

International Students' Feeling of Shame in the Higher Education: An Intersectional Analysis of Their Racialised, Gendered and Classed Experiences in the UK Universities

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The literature on international students' experiences frequently depicts them within a 'deficient' framework, highlighting their perceived lack of essential skills for managing their studies. Moreover, international students' emotional experiences are often construed as personal and psychological attributes, with their emotions viewed as transient and pathological phases that they will eventually overcome to assimilate into the local context. However, there exists a dearth of literature investigating international students' experiences from a sociological perspective, particularly concerning their emotional experiences within the broader social and political milieu. Utilizing a longitudinal research design to monitor 25 Chinese international postgraduates from multiple universities in London and Glasgow over the course of one year, this study illuminates the racialised, classed, and gendered dimensions of international students' experiences in UK higher education through an exploration of their feelings of shame. Drawing on the research findings, it is evident that power relations operate insidiously and covertly to systematically frame international students' experiences as personal or cultural 'deficiency'. This process represents a form of misrecognition, which manifests in racialised, gendered, and classed feelings of shame, experienced at the personal level as insecurity, 'stupidity', exclusion, and self-doubt. Consequently, social and cultural inequalities within higher education are often situated at the individual level.

Keywords: international students, shame, social inequalities, higher education

Introduction

Previous research suggests that international students frequently encounter hurdles in adjusting to both the academic and sociocultural contexts of their host environments, alongside grappling with challenges related to social integration, well-being, and linguistic proficiency (Ye, 2018; Zhu, 2016). While scholarly investigations have extensively scrutinized the experiences of international students, such examinations often depict them within a framework of deficiency, wherein they are perceived as lacking the requisite skills to navigate their academic endeavours in the host nation (Ploner, 2018). This portrayal reflects a manifestation of misrecognition, characterized by the social emotion of shame (Scheff, 2000), as Bertram and Crowley (2012) argued:

The truth in shame is that some people will locate blame in the survivor rather than the perpetrator, social context, or structural powers of oppression. (Bertram & Crowley, 2012, p. 76)

The acculturation of international students within the local milieu is frequently conceptualized through a stage-based model, often analysed from a psychological standpoint. For instance, Quan, He, and Sloan (2016) delineated the adjustment process of postgraduate students into four distinct stages, underscoring positive emotional experiences at the onset and culmination of the adaptation trajectory, juxtaposed with more adverse experiences occurring at an intermediate juncture within this continuum. This model of adjustment portrays the emotional experiences of international students as transient and pathological phases, delineating their adaptation journey along a linear timeline. Consequently, the adjustment model imbues international students' emotional experiences with a progressive character, framing their 'recovery' as a sequential progression towards a favourable denouement, characterized by an increasing assimilation into the host environment (Li, 2022). Such conceptualization of international students' emotional experiences accentuates an expectation for individuals confronting racialised, gendered, and class-based inequalities to surmount social disadvantages through the lens of discourse surrounding social inclusion (Archer, 2003).

Among the research on international students' experience in the host country, an overarching absence of attention to issues related to power dynamics and recognition, as the discourse on social inclusion takes precedence. Within the context of an economically-centred perspective on international education, concerns related to 'difference' are often overlooked, with 'diversity' being celebrated as a paramount aspect (Ahmed, 2013). Regrettably, these approaches tend to neglect a nuanced exploration of power dynamics, portraying diversity as unproblematic, while positioning difference as a phenomenon necessitating management through standardization and monitoring mechanisms such as quality assurance (Burke, 2017; Ahmed, 2013). From this standpoint, inclusion implies that individuals deemed 'different' from the 'standard' must engage in processes of self-improvement and self-discipline.

However, this inclusive perspective fails to account for the disparate social positions individuals occupy, thereby affording privileged groups the requisite cultural and material resources to effectively participate in the educational field. Certain values and behaviours are presupposed to be inherently 'good' within higher education, often leading to the individualization of 'failure'. This individualization justifies academic shortcomings in terms of deficits such as a lack of skill, determination, or aspiration, disregarding the unequal access to material and cultural resources experienced by specific groups (Burke, 2017). Consequently, instances of underachievement in higher education are predominantly attributed to individual shortcomings, such as aptitude, effort, and motivation, rather than acknowledging the socially situated and unequal power relations that may contribute to such outcomes. Hence, an understanding of international students' experiences within the framework of social equality in higher education necessitates an analytical approach that elucidates how individual experiences are deeply intertwined with prevailing social and institutional inequalities. This study unveils a paradigm in which personal experiences are pathologized at the subjective level through misrecognition and the imposition of shame (Burke, 2017).

Shame, delineated as a social emotion according to Scheff (2000, p. 85), constitutes a visceral sensation experienced within the corporeal realm, marked by an apprehension of rejection or inadequacy. This affective reaction induces an amplified state of self-awareness, exerting significant influence over an individual's construction of their identity (Scheff, 2000, p. 97). Nevertheless, shame often remains marginalized within social analyses, consequently perpetuating the utilization of a deficit-oriented framework in comprehending the experiences of international students including Chinese international students.

This study endeavours to situate the social dimension of emotions among Chinese international students within the framework of classed, gendered, and racialised conditions that collectively contribute to their formation. Drawing upon Ahmed's (2004a) conceptualization, it is imperative to view emotions not as individual possessions but rather as socially and relationally constructed phenomena. In essence, the emotional experiences of Chinese international students cannot be regarded merely as personal attributes; rather, they are inherently relational, intertwined with the social differences and structures prevalent within the UK higher education context. The prevailing depiction of the ideal university student as autonomous, independent, and often implicitly White, Western, male, and middle-class (Leathwood & Hey, 2009) underscores a dichotomy between the public and private spheres, framing emotions as private inner possessions rather than as socially constructed and circulating entities (Leathwood & Hey, 2009).

Consequently, discussions surrounding emotional experiences must transcend the simplistic narrative of portraying international students as vulnerable subjects grappling with deficiencies upon entering unfamiliar educational contexts. Instead, there is a pressing need to critically examine how social and embodied forms of emotion, particularly shame, are utilized as mechanisms of exclusion and control within higher education field, influenced by prevailing social differences and structural inequalities. This paper endeavours to illuminate how social and institutional discourses contribute to shaping international students' experiences of shame, thereby perpetuating and reproducing racialised, gendered, and class-based inequalities within the UK higher education field.

Theories

Field and Capital

The conceptual constructs of 'field' and 'capital', as delineated by Bourdieu, have been extensively mobilized within scholarly discourse to scrutinize the multifaceted dimensions of educational inequality within the realm of higher education (e.g., Marginson, 2013; Naidoo, 2004). Fields are construed as intricate networks or configurations that impose regulatory structures and normative frameworks within specific organized spaces, such as the educational and cultural field (Bourdieu, 1993). Bourdieu (1990b) contended that each field possesses its distinct operational logic, entrenched practices, and implicit 'rules of the game', which tend to privilege dominant groups while necessitating a requisite level of abilities and recognition to decipher these underlying logics.

Historically, institutional policies aligning universities with national economic imperatives endowed higher education with a degree of relative autonomy characterized by its inherent values, hierarchical arrangements, and normative behaviours. However, contemporary trends signal a discernible shift whereby the educational field is increasingly subjected to the influences of political and labour spheres, a phenomenon accentuated by cross-field effects (Johnstone & Lee, 2017). International education, in this context, serves the interests of the predominant domestic higher education field and is construed as a subfield within the broader social field of education (Johnstone & Lee, 2017). Consequently, the cultivation of strategic foresight and an agentic disposition, alongside proficiency in mastering the established norms and conventions, assumes paramount importance for international students. Such competencies enable them to adeptly navigate the intricate landscape of cultural values and power dynamics inherent within both academic institutions and workplace environments.

Hence, Bourdieu perceives education not as a neutral entity but rather as a pivotal mechanism for the transmission and perpetuation of values, cultural norms, and power dynamics across generations (Burke, 2013). His conceptual framework of capital serves as a valuable tool for elucidating the underlying mechanisms at

play in this process (English & Bolton, 2016). Bourdieu posits that capital, whether manifested in tangible assets (i.e., objectified form) or embodied within individuals (i.e., embodied form), can be accrued and subsequently converted into various other forms of capital. This accrued 'profit' bestows a form of power upon its possessors (Bourdieu, 1986).

Bourdieu (1986) posited that economic capital serves as the foundation for all other capital forms, facilitating access to opportunities crucial for wealth accumulation and attainment of privileged societal positions (English & Bolton, 2016). Additionally, Bourdieu (1986) delineated non-economic forms of capital, such as social and cultural capital. Social capital represents the tangible or potential resources individuals can leverage through their social affiliations and networks (Bourdieu, 1986). Cultural capital manifests in three states: embodied, encompassing enduring dispositions, manners, perceptions, and tastes esteemed within a society; objectified, entailing possession or access to culturally esteemed items like artworks, literature, or instruments; and institutionalized, represented by prestigious educational credentials (Bourdieu, 1986). Also, Bourdieu (1993) defined cultural capital as

A form of knowledge, an internalized code or a cognitive acquisition which equips the social agent with empathy towards, appreciation for or competence in deciphering cultural relations and cultural artefacts. (p. 7)

Contrary to conventional delineations of social class based solely on employment, income, or financial holdings (Zheng & Li, 2004), a Bourdieusian conceptualization accentuates the interplay of social and cultural dimensions alongside economic considerations. The increasing prominence of such class analyses steers social science away from the mere quantifiable possessions and towards the more nuanced yet inherently value-laden notions of identity (Lawler, 2005, p. 804). The assertion of dominance by an economic elite is legitimized through its access to superior cultural capital, such as refined tastes (Tsang, 2013). Education further solidifies the upper echelons' position of social reproduction by endowing them with the tools necessary for cultural perpetuation (Bourdieu, 1977). Thus, Bourdieu's focus on the cultural aspects of consumption patterns, lifestyles, and the formation of identity within class dynamics offers a lens through which to explore class inequalities in terms of educational attainment, familial inheritance, and internally cohesive sets of tastes.

Whiteness Supremacy

Ansley (1997) argued that White supremacy is a multifaceted system encompassing political, economic, and cultural dimensions, wherein individuals of White ethnicity predominantly occupy positions of power and material affluence, while pervasive notions of White entitlement and superiority, whether conscious or unconscious, permeate societal norms. Consequently, dynamics of White dominance and non-White subordination manifest across various institutions and social contexts. These entrenched traditions trace their origins to historical European contexts and persistently influence pedagogical approaches, curricular frameworks, and academic conventions within Higher Education (HE) settings globally (Ploner & Nada, 2020).

Ahmed (2007, p. 154) posited that "Whiteness is an orientation that puts certain things within reach". In line with Fanon's (2016) perspective, the ability to "do things" is less contingent on intrinsic capacities, competencies, or predispositions, but rather on one's familiarity with the world they inhabit. Colonialism, according to Fanon, renders the world 'White', thereby making it accessible primarily to certain types of bodies who are familiar with its spatial organization and know where to locate resources. Consequently, Whiteness becomes inherited through the very arrangement of these resources (Ahmed, 2007). These resources encompass not only physical objects but also encompass capacities, aspirations, styles, and techniques (Ahmed, 2007). As

a result, individuals with White bodies do not experience stress when interacting with these objects, as their Whiteness remains unremarkable and goes unnoticed (Ahmed, 2007, p. 156). This phenomenon resonates with Bourdieu's exploration of class privilege, where individuals from the middle-class background effortlessly navigate fields such as higher education "like a fish in water". Then, to not be White is to dwell the negative: it is to be 'not' and this negative emotion generates pressure on the body's surface, thereby constraining its capabilities (Ahmed, 2007).

The perception of the Other through deficit thinking is an integral aspect of Whiteness, wherein the Other is depicted as deficient either due to personal deficiency (such as cognitive or motivational deficits) or ascribed to sociocultural deficiencies (such as family dysfunctions), which are historically constructed to rationalize their perceived failures (Valencia, 1997). This narrative conveniently diverts attention away from the structural inequalities embedded within economic, political, and socio-cultural infrastructures, which perpetuate institutionalized injustices such as unequal school funding, segregation, and disparate curricular offerings (Valencia, 1997). Within this framework, the notion persists that all students should have equal access to a basic education regardless of their ethnicity, social class, or gender. However, the inherent bias of the dominant White ideology ensures that the inferior Other will consistently require additional support to meet these standardized educational demands.

In this system, the Other is perpetually positioned at a disadvantage, and it becomes widely accepted, even by the Other themselves, that the onus of remedying this perceived deficiency lies solely with them. Thus, the narrative reinforces the notion that the problem resides within the Other, perpetuating a cycle of marginalization and reinforcing the hegemony of Whiteness (Ploner & Nada, 2020).

Discourse of Neoliberalism

Neoliberalism, the contemporary iteration of liberal ideology, exhibits a strategic approach to governing and shaping individuals, operating through subtle mechanisms of control and manipulation from a distance (Rose, O'Malley, & Valverde, 2006). Under the guise of liberation and empowerment, state control undergoes a transformation from overt and explicit forms to more covert and indirect modes, encouraging individuals to actively govern and regulate themselves (Webb, 2011). Foucault (1980) posited that disciplinary techniques, including classification, systems of punishment and reward, function in nuanced and understated ways to inscribe new forms of hierarchy and obligation upon citizens.

Within neoliberal discourse, individuals are indoctrinated to perceive freedom as contingent upon their personal talents, abilities, and skills (Gordon, 1991). Moreover, they are led to believe that true freedom can only be attained by assuming the role of entrepreneurs themselves, thereby fostering a culture of individual responsibility and self-reliance. Additionally, neoliberal discipline operates by extending market principles to every aspect of society, effectively rendering the market and competition as the primary organizing forces (Foucault, 2008, p. 148). In essence, disciplinary mechanisms are externalized to an enterprise system, aiming to enhance efficiency and competitiveness (Han, 2023).

Methodology

This study sought to longitudinally observe Chinese international postgraduates enrolled in several universities across the UK over the span of one year. Participants were recruited from both Glasgow and London, with selection criteria based on two primary factors: firstly, participants were required to commence

their postgraduate studies in September 2021, and secondly, all participants were exclusively drawn from mainland China. Chinese students originating from Hong Kong and Taiwan were deliberately excluded due to the divergent educational systems and potential variations in sociocultural influences arising from differences in ideological, political, and economic contexts (Wang & Byram, 2011).

Utilizing a mixed-methods approach encompassing semi-structured interviews and audio diaries, the study aimed to discern the institutional and broader societal discourses that shaped participants' emotional experiences, sense of belonging, and engagement within the UK higher education field. Furthermore, the study aimed to explore how these experiences intersected with issues of race, gender, and social class.

Both purposive and snowball sampling strategies were employed to recruit participants for this study. Initially, a small cohort of individuals meeting the recruitment criteria were sampled through an advertisement distributed within relevant WeChat groups and personal social networks. Concurrently, my involvement in supporting various master's courses at my university and serving as a Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) in my department provided me with access to a broader pool of Chinese postgraduate students, enabling discussions about my project with them. Prior to extending invitations to participate, assurances were given to these potential participants that their decisions would not influence their academic performance in any manner (Clark, Foster, Sloan, & Bryman, 2021). Subsequently, I relied on these initially sampled participants to recommend other individuals possessing the requisite characteristics for inclusion in the study.

Furthermore, leveraging two contacts within universities in London, recruitment advertisements were disseminated within WeChat groups catering to Chinese international students in the London area. Meanwhile, purposive sampling was employed to select participants based on their capacity to provide pertinent information, typically stemming from their life experiences, aligning with the principles (Clark et al., 2021, p. 379). Given the primary focus of this paper on investigating the relationship between participants' gender and social class backgrounds and their emotional experiences, deliberate efforts were made to ensure diversity in terms of gender identification and social class backgrounds within the resultant participant group.

Building upon the findings of Chen (2013) and Lu (2002; 2004), participants in this study categorized as hailing from middle-class families exhibit certain characteristic traits. Firstly, their parents typically hold occupations within managerial roles, professional fields, or office-based positions (see Appendix). Secondly, within these occupational categories, parents are delineated as belonging to the upper middle-class if they possess a college degree or higher qualification, while those lacking such credentials are classified as lower middle-class (as depicted in Table 1). Chen (2013) further elucidated that even within the middle-class stratum of the Chinese social system, distinctions between upper and lower middle-class families exist, characterized by varying levels of accumulated social and cultural capital, which is also demonstrated in this study.

The upper-class designation encompasses individuals engaged in administrative roles within state and social affairs, along with private entrepreneurs (Chen, 2013). Conversely, the working-class, or lower class, demographic comprises service and industry workers, peasants, as well as the unemployed and partially employed. It is acknowledged, however, that some data pertaining to the educational backgrounds of participants' parents may be incomplete. As such, these categorizations serve as approximate indicators and rough tools for interpreting participants' social class standings, aiding in data analysis. It is noteworthy that in this paper, the terms social class and family background are used interchangeably.

Table 1

Participates' Categorization in Terms of Social Class

Pseudonym name	Gender	Age	Subject	Father's occupation	Mother's occupation	Father's educational level	Mother's educational level	Class
Hu Fan	Male	20-25	Electronic and electrical engineering	Deputy manager in State-Owned Enterprise (SOE)	Deputy manager in State-Owned Enterprise (SOE)	Masters	Undergraduate	Upper middle-class
Li Xian	Male	20-25	MA history	Leader in a public sector	Homemaker	Undergraduate	Undergraduate	Upper middle-class
Tu Cheng	Male	20-25	Public policy	Province bank governor	Province bank second governor	Masters	Masters	Upper middle-class
Wang Xiaoming	Male	20-25	TESOL	Self-employed	Office worker	Vocational school	Vocational school	Lower middle-class
Wei Kaifeng	Male	20-25	Robotics & AI	Doctor	University professor	Don't know	Don't know	Middle-class
Li Lu	Female	20-25	Educational studies	Civil servant	Civil servant	Don't know	Don't know	Middle-class
Liu Fei	Female	25-30	International commercial law	Retired from the ministry	Public sector	Undergraduate	Undergraduate	Upper middle-class
Xiao Wang	Female	20-25	Educational studies	Driver	Prefer not to say	Junior High	Junior High	Working-class
Luo Xue	Female	20-25	TESOL	Businessperson	Office worker	Junior High	Primary school	Lower middle-class
Liu Mei	Female	30-35	Educational studies	Self-employed	Homemaker	Don't know	Don't know	Working-class
Huang Xiao	Male	25-30	Educational studies	Retired from working in government	Working in educational department	Undergraduate	Undergraduate	Upper middle-class
Liu Qing	Female	25-30	Inclusive education	Technician	Homemaker (before senior statistician)	Masters	College	Upper middle-class
Zi Shan	Female	20-25	Economy	Engineer	Teacher	Masters	Vocational school	Middle-class
Guan Tong	Female	20-25	Media development	Engineer	Homemaker	Undergraduate	Vocational school	Middle-class
Dong Hun	Male	20-25	Civil engineering	Manager in the construction company	Manager in the construction company	College	Undergraduate	Upper middle-class
Xiong Ren	Male	20-25	Mechanical engineering	Civil servant	Scientist in agriculture	College	PhD	Upper middle-class
Xiao Xiao	Female	20-25	MA education	Middle leadership in bank	Middle leadership in bank	Undergraduate	Undergraduate	Upper middle-class
Yang Yang	Male	20-25	Digital business	Driver in state-owned enterprise	Accountancy in State-Owned Enterprise (SOE)	Junior high	Vocational school	Lower middle-class

Table 1 to be continued

Wang Qiang	Male	25-30	Media and development	Civil servant	Civil servant	Undergraduate	Undergraduate	Upper middle-class
Tian Tian	Female	20-25	Music business management	Business	Civil servant	Ministry school	College	Upper middle-class
Zhang Xiaofan	Female	20-25	Digital humanities	Business	Manager	College	Undergraduate	Upper middle-class
Xu Yiyang	Female	25-30	Marketing management	Within system	Within system	Vocational school	Don't know	Lower middle-class
Wang He	Male	20-25	User experience engineering	Manager in golf	Leader in a communication company	College	Undergraduate	Upper middle-class
Huang Zitao	Male	25-30	Diversity and media	Sales	Accountancy	College	Don't know	Middle-class
Mo Li	Female	20-25	Diversity and media	Teacher	Retired from bank	Undergraduate	Don't know	Middle-class

Despite the diversity observed within the participant cohort across various demographic categories such as age, gender, and subject of study, the majority are identified as middle-class students. Nevertheless, there remains a crucial imperative to include a more diverse representation of working-class students and to conduct further comparative analyses of the experiences between working-class and middle-class groups. This is essential as it remains unclear whether additional layers of complexity exist within the experiences of working-class students. Notably, this study has received approval from the 'Ethics Committee for the College of Social Sciences at the University of Glasgow'.

While engaging with my participants, I encountered difficulty in remaining unaffected by sensitive topics concerning their economic, social, and educational struggles. As a Chinese international student, I identified shared commonalities with my participants, which heightened my sensitivity to their experiences. Striking a balance between neutrality and empathy posed a significant challenge, as I grappled with the dilemma of appearing disingenuous or indifferent by feigning neutrality when confronted with issues resonating with my own background.

Recognizing the importance of rapport-building in the research process, I occasionally found myself inclined to share my own experiences to foster a sense of camaraderie and provide candid responses to inquiries. However, I remained mindful of the potential repercussions of such disclosures, as they could inadvertently skew the conversation and privilege my perspective over that of the participants. Indeed, acknowledging the influence of my self-perception on how I interpreted and engaged with the issues at hand was crucial in navigating this delicate balance (Winstead, 2009).

Consequently, I grappled with transitioning from the conventional notion of the detached, objective researcher to a more participatory role that involved reciprocal sharing of experiences to enhance rapport. This shift in approach necessitated careful consideration of the ethical implications and a constant reflexivity regarding the impact of my personal disclosures on the research dynamics and participants' narratives.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis (TA) was adopted to analyse data in this study. Thematic analysis "is a method for identifying, analysing, and interpreting patterns of meaning ('themes') within qualitative data" (Clarke & Braun, 2017).

Upon extensive scrutiny of interview transcripts and audio diary entries, a salient theme that emerged from the data analysis was the profound encounter with shame. Throughout the data collection phase, participants were presented with the option of communicating either in English or Chinese. Significantly, all participants opted for Chinese, a choice aimed at facilitating a more nuanced expression of their thoughts and perspectives, often incorporating culturally specific terms in Chinese such as 'gongwuyuan' (a Chinese term to describe government officers). Consequently, when recounting their feelings and experiences, participants articulated their emotions in the Chinese language. In Chinese culture, the term 'shame' is commonly employed to denote morally 'wrong' or 'bad' behaviour rather than serving as an avenue for expressing personal emotions. However, participants revealed a spectrum of specific emotions, including disappointment, exclusion, alienation, unworthiness, feelings of incompetence, uncertainty, and diminished confidence, to convey the negative experiences they had undergone. After searching for relevant articles in relation to classed and gendered experiences and emotions in higher education including study of Burke et al. (2023), Loveday (2016)

and Leathwood and Hey (2009), the social emotion of shame (Scheff, 2000) is considered to better reveal the form of misrecognition that students encountered in the higher education.

To bolster the trustworthiness of the study, active communication with participants who expressed feelings related to shame was maintained. This involved elucidating the meaning of shame in the English context and how the current studies used the concept of shame to uncover the gendered and classed inequalities in the higher education. While some participants expressed reservations about the perceived strength of the term 'shame' (when translated into Chinese) in capturing the subtleties of their emotions, they acknowledged its appropriateness in unveiling the underlying mechanisms that contributed to their negative feelings and helped to expose the educational and social inequalities in the higher education. Additionally, they perceived the term of shame as a means to garner increased attention from institutions and educators, urging a more comprehensive approach to addressing their challenges.

There are four themes emerged from data including feeling shame about asking questions in the classroom; being shame of their own silent behaviour in the classroom; feeling shame of own thinking and their ability; feeling shame of their grades.

Findings

Feeling Shame about Asking Questions in the Classroom

In addition to the cultural and intellectual shock that contributed to the behaviour of silence among Chinese international students (Wang, Shim, & Wolters, 2017; Zhu & O'Sullivan, 2022; Wang & Moskal, 2019), several female participants within the study reported experiencing discomfort and, notably, shame when they tended to ask questions in the classroom. Xiao Xiao (F, aged 20-25, upper middle-class), for instance, conveyed hesitance, articulating, "I don't dare to say my own problem. I will feel that I may disturb teachers' lectures, and I am afraid that my own problems will be very stupid". Li Lu (F, aged 20-25, middle-class) similarly conveyed a reluctance to vocalize certain questions, opting instead to listen attentively, stating, "there are still some questions I dare not to ask and just listen carefully". This manifestation of silence is characterized as unintentional, denoting a reticence rooted in reluctance and frequently accompanied by feelings of frustration and shame (Kurzon, 1997).

Therefore, the analysis of Chinese international students' silence should extend beyond cultural differences between China and the UK to encompass larger power relations inherent within this context. The recruitment of the 'best and brightest' in European higher education, echoing colonial legacies, functions as a mechanism reinforcing the knowledge economy of the West and, concurrently, perpetuating imperial White supremacy. This process, as discussed by Waters (2012), is shrouded in the discourse of neoliberalism, concealing its role in (re)producing economic and power differentials between the global North and South. The 'best' and 'brightest' individuals targeted for recruitment are those proficient in decoding university practices, frequently occupying privileged positions with ready access to resources, capitals, and networks (Burke, 2017). In essence, only specific pedagogical behaviours and practices are acknowledged as legitimate within the domain of higher education.

The legitimacy of academic practices, exemplified by seminar participation and discussions, is contingent upon adherence to certain norms. The argumentation crafted by students must be substantiated by 'evidence' and exhibit a rational underpinning (Burke, 2017). This requirement compels students to adopt hegemonic forms of White, masculine dispositions, thereby positioning themselves with traits of independence and

rationality within the higher education field (Leathwood & Read, 2008). The implicit expectation for conformity to these dominant norms underscores the perpetuation of a narrow set of cultural and epistemic values within higher education, thereby marginalizing alternative perspectives and reinforcing existing power dynamics.

Furthermore, UK classrooms are implicitly oriented around Whiteness, an orientation that is often unnoticed due to its invisible and unmarked nature. This contrasts starkly with international students who, upon entering this space, are exposed and visibly distinct in what Ahmed (2007) described as 'walking into a sea of Whiteness'. This visibility induces feelings of unconfidence and discomfort among international students when speaking in such an environment. Ahmed's (2007) concept of a 'sea of Whiteness' or 'White space' emphasizes the repetitive nature of certain bodies passing through space while others do not. This is not solely a numerical representation of bodies within the classroom, as diversity may be lacking even if filled with Chinese international students. Instead, it pertains to the replication of a particular style of embodiment and spatial inhabitation (Ahmed, 2007).

Therefore, Chinese international students, originating from non-Western backgrounds, often encounter challenges in assimilating into this culturally exclusive environment to meet the expected standards of being the 'best' students. The resultant feelings of shame and a diminished confidence in their pedagogical behaviour and thinking are linked to lived and embodied experiences of misrecognition and marginalization. These challenges manifest physically and bodily, evident in symptoms such as nervousness and anxiety connected to feelings of shame (Burke, 2017). In this sense, shame serves to shape and constrain students' actions and perceptions (Loveday, 2016), ultimately, helping to reinforce exclusion of Chinese international students.

Particularly, within the higher education system, the exercise of power disproportionately affects female participants who engage in questioning within the classroom, perceiving themselves as nonconforming to expected norms in formal academic settings. Duncan (2009) posited that women encounter discouragement from speaking up or expressing assertiveness due to the societal construction of these qualities as 'unfeminine' and potentially disruptive to the established status quo. In this perspective, silence itself becomes gendered, influenced by societal expectations regarding gender roles and language usage. The cultural norms surrounding femininity may contribute to the imposition of silence on women, reinforcing traditional gendered expectations that equate vocal assertiveness with nonconformity to prescribed feminine behaviours. This influence is reflected in emotional experiences marked by shame and a sense of feeling 'stupid' in this study. These emotional responses are intricately intertwined with gendered expectations and intersect with nationality, underscoring the gendered and raced dimensions of silence and silencing (Rodriguez, 2011, p. 112).

The misrecognition experienced by Chinese international students can have profound effects on their self-esteem and self-confidence, potentially acting as a barrier to engaging in study. This impact is exemplified by the sentiments expressed by Wang Qiang (M, aged 25-30, upper middle-class), who describes a prevalent passive learning mode among some Chinese students, opting for silence in group discussions to avoid causing any perceived trouble.

However, this inclination towards silence might be misconstrued as academic disengagement (Rodriguez, 2011). Conversely, certain female participants discussed employing proactive learning strategies outside of class, such as previewing and reviewing course materials, as well as seeking clarification on assessments by emailing instructors. Therefore, when examining students of colour, it becomes especially critical to delve into

the intricate dynamics of silence. This entails a heightened focus on the affective, cultural, and subjective dimensions of pedagogical experiences and the construction of meaning (Burke, 2013).

Being Shame of Their Own Silent Behaviour in the Classroom

Some of the participants in this study exhibit a heightened awareness of potential social judgment in the event of non-conformity with prevailing educational discourses within the classroom setting. Specific dispositions and behaviours, such as being quiet in classroom discussions, serve as challenges to established norms of 'appropriateness'. (Loveday, 2016). This contravention, in turn, engenders a sense of disorder and non-integration within the UK higher educational field. Notably, participants demonstrate a marked sensitivity when broaching the subject of silent behaviour among Chinese international students within UK classrooms. For example, one participant described how Chinese students were gradually marginalized because of their silence in class:

At the beginning of the course, the teacher will encourage us (Chinese students) to speak in the classroom, but none of us did that. Then I found that she stopped encouraging us in the later classes and only talked to local students who were proactive in the classroom. I assumed that she just felt disappointed with us and thought this is our culture. (Luo Xue, F, aged 20-25, lower middle-class)

Luo Xue has been sensitive to teachers' changing attitudes towards Chinese students and thought it was because of their silent behaviour. While being quiet and shy may relate to individuals' personal personality and characteristics, Luo Xue naturally attributed the silent behaviour to the cultural preference. Luo Xue's sensitivity is intimately linked to the prevailing representative image of Chinese international students within academic research—an image characterized by a 'deficient model'. The pervasive perception of Chinese students as passive learners possessing insufficient language proficiency coalesces to render silence a tacit confirmation of these evaluative preconceptions within academic research. Consequentially, this confirmation process serves as the wellspring of negative self-valuation and the attenuation of collective group value among Chinese international students. Importantly, Luo Xue's attribution of responsibility to international students for the lack of encouragement from teachers overlooked the potential responsibility of teachers or the institutional framework in adapting teaching methods to align with the learning needs of Chinese international students.

This attribution of responsibility, devoid of an institutional lens, contributes to a pervasive sense of shame among Chinese international students regarding their silent behaviour. This shame is discerned through the lens of teacher marginalization practices, where the withdrawal of encouragement becomes a tacit confirmation of perceived deficiencies. Consequently, the institutional responsibility to cater to diverse learning needs and foster inclusivity is obscured by the neoliberalism discourse that places the burden of adaptation solely on the individual learner.

Feeling Shame of Own Thinking and Their Ability

A few participants within the study articulated concerns regarding the dominance of Western students within the classroom dynamic. Yang Yang (M, aged 20-25, lower middle-class), for instance, observed a notable discrepancy in communicative patterns during discussions, wherein Western students manifested greater proactivity, actively engaging with teachers and peers, while Chinese students exhibited a more reserved demeanour, often assuming passive listening roles.

Drawing on Diangelo's (2006) conceptualization of classroom domination, the discourse extends beyond mere frequency of speech, incorporating an analysis of power dynamics. Diangelo contends that classroom

dominance is not solely contingent upon who speaks more frequently but pertains to the ability to control teaching rhythm and guide discussions. Active participation by Western students in teacher interactions and peer discussions not only aligns with their learning objectives but also reinforces their ideas, potentially eclipsing perspectives offered by other students. This dynamic may cultivate a sense of entitlement among Western students, potentially marginalizing the perceived significance of contributions from other non-White students. Consequently, Chinese students may grapple with concerns regarding the perceived 'value' of their contributions, engendering a reluctance to participate and a sense of shame of their ways of thinking and acting.

Furthermore, the active participation and dominance of Western students in the classroom may be construed as a form of spatial comfort. Drawing on Ahmed's (2007) conceptualization of institutional spaces, the classroom configuration is shaped by the congregated presence of White bodies, forming boundaries that may inadvertently exclude non-White counterparts. This institutional spatiality permits White students a sense of ease and alignment, as the social space is already configured to accommodate their presence.

The repercussions of such Western dominance extend beyond power dynamics to impact the feeling of Chinese international students. Feelings of inferiority emerged, compounded by perceptions of restrained and conservative thinking inherent to Chinese students in contrast to their ostensibly more expressive White counterparts, with comments including "Compared with the United States and the United Kingdom, Chinese students' thinking may be more restrained" (Tu Cheng, M, aged 20-25, upper middle-class) and "Maybe the Chinese are more conservative in their thinking, and don't want to be the first to stand out" (Wang Qiang, M, aged 25-30, upper middle-class). These dynamics underscore the nuanced interplay between power structures, institutional spatial configurations, and emotional experiences impact on marginalized student groups within the academic field.

Furthermore, existing literature suggests that individuals from working-class backgrounds are more likely to grapple with considerable ambivalence about their competence in academia (Loveday, 2015; Skeggs, 1997). Despite having acquired substantial capital through work experiences and professional positions, they continue to question their abilities.

Two female participants, one from a working-class background and the other from the lower middle class, reflected on their uncertainty regarding their academic competence:

I don't think I can achieve the image of an educational research scholar in my mind through these courses. I may have learned some skills, but I don't think I deserve to be a graduate student. (Li Lu, F, aged 20-25, middle-class)

Because of the influence of the family of origin, I have such a thought that the result is going to change, and it is obvious that I will graduate soon, but I feel that I am not worthy of this good result or feel unworthy of the ability to achieve good results. (Liu Mei, F, aged 30-35, working-class)

Notwithstanding participants' strong emphasis on the value they attribute to their studies and their belief of positive outcomes, a pervasive sentiment of not belonging and a profound sense of unworthiness permeated their narratives.

In the sociological framework proposed by Bourdieu (1990b), higher education is conceptualized as a dynamic 'field of struggles', wherein students actively participate in competitive endeavours aimed at accumulating various forms of capital to enhance their person-value (Skeggs, 2011) within the societal context. This conceptualization posits that the ability to amass capital and, consequently, elevate one's 'person-value' is intricately linked to the nuanced recognition of embodied dispositions within the academic field. This recognition facilitates the development of a 'feel for the game' (Bourdieu, 1990b), wherein individuals not only

comprehend the implicit rules and norms of the field but also succeed in positioning themselves as legitimate participants.

However, this process of capital accumulation and the cultivation of a 'feel for the game' is contingent upon the alignment of an individual's embodied dispositions with the established expectations and demands of the academic field. The reflections of Li Lu and Liu Mei underscore the internalized struggles and pervasive self-doubt hailing from working-class and lower middle-class backgrounds. They encountered ongoing challenges in reconciling their existing forms of capital with the intricate socio-cultural context of higher education. This feel of alienation can be overwhelming, with participants questioning whether they belonged in the higher education, leading to structure working-class and lower middle-class experience and a perception of them as 'deficient' (Loveday, 2016). The observations in my study suggest a discernible tendency among female students to be more susceptible to experiencing feelings of shame in connection with their academic pursuits, subsequently leading to a propensity for self-judgment. Drawing from Howard's argument (1995, cited in Scheff, 2000, p. 98), it is posited that women's status is consistently derogated, culminating in a form of 'self-mutilation' as they endeavour to conform to an idealised, gendered, or racialised conception of personhood. This manifestation of gender inequality manifests as a pervasive sense of shame, wherein individuals feel a persistent inadequacy and unworthiness in the context of university study (Burke, 2017).

Feeling Shame of Their Grades in the Second Semester

As the second semester commenced, participants began receiving their course grades from the first semester, and the impact of receiving lower remarks was often raised as a source of shame and disappointment by the participants. Two illustrative instances encapsulate this sentiment. Liu Mei (F, aged 30-35, working-class), anticipated a superior grade than the 'C' she received based on the teacher's feedback. She conveyed frustration, feeling shame of the lower grades she received. Similarly, Xiao Xiao (F, aged 20-25, upper middle-class), articulated a sense of failure. Xiao Xiao speculated that her choice of topic for the assessment might have been misguided, attributing the unsatisfactory 'E' grade to this potential misjudgement. These reactions underscore the emotional impact of academic assessments on the participants, reflecting feelings of frustration, failure, and shame.

The frustration and shame expressed by Liu Mei and Xiao Xiao regarding their grades were both accompanied by a tendency to attribute responsibility for their academic shortcomings to themselves. Xiao Xiao attributed her dissatisfaction to the possibility of having chosen the wrong topic for assessment, while Liu Mei believed her assumptions about the teachers' expectations were misguided. This inclination to place responsibility on individual academic shortcomings is intertwined with a discourse of individualism that conceals shame within the educational system by attributing deficiencies to the individuals within these systems (Burke, 2017). This individualism discourse is deeply embedded in gendered, classed, and racialised identities (Skeggs, 1997; Burke, 2017), leading to a decline in self-esteem and self-confidence. For instance, Liu Mei attributed her perceived shortcomings to a lack of prior Western education and an unfamiliarity with the UK-based ways of thinking needed to attain high grades, effectively shouldering the blame for her perceived inadequacies. Liu Mei's thoughts also reflect the influence of the Whiteness supremacy within UK academic culture. In Western education, Whiteness has been normalized, leading people to naturally regard Western thinking as the norm and the appropriate reference point. The continuous measurement of students' values against these norms implicitly derives from dominant practices and ways of thinking in 'White' cultures

(Atencio & Wright, 2009). Liu Mei's belief in the superiority of Western knowledge as the key to success underscores the assumed elevated status of Western education.

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) performance indicators serve as foundational elements for universities in crafting their teaching and grading systems, aligning them with the objective of generating test results conducive to bolstering their standings in various league tables. This practice contributes to the 'datafication' of students' abilities, highlighting a systematic influence on how their capabilities are quantified and evaluated within the higher education landscape. In this context, international education is often viewed as an economic asset, enhancing institutional reputation to vie for funds and ensuring national economic competitiveness (Rizvi, 2007). However, this instrumental approach may also curtail the broader development of international students.

This grading system tends to render gendered, classed, and racialised subjectivities invisible within the academic framework. There is a prevailing perception that all grades are achieved meritocratically and fairly. However, these subjectivities are keenly felt through lived, emotional experiences and instances of misrecognition (Burke, 2017). The process of attributing academic outcomes solely to individual capabilities obscures the structural inequalities embedded within the educational system, perpetuating a narrative that overlooks the broader socio-economic and cultural dimensions influencing students' experiences and achievements.

Shame and shaming, as discussed by Burke (2017), are suggested to underlie the lived and embodied experiences of inequality and exclusion among international students. These experiences are often obscured by the mainstream discourse of 'inclusion' in higher education. Archer (2003) argued that the discourse of 'inclusion' implicitly requires individuals to fit into the dominant framework; failure to do so may result in exclusion, either through self-exclusion or institutional exclusion. This discourse coerces those unfamiliar with the dominant education system to transform themselves into a 'standardized' version of personhood. This includes adapting to Western academic requirements such as critical and independent thinking, with an aim to be recognized as a qualified pedagogical participant, regardless of educational and cultural differences.

However, the discourse of 'inclusion' within the context of higher education may inadvertently contribute to the perpetuation of a problematic deficit model, particularly when applied to Chinese international students. The experiences of shame, as illustrated by Huang Xiao, can act as a significant constraint on participants' motivation to excel academically. Huang Xiao, an upper-middle-class individual aged 25-30, candidly expressed the immense pressure associated with academic writing, leading him to consciously lower his expectations regarding the success associated with earning a diploma. This strategic adjustment aimed to alleviate anxiety and safeguard his mental health. Huang Xiao's decision to self-exclude by reducing efforts to achieve high academic performance resonates with the findings of Raphael Reed et al. (2007). Negative learning experiences, such as shame and humiliation, can contribute to the formation of specific habitus (Bourdieu, 1986), manifested in 'disengaged learning identities'. These identities, characterized by a withdrawal from active participation in academic pursuits, are, in part, self-protection strategies. They serve as coping mechanisms in response to highly negative learning experiences, acting as shields against further emotional distress. Huang Xiao's experience of perceived failure in a previous semester further exacerbated his self-doubt, impacting his confidence in his skills and talents. This negative self-perception and experiences of shame not only influenced his assurance about passing tests but also led to significant procrastination in completing assessments, as he posted:

I didn't manage my time well, and I was a little bit resistant to writing papers. Things that I learned from the paper are forgotten quickly after I finished the essay. And I didn't get high grades from last semester. So, I don't see the point why I need to read papers and write paper since I fail anyway. (Huang Xiao, M, aged 25-30, upper middle-class)

When combined with deficit discourses that attribute delays and disruptions to presumed shortcomings in individuals (Bennett & Burke, 2018), the inclusion of such narratives leads international students to deeply internalize feelings of shame and perceived inadequacy regarding their own abilities.

Discussion

In contemporary Western societies, a prevailing discourse of individualism permeates various aspects of life, attributing successes and failures to an individual's inherent capabilities, motivation, and resilience (Burke, 2017). Within the framework of this study, this discourse of individualism significantly influenced the participants' perceptions of their academic abilities. Some participants attributed their poor academic performance to their perceived personal deficiencies, including a perceived lack of alignment with a 'Western' style of thinking. This perception not only serves to obfuscate the operation of power relations within the higher education field but also contributes to the reinforcement of shame associated with their private feelings. Thus, shame becomes misrecognised as a racialised, gendered and classed property of individuals, rather than recognizing it as a symptomatic outcome of systemic inequalities within the educational framework (Loveday, 2016).

Due to cultural disparities between Western countries and China, Chinese students are often stereotyped as passive, feminine, and inclined towards silence, potentially rendering them invisible within the classroom setting (Quan et al., 2016). Such portrayals, positioning Chinese students as culturally deficient, overlook the nuanced social factors that may underpin their perceived reticence, instead attributing it to a homogeneous cultural identity. Consequently, despite their previous academic achievements, these students may internalize these negative stereotypes, viewing them as personal 'deficiency', given the pervasive influence of deficit constructs.

In this context, international students' experiences of shame can be interpreted as instances of epistemic violence, wherein Western cultural norms are unjustly deemed superior to non-Western counterparts (Diangelo, 2006). The stigmatization surrounding perceived deficiencies in confidence, intelligence, and capability is deeply intertwined with the socio-political context of international education. Within this paradigm, personal feelings of shame arise as a manifestation of hegemonic discourses that erroneously attribute social issues to individual failings. Such misguided attribution places undue burden on individuals, diverting attention away from the broader societal factors contributing to the adverse experiences of international students.

In the context of my investigation, a notable observation emerged regarding the misrecognition of students, which entails a disregard for the valuable insights that students could contribute to university communities. This phenomenon aligns with Fraser's conceptualization of misrecognition as "an institutionalized pattern of cultural value that privileges traits associated with masculinity, while devaluing everything coded as 'feminine', paradigmatically—but not only—women" (Fraser, 2013, p. 162). These ingrained "androcentric value patterns" permeate everyday interactions, giving rise to gendered status subordination or misrecognition. Consequently, this misrecognition manifests in various forms, such as exclusion in public discourse and marginalization in specific academic domains, exemplified by the underrepresentation of certain genders in fields like STEM.

Moreover, the existing body of research on the silent classroom behaviour exhibited by Chinese international students in the UK often underscores the prevailing argument attributing this phenomenon to cultural and academic disparities between the UK and Chinese educational contexts. Notably, Chinese international students may experience a sense of disorientation when confronted with the pedagogical approach in the UK, characterized by a pronounced emphasis on active participation. This departure from their prior educational experiences in China, where a quiet behaviour was traditionally valued and interpreted as a sign of compliance and obedience, can lead to feelings of discomfort and reluctance to engage.

However, it is crucial to acknowledge that culture operates within a broader social context and should not be viewed in isolation as the sole determinant of students' learning practices, habits, and experiences (Gu, 2009). The findings of this study align with Rodriguez's (2011, p. 112) assertion that the phenomena of silence and silencing are multifaceted, inherently intersecting with issues of gender and race. Consequently, the challenges faced by international students extend beyond mere language difficulties and cultural differences, encompassing the subtle yet pervasive influence of power dynamics shaped by broader societal contexts and intersecting inequalities within the UK higher education field.

Finally, this study underscores that the emotional experiences of international students should not be dismissed as a mere 'phase' that will naturally dissipate. This challenges the prevailing linear discourses surrounding the 'adjustment' process, which unfairly places the onus on individual students to manage their adaptation through self-transformation. From this perspective, the sense of shame felt by international students is depicted as an ongoing process that persists even beyond the initial stages. Participants in the study continued to express feelings of shame towards their academic performance and a diminished self-confidence in their abilities, highlighting that this emotional experience is not a transient phase with a definitive endpoint. This observation aligns with Loveday's (2016) research, which suggests that the 'stickiness' of shame can endure as a bodily presence, acquired through practices over time. Moreover, this enduring sense of shame plays a role in shaping the self-perception of Chinese international students and influences the nature of the relationships they form with both individuals and their environment. Consequently, when these students encounter environments or individuals they previously perceived as 'intimidating', the feelings of shame may resurface, becoming an ingrained aspect of their habitus. Although explicit instances of oppression and discrimination were not explicitly articulated by my participants, the subtle and covert mechanisms of power at play within the field of higher education in the UK, coupled with the pervasive discourse of 'deficiency', inadvertently perpetuate the misrecognition and reproduction of international students' experiences. This unwitting reinforcement further contributes to the cultivation of the social emotion of shame, which becomes ingrained in the embodied sensibilities of the self.

Conclusions

While there is already plenty of literature conducted on navigating the experiences of Chinese international students, most of these studies intended to answer cultural differences between China and UK (Quan et al., 2016; Liu, 2006), analysing their emotional experiences from a psychological perspective (Oberg, 1960; Quan et al., 2016). I argue that the absence of sociological investigation may exacerbate international students' racialised, classed and gendered experiences in the host country and contribute to institutional misrecognition, manifesting at a personal level as a sense of shame.

Despite shame being acknowledged as a social emotion (Scheff, 2000; Ahmed, 2004b), its manifestation is deeply personal, giving rise to a profound sense of self-doubt and unworthiness. This study has demonstrated the far-reaching consequences of this experience for Chinese international students, including a heightened sense of disconnection, exclusion, and diminished confidence. These encounters with shame result in a pervasive feeling of alienation, where individuals perceive themselves as not conforming to the expected persona and experiencing a sense of unworthiness.

The study brings to light that misrecognition operates at the affective level, manifesting as shame and contributing to feelings of deficiency and a pervasive sense of not belonging (Burke, 2017). I contend that these feelings of deficiency are intricately linked to the stigmatization attached to the lived experiences of Chinese international students, further exacerbated by discourses rooted in neoliberalism, Whiteness supremacy and individualism within higher education. This form of misrecognition aligns with deficit discourses that frame 'inclusion' as a process wherein students must demonstrate their ability to assimilate into hegemonic norms (Burke, 2013; Bennett & Burke, 2018). Consequently, higher education 'inclusion' amplifies 'deficient' discourses surrounding Chinese international students, placing the burden on them to 'overcome' what is perceived as 'deviant' thoughts and behaviours and revert to a perceived 'normal' state.

The affective dimensions inherent in lived and embodied experiences profoundly influence individuals' sense of self and their perceptions of their positions and relationships with others (Burke, 2017). Concurrently, it is imperative to critically engage with discourses surrounding 'inclusion'. The prevalent model of inclusion, which emphasizes assimilation into the dominant framework, is inherently problematic.

In light of these findings, it is imperative for host institutions and teachers to embody academic hospitality characterized by openness and reciprocity. Universities can orchestrate workshops or seminars aimed at enlightening educators about Chinese culture, history, and societal norms, thereby enhancing their ability to effectively engage with Chinese students. Concretely, educational institutions can promote inclusivity by urging instructors to incorporate and embrace the cultural backgrounds of international students into their pedagogical approaches. For instance, educators may integrate practices such as playing Chinese melodies or presenting excerpts of Chinese poetry as introductory elements to classroom sessions. The cultivation of inclusivity should transcend sporadic occurrences, such as the commemoration of major cultural festivities, and evolve into an ingrained aspect of educators' daily routines, fostering an environment conducive to sustained and supportive cultural interaction.

To gain deeper insights into the perspectives, dialogues, and daily experiences of students from diverse racial backgrounds, educators are encouraged to venture beyond the confines of the classroom and actively participate in the cultural activities and festivals of their students. This proactive engagement serves as a means to foster a more profound understanding of their cultural milieu, thereby enabling educators to better comprehend and address the needs and concerns of their diverse student body.

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Appendix

Table 1

Definition and Operationalization of the Middle Class in China

	Occupations
<i>Managers</i>	The managers of state-owned, collectively owned, and privately owned enterprises; the managers of foreign and joint venture enterprises
<i>Professionals</i>	Research, educational, and medical specialists (e.g., scientists, professors, teachers, and doctors); engineers, technicians, and their assistants; economic and legal professionals (e.g., accountants, lawyers, and so on), cultural/art and sports professionals; creative intellectuals (e.g., writers, musicians, and consultants); all other kinds of self-employed professionals
<i>White-collar office workers</i>	The staff members in the government and party agencies; the office workers and staff members in public organizations and all types of enterprises

Note. Source: this table is cited from Chen (2013).