

Meaningful Work for Chinese Managers

Confucianism and Taoism based Career Success in China

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Meaningful Work & Career Success in the Context of Chinese Culture

- Career success is the essential component of meaningful work in China
- To Chinese, the meaningfulness of their work in terms of Confucianism and Taoism largely impact their perceptions of career success
- Almost all major multinational companies have expanded their operations into the global market (in particular BRICS). China is one of the most important emerging markets and poses great challenges in understanding how employees think of their work and what they try to get from their work
- This study is to explore what a meaningful managerial job is to managerial personnel in the Chinese context

What is Confucianism?

- Confucianism has been the mainstream of Chinese ideology, politics and culture all through the ages.
- The basic thoughts of Confucius can be embodied in the following six aspects: humanity, rite, neutrality, virtue, education and cultivation
- Confucianism reflects the human being as a social role in the society.

What is Taoism?

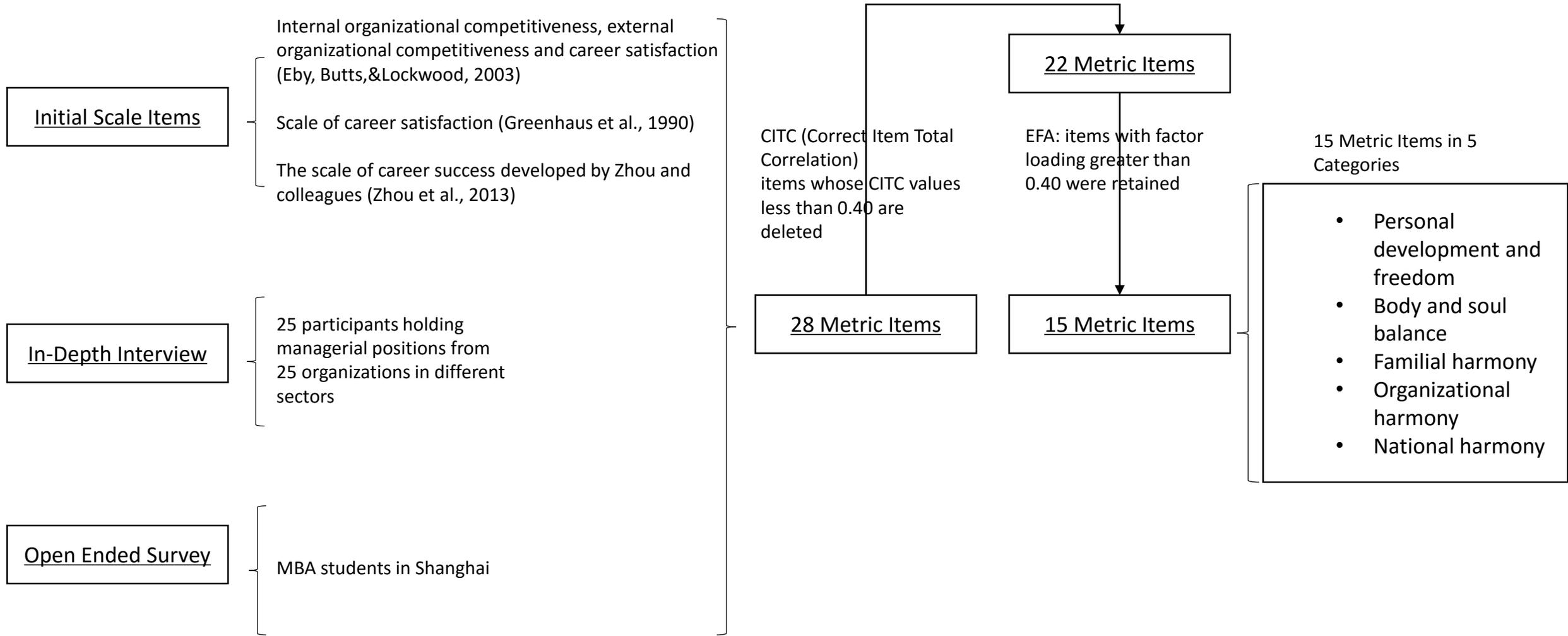
- Taoism contains many profound theories which at first may be difficult to understand. In general, these theories reflect Taoism as a balanced relationship between human beings and nature.

A Brief Comparison between Confucianism and Taoism

	Confucianism	Taoism
Tenet	Patriarchal order	Naturalistic freedom
Object it focuses on	Group	Individual
Outlook of harmony	Harmony in the order of family and country	Harmony in the balance of body and soul
The definition for people	The role orientation of people in the structure of social hierarchy (role doctrine)	People's state of natural existence and free will (Liberalism)
Basic value dimensions	The principle of “benevolence”: the principle of human relations (code of blood relationship ethics)	Nature of “individual”: nature of individual feeling (self-perception of feelings)

Source: An's *Order and Freedom* (2010) and the summary.

Development of Metrics of Career Success in Context of Chinese Culture



The Derived Five-Factor Model of Career Success

Taoism Orientation

Confucianism Orientation

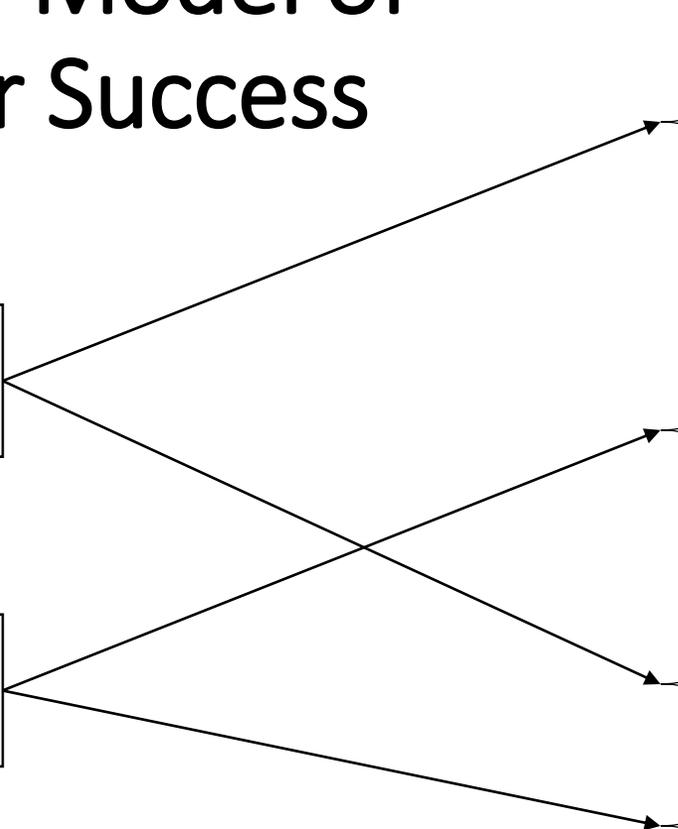


Table 1
Result of factor loading on key dimensions of managers' career success

Variable Items	Factor Loading				
	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Personal development and freedom</i>					
I have enough time to enjoy my life after work.	0.78				
I can realize my dreams through my work.	0.71				
I can bring my advantage at work.	0.70				
I can become an expert in a field.	0.64				
I can have spiritual freedom and maximum autonomy at work.	0.53				
<i>Familial harmony</i>					
I can make enough money so that my family can live a comfortable life.		0.73			
I can achieve a balance between work and family life.		0.51			
<i>Organizational harmony</i>					
My work is highly valued by my superiors.			0.83		
I can lead my team to achieve high performance.			0.70		
I play an indispensable role at work.			0.62		
My work is highly recognized by peers.			0.48		
<i>Body and soul balance</i>					
I can keep healthy physically and psychologically despite the busy schedule.				0.67	
I can work on jobs that make me happy.				0.65	
<i>National harmony</i>					
My work can contribute to my country's prosperity and people's happiness.					0.87
My work can help the development of and make contributions to the society.					0.85
<i>Method</i>	Principal component analysis				
<i>Rotation</i>	Orthogonal Rotation				
<i>KMO value</i>	0.865				
<i>Chi-square value of Bartlett examination</i>	3197.809				
<i>Variance (%)</i>	57.13%				

CFA

Statistics of Survey

- **Region.** Managers from Tier 1 to Tier 4 cities, including Shanghai, Tianjin, Nanjing, and Inner Mongolia
- **Gender.** 63.9% male, 36.1% female
- **Education.** 76.9% degree of university and college, 19.4% degree of master, 1.2% degree of PhD, the rest hold a high school diploma
- **Age.** Average length of employment is 15.48 years.
- **Validity of Survey Feedbacks.** Hand out 1000 questionnaires , a returning rate of 75%, 614 valid questionnaires.

Analysis of Reliability

Cronbach α 's of career success scale

Scale and the factors	Number of items	Cronbach α
The overall scale	15	0.917
Personal development and freedom	5	0.863
Body and soul balance	2	0.817
Organizational harmony	4	0.740
National harmony	2	0.861
Familial harmony	2	0.842

Analysis of Content and Construct Validity

The results of confirmatory factor analysis for career success in China

Model	χ^2/df	GFI	AGFI	NFI	IFI	CFI	RMSEA
Model I: Single-factor model	7.33	0.76	0.70	0.79	0.81	0.81	0.130
Model II: First order five-factor model	3.03	0.90	0.87	0.93	0.95	0.95	0.070
Model III: Second-order single-factor model	3.52	0.88	0.85	0.91	0.93	0.93	0.079

Key Findings

- The five factor model proves a good metric to profile the career success in context of Chinese culture.
- The concept 'harmony' is one of the key indicators of Chinese managerial personnel's career success, which is different from western culture (career satisfaction or calling).
- The naturalism-based ingredients embedded in the Taoism is key indicators of Chinese managerial personnel's career success (which is different from work-life balance).
- People in China keep a balance between Confucianism and Taoism metrics of career success when they pursue a meaningful work.

Next Step

- Using different samples for more generalizable findings. For example, people in different occupations or general staff (not managers) in the organizations
- Cross-cultural comparative study on meaningful work (career success)

Thank You

Back Up

Literature review (I)

- Career Success

- The accumulated positive work and psychological outcomes resulting from one's work experiences

(Seibert & Kraimer, 2001)

- Three Ways to Enhance Conceptualizing and Measuring Career Success

- Making use of research on what employees want from their work
- More attention to how people in different contexts view their career success
- Using qualitative methods to obtain richer information and develop more solid theories

(Heslin, 2005)

Literature review (II)

- Four main streams of research on categorizing and further assessing career success
 - The single-factor approach: job satisfaction, career satisfaction, calling
 - The quadratic approach: self-referent career success & other-referent career success
 - The dynamic approach: different meanings at different career stages
 - The gender approach: female : a full life & balance

(Greenhaus, Parasuraman & Wormley, 1990; Hall & Chandler, 2005; Judge, Higgins, Thoresen & Barrick, 1999)

Literature review (III)

- Research on cross-cultural difference in career success has remained under studied
(Ngo et al., 2014)
- Almost all major multinational companies have expanded their operations into the global market (in particular BRICS). China is one of the most important emerging markets and poses great challenges in understanding how employees think of their work and what they try to get from their work
- Compared with the employees from the West, Chinese employees have remarkable characteristics with different career needs, different way of thinking and codes of behaviors
(Zhou, Sun, Guan, Li & Pan, 2013)
- Contemporary research on career success has not given enough attention to the group of managerial personnel in the Chinese context, which are an important career group, and their understanding of career success will have important implications in organization performance
(Zhou et al., 2013)

Literature review (IV)

- Cultural Characteristics

- The character of being mutually complementary to each other between Confucianism and Taoism is a basic thread in Chinese history.
- The Confucianism and Taoism-based cultural values have deeply affected the Chinese and their thinking systems and value judgement for thousands of years.

(Li,1989)