

# Students' Perceptions of School Counselors: An Investigation of Two High Schools in Beijing, China



*The Professional Counselor*  
Volume 4, Issue 5, Pages 519–530  
<http://tpcjournal.nbcc.org>  
© 2014 NBCC, Inc. and Affiliates  
doi:10.15241/qs.4.5.519

Qi Shi  
Xi Liu  
Wade Leuwerke

**This study sought to examine students' perceptions of their school counselors in two high schools in Beijing, China. Independent *t* tests found that female students rated school counselors' availability significantly higher than male students did. Also, students who had received prior counseling services rated counselors significantly higher in the following areas than did students who had never received counseling services: knowledge of achievement tests, friendliness and approachability, understanding students' point of view, advocating for students, promptness in responding to requests, ability to explain things clearly, reliability to keep promises, availability, and overall effectiveness. A  $2 \times 2$  between-subjects ANOVA found an interaction effect between gender and use or nonuse of counseling services. In general, students gave positive evaluations of school counselors and were satisfied with counseling services.**

***Keywords:* school counselors; counseling services; students' perceptions; high schools; Beijing, China**

China has been experiencing dramatic economic and social changes in the past 3 decades (Guthrie, 2012). During this time there has been increased attention to both mental health problems and student development (Cyranoski, 2010; Lim, Lim, Michael, Cai, & Schock, 2010; Xin & Zhang, 2009). It has been estimated that at least 17.5% of the Chinese population has some form of mental illness, one of the highest rates in the world (Phillips et al., 2009), accounting for about 20% of hospitalizations in the country (Fei, 2006). Facing significant mental health challenges, several authors have noted the need for more counseling professionals and mental health service providers (Cook, Lei, & Chiang, 2010; Davey & Zhao, 2012). In rural areas with fewer resources, the demand for mental health care is even greater (Ji, 2000).

Given such great needs for mental health services, China has been making tremendous efforts in reforming its mental health service system (Tse, Ran, Huang, & Zhu, 2013). In 2004, China launched the 686 Project, a mental health reform initiative modeled on the World Health Organization's recommended framework for integrating hospital-based services with a community mental health service system (Ma, 2012). By the end of 2011, 1.83 million Chinese people with severe mental illness had been treated as a result of the project.

While China has witnessed growth in the counseling profession, at the same time it has struggled to build national certification and licensing standards, and create comprehensive counselor training (Chang & Kleinman, 2002; Cook et al., 2010; Davey & Zhao, 2012; Ding, Kuo, & Van Dyke, 2008; Hou & Zhang, 2007). In 2002, China's National Counseling Licensing Board was formed, and there is currently a three-tier national licensing

---

Qi Shi is an assistant professor at Loyola University Maryland. Xi Liu is a doctoral student at George Washington University. Wade Leuwerke is an associate professor at Drake University. Correspondence can be addressed to Qi Shi, 2034 Greenspring Drive, Timonium, Maryland 21093, [qshi@loyola.edu](mailto:qshi@loyola.edu).

program. More than 30 locations throughout China offer the qualification exams for counselors, and recently a national exam to license school counselors was instituted (Lim et al., 2010). Results from a nationwide survey of professional training of mental health practitioners in China showed that quality of training and supervision were among common concerns (Gao et al., 2010). Also, more accredited professional training programs at the university or college level must be designed and established. Beijing Normal University, in collaboration with Rowan University in the United States, was reported to be the first university in China to offer a school counseling training program (Lim et al., 2010).

## **Mental Health of Students in China**

Increased attention to student well-being has shown high prevalence of mental health problems among Chinese students (Cook et al., 2010; Wang & Miao, 2001). Common psychological problems among students included test anxiety, academic pressure, loneliness, social discomfort, video game addiction (Thomason & Qiong, 2008), Internet addiction, child obesity, self-centeredness and reclusion (Worrell, 2008). A study from a metropolitan area in southeastern China showed that 10.8% of high school students had mental health concerns including hostility, compulsions, depression and interpersonal relationship sensitivity (Hu, 1994). A more recent survey conducted by Wu et al. (2012) among 1,891 high school students in a southern city in China showed that 25% of the adolescents reported a perceived need for mental health services, while only 5% of the sample had used school-based mental health services, and 4% had used non-school-based services.

Researchers are starting to identify factors that contribute to Chinese students' mental health problems, including the pressure to achieve academic success (Corbin Dwyer & McNaughton, 2004; Thomason & Qiong, 2008; Worrell, 2008), being an only child (Liu, Munakata, & Onuoha, 2005; Thomason & Qiong, 2008; Worrell, 2008), prevalence of physical abuse (Wong, Chen, Goggins, Tang, & Leung, 2009), inability to cope with multiple expectations and requirements (Tang, 2006), increased attention to personal and social development (Corbin Dwyer & McNaughton, 2004), and the generation gap between children and their parents (Thomason & Qiong, 2008). Zheng, Zhang, Li, and Zhang (1997) suggested that parents and teachers who did not attend to students' psychological problems contributed to the high rates of mental health problems among students. Because they have the most direct interaction with students, homeroom teachers and subject teachers in China are well-positioned to help students address their mental health concerns. In fact, Chinese homeroom teachers perform a wide variety of counseling tasks (Shi & Leuwerke, 2010). However, teachers do not receive sufficient training in providing counseling services.

## **School Counseling in China**

School counselors are uniquely positioned to impact the mental health and academic success of students in China. As would be expected with developing professions, there are numerous challenges to school counseling in China: (a) a tremendous shortage of qualified school counselors (Cook et al., 2010; Shi & Leuwerke, 2010; Thomason & Qiong, 2008; Yan, 2003; Zheng et al., 1997), (b) an urgent need for more accredited training programs (Gao et al., 2010; Leuwerke & Shi, 2010; Lim et al., 2010) and (c) a lack of support and respect from teachers and other school staff (Jiang, 2005; Leuwerke & Shi, 2010). Although many schools in China, especially in urban areas, have begun to establish counseling offices and hire school counselors, this profession is still in its primitive developmental stage (Leuwerke & Shi, 2010). Moreover, school counselors themselves have expressed great need for more training and standard education to better serve their students (Leuwerke & Shi, 2010). A standardized training system is imperative to provide training, assessment, issuance of licenses and continued education (Cook et al., 2010; Davey & Zhao, 2012; Yan, 2003; Zheng et al., 1997).

Facing the serious situation of Chinese students' mental health concerns and school counseling challenges, the Chinese government has turned greater attention to advanced mental health education in K–12 schools. Government policies on education reform have put more emphasis on students' mental health and the availability of psychological services (Ding et al., 2008). The Ministry of Education in China has published two important government guidelines in the past 2 decades. "Several Suggestions on Improving Mental Health Education in Elementary & Secondary Schools" (Zhong guo jiao yu bu, 1999) identified moral and politics teachers, homeroom teachers, Communist Youth League cadres, and school counselors as the personnel in schools responsible for the mental health needs of students. K–12 schools with available resources and funding were required to establish counseling offices, and school counselors were identified as the leaders of this system (Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, 1999). In 2012, the Ministry of Education released the updated version of "Guideline of Mental Health Education in Elementary & Secondary Schools." This guideline described the goals, content and methods of mental health education as well as the personnel responsible for delivery. The report specifically called for educating students about basic knowledge and skills regarding interpersonal relationships, career development, and living and socialization (Zhong guo jiao yu bu, 2012).

As required by the Chinese government, schools in large cities have begun to hire school counselors to provide counseling for their students (Jiang, 2005). In K–12 schools in China, school counseling is called *school guidance* or *mental health education*, which is actually a part of political and moral education (Jiang, 2005). School guidance in K–12 school settings has been taught as a subject course like math or science (Hou & Zhang, 2007). In addition to school counselors, homeroom teachers also play an important role in mental health services for students by performing a large range of counseling tasks (Shi & Leuwerke, 2010; Wang, 1997). Chinese students access psychological services in schools through a variety of channels: individual counseling, group activities, lectures on common psychological concerns, parent and teacher consultation, and classroom guidance (Leuwerke & Shi, 2010).

The expansion of services in the Chinese school system has made counseling more accessible than ever to students (Thomason & Qiong, 2008). However, empirically based literature examining the role, function and scope of school counseling in China is virtually nonexistent (Jiang, 2005; Leuwerke & Shi, 2010; Shi & Leuwerke, 2010; Thomason & Qiong, 2008). Very little is known about the amount of counseling that students actually receive at school, let alone how students perceive school counselors and the school counseling services they receive (Leuwerke & Shi, 2010). The present study sought to examine some of these questions. Through surveys of students at two high schools in Beijing, the authors explored students' use of counseling in school as well as their perceptions of the school counselors. The authors also examined possible differences among students who sought services or not, as well as any differences across gender. Correspondingly, the research questions in this study were as follows: (a) How many students seek counseling services and how often do they meet their school counselors in these two high schools in Beijing? (b) Do students' perceptions of the school counselors differ across gender? (c) Do students' perceptions of the school counselors differ depending on whether or not they seek counseling services? (d) Do male and female students' perceptions differ depending on whether or not they seek counseling services?

## Methods

### Participants

A total of 137 (47 male, 90 female) students from two high schools in Beijing completed questionnaires; 293 surveys were distributed, resulting in a return rate of 46.76%. The sample was recruited through the first author's contacts in Beijing. Among the students who completed the survey, 126 were from a high school

affiliated with Beijing Normal University and 11 were from a high school affiliated with Beijing Renmin University. The sample consisted of 12.4% ( $n = 17$ ) senior 1 students (equivalent to 10th graders in the United States), 78.8% ( $n = 108$ ) senior 2 students (equivalent to 11th graders in the United States) and 8.8% ( $n = 12$ ) senior 3 students (equivalent to 12th graders in the United States). The two high schools recruited for the study are among the top ranked high schools in Beijing. The school counselors being evaluated in these two high schools had an average of 8 years of experience working as professional school counselors. Students from these schools typically perform very well in academics and gain admission to universities after high school. As for plans after high school, 97.8% ( $n = 134$ ) of the students surveyed stated that the plan was a 4-year college, with only three students indicating “other plans.” No student indicated planning to attend a 2-year college or vocational training school or get a job right after graduating from high school.

### **Instrument**

Participants completed a brief demographic questionnaire as well as the Chinese High School Students’ Perceptions of School Counselors Survey. All information students provided in the survey was anonymous. The demographic questionnaire included items such as students’ grade level, gender and postsecondary plans. The Chinese High School Students’ Perceptions of School Counselors Survey used in this study was adapted from McCullough’s (1973) survey that was originally designed to determine high school students’ perceptions of school counselors’ services in the United States. Some changes were made to adapt to Chinese students’ cultural background, including adding two questions about the number of times that students had tried to see the school counselor and the actual number of times that they had met with the school counselor. After indicating the number of times they had tried and actually met with a school counselor, participants rated their counselor’s ability and effectiveness on a four-point Likert scale (4 = excellent, 3 = good, 2 = fair, 1 = poor) in the following 11 areas: knowledge of college admission, knowledge of vocational information, knowledge of achievement tests, friendliness and approachability, understanding students’ point of view, advocate for students, promptness in responding to requests, ability to explain things clearly, reliability to keep promises, availability to students, and overall effectiveness.

### **Translation**

The authors created all materials utilized in this study in English, and the first author then translated the documents into Mandarin Chinese. To examine translation quality, a bilingual, native Chinese speaker who was not part of the research team subsequently translated all documents back into English. The authors evaluated and considered these translated documents equivalent. This approach is consistent with common practice in research requiring translation of documents (Larkin, de Casterlé, & Schotsmans, 2007; Liu et al., 2005).

### **Design**

Data analyses were conducted based on the four research questions in this study. First, descriptive statistical analysis was conducted to learn the number of students who had sought counseling services and the frequency of their meetings with a counselor. Second, an independent  $t$  test was conducted to determine the differences between male and female students’ perceptions of their school counselors’ services. Third, another independent  $t$  test was performed to examine the differences between students’ perceptions of their school counselors’ services depending on whether or not the students had sought prior counseling services. Finally, a  $2 \times 2$  between-subjects ANOVA was done to determine whether there was a statistically significant interaction effect between gender and whether or not students sought prior counseling services.

The data from students who had never had individual meetings with counselors were included in these analyses. These data were included because these students had had contact with school counselors in other circumstances (e.g., lectures, classroom guidance, school-wide gathering), even though they had not met with school counselors individually (Leuwerke & Shi, 2010).

## Procedure

Five teachers at the two high schools assisted with data collection. Since research participation and the protocol were new to most of the teachers, explanation of the confidential and voluntary nature of the project was provided through teleconference. Questions from the teachers were answered via e-mail. One of the teachers in Beijing was in charge of the informed consent forms and data storage. Parents of the students in the classrooms of all five teachers received one copy of the informed consent and all granted consent for their child to participate in the research. Students then received e-mails. An online survey tool (<http://www.surveymonkey.com>) was used to administer the questionnaire.

## Results

The first goal of this study was to examine how many students had sought services from school counselors and the number of meetings they had had with their school counselors since they entered high school. Descriptive statistics were obtained in order to achieve this goal. Nearly half of the participants (48.9%,  $n = 67$ ) reported having seen counselors at least once. Among these 67 students, the majority ( $n = 41$ ) had met once individually with a school counselor, 22 had seen a school counselor individually two to three times, and four students had talked with school counselors four to five times. No student reported having met with a school counselor more than five times. Information on the length of these individual counseling sessions was not obtained in the survey.

The second goal of this study was to examine the students' perceptions of their school counselors. Fifty-three students provided a complete evaluation of their school counselors in the survey. Among these 53 students, 36 had used counseling services before, whereas 17 reported no individual meetings with a counselor. As shown in Table 1, students' most positive ratings of their school counselors were for friendliness and approachability ( $M = 3.20$ ,  $SD = 1.25$ ) and ability to explain things clearly ( $M = 2.99$ ,  $SD = 1.33$ ). The lowest rated attributes were knowledge of college admission ( $M = 1.30$ ,  $SD = 1.42$ ) and knowledge of vocational information ( $M = 1.10$ ,  $SD = 1.30$ ).

**Table 1**

*Descriptive Statistics on Students' Evaluations of School Counseling Services*

School counseling services evaluated	<i>N</i>	Min	Max	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Friendliness and approachability	137	0	4	3.20	1.25
Ability to explain things clearly	137	0	4	2.99	1.33
Availability to students	137	0	4	2.77	1.38
Understanding students' points of view	138	0	4	2.73	1.32
Promptness in responding to requests	137	0	4	2.68	1.47
Reliability to keep promises	137	0	4	2.37	1.62
Advocate for students	137	0	4	2.31	1.51
Knowledge of achievement tests	137	0	4	1.82	1.44
Knowledge of college admission	141	0	4	1.30	1.42
Knowledge of vocational information	138	0	4	1.10	1.30
Overall effectiveness	137	0	4	2.51	1.40
Valid <i>N</i> (listwise)	137				

Furthermore, independent *t* tests were conducted to determine whether students' ratings of counseling services differed significantly between genders and between students who had or had not sought counseling services. A statistically significant result was found in students' ratings of school counselors' availability in the independent *t* test based on gender. Female students rated school counselors' availability significantly higher than male students did ( $F = 4.196, p < .05$ ). Statistically significant results also were found based on whether or not the students had sought counseling services. As shown in Table 2, students who had received prior counseling services rated counselors significantly higher in the following areas than did students who had never received counseling services: knowledge of achievement tests, friendliness and approachability, understanding students' point of view, advocate for students, promptness in responding to requests, ability to explain things clearly, reliability to keep promises, availability, and overall effectiveness.

**Table 2**

*Students' Evaluations of School Counselors Depending on Whether or Not They Seek Services*

School counseling services evaluated	Levene's test <sup>a</sup>		<i>t</i> test <sup>b</sup>				
	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>M</i> difference	<i>SE</i> difference
Knowledge of college admission	.59	.443	1.84	139	.068	.46	.25
Knowledge of vocational information	.55	.460	2.22	135	.028	.51	.23
Knowledge of achievement tests	7.61	.007	1.53	134	.128	.40	.26
Friendliness and approachability	7.34	.008	2.10	135	.038	.47	.22
Understanding students' points of view	8.26	.005	2.46	136	.015	.57	.23
Advocate for students'	2.89	.092	2.50	135	.014	.67	.27
Promptness in responding to requests	18.23	.000	2.12	135	.036	.55	.26
Ability to explain things clearly	17.92	.000	2.24	135	.027	.53	.24
Reliability to keep promises	9.28	.003	2.44	135	.016	.70	.29
Availability to students	9.59	.002	2.24	135	.027	.55	.25
Overall effectiveness	39.95	.000	3.03	135	.003	.74	.25

<sup>a</sup>Levene's test for equality of variances. <sup>b</sup>*t* test for equality of means.

A  $2 \times 2$  between-subjects ANOVA was conducted to evaluate the effects that gender and students' experiences with counseling services had on students' perceptions of counseling services. Levene's test and *F*max indicated that the homogeneity of variances assumption was met. A statistically significant interaction effect was found between gender and whether or not the students had received counseling services,  $F(1, 133) = 5.923, p = .016$ . As shown in Figure 1, the relationship between whether or not students had received counseling services and their perceptions of school counselors differed depending on gender. Among students who had had individual meetings with their counselors, males rated the counselors higher than females did, while females rated the counselors higher than males did if they had never received counseling services.

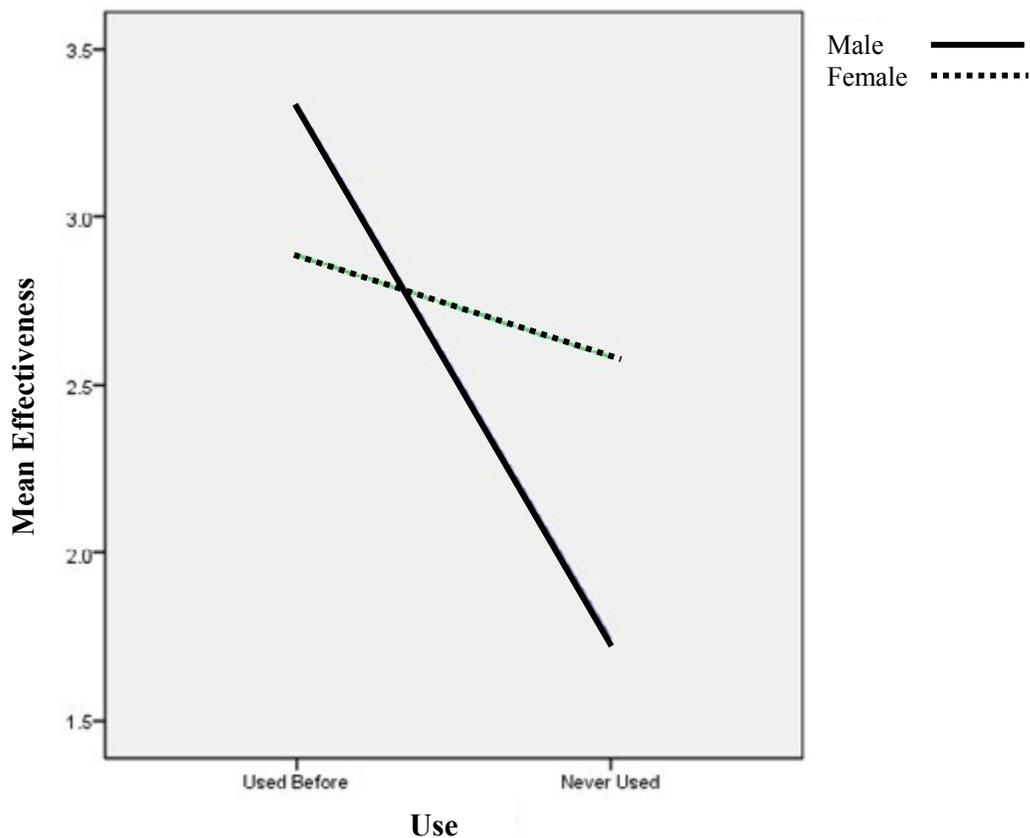


Figure 1. Mean differences on gender and whether or not students received counseling services.

## Discussion

In this study, almost half of the participants reported seeking help from a school counselor at least once. Interestingly, over 60% of the students who had met with a counselor had not returned for a subsequent meeting. Although China has seen the presence of school counselors increase in urban schools, it is still not common for students to seek counseling services (Thomason & Qiong, 2008). While the specific reasons why the students discontinued meeting with school counselors in this study are not clear, the following factors might help explain this phenomenon: (a) students have been found to be most concerned with physical health and to have failed to consider other aspects of health such as mental/psychological, behavioral and social (Wang, Zou, Gifford, & Dalal, 2014); (b) stigma toward mental illness exists among Chinese students (Thomason & Qiong, 2008; Wang, Huang, Jackson, Chen, & Laks, 2012); (3) Chinese cultural beliefs promote solving family-related issues inside one's own family (Cook et al., 2010); and (4) students spend the majority of their time preparing for the National College Entrance Exam (NCEE), which Chinese school counselors perceived as an impediment to students' utilization of school counseling services and future school counseling development in China (Leuwerke & Shi, 2010).

As for the modal number of counseling sessions that school counselors hold in secondary schools in China and the United States, little is presented in the current literature. More research has been conducted on college students' attendance of counseling sessions offered by university counseling centers. For example, Draper, Jennings, Baron, Erdur, and Shankar (2002) found that, on average, college students met with counselors only three times. A number of studies have confirmed that most college students attend only a few sessions and

that 50% terminate counseling prematurely (Ledsky et al., 2000; Renk, Dinger, & Bjugstad, 2000; Whipple et al., 2003). The number of counseling sessions that school counselors have with high school students could be likewise related. Students who visit school counselors by referral normally do not return for a second session, even though more sessions are indicated (E. Zhang, personal communication, June 5, 2007).

In China's current school system, homeroom teachers have close, day-to-day interaction with students in their own homerooms; these teachers are responsible for students' behavior, academic performance, mental health and all-around development (Lim et al., 2010; Shi & Leuwerke, 2010). Homeroom teachers may refer students to school counselors if they feel that students' problems are beyond the teachers' ability to solve (E. Zhang, personal communication, June 5, 2007). Future research could help explain why students tend to meet with their counselor only one time, and could explore the factors associated with students' premature termination. It might be that Chinese counselors are giving an intentional or unintentional message that only one session is appropriate. Additional research is necessary to explore how school counselors could reach out to more students and reduce the stigma attached to mental problems, which might encourage more students to utilize individual counseling in school settings.

The descriptive results of this study provide some preliminary information about the level of students' satisfaction with particular areas. Based on the students' perceptions in two high schools in Beijing, it appears that school counselors are doing quite well in many different areas, such as friendliness and approachability to students, ability to explain things clearly, and availability. However, there are some areas in which school counselors must improve their knowledge and skills (e.g., college admission, vocational information and opportunities, achievement tests). When interpreting the results of this study, it is important to keep in mind that participants in this study are all from top-ranking high schools in Beijing, where students have a general college-going mindset and therefore place significant emphasis on academic achievement; in addition, these students have a higher expectation and interest in seeking counseling services related to applying for college. Also, in the current school systems in China, homeroom teachers are normally in charge of handling students' academic testing, disseminating college-related information and helping students prepare for college (Shi & Leuwerke, 2010). Therefore, school counselors might not be as prepared as homeroom teachers to provide information regarding college admission and achievement tests.

As for the low ratings in the area of vocational information and opportunities, it is critical to consider the fact that the practice and profession of career counseling is still in the developmental stage in China (Leuwerke & Shi, 2010; Zhang, Hu, & Pope, 2002). Unfortunately, a thorough literature search revealed no information on the current conditions of school counselors' training in China. However, a few studies have briefly mentioned the training or education that school counselors receive. For example, Gao et al. (2010) conducted a national survey on professional training experience among mental health practitioners in China, with only half of their sample working in educational settings such as high schools and universities. The researchers found that mental health practitioners reported receiving only short-term training and continuing education that focused on theories; a majority reported receiving no supervision or case consultation (Gao et al., 2010). Although there is a lack of literature on school counselors' training in particular, several authors have indicated an urgent need for a more regulated, comprehensive and standardized training and qualification system for school counselors in China (Cook et al., 2010; Leuwerke & Shi, 2010; Lim et al., 2010; Thomason & Qiong, 2008).

It was expected that students who had had individual meetings with school counselors would rate counseling services differently than the students who had never seen school counselors individually. Students who had received counseling services before rated school counselors at a significantly higher level than students who had never had counseling services in many different areas, including the school counselors' test skills,

approachability, understanding, advocacy, promptness, ability, reliability, availability and overall effectiveness in providing counseling services. This finding is not surprising, considering that students who have had personal contact with the school counselors might have a better understanding of the role of school counselors and the services they provide, and therefore are more likely to give a higher rating of school counseling services. In a study conducted in Turkey, Yüksel-Şahin (2008) also found that the factor of whether students had met with school counselors was a significant predictor of students' evaluations of counseling guidance service.

Similarly, gender differences were expected in students' rating of school counselors. The results show significantly higher ratings from female students than male students of school counselors' availability. From the descriptive results of this study, one can see that female students reported more contact with school counselors than male students did; this finding might help explain female students' higher rating of school counselors' availability.

Finally, an interaction effect was found in students' ratings of the effectiveness of their counselors in the  $2 \times 2$  between-subjects ANOVA based on gender and whether or not students seek counseling services. In a 2009 study, Hou, Zhou, and Ma examined high school and university students' expectations of counseling in China. Results of their study showed that female students had significantly higher scores than males in terms of their own openness and counselors' acceptance. Meanwhile, the researchers also found that students who did not have counseling experience had significantly lower scores on their motivation compared to their counterparts. These trends continued in the current study, which further supports the idea that students' previous counseling experiences and gender relate closely to their expectations and perceptions of counselors and counseling services in general.

As a developing profession facing a huge student population, school counselors in China are doing a more than adequate job with limited resources. In the current study, most high school students reported seeking counseling services from their school counselors more than once, and they reported having generally positive experiences in counseling. Meanwhile, these students also had positive perceptions of their school counselors' services; however, they reported the need for more vocational guidance or more knowledge of achievement tests from their counselors. An interaction effect was found in students' perceptions of school counseling services based on students' gender and whether they had met with school counselors before.

### **Implications**

This study contributes to the literature by filling a research gap in Chinese students' utilization and perceptions of school counseling. This line of inquiry is very important for the future development of the school counseling profession in China in that it provides implications for researchers and school counseling practitioners, as well as counselor educators. Future researchers could further investigate factors that might predict students' utilization of school counseling services and what students need the most from counseling. More efforts need to be made in both conducting empirical research in the school counseling field and in exploring ways to improve the profession that will suit China's cultural and social situations (Jiang, 2005; Thomason & Qiong, 2008). Moreover, the findings from this research are informative for school counseling practitioners in China. Chinese school counselors may want to self-evaluate their services and seek further training and education to improve their services in the areas that students rated lower. School counselors also could explore ways to make their services more accessible for students. Finally, the results of this research can be beneficial for counselor educators, who could contribute to improving the quality of school counselors' training and education by providing opportunities for supervision, practice and professional development courses targeting the knowledge and skills that school counselors need most.

## Limitations

There were a number of limitations in this study that limit generalization and call for additional research. First, the sample in this study was a convenience sample; the majority of the participants were from one high school, also limiting the generalizability of the results. Second, the two high schools are similar to each other in that they are top-ranking high schools in Beijing, and their students have similar future plans. Therefore, the results of this study may not apply to other geographic areas in China, especially rural areas, because a difference exists in educational conditions between economically developed areas (e.g., Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou) and underdeveloped areas (e.g., rural areas in West China). Students from different geographical areas in China may encounter different mental health problems, and the development of school counseling in urban and rural China may be different (Yan, 2003). The position of school counselor may not even exist in some areas in China. Third, the sample lacks diversity in terms of gender and grade level. Most of the participants in this study were female students and senior 2 students. Gender may be a variable that influences how students perceive counseling and school counselors. Future research utilizing more diverse and larger samples from across the country will be able to provide a more detailed and general picture of school counseling in high schools across China. Lastly, the instrument used in this study was adapted from an instrument that was developed several decades ago. Although some modifications were made, the validity and reliability of the scale used for Chinese students are not clear at this time. Future studies may investigate the validity and reliability of this instrument and also develop new instruments that are specially designed to measure students' perceptions of Chinese school counselors' effectiveness, competence, expertise and contributions.

## Conflict of Interest and Funding Disclosure

The authors reported no conflict of interest or funding contributions for the development of this manuscript.

---

## References

- Chang, D. F., & Kleinman, A. (2002). Growing pains: Mental health care in developing China. *Yale-China Health Studies Journal, 1*, 85–98.
- Cook, A. L., Lei, A., & Chiang, D. (2010). Counseling in China: Implications for counselor education preparation and distance learning instruction. *Journal for International Counselor Education, 2*, 60–73.
- Corbin Dwyer, S., & McNaughton, K. (2004). Perceived needs of educational administrators for student services offices in a Chinese context: School counselling programs addressing the needs of children and teachers. *School Psychology International, 25*, 373–382. doi:10.1177/0143034304046908
- Cyranoski, D. (2010). China tackles surge in mental illness. *Nature, 468*, 145. doi:10.1038/468145a
- Davey, G., & Zhao, X. (2012, November). Counseling in China. *Therapy Today, 23*(9), 12–17.
- Ding, Y., Kuo, Y.-L., & Van Dyke, D. C. (2008). School psychology in China (PRC), Hong Kong, and Taiwan: A cross-regional perspective. *School Psychology International, 29*, 529–548. doi:10.1177/0143034308099200
- Draper, M. R., Jennings, J., Baron, A., Erdur, O., & Shankar, L. (2002). Time-limited counseling outcome in a nationwide college counseling center sample. *Journal of College Counseling, 5*, 26–38. doi:10.1002/j.2161-1882.2002.tb00204.x
- Fei, X. (2006, October 16). The cause of and solution for mental diseases in China. *The Epoch Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.theepochtimes.com/news/6-10-16/47113.html>
- Gao, X., Jackson, T., Chen, H., Liu, Y., Wang, R., Qian, M., & Huang, X. (2010). There is a long way to go: A nationwide survey of professional training for mental health practitioners in China. *Health Policy, 95*, 74–81. doi:10.1016/j.

healthpol.2009.11.004

- Guthrie, D. (2012). *China and globalization: The social, economic and political transformation of Chinese society* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Hou, Z.-J., & Zhang, N. (2007). Counseling psychology in China. *Applied Psychology, 56*, 33–50. doi:10.1111/j.1464-0597.2007.00274.x
- Hou, Z.-J., Zhou, S.-L., & Ma, C. (2009). Preliminary research on high school and university students' expectation about counseling. *Chinese Journal of Clinical Psychology, 17*, 503, 515–517.
- Hu, S. (1994). Gao zhong sheng xin li jian kang shui ping ji qi ying xiang yin su de yan jiu [A study of the mental health level and its influencing factors of senior middle school students]. *Acta Psychologica Sinica, 26*, 153–160.
- Ji, J. (2000). Suicide rates and mental health services in modern China. *Crisis, 21*, 118–121.
- Jiang, G. (2005). Zhong guo da lu zhong xiao xue xin li fu dao fa zhan ping su [The development of school counseling in the Chinese mainland: A review]. *Journal of Basic Education, 14*, 65–82.
- Larkin, P. J., de Casterlé, B. D., & Schotsmans, P. (2007). Multilingual translation issues in qualitative research: Reflection on a metaphorical process. *Qualitative Health Research, 17*, 468–476. doi:10.1177/1049732307299258
- Ledsky, K. M., Reynolds, E. V., III, Weissman, M. S., Ball, J. D., Rabinowitz, M., Collins, C., . . . Mansheim, P. (2000). Practice patterns for the outpatient treatment of depression in a case-managed delivery system: A utilization study. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice, 31*, 543–546.
- Leuwerke, W., & Shi, Q. (2010). The practice and perceptions of school counsellors: A view from urban China. *International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling, 32*, 75–89. doi:10.1007/s10447-009-9091-3
- Lim, S.-L., Lim, B. K. H., Michael, R., Cai, R., & Schock, C. K. (2010). The trajectory of counseling in China: Past, present and future trends. *Journal of Counseling and Development, 88*, 4–8.
- Liu, C., Munakata, T., & Onuoha, F. N. (2005). Mental health condition of the only-child: A study of urban and rural high school students in China. *Adolescence, 40*, 831–845.
- Ma, H. (2012). Integration of hospital and community services—the “686 Project”—is a crucial component in the reform of China's mental health services. *Shanghai Archives of Psychiatry, 24*, 172–174.
- McCullough, C. W. (1973). Student perceptions of counselor services in junior and senior public high schools of Montgomery County, Maryland. *Dissertation Abstracts International, 34*(5A), 2308.
- Phillips, M. R., Zhang, J., Shi, Q., Song, Z., Ding, Z., Pang, S., . . . Wang, Z. (2009). Prevalence, treatment, and associated disability of mental disorders in four provinces in China during 2001–05: An epidemiological survey. *The Lancet, 373*, 2041–2053. doi:10.1016/S0140-6736(09)60660-7
- Renk, K., Dinger, T. M., & Bjugstad, K. (2000). Predicting therapy duration from therapist experience and client psychopathology. *Journal of Clinical Psychology, 56*, 1609–1614.
- Shi, Q., & Leuwerke, W. C. (2010). Examination of Chinese homeroom teachers' performance of professional school counselors' activities. *Asia Pacific Education Review, 11*, 515–523. doi:10.1007/s12564-010-9099-8
- Tang, Y. (2006, June 8). Children at risk. *Beijing Review, 49*(23), 25–27.
- Thomason, T. C., & Qiong, X. (2008). School counseling in China today. *Journal of School Counseling, 6*.
- Tse, S., Ran, M. S., Huang, Y., & Zhu, S. (2013). The urgency of now: Building a recovery-oriented, community mental health service in China. *Psychiatric Services, 64*, 613–616.
- Wang, G. (1997). The homeroom teacher's role in psychological counseling at school. *Proceedings of the International Conference on Counseling in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. China, 6*, 87–92. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED439325)
- Wang, S. M., Zou, J. L., Gifford, M., & Dalal, K. (2014). Young students' knowledge and perception of health and fitness: A study in Shanghai, China. *Health Education Journal, 73*, 20–27. doi:10.1177/0017896912469565
- Wang, W., & Miao, X. (2001). Chinese students' concept of mental health. *Western Journal of Nursing Research, 23*, 255–268.
- Wang, X., Huang, X., Jackson, T., Chen, R., & Laks, J. (2012). Components of implicit stigma against mental illness among Chinese students. *PLoS ONE, 7*, e46016.
- Whipple, J. L., Lambert, M. J., Vermeersch, D. A., Smart, D. W., Nielsen, S. L., & Hawkins, E. J. (2003). Improving the effects of psychotherapy: The use of early identification of treatment and problem-solving strategies in routine practice. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 50*, 59–68. doi:10.1037/0022-0167.50.1.59
- Wong, W. C., Chen, W. Q., Goggins, W. B., Tang, C. S., & Leung, P. W. (2009). Individual, familial and community determinants of child physical abuse among high-school students in China. *Social Science & Medicine, 68*, 1819–

1825. doi:10.1016/j.socscimed.2009.03.001.

- Worrell, B. J. (2008, February 15). Mental health master plan. *China Daily*. Retrieved from [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/opinion/2008-02/15/content\\_6458887.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/opinion/2008-02/15/content_6458887.htm)
- Wu, P., Li, L. P., Jin, J., Yuan, X. H., Liu, X., Fan, B., . . . Hoven, C. W. (2012). Need for mental health services and service use among high school students in China. *Psychiatric Services, 63*, 1026–1031.
- Xin, Z., & Zhang, M. (2009). Changes in Chinese middle school students' mental health, 1992–2005: A cross-temporal meta-analysis. *Acta Psychologica Sinica, 41*, 69–78.
- Yan, H. (2003). Wo guo zhong xiao xue xin li jian kan jiao yu jiao shi de xian zhuang ji qi dui ce [Current status and strategies of elementary and secondary mental health education teachers in our country]. *Jiangnan Da Xue Xue Bao-Ren Wen Ke Xue Ban, 22*(5), 77–80.
- Yüksel-Şahin, F. (2008). Evaluation of school counseling and guidance services based on views of high school students. *International Journal of Human Sciences, 5*(2), 1–26.
- Zhang, W., Hu, X., & Pope, M. (2002). The evolution of career guidance and counseling in the People's Republic of China. *The Career Development Quarterly, 50*, 226–236. doi:10.1002/j.2161-0045.2002.tb00898.x
- Zheng, R., Zhang, W., Li, T., & Zhang, S. (1997, May). The development of counseling and psychotherapy in China. In *The International Conference on Counseling in the 21st Century*. Retrieved from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED439312.pdf>
- Zhong guo jiao yu bu (1999). Guan yu gai shan zhong xiao xue xin li jian kang jiao yu de ji dian yi jian [Several suggestions on improving mental health education in elementary & secondary schools]. Retrieved from <http://www.jylw.org/jiankangjylw/20847.html>
- Zhong guo jiao yu bu . (2012). Zhong xiao xue xin li jiang kang jiao yu zhi dao gang yao (2012 xiu ding) [The guideline of mental health education in elementary & secondary schools (2012 Ed)]. Retrieved from <http://www.moe.gov.cn/publicfiles/business/htmlfiles/moe/s3325/201212/145679.html>