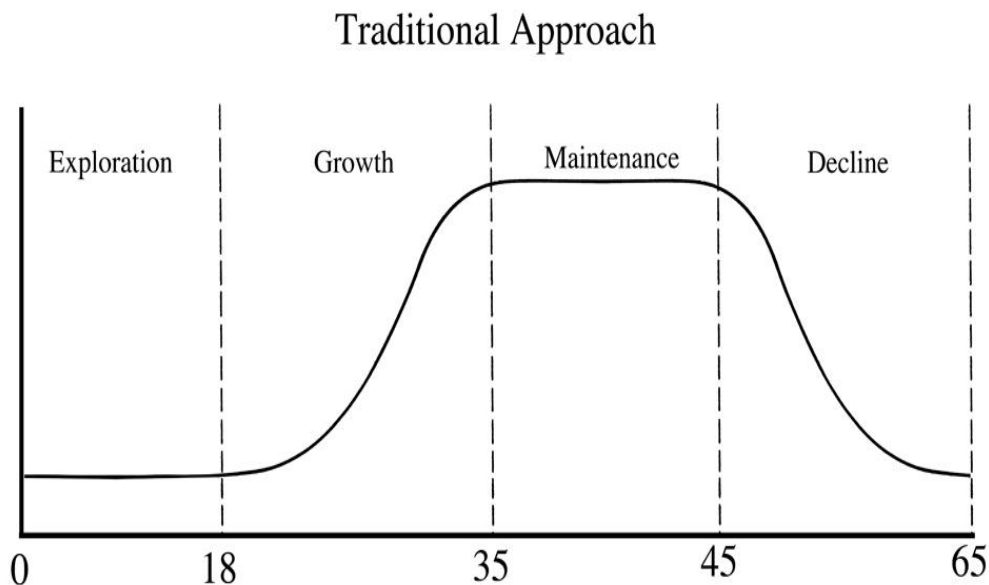
## 2.2. Career Development

It is commonly accepted that career development is the life-long process of managing learning, work, and transitions, in order to move towards a personally determined and evolving preferred future (Olszewski-Kubilius, 2018). Thus, career planning is life planning. Statistics Canada figures showed that the average Canadian worker changes job every 3 years and changes occupations every 5 years (European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, EFILWC, 2007). The average Canadian experiences 6-10 changes in occupation during his or her working life. But still, there is pressure on students to make a choice of career path before they finish high school or college or university, and often there has been very little exploration to inform the decision-making process.

According to Baer, Flexer, Luft and Simmons (2008) an individual's career development is a lifetime process that encompasses the growth and change process of childhood, the formal career education at school, and the maturational processes that continue throughout a person's working adulthood and into retirement. Career consists of different stages and the individual is confronted with different issues during each of these stages. Schreuder and Coetzee, (2006), postulate that the common pattern of multiple careers during individuals' adult years requires that they evaluate, make personal decisions and implement career transition actions at several points during their lifetime.

Super (1957) identified stages of career development namely growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance, and decline, that were thought to capture individuals' work related experiences from the years of childhood to retirement.

Career Development is a lifelong process of managing learning and work.



**Figure 1:** Traditional Approach to Career Development by Super (1957)

### 2.2.1 Post Modern Approach to Career Development

Savikas (2009) cautions that the traditional approach to career development by techniques face a crisis in that their fundamental assumption of predictability based on stability and stages is debatable and, more importantly, may no longer be functional.

According to the post modern approach to career development, developmental tasks are still appropriate during each life stage, although the nature of these tasks will change, they involve gaining appropriate self-information, displaying effective decision making skills, gaining appropriate career information, integrating self and career information and planning a career (Watson, 2001). It further proposes that these stages are now happening more and more frequently. Greenhaus (2003) therefore proposed that the career of the 21st century is not measured by chronological age and life stages, but by continuous learning and identity changes

## Post-modern approach

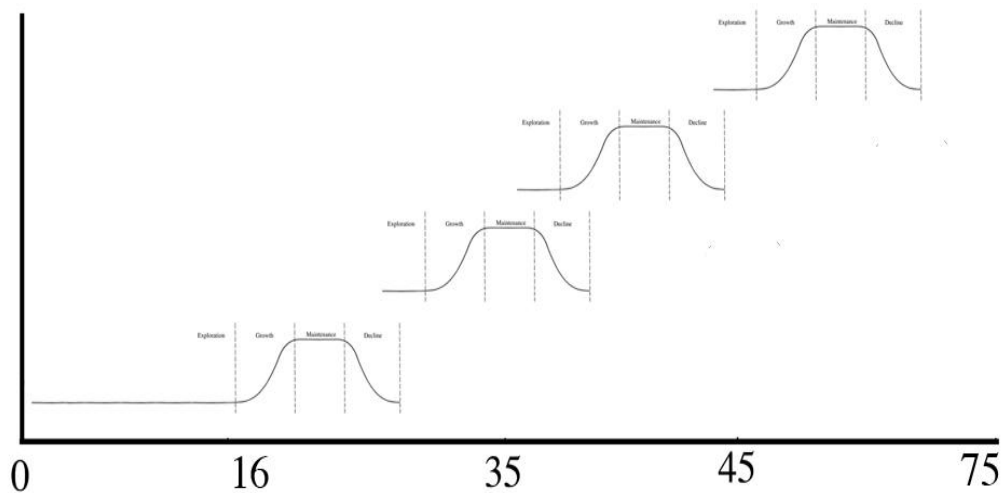


Figure 2: Post Modern Approach to Career Development

### 2.3. Social Cognitive Career Theory

Social cognitive career theory focuses on the development of career interests, making career choices, individual and contextual influences on career behavior (Lent & Brown, 1996). The theory emphasizes individual agency, that is, people's ability and motivation to influence their environment and their own career development. Social cognitive career theory draws on Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory and the triadic-reciprocal model, which propose bidirectional influences between individual characteristics (abilities and beliefs), contextual characteristics (social support), and overt behaviors (Lent et al., 1994). As illustrated by Lent, Brown, and Hackett (2002), social cognitive career theory attempts to trace some of the complex connections between persons and their career-related contexts, between cognitive and interpersonal factors, and between self-directed and externally imposed influences on career behavior. More specifically, the theory explains how person inputs (gender, predispositions) and contextual factors (mentoring) impact work and career performance via a cognitive-behavioral process.

Lent et al., (2002) in explaining social cognitive career theory on academic career development categorize them into three thematic clusters: (1) individual characteristics and personal resources as "person inputs" of academic career development, (2) contextual influences on academic career development, and (3) active regulation of behavior in the context of academic career development.

a. Individual characteristics and personal resources. Social cognitive career theory suggests that individual difference characteristics can impact people's career development via learning processes and the psychological regulation of behavior (Lent et al., 2002). Such characteristics and resources may include demographic characteristics (age, gender), personality traits (conscientiousness), as well as relatively stable abilities, beliefs, attitudes, and motivation.

b. Contextual influences. Social cognitive career theory also suggests that individuals steer their career development within the context of environmental opportunities and constraints (Lent et al., 2002). Such contextual factors may include factors, such as working conditions, social support and networks, career development programs and specific interventions, academic disciplines, professional societies, and societal and cultural contexts.

c. Active regulation of behavior focuses on the prediction of active career behaviors as a central component of social cognitive career theory (Lent et al., 2002). This postulates making career choices, investing effort to achieve career goals, long-term planning, use of specific strategies, and feedback seeking (Zacher&Frese, 2018).



**Figure 3:** Career Development Model University of California, Berkeley

#### **2.4. Gender**

More broadly, the role of gender in career advancement has stirred intellectual discourses by economists, political scientists, sociologists, policymakers, and others (Yusuf, 2015). Gender influences a wide range of career-related attitudes, behaviors, and outcomes. This includes career choice, career experiences, occupational health, work attitudes, other people's perceptions, and career outcomes (Bustamante& Bartels, 2018). Therefore, to understand individuals' careers, it is important to consider gender.

Previous literature has examined the role of gender in such settings as the federal civil service, state agencies, nonprofit international organizations, and private firms. Most governments have made a formal commitment to equal employment opportunity, which advocates for a workforce that reflects the nation's diversity and decisions that are responsive to the needs of the people it serves (Aaron' Kares, Segovia&Loyd, 2017).

The issues affecting gender differences in career choices and career patterns are varied and complex. Men and women differ considerably in their career choices, and many factors contribute to these differences. Adult females have been going steadily into occupations, professions and managerial jobs previously reserved for men (European Commission 2008).

Arguably, while it is true that efforts of many women's organizations had raised the point of awareness concerning women's status, and women had been occupying leadership positions, a lot of the expected results fall short of expectations. There are still gender disparities in terms of approach to elite leadership positions in the workplace, academics and in government (Schein, 2001). Smaglik (2008) noted that women around the world face relatively larger barriers in gaining advancement access to top positions in office, that even in the thirty (30) most developed countries of the world, the average percentage of female managers is less than thirty percent (30%).

There are cases when gender issues are brought to bear on certain advancement. Some variation has emerged over the years, nevertheless, across countries, recent report published by the National Academy of Sciences stressed the need to eliminate biases and barriers facing women in fulfilling their potential (Yusuf, 2015).

#### **2.5. Personal Abilities and Career Development**

Several studies have linked education and academic performance, as well as skills development to the personal developmental goals of individuals, with education having the capacity to evoke hidden talents and confidence (Feng & Ha, 2016; Heise& Meyer, 2015).

From studies conducted on factors influencing career development, the results showed that the main contributing factors for career development revolve around their interpersonal skills, network relationships and their ability to perform (Tanoli, 2016). Respondents who were known to perform and deliver work of a high standard, were more often perceived as being successful in their career paths. Also respondents' ability to be open to feedback and constructive criticism for self-development are perceived as contributing factors.

A study by Hooley (2015) related career development to individuality and asserted that career guidance is primarily concerned with realizing the aspirations (motivation, vision) and potential (ability) of the individual. It was mentioned in the study that a range of outcomes of individual efforts or abilities can influence a number of primary and secondary outcomes which ultimately lead to successful career development.

Bjurberg (2014) assumes that personality traits are connected to academic achievement that lead to positive career development. In considering your skills and abilities and how they may fit a particular occupation, one must do more introspection.

Contrarily, Jasminka, Walker and Bazdan (2017), examined the differences among students in terms of self-reported leadership characteristics. The research showed that academics and college program are not related to student reported leadership proneness, suggesting that college education's impact on leadership traits is not significant.

## **2.6. Gender and Career Development**

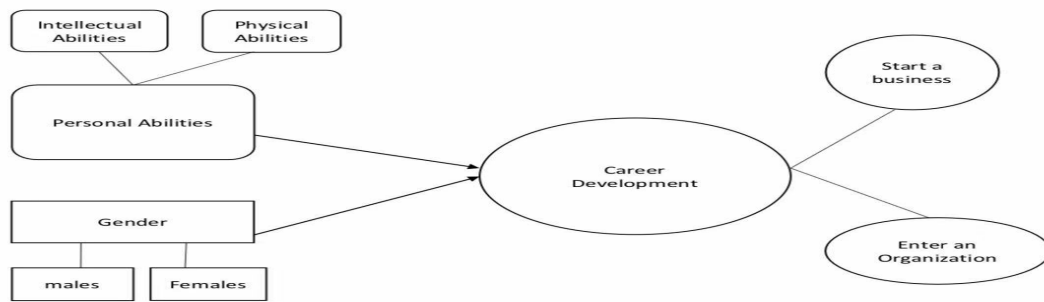
Bustamante and Bartels (2018) sought to compare the characteristics of funded career development awards from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) between the specialties of anesthesiology and surgery. The NIH grant-funding database report was queried for career development awards for the years 2006–2016 using the filters “Anesthesiology” and “Surgery.” Grants were characterized based on the gender of the principal investigator and whether the funding opportunity announcement indicated promotion of underrepresented minorities (URM). Based on the AAMC data query, in 2016, the number of women faculty members at the instructor or assistant professor level in U.S. medical schools was 2314 (41%) for anesthesiology and 2281 (30%) for surgery. Between 2006 and 2016, there were 88 career development grants awarded to investigators in anesthesiology departments compared to 261 in surgery departments. Of the grantees in each specialty, 29 (33%) were women in anesthesiology and 72 (28%) in surgery ( $P = 0.344$ ). Awards to promote URM were identified for two grants (2%) in anesthesiology and nine grants (3%) in surgery ( $P = 0.737$ ). Faculty members in surgery were more likely to receive an award than in anesthesiology ( $P < 0.0001$ ), and women were less likely to receive an award than men ( $P = 0.026$ ).

Yusuf (2015) examine gender differentials and career advancement among academia in Nigerian universities. It sought to investigate if there were organizational barriers that impeded women from getting to a significant career advancement. A sample size of 160 academics was selected across the faculties, and were administered questionnaires. 10 women academic were selected purposively for in-depth interviews. The outcome indicates that there is no statistically important relationship between gender stereotypes and career progression among the academic staff that hampers advancement of women in academics. The result from qualitative study shows that there are organizational procedures in which women in academia had to comply with together with other social factors that slow down women's movement into higher management positions in the academia.

European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, (2007) comparatively examined the issue of gender and career development and explores the continuing barriers to achieving equality of opportunity in this area. Looking at the current European Union countries (with the exception of Sweden) and Norway, the study explores the extent to which career patterns are changing in response to the restructuring of work and organizations and how this impacts on women's career experiences. The study finds that although careers are changing in most countries, the nature of this change is best described as a gradual erosion of traditional work patterns, rather than a transformation which is likely to improve opportunities for women. Gender segregation remains a significant problem, despite women's increased activity rates. Female-dominated part-time work, associated with poor opportunities for training and promotion, also persists. The study reveals that most trade unions have been proactive in campaigning on this topic and in increasing their members' awareness of and ability to raise such issues with employers. However, it also shows that many employers appear to remain unconvinced about the need to prioritize gender and careers.

In contrast, Aaron, Kares, Segovia and Loyd (2017) explore the understudied role of program staff in an out-of-school time (OST) program at a large science museum, which may be especially relevant for supporting underrepresented minority (URM) youth's interest in science, technology, engineering, or math (STEM) careers. Using a sequential explanatory mixed-method design, 167 alumni were surveyed on their program of science attitudes, career interests, and memories about how the program compared to experiences at home, school, and with friends. They followed that with 49 interviews with alumni. Findings show that, while in the program, alumni who identify as women reported a much greater increase in their STEM career interest than those who identify as men.

Chen, Roy, and Crawford, (2010) postulated a critical update regarding the status of women in the public health profession by exploring gender-related differences in promotion rates at the nation's leading public health agency, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Using personnel data drawn from CDC, it was found that the gender gap in promotion has diminished across time and that this reduction can be attributed to changes in individual characteristics such as higher educational levels and work experience. However, a substantial gap in promotion that cannot be explained by such characteristics has persisted, indicating continuing barriers in women's career advancement.



**Figure 4:** Conceptual Framework of Study

**2.7. Hypothesis**

1. There would be a significant positive relationship between personal abilities and career development among international students in China.
2. Personal abilities would have a significant positive effect on career development among international students in China.
3. There would be a significant gender difference on career development among international students in China.

**III. METHODOLOGY**

**3.1. Research Design**

Based on the research objectives, the correlational cross sectional survey design was chosen. The correlational survey was believed to be the most suitable for this research because it seeks to predict relationships between and among a set of variables and this is directly linked with the research objectives. According to Lomax (2007), a correlational research seeks to explore the nature of relationships that exist among a collection of variables in a study and amount of data at a given point in time (Osuola, 2001). An online survey was used to collect data from respondents.

**3.2. Population, Sample Size and Sampling Technique**

The total population for the study consisted of some selected universities in China where international programs are offered. The accessible population however comprised all students who have been in China for one or more years. Convenience sampling technique was used to recruit the various participants. 165 participants were expected for this survey. Out of the 165, 148 responded representing 89.7% response rate.

**Table1: Selected Chinese Universities and Sample size for the study.**

University	Sample
Jiangsu University	50
Jiangsu University of science and Technology	35
Zhejiang University of Finance and Economics	10
Zhengzhou University	10
Hubei University	13
Shenyang Normal University	30
	148

Source: Field computation (2019)

**3.3 Reliability and Validity**

Field (2009) defined reliability as the ability of a questionnaire to yield similar findings when repeated under the same or similar conditions. Classical test theory’s reliability coefficients remain widely used in behavioral and social research. Each provides an index of measurement consistency ranging from 0 to 1.00, which can be interpreted as the proportion of observed-score variance attributable to true scores (stable or non-random individual differences). Coefficients at or above 0.70 are often considered sufficiently reliable for making decisions about individuals based on their observed scores, although a higher value, perhaps 0.90, is preferred if the decisions have significant consequences (Kline, 2010).

**Table 2: Indicator Reliability**

Variables	N	item	Cronbach alpha
Personal Abilities	148	8	.840
Career Development	148	5	.793
Overall		13	.884

Source: Field computation (2019)

Internal reliability was evaluated for the two factors separately. The reliability coefficients for personal ability and career development were .840 and .793, respectively, with all Cronbach alpha values higher than .7, indicating the high internal consistency of each scale instrument.

**Table 3: Descriptive Statistics**

Characteristics	Classification	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	96	64.9
	Female	52	35.1
Age	20-24	47	31.8
	25-29	58	39.2
	30-34	32	21.6
	35-39	11	7.4
	40 and above	0	0
Educational Status	Bachelor	51	34.5
	Masters	69	46.6
	PhD	28	18.9
Program of study	Management	59	39.9
	Medicine/Pharmacy	38	25.7
	Engineering	21	14.2
	Environmental Science	9	6.1
	Chemistry	6	4.1
	Chinese Lang & Culture	15	10.1
Years of study	1-1.5 yrs	68	46.0
	2-3.5 yrs	60	40.5
	4-5.5 yrs	28	13.5
No. of conferences attended	1	31	20.9
	2	44	29.7
	3	48	32.4
	4	14	9.5
	5 or more	11	7.4

Source: Field computation (2019)

The results of the gender distribution for the study was; 96(64.9 %) males and 46(35.1%) females. The age distribution are as follows; out of 148 respondents sampled, 47(31.8%) were between the ages of 20-24 years, 58(39.2%) respondents were between the ages of 25-29 years. Respondents between the ages of 30-34 years were 32(21.6%) and lastly 11(7.4%) fell into the age category of 35 years and above. In relation to educational status, 51(34.5%) were bachelor or undergraduate students. 69(46.6%) were master students and 28(18.9%) respondents were PhD students.

With respect to program of study of respondents, the results indicated that 59(39.9%) were offering Management, 38(25.7%) were offering medicine and pharmacy, 21(14.2%) were offering Engineering, 9(6.1%) respondents were offering Environmental science whiles 6(4.1%) respondents were offering Chemistry. The remaining 15(10.1) of the respondents were offering Chinese Language and Culture.

Furthermore, the research considered the years of study of the respondents on their various universities. 68(46.0%) of the respondents had studied in their school between 1-1.5 years. 60(40.5%) had studied for 2-3.5 years and 28(13.5%) had studied for 4-5.5 years.

Finally, the research explored the number of academic conferences that respondents had attended in the pursuance of their study. 31(20.9%) participants had attended just one conference. 44(29.7%) had attended 2 conference whiles 48(32.4%), 14(9.5%) and 11(7.4%) had attended 3, 4 and 5 conferences respectively.



**Table 4: Descriptive Statistics on degree of Personal Abilities and Career Development**

Variables	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev
Personal Abilities	148	1.0	5	4.84	.701
Career Development	148	1.0	5	6.04	.741

Source: Field computation (2019)

The results of the analysis of the descriptive statistics of the continuous variables in the study as illustrated indicates that personal abilities have a mean of 4.84 with a standard deviation of .701 whilst career development has a mean of 6.04 with a standard deviation of .741. Standard deviations are close to 1, hence the data is accepted (Gaur & Gaur, 2009, Srinivasan, 2015). The results on the table showed that participants have high level personal abilities.

**Table 5: Summary of the correlation between personal abilities and career development**

variables	Mean	SD	N	r	p
Personal Abilities	4.84	.701	148	.584	.001**
Career Development	6.04	.741			

Source: Field computation (2019)

**Dependent Variable: Career Development \* p < .10; \*\* p < .05; \*\*\* p < .01**

The results in table 4.6 above indicate that the mean and standard deviation for personal abilities and career development are (4.840, .701) and (6.040, .741) respectively. The Pearson r correlation indicates that there is a positive correlation between personal abilities and career development (r = .584, P = .001). This means that the higher personal abilities of international students, the higher likelihood for them to develop their career.

**Table 6: Summary of the Regression Analysis for Personal Abilities on Career Development**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		standardized Coefficients	t	sig
	B	Std. error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.456	.057		8.855	.000
Personal Ability	.378	.061	.584	3.486	.003**

Source: Field computation (2019)

**a. Dependent Variable: Career Development \* p < .10; \*\* p < .05; \*\*\* p < .01**

**a. df = 1, 146 b. Note: Personal abilities: R<sup>2</sup> = .243, F = 32.521.**

Table 4.7 above indicates that with an ‘R<sup>2</sup> value’ of .243 (R<sup>2</sup> = .243), it follows that the strength of the relationship between the predictor variable (personal abilities) and the outcome variable (career development) as explained by the model is 24.3%. The value of the ‘R Square’ also explains the extent of variations in career development accounted for by personal abilities. Therefore, with an ‘R Square’ value of .243 (R<sup>2</sup> = .243), it follows that personal abilities explains 24.3% of the variations in career development of international students in china. The results showed that F statistic is significant at 0.05, therefore personal abilities has a positive significant effect on career development of international students [F = 32.521, P < .05]. This affirms a similar study by (Tanoli, 2016; Hooley, 2015; Bjurberg, 2014). Based on this finding, the second hypothesis that personal abilities impact positively on career development among international students is supported.

A possible explanation could be that the confidence at which students use to perform and deliver work of a high standard often are perceived as being successful in their career paths. Also effective communication from supervisors to students and ability of students to be open to feedback and constructive criticism for self-development will sharpen them to a successful career.

**3.4. Test for Multicollinearity**

**Table 7: Correlations Matrix Showing No Multicollinearity between the Variables**

	1	2	3	4	Durbin Watson
Age	1.0				
Years of Study	.051	1.0			
Gender	.132	.071	1.0		
No. of conf attended	-.123	.013	.037	1.0	1.837

Source: Field computation (2019)

Multicollinearity on demographic variables (age, years of study, gender and number of conferences attended tenure of service) were put together in a multiple regression model and the influence of the demographic variables analyzed. Prior to this, the major test assumptions of multiple regression were satisfied.

The correlations matrix in table 7 shows that there is no issue of multicollinearity in the data distribution as all pairs of variables have correlations less than 0.9 (Hair, Black, Babin& Anderson, 2010; Gaur & Gaur, 2009).

### 3.5. Test for Autocorrelation

Per the rule of thumb ( $1.5 < d < 2.5$ ), the Durbin Watson statistics of 1.837 as shown in table 4.6 shows that the error terms are not correlated.

**Table 8: Summary of independent t test for the gender difference in occupational stress**

Variable	Mean	SD	N	df	t	p
Male	4.138	0.781		146	-1.430	.178**
Female	3.93	0.680				

Source: Field computation (2019)

**Dependent Variable: career development \*  $p < .10$ ; \*\*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .01$**

From the table, it is evident that the male international students scored slightly higher on career development ( $M = 4.138$ ,  $SD = 0.781$ ) than their female counterpart ( $M = 3.93$ ,  $SD = 0.680$ ). The t statistic observed indicated that there is no significant gender difference in career development among international students in China [ $t(60) = -1.334$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ]. The hypothesis that there would be a gender difference in career development was rejected. The findings were in contrast to (Bustamante& Bartels, 2018; Yusuf, (2015)).

However, this finding affirms a similar done by (Aaron' Kares, Segovia&Loyd, 2017; Chen, Roy, 7 Crawford, 2010) who postulated that there is no gender difference in career development.

This could be explained by the high availability of same-sex role models in career choice in recent years. Parental role modeling also influences occupational preference and career choice, since children tend to identify most with their same-sex parents and working adults are also segregated occupationally to some extent. So if a female has parents who have achieved more in their career, they may aspire to be like them as explained by Social Cognitive Career Theory. The results could also be a reflection of the increasing proportion of women in high leadership positions at agencies, schools and offices which may serve as a motivation for the females that they can eventually assumed such positions also.

### 3.6. Summary of findings

1. There is a significant positive relationship between personal abilities and career development.
2. Personal abilities have a significant positive effect on career development among international students in China.
3. There is no significant gender difference on career development among international students in China.

## IV. CONCLUSION

It is now widely recognized that graduates need to develop employability and career management skills in order to enter and thrive in a global knowledge economy. Personal, Academic and Career Development in higher education shows how engaging students in personal and career development experiences can result in powerful insights that translate into enhanced skills and attributes useful in all areas of life. A central theme in the preceding text is that career planning is life planning. It is not possible to separate career from other aspects of a person's life. Moreover, the main driver in career-life planning is a person's vision for their life that is their answer to the question "What kind of a person do I want to become?"

There is no best career for any given individual and in fact it is important to develop the idea that all careers are valuable, and should be valued, as potential sources of satisfaction and fulfillment. Furthermore, all of a person's life roles contribute to their personal satisfaction. The main career-life goal for early adults, is exploration. Therefore, it is important to teach students how to make informed choices, which is how to explore within themselves, to discover their own interests, abilities, values, personal life goals; how to explore outside themselves to see what is involved in different occupations; and reality test the occupational alternatives they are considering. In the process of exploration, it is important also to discover that personal fulfillment is largely self-determined and that they are active agents in the lives they lead.

For educators, guidance workers, and parents, it is important to realize the usefulness of beginning career education at a very early age, in fact, the younger the better. Heads of academic institutions need to provide an environment that supports and encourages exploration, goal seeking, goal setting, and that minimizes the barriers that students face, especially artificial barriers that often result from the unfulfilled dreams of some adults.

There are numerous interventions that has been set to address gender-based career obstacles and improve faculty development. Mentoring programs, along with long-term training opportunities, leadership training, and flexible work schedules to accommodate family needs, are potential intervention strategies that might help female employees rise to higher levels within any agency.

## V. LIMITATIONS

Firstly, the study examined the effects of personal abilities on career development among international students in China. Selected schools were used for the study which consequently makes it difficult to generalize the findings to all international students in China. Hence further studies on the subject matter should try as much as possible to increase the sample size and the number of schools in order to enhance the external validity of the study.

Secondly, the current study took the form of a cross sectional design to collect and analyze data only at one point in time within the study period. The challenge with this study design is that it makes it difficult to capture how some of the issues change over time and how these issues affect the outcome of the study. It is therefore recommended that future studies with adequate resources should adopt the longitudinal design to address these developmental issues. For example, to find out whether students would change their career plan over a period of time or whether students have actually achieved the career they had in mind.

## REFERENCE

- [1]. Abele, A. E., & Spurk, D. (2009). The longitudinal impact of self-efficacy and career goals on objective and subjective career success. *Journal of Vocational Behaviour*, 74, 53–62.
- [2]. Anger, S. & Schnitzlein, D.D. (2017). Cognitive skills, non-cognitive skills, and family background: evidence from sibling correlations. *J Popul Econ*, 30, 591. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00148-016-0625-9>
- [3]. Baer, R.B., Flexer, R.W., Luft, P., & Simmons, T.J. (2008). *Transition planning for secondary students with disabilities*. New Jersey: Pearson Education Inc.
- [4]. Bandura, A. (1977). Self-efficacy: Towards a unifying theory of behavior change. *Psychology Review*, 84, 191-215. DOI: 10.1037/0033-295X.84.2.191.
- [5]. Barley, S. R., Bechky, B. A., & Milliken, F. J. (2017). The changing nature of work: Careers, identities, and work lives in the 21st century. *Academy of Management Discoveries*, 3(2), 111–115.
- [6]. Chapman, Vera (June 12, 2012). "Maximizing the Career Development of Students Who Study Abroad." *National Career Development Association, Career Convergence Magazine*. Retrieved from: [http://associationdatabase.com/aws/NCDA/pt/sd/news\\_article/59803](http://associationdatabase.com/aws/NCDA/pt/sd/news_article/59803).
- [7]. Chen, Z., K & Crawford, A.C.G. (2010). Examining the Role of Gender in Career Advancement at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *American Journal Public Health*.100(3): 426–434
- [8]. Committee on Maximizing the Potential of Women in Academic Science and Engineering Beyond Bias and Barriers (2007): *Fulfilling the Potential of Women in Academic Science and Engineering* Washington, DC: National Academies Press;
- [9]. Dolan, J. (2004). Gender equity: illusion or reality for women in the federal executive service? *Public Adm Rev*; 64:299–308
- [10]. Furman, J. (2016). Is this time different? The opportunities and challenges of artificial intelligence. Paper presented at the AI Now: The Social and Economic Implications of Artificial Intelligence Technologies in the Near Term, New York, NY.
- [11]. Gaur, A., & Gaur, S. (2009). *Statistical Methods for Practice and Research*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New Delhi, India: Response Books.
- [12]. Heise, M., & Meyer, W. (2015). The benefits of education, training and skills from an individual life-course perspective with a particular focus on life-course and biographical research. Impact of education and training Third report on vocational training research in Europe: background report. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2004 (Cedefop Reference series, 54).
- [13]. Hiebert, B. (2010). *Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling in the Schools: Career-life Planning for All*. Conference on Career Development, in Braga, Portugal, University of Jyvaskyla, Finland;
- [14]. Hirschi, A. (2018). *The Fourth Industrial Revolution: Issues and Implications for Career Research and Practice*. *Career Development Quarterly*.
- [15]. Hsieh C, W, & Winslow, E. (2006). Gender representation in the federal workforce: a comparison among groups. *Rev Public Person Adm* (26) :276–294. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10888691.2017.1398090>
- [16]. Johnston, C.S. (2016). A Systematic Review of the Career Adaptability Literature and Future Outlook. *Journal of Career Assessment*.
- [17]. Koekemoer, E. (2014). An exploratory study on factors influencing the career success of management employees. *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 40(2). <http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/sajip.v40i2.1204>
- [18]. Krumboltz, J. D. (1983). *Private rules in career decision-making*. Columbus, OH: The National Center for Research in Vocational Education.
- [19]. Krumboltz, J. D. (2000). Planned happenstance: Constructing unexpected career opportunities. In B. Hiebert (Ed.). *Building tomorrow today: Con*
- [20]. Kumar, A. (2007). *Personal, Academic and Career Development in Higher Education*. Routledge 2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN
- [21]. Mayes, L, M, Wong, C, A, Zimmer, S, Fernandez-Bustamante, A & Bartels, K. (2018). Gender differences in career development awards in United States' anesthesiology and surgery departments, 2006-2016. *BMC Anesthesiol* 2018 Jul 27;18(1):95. doi: 10.1186/s12871-018-0561-1.
- [22]. Nolting, William, Donohue, Debbie, Matherly, Cheryl and Tillman, Martin. (2013). "Career Impact and Global Workforce Development" in *Internships, Service Learning, Volunteering Abroad: Successful Models and Best Practices*. NAFSA: Association of International Educators, Washington, D.C.
- [23]. OECD. (2018). *Education at a Glance 2018: OECD Indicators*. OECD Publishing. Retrieved from: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-2013-en>.
- [24]. Olszewski-Kubilius P. (2018). The Role of the Family in Talent Development. In: Pfeiffer S. (eds) *Handbook of Giftedness in Children*. Springer, Cham. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-77004-8\\_9](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-77004-8_9).
- [25]. Price, C. A., Kares, F., Segovia, G., & Loyd, A. B. (2018). Staff matter: Gender differences in science, technology, engineering or math (stem) career interest development in adolescent youth. *Applied Developmental Science*. Advance online publication.
- [26]. Ramos, K., & Lopez, F.G. (2018). Attachment security and career adaptability as predictors of subjective well-being among career transitioners. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, Volume 104, 72-85. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2017.10.004>.
- [27]. Smaglik, P. (2008). The gender imbalance. *Nature* ;454(7204):664

- [28]. Srinivasan, P. (2015). Exploring the Influences of Teacher's Intelligence and Emotional Intelligence on Students' Academic Achievement. *American Journal of Educational Research*. 2015; 3(9):1159-1162. doi: 10.12691/education-3-9-15.
- [29]. Super, D. E. (1987). Career and life development. In D. Brown & L. Brooks (Eds.). *Career choice and development*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- [30]. Super, D. E., & Knasel, E. G. (1979). The development of a model, specifications and sample items for measuring career adaptability (vocational maturity) in young blue collar workers: Final report to Canada Employment and Immigration. Cambridge Institute for Careers Education and Counselling.
- [31]. Tillman, M. (2012). "Employer Perspectives on International Education," in *SAGE Handbook of International Higher Education*, SAGE Publications, CA.
- [32]. University of California. Staff and career development., Berkeley. Trtrieve: <https://ucnet.universityofcalifornia.edu/working-at-uc/your-career/career-development.html>
- [33]. Stevens, P. (1990). *Career transitions: The Australian perspective*. Sydney: CWC.
- [34]. Savikas, M. L., Nota, L., Rossier, J., Dauwalder, J. P., Duarte, M. E., Guichars, J., Soresi, S., Edbroeck, R. V., & Vianen, A. E. M. (2009). Life designing: A paradigm for career construction in the 21st century. *Journal of Vocational Behaviour*, 75(3), 239-250.
- [35]. Greenhaus, J. H. (2003). Career Dynamics. In: W. C. Bornman., D. R. Ilgen., & R. J. Klimoski. (Eds.). *Handbook of psychology volume twelve: Industrial and organisational psychology*, (pp. 519-535). Hoboken (USA): John Wiley & Sons.
- [36]. Stead, G.B., & Watson, M.B. (2001). Contextual transformation and the career development of black South African youth. In: C. R. Stones. (Eds.). *Socio-political and psychological perspectives on South Africa*, (pp. 173-196). Johannesburg: Nova.
- [37].

Collins Boakye" Personal Ability and Career Development: A Case Among International Students in China" *International Journal of Business and Management Invention (IJBMI)*, vol. 08, no. 04, 2019, pp 13-24