

# Cross-Cultural Insights into Career Development: A Study of Domestic and Chinese International Students

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## Introduction

Psychology of Working Theory (PWT) proposed:

- 1. Economic constraints (EC) and marginalization (M) are the two main environmental barriers limiting individuals' access to decent work
- 2. Work volition (WV) and career adaptability (CA) can buffer the hindering effect from environmental barriers

In this study, we ask:

**If PWT holds valid across three groups of university students? What are some differences in career development behaviors cross-culturally?**

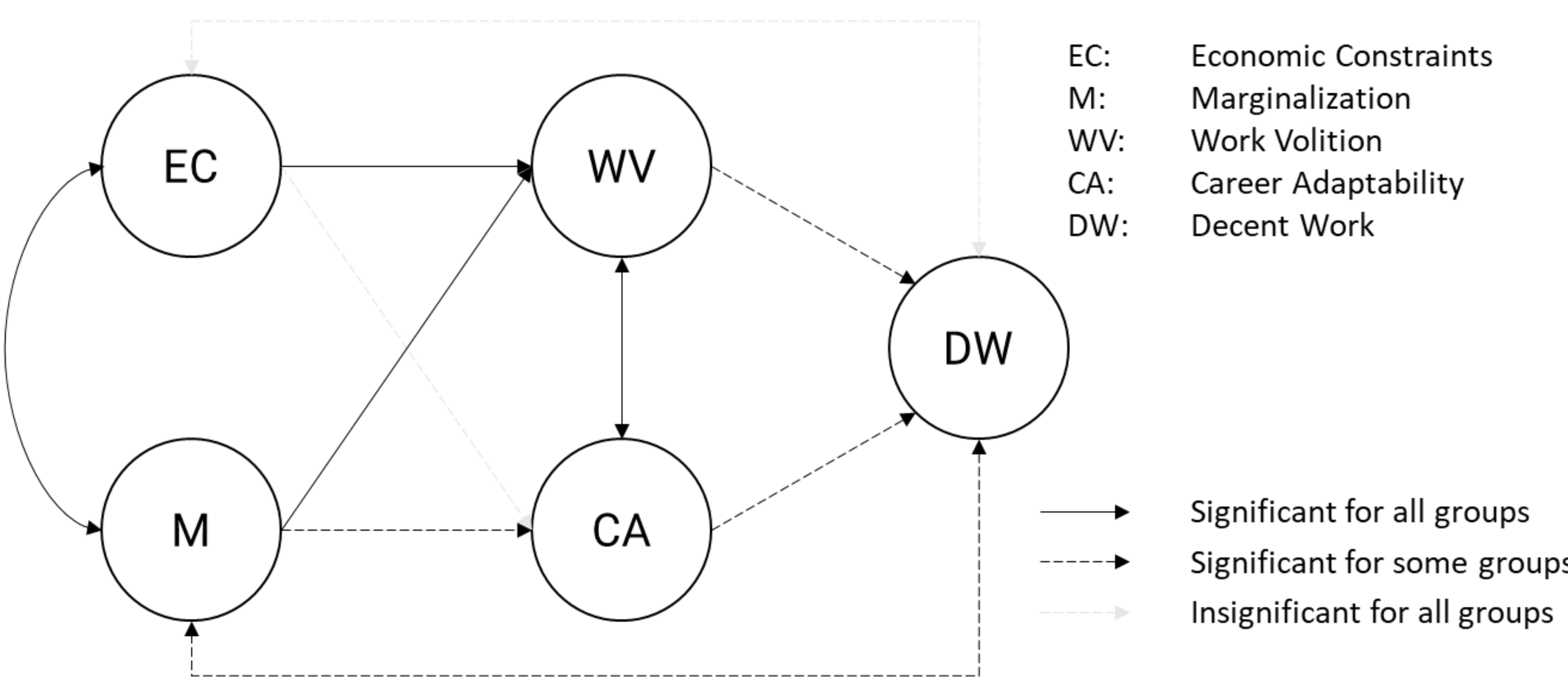
## Method

- Data collected from three groups from November 2023 to July 2024.
- **Confirmatory factor analyses (CFAs)** on each latent construct using Plausible values for each factor.
- **Path models** were estimated separately for each group to explore group-specific structural relationships.
- Finally, a **moderated path analysis** was conducted across all three groups, quantifying the differences in structural paths due to group-level variations.

## Participants

- 285 **American university students** (36 undergrads),
- 279 **Chinese international students** in the US (80 undergrads),
- 281 **Chinese university students** in China (154 undergrads).

## Results



Moderation Effects on Structural Paths			
	Geographic Location	Cultural Identity	Work Experience
Path Effects:			
EC -> CA	-0.017	-0.026	-0.031
EC -> WV	0.005	0.051	-0.027
M -> CA	-0.032	-0.021	0.051
M -> WV	-0.002	-0.111*	-0.064
CA -> DW	-0.355***	0.441***	0.067
WV -> DW	-0.144	-0.173*	-0.170
Covariance:			
EC <-> M	-0.125	0.238*	0.060
EC <-> DW	-0.069	0.008	-0.012
M <-> DW	-0.190	0.043	-0.012
CA <-> WV	-0.069	0.004	-0.157

\*: p < 0.05   \*\*\*: p < 0.001

**Geographic locations:** US or China

**Cultural identity:** American, Chinese

**Work experience:** yes or no

## Findings

- Across three groups: EC(economic constraints) and M (marginalization) significant predicts WV (work volition), which significantly related with CA (career adaptability).
- Among all three moderators, **cultural identity is the most consistent moderator** demonstrating group difference between American students and Chinese students on multiple paths.
- CA -> DW is the most sensitive path to moderators: locations (US VS China), cultural identity (American VS Chinese)

## Practical implications

- **Cultural identity** should be considered in supporting university students' career development.
- **Work volition(sense of choice)** is deeply impacted by economic constraints and marginalized experience.
- **Career adaptability** is related to work volition. Career counselor could work on broadening students' perception of professional options first.

## Acknowledgments

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## Selective References

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