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Career Resilience: the Study of University Students' Career Adversities and Their Coping Strategies in Taiwan

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Introduction

1. What is the career barriers that university students perceive themselves?

1.1 how to be an autonomous adult, adjusting in an environment
1.2 A lot of career problems are mentioned such as personal, emotional, social and academic problems during university stage (Rahat & Ilhan, 2016).

2. What keeps them going?

Many university students experience career barriers or difficulties, and these difficulties with anxiety, depression, criticism. (Santos, 2001; Saunders, Petersen, Gati & Amir, 2010; Shin & Kelly, 2014) However, some individuals do find a way to adapt and develop well. How and Why some student develop into adjusted in face of adversity.



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The Aims of this Study

1. To explore the university students' **career adversity**.
2. To understand the reactions of university students to their career adversities.
3. To explore the **assets and resources applied** by university students to go out of their career adversities.
4. To understand **the meaning** of university students on career resilience
5. To explore the recommendations of **career resilience cultivation** made by university students.

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Literature review

Resilience

The **pioneers of resilience theory** were Norman, Garmezy, Emmy Werner, Anne Masten, and Sir Michael Rutter who tried to answer the question **why some adolescents develop into well-adjusted and relatively healthy adults in the face of adversity**. (Wang, Zhang, Zimmerman, 2015)

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Literature

Definition of career resilience

1. London(1983) described **career motivation** as a multidimensional construct. The components consist of **career identity, career insight, and career resilience** domains (Bimrose & Hearne, 2012; London, 1997) "
2. Collard et al. (1996) present definitions of career resilience is **"the ability to adapt to changing circumstances, even when the circumstances are discouraging or disruptive"** (p. 33).

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Two perspective

1. **trait-oriented perspective**
define resilience as a **personal trait** that helps some at risk youth overcome adversity and subsequently achieve optimal or even exceptional adjustment.
trait approach does not consider contextual influences.
2. **process-oriented perspective**
resilience as an **interaction of individuals and their environment** for overcoming the negative effects of exposure. Resilience is defined by the context, population, risk, promotive factors and outcome

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Strength-based model

- **Strength –based model rather than a deficit and problem oriented approach.**
- Resilience theory provides a conceptual framework for explaining how youth can avoid the negative effects of risk factors with the help of **two kinds of promotive factors :assets and resources**
- **Assets:** intrapersonal positive factor, such as competence, self-efficacy.
- **Resources:** external to individual that can help youth overcome the negative effects of risk factors such as parental support and availability
- (Wong, Zhang, Zimmerman, 2015; Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005)

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Some evidences

1. the resource such as parental support, community support can be protective factors that buffer against decreased well-being and adjustment in the face of stress(Cooper, et al.2012, Hurd & Zimmerman, 2010)
2. the assets such as religious belief(Wills, Yaeger, & Sandy, 2003)self-esteem(Byrne & Mazanov,2001)and positive affect(Scheier, et al, 2000) decreased the negative effects of stressful or career difficulties.

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Research Method

3.1 Research Participants

The participants in the research are **4 classes of students studying two education courses** “Issues in Education”, “Principles and Practice in Guidance and Counseling” in a northern national university. The total number of students is 240 students. To account for unauthorized cases, a **total of 203 participants were valid** based on the situation of university youth’s career resilience.

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3.1 Research Participants

		number of people	percentage
Sex	female	123	60.6
	male	80	39.4
college	Liberal arts	47	23.2
	Technology & Engineering	25	12.3
	music	8	3.9
	education	55	27.1
	science	50	24.6
	Sports & Recreation	12	5.9
	Arts	6	3.0
	sophomore	37	18.2
grade	Junior	65	32.0
	senior	75	40.0
	Graduate student	26	12.8

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Research Method

3.2 Data Collection

The researcher based this study in reference to literature on the introduction of career resilience and designed semi-structured writing guidelines in addition to **inviting students who once suffered but went through** their career adversities; to document their stories of career resilience. Each story can be referred to as an event or many adversities.

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Research Method

The main **writing guidelines** contain:

1. the descriptions about **the context of suffered adversity**, including people, event, time, place, and objects,
2. the **thinking, feeling, and behavior during the suffering**,
3. the **internal assets and external resources** applied to go out of or resolve the adversity, such as personal characteristics or others’ assistance, and
4. the **definitions and cultivation** recommendations of career resilience based on the experience

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Research Method

Before starting the courses, the researcher provides the students with the research purpose, the data collection and analysis. The research **adopts Opt-In approach**. That is, the Youth themselves **were informed** about the nature of the research and they gave paper consent being made clear that participation was **voluntary** and that all data would remain confidential at all time. Each participant reserves the right to withdraw from the research.

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Research Method

3.3 Data Analysis

The research adopts **content analysis** to analyze the collected data. Nachmias & Nachmias (2007) pointed out that content analysis is a research method **using quantitative techniques and qualitative analysis** to investigate and analyze the contents of a document based on objective and systematic attitude, to generate the environmental background and meanings of the document.

In other words, the researchers will classify the contents of the texts and practice statistics, and then propose the descriptive interpretations in accordance with the number of these categories. It analyzes not only the message of the contents, but also the impact of the content on the whole phenomenon (Chung-Yi Hu, 2103).

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Research Method

This research invites a senior teacher in counseling field to read the collect texts and to discuss the encoding method together. The five conducted encoding methods are listed as follows:

- 1.Event of career adversity** : the suffered life setback, predicament, pressure events, or negative experiences by looking back to the growth process.
- 2.Impact of career adversity**: the physical and psychological reactions when suffering the career adversity, including the cognition, emotion, behavior, and physiology.
- 3.Utilization of resources**: the internal assets and external resources applied to go out of career adversity.
- 4.Definition of career resilience**: the metaphors, opinions, or descriptions about career resilience provided by the participants.
- 5.Method of career resilience cultivation**: the recommended methods to raise career resilience.

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Research Method

The two encoders read all texts and complete the encoding respectively. According to the calculation of reliability between the two encoders, **the inter-coder reliability reaches 0.91**. Therefore, there is sufficient reliability of the encoding results.

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I Career adversity of university' youth

Category	Percentage
Love	20.7%
interpersonal relationship	23.3%
health	7.9%
Learning	35.5%
self-development	16.3%
Family	15.3%
Others	7.9%
death	9.9%

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I-1 Adversity of health

- 1. Congenital organ defects**, such as limb defects or hearing impairment,
- 2. Serious diseases**, such as brain tumors or breast cancer,
- 3. Accidental injury**, such as sport injury or car accident,
- 4. Melancholy**: disturbance caused by emotions

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1-2 Adversity of family

1. **Bad parent-child relationship:** accusation, and comparison methods.
2. **Parent confliction:** parents often fight against each other
3. **Unforeseen family event:** family suffered serious illness, unemployment, economic difficulties



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1-3 Adversity of learning

1. **Failing to pass an examination**
2. Low learning performance
3. learning pressure
4. Learning bottlenecks
5. **Studying in an uninterested department.**
6. Emergency
7. Learning rule violation



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1-4 Adversity of self-development

1. uncertain or negative self-evaluation,
2. having no sense of future development.



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1-5 Adversity of interpersonal relationship

1. **Confliction of friendship.**
2. **Discrimination or criticism**
3. **Exclusion or bully**
4. **Lonesomeness**
5. **Other**
helping classmates
to cheating



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I-6 Adversity of love.

1. proposing to someone but being rejected,
2. maintenance of romantic relationship, and
3. breaking up.



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I-7 Adversity of death

1. death of family members, such as grandparents or parents
2. death of teachers or classmates.



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I-8 others

suffering **two or more adversities** at the same time." For example, a participant failed to pass an examination and suffered incessant conflicts between her/his parents.

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II Reactions of College' Youth to Career adversity

Feeling N = 118 58.1%	"crying," "fear," "sadness," "suppression," "loss/helplessness," "anger/indignation," "regret," "depression/frustration," "self-accusation/guilt," "anxiety," "panic," "embarrassment," "abandonee"
Cognition N = 105 49.8%	I am not good enough/I do not have something," "It is impossible," "I want to give it up," "I don't know how to do," "I can't trust it," "It is not worthy," "It is unfair," "I want to escape," "It is meaningless," "I don't care"

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Reactions of College' Youth to Career adversity

Behavior N = 55 27.1%	rejecting or retreating from people," "unable to be interested in learning or doing something," "unable to concentrate on doing something," "ingratiating herself/himself with someone," "self-inflicted/self-harm," "forbearance," "giving up," "oral counterattacking," "unable to leave alone,"
physiology N = 12 5.9%	poor appetite, poor sleep quality

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III. Internal assets and External Resources of College' Youth for Career adversity Resolution

The research found that these participants applied their internal and external resources to go through the progress. Among the participants, 167 students accounting for 82.3% mention the utilizations of **internal assets** regarding personal characteristics, thoughts, motivations, and other factors, including "striving for responsibility," "refusing to take defeat," "optimism," "toughness/bravery," "adjusting or changing ideas," "faith," "introspection/self-talk," "perseverance/never giving up," "adaptation/acceptance," "rational analysis," "conversation," "emotional adjustment," "thanksgiving," "being humble," and so on

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III. Internal assets and External Resources of College' Youth for Career adversity Resolution

202 students accounting for 99.5% mention the utilizations of **external resources**, including:

1. **support of important people**, such as assistance provided by the physician, counselor, teacher, friend, classmate, student elder, family, relative.
2. **reading and writing**, such as reading a book or diary guiding communication expression and emotional adjustment,
3. **self-care and relaxation**, such as doing exercise, listening to music, watching movies, or traveling,
4. **other measures**, such as **learning the behaviors of an idol**.

The research found that most of the participants applied both **internal and external resources to leaving adversities**.

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External resources

1. **support of important people**, such as teacher, friend, classmate, student elder, family, relative.
2. **reading and writing**, such as reading a book
3. **self-care and relaxation**, such as doing exercise, listening to music, watching movies, or traveling.
4. **others**: such as learning the behaviors of an idol.

rebound.

equilibrium.

career adversity.

Internal personal assets

including "striving for responsibility," "refusing to take defeat," "optimism," "toughness/bravery," "adjusting or changing ideas," "faith," "introspection/self-talk," "perseverance/never giving up," "adaptation/acceptance," "rational analysis," "conversation," "emotional adjustment," "thanksgiving," "being humble"

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VI. Definitions of university' youth on career resilience

Seven metaphors of career resilience

The image displays seven metaphors for career resilience, each with a corresponding image and label: a basketball labeled 'ball', a metal spring labeled 'spring', a coiled rubber band labeled 'rubber band', a diagram of an antibody labeled 'antibody', a rocky reef labeled 'reef', a coiled rope labeled 'rope', and a green grass blade labeled 'grass'.

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VI. Career Resilience Definition Provided by College' Youth

How do the college' youth passing through the career adversities interpret career resilience? **Seven metaphors of career resilience** proposed by these participants are collected in the research, including **grass, rubber band, spring, ball, reef, antibody, and rope**. After exploration, all of these metaphors indicate these participants are living under pressure or challenge rather than a general environment. Furthermore, they show the attitude of resilience, flexibility, toughness, perseverance and confrontation, and applied the external resources to going out of the adversities.

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VI. Definitions of career resilience raised by the participants

refusing to take defeat	never giving up	perseverance
toughness	tolerance/forbearance	optimism
flexibility	positive thinking	self-trust
bravery	introspection	acceptance and adaptation
adjusting emotions	resolving problems	action
restarting	conversion	asking for help

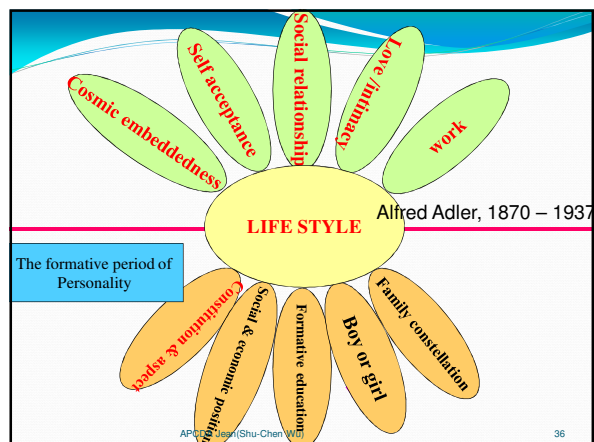
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- ### V. Career resilience Cultivation Recommended
- The research summarized the recommendations of career resilience cultivation proposed by the participants. The ten recommendations are:
1. **Learning the failure** (25 students, 12.3%),
 2. **Adapting oneself to the problem**, including emotional adjustment, facing the problem, classifying the problem, practicing and trying, and resolving the problem (84 students, 41.4%),
 3. **Comprehending oneself**, including introspection and self-evaluation (25 students, 12.3%),
 4. **Valuing oneself** (17 students, 8.4%),
 5. **Encouraging oneself** (20 students, 9.6%),
 6. **Cultivating in personal characteristics or skills** (70 students, 34.5%),
 7. **Taking care of oneself** (31 students, 15.3%),
 8. **Learning models** (5 students, 2.5%),
 9. **Asking for help** (23 students, 11.3%),
 10. **Constructing a friendly environment** (8 students, 3.9%).
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Discussion

1.1. Based on the viewpoint of psychological development, the career adversities observed by the research are **similar to a person's five life tasks** advocated by Adlerian, including social relationship, occupation, love and marriage, self-acceptance, and spirituality. Since the participants of the research **are all students studying in college, there is no adversity regarding occupation**. In other words, "learning" can be treated as the "occupation" for these full-time students.

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1.2. In the research, the **most of career adversity suffered by the participants is learning**. It can be assumed that the type of career adversity is related to the life value in traditional Chinese culture: to be a scholar is to be the top of society. That is, **most parents and elders hope that their children and youth study hard to acquire fame, serving as officials to honor the family** (Hsiou-Huai Wang, 2015).

Literatiism

1.3. In addition, the second and the third adversities, **interpersonal relationship and love**, are related to the research results that university' youth **will gradually transfer or expand their focuses of social relationships from family to peer group** as their physiological growth and social cognition develop, and change their peer groups from the same gender to mixed ones (Brown, 1990; Coleman, 1961; Kandel, 1978).

- 2. the results is similar to previous studies. **All of the research results indicate that those suffering adversities may bear more risks.**
- 3. **The research found that the participants applied not only internal assets but also external resources**
- 4. **The metaphors of career resilience raised by these participants show that career resilience contains the factors of personal dimension and environmental context.** It is also consistent with the protective factors described in the literature aforementioned

5. In addition, the literature aforementioned figured out that traditional **Chinese culture emphasizes the forbearance for adversity adaption**. Even though in the research, some participants adopts "forbearance" to adapt themselves to adversities, the number of them is not many. **Is it because of the rapid change of generation? Is it because of the change of values?** Or is it because participants prefer other strategies? The answer is in need of further exploration.

Suggestion

1. Fostering career resilience: **.Building career resilience development education** in schools
2. Developing **assessment tool** of career resilience in university youth.
3. Using **cross-sectional** survey to understand the youth's career resilience phenomenon

Thank you

Wish you all the best

