

[Special Topic/Editorial: *Internationalization and
International Publishing in Counseling*]

**Internationalization and International Publishing:
Broadening the Impact of Scholarly Work in Counseling**

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Internationalizing scholarly work in counseling is instrumental to the development of the field of counseling around the globe. Practical steps and potential barriers to internationalizing counseling literature, including journals in counseling, are identified and discussed. The authors also explain how *Asian Journal of Counselling* can continue to play an important role in developing indigenous and international scholarship in counseling in Asia and beyond.

In the past decade, the discipline of counseling psychology (and to some extent, the broader field of counseling) has devoted considerable attention to internationalizing its research and practice (e.g., Douce,

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2004; Gerstein & Ægisdóttir, 2005; Heppner, 2006; Leong & Blustein, 2000; Leong & Ponterotto, 2003). The *internationalization* movement was at the onset initiated by scholars in the United States (U.S.) who saw internationalization as a logical step of the maturing field of counseling psychology (Douce, 2004; Heppner, Casas, Carter, & Stone, 2000). It has generated an array of scholarly work in which counseling scholars from around the world reported on the development of the counseling in their regions, discussed the nature of internationalization (e.g., Leung, 2003; Marsella & Pedersen, 2004; Pedersen, 2003), and commented on how internationalizing the field might strengthen the overall standing and relevance of counseling and counseling psychology worldwide (e.g., Gerstein & Ægisdóttir, 2005; Savickas, 2007).

Internationalization and collaboration are two keywords that cannot be separated. Advancement in information, communication, and computer technologies have greatly reduced the distance between nations in different geographic regions, as stated by Friedman (2006) in his bestseller *The World is Flat*:

... the wiring of the world with fiber-optic cable, the Internet, and work flow software has blown down many of the walls that prevented collaboration. Individuals who never dreamt they could work together ... are suddenly on the move. (p. 232)

With the availability of communication and information platforms, collaboration between scholars in two distant countries (e.g., China and the U.S.) are now almost as convenient as collaboration between scholars from two cities of the same country (e.g., San Francisco and New York). Both types of collaboration are important and could yield meaningful, but very different, scholarly outputs, yet collaboration across national and geographic borders in the field of counseling are still an exception rather than the rule. This is because even with the

availability of advanced communication technologies, we still have to overcome a host of human barriers to international collaboration, including differences in languages, cultural beliefs, and approaches to research and practice.

We believe that collaboration is a key to advancing the internationalization agenda of counseling and counseling psychology, and that scholarly journal can play an active role in facilitating various forms of cross-border collaboration. We would like to achieve three objectives in this article. First, we would like to discuss the importance of internationalizing the counseling literature, including publishing in venues “international” to authors, and offer practical steps to “internationalize” counseling journals. Second, we identify barriers that might inhibit authors from crossing national borders in their publishing endeavors, and propose ways to overcome these barriers. Third, we would like to discuss ways that *Asian Journal of Counselling (AJC)* can respond to the call to internationalize the counseling literature, and to continue its mission as a platform for counseling scholars in Asia and around the world to share their research and practice in diverse cultural contexts.

Strengthening the International Substance of Counseling Journals

Counseling scholars should take a stance to value international perspectives in scholarly work. It is important for authors to: (1) integrate and synthesize relevant studies from around the world into review of literature and/or conceptualization; (2) diversify research samples in terms of cross-cultural composition; and (3) discuss findings and/or proposed frameworks in the light of the global literature and the needs of the international counseling community. Regardless of where scholarly articles are submitted and published, authors should aim to

anchor their scholarly work on what has been done around the world, in addition to those from within their local region. These are the most important points that we would like to communicate through this article.

Equally, scholarly journals in counseling could play an important role in facilitating cross-cultural and international synthesis of counseling literature. Counseling journals could serve as scholarly platforms where cross-national research findings are reported and synthesized, views on practice and interventions are discussed, and emerging international and local concerns are addressed by the global community of counselors and psychologists (e.g., Marsella, 1998). The impact of individual scholarly work in counseling are amplified if it is connected to related work from the international community and if dialogues could be carried out in diverse publishing platforms. The cross-fertilization of scholarship will yield substantial benefits to the entire counseling profession as the multicultural and cross-cultural base of scholarship is further enriched and strengthened.

However, internationalizing our counseling journals does not simply mean that authors submit their work to diverse journal outlets around the world. It requires collaborative efforts from journal editors and scholars to: (1) generate outputs that address themes central to the international counseling community; (2) develop international research and practice forums in which multiple research or conceptual pieces around convergent themes are addressed; (3) expand journal editorial boards to include reviewers from diverse geographic regions; and (4) adopt editorial processes and standards that would accommodate diverse expression of scholarships across national borders.

At this point, there are still plenty of rooms to improve on publishing across borders in counseling and counseling psychology. The degree of “international diversity” in counseling journals is still

quite low, especially in the U.S., where counseling is regarded as an established discipline with a comprehensive conceptual and empirical base (Leung & Hoshmand, 2007). If we are serious about internationalizing the counseling field, we need to internationalize the scholarly journals that are published in different parts of the world.

Internationalizing counseling and counseling psychology journals and fostering community among colleagues around the world are no easy tasks but they could be approached through initiatives at several levels. First, counseling journals should take the lead in addressing issues central to the development of the field of counseling worldwide. The international themes suggested by Savickas (2007) could be used as a general guide in this respect. Savickas identified four themes confronting the international counseling psychology community: (1) defining counseling psychology from an international perspective; (2) crystallizing a cross-national professional identity; (3) encouraging construction of indigenous models, methods, and materials; and (4) promoting international collaboration. Even though Savickas was addressing more specifically to the community of counseling psychologists, the themes he suggested could well be used as a general guide for authors and editors to develop diverse international counseling scholarships.

Second, counseling journals should invite submission on thematic topics of concern to counselors and psychologists, such as global mental health, racial relationships and racism, as well as various forms of social and economic inequities. These scholarly exchanges should also examine if there are higher-order values (e.g., social justice, commitment to cultural understanding, and non-violence) that serve to unite the counseling profession, and how these shared values might impact the conceptualization and application of counseling and psychological frameworks across cultures. In other words, thematic

topics are to be chosen according to the moral and social commitments and priorities of the field of counseling and counseling psychology, in addition to pursuing scholarly and academic interests. It is a step toward furthering counseling and counseling psychology as moral, political, and cultural forces, as pointed out by Marsella (2007) and others (e.g., Goodman et al., 2004).

Third, we should consider diverse formats for theme-based discussion, in addition to traditional ways of reporting conceptual and empirical work. Two practical ideas are the use of case studies and the use of online formats for discussion and documentation. By case studies, we mean more than individual clinical case studies in counseling work. They can include social groups and community systems where certain problems of international significance have been identified, such as counseling families with international adoptees or working with victims of human trafficking. Case studies allow the problem under consideration to be the focus of exchanges, leading to conceptual and practical problem-solving that takes into account the cultural variance behind authors, clients, and communities. It is therefore a very appropriate way to apply culture- and context-based lenses to conceptualize global problems that counselors and psychologists may help to address in theory and practice.

With the availability of technology and Internet communication platforms, it also makes sense to hold online dialogues with international colleagues on thematic topics and issues, without requiring the participants to travel to the same location. Using various listserv or online discussion venues, people can build intellectual communities and disseminate information efficiently across geographic boundaries. These ongoing discussions could be edited for publication in counseling journals as a part of an international forum or issues addressing specific international themes. In addition to the substantive

dialogues and reflections generated through these electronic networks, we also believe that online discussions might help to “match” scholars from different regions who have similar lines of scholarly interest and passion. The exchange and cross-fertilization of ideas among scholars, and the fermentation of various forms of cross-cultural collaborative relationships (e.g., research collaborations, mentoring) would lead to broad, substantive, dynamic, and permanent forms of international collaboration in the future.

Overcoming Barriers to International Publishing

The most common barrier to international publishing is authors’ own tendency to stay within their comfort zone, to submit and pursue publication in journals that are most known to them. We think it is important for authors to be aware of diverse outlets around the world, and to consider venues in which their scholarly work might interface with other authors who might be doing similar lines of work. We strongly recommend authors and editors to pursue cross-national publications in journal issues that would maximize the global impact of convergent scholarly work.

We also encourage academic departments that evaluate the scholarly work of counseling colleagues to put an emphasis on the international substance of scholarly work, including the synthesis of international literature, cross-border publications, and different forms of international collaboration. Without an incentive system that values international scholarship and collaboration, counseling colleagues might not have a strong motivation to pursue cross-border scholarly initiatives.

Paradoxically, in some Chinese communities in Asia such as Hong Kong, there is a prevalent attitude in academia (including academic departments and university administration) that privileges overseas publication venues, and at the same time undervalues local publication

venues. Our observation is that the above scenario applies to the field of counseling in Hong Kong as well. There are at least three undesirable side effects to this mind-splitting attitude. First, authors are more likely to submit their high-quality academic work overseas than to local venues. As a result, local publication venues have relatively little space to grow. Second, academic work published in Western journal outlets are often written in English, and might not reach local target-audiences (especially counseling practitioners) who are not familiar with these journals or are not proficient in English. This results in a widening of gap between local needs and scholarship. Third, local publication venues and researchers have to struggle with an “inferiority complex” which is detrimental to the long-term development of the field of counseling. Undervaluing the importance of locally published scholarships is not conducive to the healthy development of an applied field such as counseling, in which local culture, needs, and context are essential pieces of the puzzle, as echoed by Douce (2004) in an article on the globalization of counseling psychology:

... there is intense pressure for international faculty to publish in U.S. journals. If publishing in the U.S. is the standard for advancement and U.S. journals only publish what is relevant to U.S. populations, we are educational imperialists. (p. 147)

We echo the sentiments expressed by Douce (2004). This should not become an academic turf issue. We believe that it is important for counseling scholars (and those in administrative positions) to recognize that the nurturance of local-based scholarship is an important prerequisite for the advancement of the field locally and internationally.

Another barrier to international publishing is related to the mechanism of journal reviewing, which at times might inhibit international publishing. We believe it is important for journals to have

reviewers who (1) hold an affirming attitude toward an international perspective of counseling; (2) possess sufficient cross-cultural knowledge, including knowledge of the international counseling literature; and (3) have the capacity for cross-cultural sensitivity and respect such that their comments could be delivered to authors in ways that are respectful of their cultural backgrounds. When authors who are submitting across national borders feel that their work were evaluated negatively due to reviewers' lack of sufficient cross-cultural knowledge and understanding (e.g., lack of understanding/concern on how certain variables might be important in the author's cultural context), or when the reviewers' feedback convey biases and a lack of cultural respect (e.g., using demeaning comments to criticize non-standard English usages), they might be discouraged to submit again. We strongly recommend counseling journals to "recruit" an international team of reviewers and to form an editorial board with a strong international representation, so that diverse approaches to scholarly research and practice could be evaluated in a fair and respectful manner.

Language is another factor that would deter international publishing. We have the tools to communicate seamlessly across borders (e.g., optical fiber and work-flow software), yet we could not read scholarly work in languages foreign to us, or publish in languages that we are not familiar with. In Chinese regions in Asia, there is often a bias that English is the "international language" and that it should be the "default" language to present our scholarly work. We realize that publishing in English is likely to increase the likelihood that a certain scholarly piece might reach an international audience, and consequently be cited by other scholars around the world, yet we also feel strongly that publishing in one's own language will also serve to reach a vast number of readers who are not proficient in English. *AJC* is an example of a journal trying to accommodate multiple languages within a society. All the abstracts in *AJC* are published in English and Chinese, and the

English abstracts are included in PsycInfo (the electronic database of the American Psychological Association). More than half of the articles published in *AJC* are written in English. *AJC* will continue to be a bilingual publication. Many authors still prefer to write in Chinese, a language that is increasingly used in the next century, and it is important for us to keep the journal as a venue for these authors.

Another issue is the cost of production and circulation that can affect the reach of a given journal to an international readership. Those with resources can perhaps lead the way, and counseling journals in more “developed” regions could initiate more theme-based international issues. We also need to keep in mind that less endowed universities and those in developing countries may not have the budgets to acquire journals. One option is to shift to electronic publishing and make allowance for wider access to developing regions. However, access would still be restricted to those who have the capacity for Internet connection in their regions.

Most important of all, authors’ have to conquer their ethnocentric tendency and inclination to stay within their cultural comfort zone and encapsulation (Pedersen, 2003). We believe that publishing internationally is an important way to reach out to and enrich people’s understanding of diverse cultural beliefs, and at the same time to expand their cultural awareness and professional horizon that would elevate the level of scholarship.

Internationalization and the *Asian Journal of Counseling*

AJC will continue to solicit and publish scholarly work related to counseling in Asia, including articles that would further the understanding of the important interface between culture and counseling. This has always been the number one priority for *AJC*. However, we also aspire to strengthen our “international” and “global” mindset, and

hope that the journal could take part in addressing issues critical to the international counseling community, as well as the synthesis of counseling literature worldwide.

With the above in mind, we believe that the goals of *AJC* should be both indigenous and international. Anchoring on the suggestions on international counseling psychology by Savickas (2007), we believe that the indigenous mission of *AJC* should be to: (1) facilitate the crystallization of a professional identity for the counseling profession in Asia, especially in Chinese communities; (2) serve as a scholarly venue for conceptual and research articles that would further the understanding of the cultural context of counseling, leading to the development of models, methods, and practice indigenous to the cultural contexts in Asia; and (3) engage counseling professionals in Asia to respond to emerging and urgent issues that have critical social significance.

The goals of *AJC* are also international. We would like to be connected with the international counseling community. Through future issues of the journal, we hope to: (1) engage counseling colleagues around the world to discuss issues, concerns, core values, and action items that are salient to the international counseling community; (2) solicit submissions on special thematic topics on theory and practice so that the aggregate of these scholarly work could make unique contributions to the counseling literature; and (3) facilitate international collaboration through various research, practice, and thematic forums.

In addition to the above, *AJC* will continue to pursue other formats of scholarly exchanges discussed in this article, including case studies and online sharing and discussions. We will also seek to expand the international composition of reviewers, and to cultivate a constructive process of journal reviewing that is educational to authors and reviewers.

In conclusion, we hope the ideas that we shared could motivate our colleagues to explore ways to increase the international substance of their scholarly work, and to increase the impact of their scholarly work through publishing in international venues. In the Silk Route project spearheaded by Yo Yo Ma, he brought musicians from far corners of the world who do not read Western sheet music to play together with Western musicians. As all the players learn from one another, new forms of musical knowledge have emerged. Through indigenization, internationalization, and collaboration, we could work together to bring the field of counseling toward a new and exciting horizon.

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輔導文獻和出版的國際化：擴闊學術著作的影響力

將輔導文獻國際化，有助輔導領域在全球的發展。本文討論把輔導文獻（包括學報）國際化的實際步驟與可能障礙。作者亦指出在亞洲及其他地區，《亞洲輔導學報》在推動輔導學理本土化及國際化方面仍擔當重要角色，文章並論述當中原因。