



Jumping out of the Fishbowl. Swimming to the Sea: Scholars' reflexive agency in shaping global opening research system

Yiran Ma

To cite this entry:

Ma, Y. (2024). Jumping out of the Fishbowl. Swimming to the Sea: Scholars' reflexive agency in shaping global opening research system. *Cambridge Educational Research e-Journal*, 11, 332-346. <https://doi.org/10.17863/CAM.114541>



Link to the article online: <https://www.repository.cam.ac.uk/handle/1810/377852>



Published online: December 2024



Jumping out of the Fishbowl. Swimming to the Sea: Scholars' reflexive agency in shaping global opening research system

Yiran Ma

University of Oxford

ABSTRACT

This essay argues that scholars have the agency to reshape the research cultures of the global research system they are in. However, their agency cannot independently generate, just like the constraining fishbowl and its single-type water that the fish live in, the dynamics of scholars to jump out of the fishbowl and swim to an open ocean of knowledge not only demand their criticality and reflexivity of perceiving what their water is like but also should be guaranteed by an enabling structure aligning with the values of an ecological global opening science system. Firstly, to explain the dynamics of agency, the essay discusses the interdependent relationality between researcher-agency interaction and multipolarised structural and cultural changes in global sciences. Then, the study explains three stages for the scholars to act their agency in participating in global science by comparing and contrasting the analogies of 'fish jump to another fishbowl' and 'fish jump into the ocean' to call for the scholars' agential imaginary of the global opening science system. The study shows the implications of critically recognising the university scholars' reflexive agency as the autonomous foundation of the global science system, and envisions the supportive multi-level structure and ecological research cultures for empowering pluralistic knowledge as global common goods.

KEYWORDS

Global science system, scholar, agency, structure, research culture

All rivers run into the sea.

(海纳百川 *hai na bai chuan*), a Chinese proverb

Introduction

Structure, Culture, and Scholars' Agency

Archer (2017) articulate the interdependence among agency, structure, and culture as an intersectional analysis of the shape of societal change and reproduction. Agency implies the scholars' ability to resource mobilization, implicated by historical experiences and interact with each other through discourse involving justification, persuasion, and legitimisation.

Notably, Archer (1995) regards agents as entities embedded in cultural and structural conditions. She discloses that power asymmetry exists when agents negotiate with the other agents by reproducing the resource dependency leading to power asymmetry and break the balanced reciprocity. Structures involving material and ideational factors condition the realization of scholars' agential capacity (Bourdieu, 1990; Inouye, 2023; McAlpine et al., 2014; McAlpine & Amundsen, 2016).

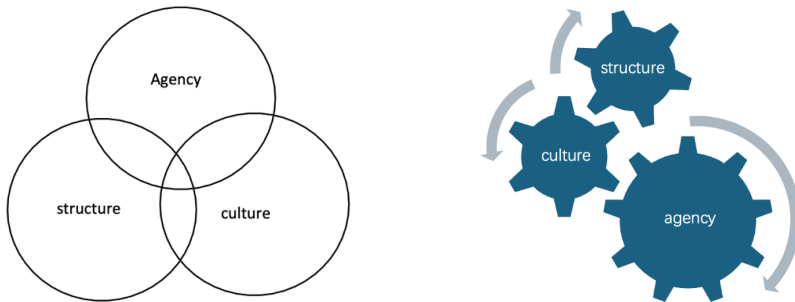
Meanwhile, culture influences individuals' behaviour through imbued values, legitimized knowledge, and beliefs. Research cultures are defined as the structural factors shaping scholars' career trajectories, research design, communicative norms, research behaviour, values, aspirations, and attitudes. (Royal Society, 2017),

influencing the scholars' self-formation process as subjectification (Biesta, 2009).

Therefore, the relations among agency, structure and culture could be described in a Venn diagram and a gear metaphor (Figure 1) to understand their interdependency and reciprocity.

Figure 1

A Venn and a gear diagram describing the culture-structure-agency relation



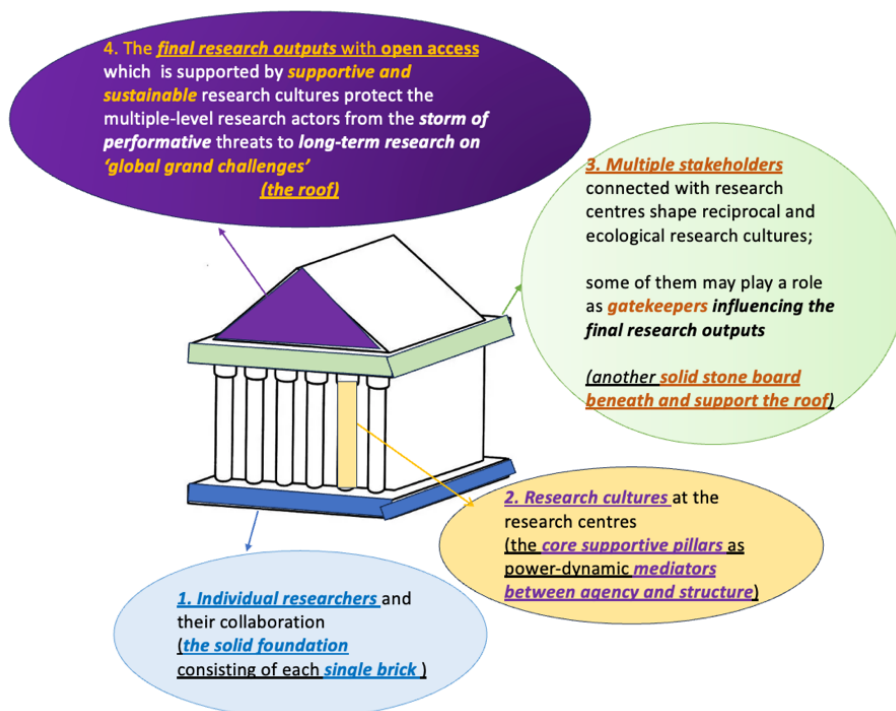
Source: the author

Interrelations Among Research Cultures, Scholars' Agency, and Multi-Level Structure in the Global Research System

The centre-periphery world system (Wallerstein, 1979) dominated by Euro-American neoliberal epistemology (Barnett, 2005; Hall & Gieben, 1992) through Western-hegemonic (Gramsci et al., 1971) modernity and globalisation (Appadurai, 2000; Hall, 2006; Giddens & Pierson, 1998). These structural conditions mechanically limiting scholars' autonomous inquiry involve global neoliberal governmentality embedded in new-managerial (Trow, 1994) higher education reforms, geopolitical tensions of neo-nationalism imagining knowledge as an arm race (Marginson, 2022a), the precarious job constrained by institutional promotion incentives following competitive public funding schemes (Yang, 2024).

Figure 2

A 'Parthenon-Structure' Metaphor of Structure-Culture-Agency Relation in Research



Source: the author

However, the scholars are not ‘puppets of structures’ (Archer 2000, p.71). The scholars’ agency has counterpower to constraining structural conditions through personal ambitions for achieving academic goals and shaping the ecosystem of the global science (Yang, 2024).

Moreover, multiple levels and geospatial scales in the higher education system also provide scholars’ autonomous agency with enabling or constraining structures through professional norms, measurements, and publishing. (Conrad 2017; Marginson, 2021, 2022a). The relevant factors involve universities’ development goals, national policy agenda, promotion incentives, and publishers’ and funders’ open-research policies. (World Bank, 2005; Wellcome Trust, 2020; Zhan & Marginson, 2023). Consequently, a ‘Parthenon-structure’ metaphor (Figure 2) could describe the multi-level structure-culture-agency interactions in the global research system, which interprets the role of ecological research cultures, imagined as the core supportive pillars, in connecting individual-agency based research collaboration and knowledge production, dissemination, and circulation activities involving multiple stakeholders to sustainably generate long-term research impact.

Multipolarisation of Global Science and Diversification of Scholars’ Capacity

Emerging countries boost knowledge flows across international-collaboration communicative networks with the arrival of the Internet in the 1990s (Castells, 1996) mobilise capitals, plural ideologies, and cross-border research infrastructures (Harvey, 1981, 2001; Lefebvre, 2012; Marginson, 2022b) contribute to the diversification of scholars’ capacity (Marginson, 2022c). The multipolarisation of the global political economy (Marginson & Xu, 2023) is accompanied by the multipolar shifts in the global scientometrics landscape (Wagner 2009, 2018) with less concentrated dependence on the conventional Euro-American centres (Wagner et al., 2015). Hence, scholars have more possibility of moving beyond the centre-periphery model of the global science system (Marginson & Xu, 2023).

Jump to Where? Directions Matter

In this section, the 3-stage fishbowl-and-ocean relations (Figure 3) respond to the research questions exploring the interactions among researchers’ agency, research cultures, and the structure of global science system. Also, this major section justifying the author’s core argument that researchers’ agency in shaping ecological research cultures through critical and reflexive onto-epistemic shifts to contribute to knowledge as the global common good in the opening global research system.

The first negative example of researchers’ agency in joining the international science system can be imagined as a fish jumping into another fishbowl, in which the fishbowls’ boundaries circumscribed by the Western-centred structure of fishbowls have not changed. This critiques researchers’ uncritical and linear thinking, who feel all the water and fishbowls are the same. They homogeneously follow neoliberal governmentality embedded in the current Western paradigmatic performative research culture and form their neoliberal subjectivity (Foucault, 1991).

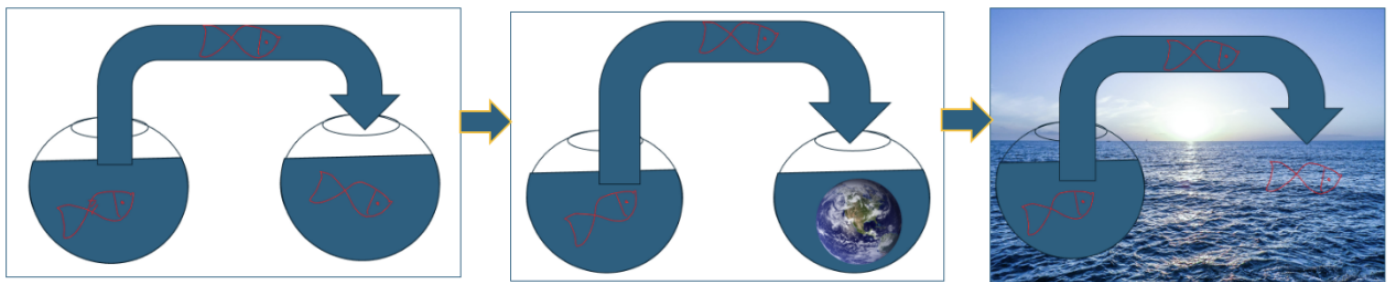
Additionally, the second negative example is researchers participating in Westernised international research, like a fish jumping into another fishbowl with a globe floating within the boundary of the Western ordering of value. This critiques researchers reproducing the global science system’s centre-periphery model (Wallerstein, 1979) in the internationalisation of higher education limited within the Western hegemonic onto-epistemic metaphysics.

Praiseworthy, the third example of researchers’ agential international research behaviour is abandoning the Western-dominated metaphysics, imagined as a fish jumping out of a fishbowl, and swimming into the sea. Researchers embrace heterogeneous bodies of knowledges equally as the global common good, like water in oceans, based on the global opening ontology.

In general, the three stages discussed in this section aim at triggering scholars’ agency in critical and reflexive imaginary of the Euro-American-centric asymmetrical global science system. This should be the starting line and the destination throughout their process of shaping global science.

Figure 3

The three stages of the fish jumping out of the fishbowl and swimming to the sea



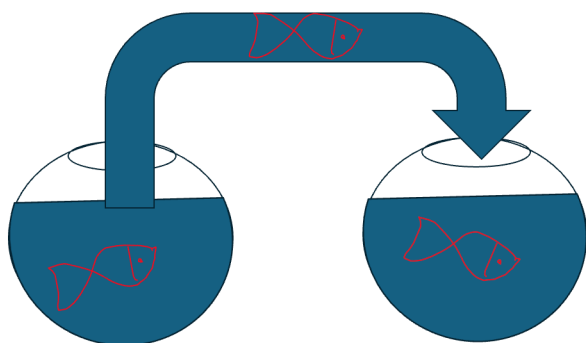
Source: the author

Stage 1: The Fish Will be the Last to Discover Water: Scholars' illusion of their neoliberal subjectivity as the homogenous global system

Since the arrival of the 21st century, the higher education landscapes are increasingly shaped by the global knowledge economy targeting academic productivity for global neoliberal competition (de Wit, 2009; de Wit & Altbach, 2021; Sehoole & de Wit, 2014; Teferra & Knight, 2008). The Western-paradigmatic modernity legitimises the rational governmentality (Foucault, 1982) of entrepreneurial and performance-based research culture. Scholars worldwide homogeneously harbouring a neoliberal subjectivity (Burchell, 2013; Oancea, 2019; Hofmeyr, 2011) acted through self-regulation under the research assessment framework connected with promotion incentives (Xu, 2020; Xu et al., 2021; Oancea, 2014, 2019; Tan, 2023). This global competition for academic capitalism (Slaughter & Leslie, 1997) competing for high-stakes performative public funding schemes (Ball, 2000) as commodification of knowledge, ignoring reciprocal collaborations and openness respecting the nature of knowledge (Lepori & Jongbloed, 2018). Therefore, scholars may have an illusion that they are conducting research in the homogenous global research system like the same water (Figure 4).

Figure 4

Jumping into the same fishbowl with the same water



Source: the author

Hence, the scholars need to first realise the heterogeneity of their agency under different structures intersecting with their career stages, disciplines, gender, ethnicity, and locations (Crenshaw, 2013), and accordingly adopt variant strategies in their global research activities for their dialectic relationships in with their fields (Bourdieu, 1986).

For instance, scholars in different higher education systems enjoy divergent academic freedom as self-directed agency freedom (Sen, 1985). In American higher education, academic freedom is highly valued as a core of knowledge inquiry, and therefore, American scholars have large bottom-up autonomy in seeking collaborative partners and independently extending their research topic beyond nation-states (Lee & Haupt,

2020). In contrast, Chinese universities are highly institutionalized and governed by the central government, closely serving the national policy and research agenda, so scholars' intellectual agency enjoys freedom in international collaboration and knowledge mobilization under the structure of the political-oriented accountability system and political surveillance (Zha & Hayhoe, 2014). Therefore, Chinese scholars have a dual agency and identity both serving the nation-state and internationalization (Marginson, 2021).

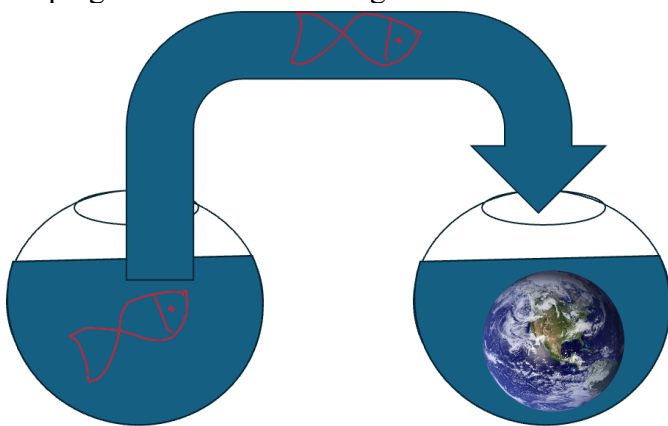
Different political cultures differently perceps the mission of the university (Yang, 2013). For instance, intellectual freedom based on Confucian self-formation, self-mastery, and social responsibility (Hayhoe et al., 2012) is more suitable to describe Chinese scholars' agency in highly institutionalized universities (Hayhoe & Liu, 2010). Thus, Chinese scholars' intellectual freedom is costly due to the Chinese traditions of intellectual authority serving as scholar-officials speaking for the governmental public good (Hayhoe, 2017), along with the social structure of the state overreaching the local sphere (Marginson & Yang, 2022). In contrast, academic freedom and autonomy of free inquiry as a German tradition and European core values experience tensions between the ruling state, individual and institutional autonomy (Marginson & Yang, 2022).

Stage 2: Jump into a Real Globe or Another Fishbowl? Dangers of unawareness of a diffused globe still floating in another fishbowl

Master's tool can never dismantle the master's house (Steiner, 2021), so it is hard for scholars to completely deconstruct the Western hegemonic structure if they follow the existing asymmetrical structure with linear thinking, just like jumping into another globe still floating in the centre-peripheral fishbowl container (Figure 5). This globe is not a real globe.

Figure 5

Jumping into a Globe Floating in Another Fishbowl



Source: the author

However, the existing the Euro-American-centric internationalization of higher education (Buchholz, 2018; Knight, 1994; Marginson, 2023a, 2023b; Oldac & Yang, 2022) is hard for non-Western scholars to be aware. Following the Western-centred game rules embedded in metaphysical and onto-epistemology imagination of the global science landscape, scholars are accustomed to obeying the existential Western ordering of values (Shahjahan et al., 2017). For instance, the Anglo-American mode of World-Class Universities shapes the global norms of modern-pattern universities, embodied in university rankings (Hazelkorn, 2015), like the elite public university in China, Project 211, 985 benchmarking the West (Marginson, 2021). Besides, for non-Anglophone journals, internationalisation mainly means Westernisation (Marginson & Xu, 2022), treasuring the imperial standardisation by the English-mediated journal impact factor rather than generating local societal impacts (Altbach, 2007; Li & Yang, 2020; Yonezawa et al., 2016).

Global diffusion also implies in the policy borrowing (Marginson, 2022d), like Research Assessment Exercise in Hong Kong regards 'world-leading excellence', 'international-level' non-local panels (Tan, 2023),

‘best four-star’ research trasuring English publications (University Grants Committee, 2017).

In consequence, especially for the scholars in postcolonial societies or the Global South, even though they join global science system just like jumping into a global scale, they may be unaware that this globe is floating in a bigger fishbowl limited by the imaginary scale and global governance rules shaped by the normalised Anglo-American centre in the world system (Wallerstein, 1979). Arguably, to exert scholars’ agency in the real sense of an international research system requires awakening the pursuits for an alternative to a Euro-American-dominated research network (Connell, 2014) and treasuring plural research methods, concepts, and agendas (Alatas, 2000).

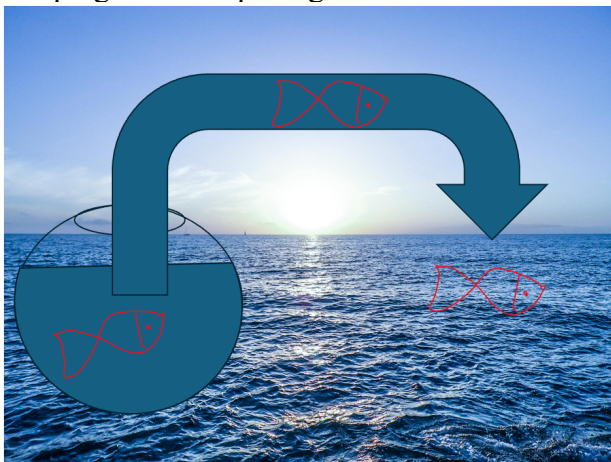
Stage 3: Only When the Fish Know the Ocean, Can They Jump into the Ocean: Opening up scholars’ imaginaries and possibilities through self-reflexivity and epistemic pluriversality

Transforming ‘the Law of Laws’

Arguably, just like a fish jumping into an opening ocean as a global knowledge pool from the fishbowl (Figure 6), scholars’ reflexive agency can reshape global neo-colonial power relations as the regime of truth (Foucault, 1980, 1982) by creating knowledge as critical discourse (Foucault, 1979) through reflexive agency continuously critiquing self-positionality (Sen, 1985).

Figure 6

Jumping into an Opening Ocean as a Global Knowledge Pool



Source: the author

Scholars’ ethos of criticality are presented by the postcolonial and critical theorists emerging in the 1960s (Alatas, 2006), who revisit the genealogy of global knowledge asymmetries causing academic dependency on Western legitimised knowledge (Alatas, 2003).

Informed by the decolonial logic of critical race theory (CRT), a basic step is to revolutionize research methods by disclosing the historically structural and systematic violence without following the colonial paradigms (Warmington, 2024), especially for disciplines embedded in colonial discursive legacies like anthropology (Bejarano et al., 2019) and comparative international education (Anuar et al., 2021). Besides, enlightened by the legal breakthroughs of CRT, applying the global opening ontology also demands questioning and changing ‘the law of the law’ that dominates the powerful key players in the global science system.

Notably, scholars studying feminism, ethnicity, and anti-imperialism show modern reflexivity as new social movements (Beck et al., 1994) leading the unheard or misrepresented voice to be heard, and disclose the historical reality to dismantle the intellectual and political exclusion of non-dominant Anglophone cultures (Said, 2014).

Besides, the representation of the scholars in-between the dominant and subordinate cultures is especially challenging. From the global South working at Western world-class universities, they both shoulder

the obligation of critically reflecting on the postcolonial influence on knowledge production while also taking advantage of their institutional global reputation. However, even though they could have multiple identities, their agency in critically examining the global postcolonial structural violence has more potential, just like non-Western background diaspora scholars Du Bois, Spivak and Bhabha working in Anglophone prestigious universities (Moore-Gilbert, 2000), their multiple-contextual experiences as both outsiders and insiders of the Euro-American centre provide them with advantageous multi-positionality treasuring heterogeneous bodies of ideas to connecting the centre and periphery in the global knowledge landscape (Yang, 2024).

Therefore, to decolonize the global science system, these scholars create the possibility of possibilities. They shape ‘imaginary landscapes’ (Appadurai, 1996, p.31-32) with a non-linear imagination embracing uncertainty (Bauman, 2013) and existential critiques of Western universality (Shahjahan & Edwards, 2022; Robertson, 1992), and treasure multiple onto-epistemologies.

For instance, instead of Western dichotomous dialectical reasoning, Sen (2014) ’s multiple identities treasure various elements making up a whole individual. Rather than imposing a single identity like the race of a researcher as a tyranny, the plural identities consist of competing or non-competing self-conceptions like multiple citizenships not only national but also global and planetary citizens could enhance inclusive research cultures, counter-hegemonic policies, and social cohesion (Sen, 2001). Meanwhile, the scholars’ multiple identities have implications for abandoning the politics of partition separating and alienating researchers from minority groups, such as displaced refugee researchers, or Islamophobia sentiments (Sen, 2007), which distinguishes the cultural positionality from alienation existing in the clash of civilisations (Huntington, 1993; Sen, 2009).

Similarly,echoing the Chinese proverb ‘all rivers run into the sea’, this unity-in-diversity epistemology informs the depoliticisation of knowledge to negotiate academic freedom and national security in international research collaborations against geopolitical tensions. The peaceful co-existence values informs knowledge exchange generating mutual benefits for humans’ sustainable and cooperative security reached through dialogues to understand each other’s differences. China’s vision of ‘building a global community of shared future’ (*ren lei ming yun gong tong ti*, 人类命运共同体) aligns with the positive-sum common ground of generating global common goods in international research collaboration. This vision of knowledge diplomacy (Knight, 2022) built on cultural and ethical onto-epistemologies treasuring values of reciprocity, equality, openness, and diversity rather than zero-sum competition.

Reshaping the Ethical Dilemmas of Neo-Colonial Internationalisation of Higher Education Through Cross-Cultural Dialogues

Due to globalized capitalism since the 1980s, global social-cultural change has become commodity-oriented, with reduced self-reflexivity in a post-truth era with digital technology (Archer, 2020; Giddens, 1992, 2002).

To overcome the Western-hegemonic neoliberal, imperial, and neo-colonial ethical dilemmas in international higher education (Rizvi, 2019; Stein et al., 2019), critical scholars could create knowledge relevant to diverse knowledge systems through multiple voices valuing unity in diversity (Said, 2014) and epistemic pluriversality (Mignolo, 2018) . Notably, just like the social-cognition-informed big-fish-little-pond effect (Marsh & Hau, 2003), scholars’ academic self-concept significantly mediates their self-reliance psychological motivations for integrating thier cultural positionalities to research (Brookover & Lezotte, 1979). For instance, Humanities and Social Science Chinese scholars affiliated at universities worldwide attribute the success of thier research to thier multi-positionality awareness of integrating Chinese theories into the Anglo-American-dominated disciplinary theories (Yang, 2024). Accordingly, scholars have variant national self-determination by bridging local conceptualisation and methodological paradigms rather than benchmarking ‘foreign knowledge’ (Chinchilla-Rodríguez et al., 2018, p. 1486).

Since cultural change happens when a more comprehensive and coherent ethic emerges, ecological research cultures in the global science system could be facilitated by new ideas emerging from knowledge exchange across social groups (Archer, 2013). Arguably, scholars’ dialogue among civilisations (Hayhoe &

Pan, 2001) demands reciprocal relationality instead of dangerous categorization and alienated blocs causing clashes of civilisations (Huntington, 1996), which would hinder researchers' inter-regional collaboration.

Researchers' Cultural Self-Awareness: Transforming Torn into a Gift

Non-Western scholars are excluded from 'universality' as 'particularity' (Takayama, 2011), just like in Humanities and Social Sciences, non-Western journals are separate from the representative West, and considered as marginalised area studies journals (Li & Yang, 2020). Non-Anglophone knowledge is regarded as inferior, peripheral, and less worthy of being learned from (Connell, 2020).

However, this 'torn' suffering can also change from a burden to a gift (Li & Yang, 2020; Wen & Yang, 2019) if scholars have agency to make use of their 'double-knowing' (Singh & Han, 2010, p.188) capacity, biculturality and multiculturalism to create new knowledge (Yang, 2023b) and to revisit Western-hegemonic world history through multi-positional (Sen, 2002) and genealogical analytical lenses.

In practice, scholars' agency in opening cultural pluralism can be exerted through cultural appreciation, multi-cultural engagement, and utilising culturally oriented research methods (Shen et al., 2023). For instance, Asia as a method (Chen, 2010) is proposed as an alternative Asian-history anchored lens as one another's reference for deimperialising world history with intersectional studies of postcolonial critiques, Asia, and globalization, generating original Asian-enlightening theoretical contributions. Meanwhile, scholars should also avoid romanticizing single positionality as cultural nationalism (Yang, 2023b) by romanticizing a certain culture with uncritical exceptionalism.

Scholars' Psychological Sentiments of Living with Differences

Getting the dynamics of jumping out of the accustomed water demands scholars' awakening their longing for living with differences and embracing unfamiliarity with multiculturalism and the discomfort of uncertainty is a significant goal in this era (Hall, 2007).

Foucault (1982) proposes that in any power dynamics, the accomplice and resistance of policies are fundamentally rooted in individuals' emotional affections. Scholars' positive and negative emotions toward national policies shape the higher education landscape by deciding the scale of possibilities through resource distribution and selected social power-relational connections (Zembylas, 2005).

Arguably, scholars' agency implied different mentalities and emotions towards the same shifts bringing about contrasted outcomes. To take empirical research on the scholars' divergent emotions facing Brexit as an example (Marginson et al., 2020), positive emotions towards extending the collaborative network beyond Europe catalyses greater individual and institutional agency, which is rooted in the scholars' bottom-up autonomous collegial research culture and collaborations based on epistemic agreement (Marginson, 2022c). Notably, this global collegial network is regarded as the determinant compared to national and institutional policies (Wagner et al., 2015). By contrast, negative sentiments about the isolated collaboration, less-diversified funding, and harder mobility between Britain and Europe become impediments to exerting scholars' agency with fear of uncertainty and perplexity (Marginson et al., 2020).

Even though the global research system is largely influenced by national policy agenda and diverse funding resources beyond nation-states (Kwiek, 2021), geopolitical tensions would not completely curb global mobility and data when scholars maintain their freedom and autonomy in international collaboration (Marginson, 2021).

Scholars' Imagination of Knowledge as Global Common Goods Against Geopolitical Tensions

Geopolitical tensions generally only partly influenced but did not deter scholars' collaborations (Lee & Haupt, 2021). Arguably, this implies scholars' positive-sum relational imagination of knowledge as global common goods generate inspiring emotions towards perseverant, autonomous and informal international research collaboration (Marginson, 2021). For instance, Chinese scholars agentially believe in China's knowledge-diplomacy ideal, so imagining research collaboration as positive-sum knowledge diplomacy (Knight, 2022) treasuring plural knowledges moves beyond an imagined community scaled by the territorial

borders circumscribed by a nation-state container as methodological nationalism (Anderson, 2020; Shahjahan & Kezar, 2013).

By contrast, the U.S.'s geopolitical tensions and increasingly restricted research partnerships with China attract worries and critiques. In 1979, the US and China formally established diplomatic relations and started research collaborations. From 2009 to 2017, the Obama government encouraged knowledge exchange activities. In 2015, cultural exchanges between China and the US reached a climax. Nevertheless, in 2017, Trump was elected as the President of the U.S., and the liberal international order declined, accompanied by the emerging Sino-U.S. New Cold War, populism, and nationalism. Meanwhile, the Sino-US Trade War reduced cross-border collaborative research funding. From 2020 to 2021 at the time of the global COVID-19 pandemic, the Sino-U.S. knowledge exchange was increasingly imagined as a zero-sum national arms race by the US. Trump suspended the Fulbright Program between China and the U.S., cutting off people-to-people and cultural exchanges between the two countries. Meanwhile, echoing the interviewees' expressions in the last section, there was a decline in mobility from China to the U.S. because of 'visa wars'. Additionally, there was no longer funding for Chinese-language programs at US universities hosted at Confucius Institutes.

Arguably, Soft-power (Nye, 2004) imaginary of science pursuing persuasion, attraction and compliance for national self-interest hinders opening knowledge communications in the global science system.

Open Science: Swimming in a Global Opening Knowledge Pool

Open science involves global peers to transparently preserve and monitor research integrity (O'Carroll et al., 2017). Arguably, scholars have agency in shaping a global opening knowledge system through participating in and co-designing open science.

Firstly, for knowledge production, scholars could do meta-research (Oancea, 2024) on open science as a research community. Besides, interdisciplinary open collaborative projects can expand inclusive knowledge production.

For participating in open peer review, scholars could become open peer reviewers to transparently publish their review reports together with making their identities open when they are authors. In this way, structural bibliographic coloniality (Mills & Inouye, 2021) like discrimination of authors' gender, race, and institutions. and Western ordering of values in publications could decrease.

Besides, for knowledge dissemination, scholars could choose publishers supporting open access, and commit their publications to open access archiving repositories. Also, similar to open peer review, provisional drafts of research findings could be shared on open platforms. For broadening global research impact, especially early-career researchers, most of whom are called digital natives (Bennett et al., 2008), and could share their research in the digital space to expand grassroots knowledge dissemination (Castells, 1999) through Podcast, and video channels as the internet-facilitated global communicative network (Robson, 2023). Meanwhile, scholars could translate their academic language into public-understood expression and multiple local languages.

Additionally, for knowledge circulation, scholars could reference open data, and expand knowledge exchange with actors beyond the academia, so that the global knowledge research system could become a non-hierarchical and inclusive knowledge co-production community by multiple stakeholders.

For instance, at the University of Oxford, the researchers lead an interdisciplinary open research initiative called Reproducible Research Oxford to join the Oxford Festival of Open Scholarship, and activities involve peer-to-peer training (summer school, workshop), and grassroots community building like open science journal clubs (Ihle et al., 2022).

Again, scholars' agency shaping open science demands an opening structure. For instance, the University of Oxford initiates inclusive peer assessment and openly shows authors' identities for institutional research funding allocation, building open archiving repositories, and organising the research office and librarian-led open data skills training (Gladstone et al., 2023). On the supra-national European Research Area (ERA), open-science collaboration policy support, open data cloud storage and mobilisation infrastructure should be added to the former ERA's free-movement concept of people and knowledge in the Lisbon Agenda (Shattock, 2014).

Critical Implications on Agency and Structure: Can they jump out of the fishbowl autonomously? *Tyranny of Merit as Constraining Conditions*

The water that bears the boat is the same that swallows it up.
a Chinese proverb

Archer (1995) notes the alignment among individual agencies' obligations, sanctions, and vested interests related to warded resource allocation. Scholars hold their own beliefs of the ethos of science (Merton, 1938), which motivates them to pursue their research aspirations and career achievements (Archer, 2008; McAlpine, 2012; Sen, 1999, p.288). Meanwhile, the institutional award system should connect the scholars' career goals, merits, and efforts (Merton, 1969). However, the researchers' success, functions of higher education, and research quality are narrowed as quantitative rationales. (Archer, 2008; McAlpine, 2012). For instance, citations can be influenced by factors irrelevant to the value and quality of research (Tahamtan & Bornmann, 2019), becoming a tyranny of merit (Sandel, 2020).

Altmetrics as Enabling Conditions

Therefore, to incentivize scholars' agency demands altmetrics for inclusive and diverse research culture. For instance, when researchers report their research in the media, generate broader public discussion and debate, and enlighten the policy documents through their research, their achievement exceeding the quantitative research outcome should be included in recognition as altmetrics (Derrick et al., 2024) for relevant, generative, horizontally diverse, and sustainable research (International Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, 2022).

Conclusion

This study justifies the role of scholars' agency in shaping ecological research cultures pursuing global opening ontology. The global science system is analogically imagined as the ocean tolerating plural knowledges since every drop of water matters. Just like the fish realizing the water that they live in, only when scholars' are reflexively and critically aware of the asymmetries of knowledge in the global science system, can they see their 'water' clearly and know their situated structure well by comparing their central or peripheral positions with 'the other'. Both Western and non-Western researchers could agentially and jointly construct an ecological global science system through inclusive, equal, healthy, sustainable research cultures treasuring intellectual pluralism for the emancipation of knowledges. Only after the river merges with the sea does it show its majestic and endless waves. In conclusion, the study critically discusses the multiple realities, possibilities, and imaginations scholars' agential reflexivity shaping the root of the global science system, and further implicates the complementary structural and cultural evolution on multiple levels of higher education for building supportive, diverse, inclusive, and equal ecology for global science system as global common goods.

References

- Adams, C.E. & Leary, M.R. (2007). Promoting self-compassionate attitudes toward eating among restrictive and guilty eaters. *Journal of social and clinical psychology*, 26(10), 1120-1144. <https://doi.org/10.1521/jscp.2007.26.10.1120>
- Akin, A. (2009). Self-compassion and submissive behavior. *Education and Science*, 34(152), 138.
- Akin, A. (2010). Self-compassion and Loneliness. *International Online Journal of Educational Sciences*, 2(3).
- Allen, A.B. & Leary, M.R. (2010). Self-Compassion, stress, and coping. *Social and personality psychology compass*, 4(2), 107-118. Vancouver. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1751-9004.2009.00246.x>
- Binder, P.E., Dundas, I., Stige, S.H., Hjeltnes, A., Woodfin, V. & Moltu, C. (2019). Becoming Aware of Inner Self-Critique and Kinder Toward Self: A Qualitative Study of Experiences of Outcome After a Brief Self-Compassion Intervention for University Level

- Students. *Frontiers in psychology*, 10, 2728. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.02728>
- Barnard, L.K. & Curry, J.F. (2011). Self-compassion: Conceptualizations, correlates, & interventions. *Review of general psychology*, 15(4), 289-303. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0025754>
- Biber, D.D. & Ellis, R. (2019). The effect of self-compassion on the self-regulation of health behaviors: A systematic review. *Journal of Health Psychology*, 24(14), 2060-2071. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1359105317713361>
- Bierhoff, H.W. (2005). The psychology of compassion and prosocial behaviour. In Gilbert, P. (Eds.). *Compassion: Conceptualisations, research and use in psychotherapy* (pp. 148-167). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203003459-9>
- Bizami, N. A., Tasir, Z., & Kew, S. N. (2023). Innovative pedagogical principles and technological tools capabilities for immersive blended learning: a systematic literature review. *Education and Information Technologies*, 28(2), 1373-1425. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-022-11243-w>
- Bluth, K. & Blanton, P.W. (2014). Mindfulness and self-compassion: Exploring pathways to adolescent emotional well-being. *Journal of child and family studies*, 23(7), 1298-1309. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-013-9830-2>
- Bluth, K. & Neff, K.D. (2018). New frontiers in understanding the benefits of self-compassion. *Self and Identity*, 17(6), 605-608. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15298868.2018.1508494>
- Bluth, K., Campo, R.A., Futch, W.S. & Gaylord, S.A. (2017). Age and gender differences in the associations of self-compassion and emotional well-being in a large adolescent sample. *Journal of youth and adolescence*, 46(4), 840-853. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-016-0567-2>
- Bluth, K., Park, J. & Lathren, C. (2020). Is parents' education level associated with adolescent self-compassion?. *Explore*, 16(4), 225-230. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.explore.2020.02.003>
- Bluth, K., Roberson, P.N., Gaylord, S.A., Fautot, K.R., Grewen, K.M., Arzon, S. & Girdler, S.S. (2016). Does self-compassion protect adolescents from stress?. *Journal of child and family studies*, 25(4), 1098-1109. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-015-0307-3>
- Brown, B. (2012). *Soul without shame: A guide to liberating yourself from the judge within*. Shambhala Publications.
- Bushman, B.J. & Baumeister, R.F. (1998). Threatened egotism, narcissism, self-esteem, and direct and displaced aggression: Does self-love or self-hate lead to violence?. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 75(1), 219.
- Campo, R.A., Bluth, K., Santacroce, S.J., Knapik, S., Tan, J., Gold, S., Philips, K., Gaylord, S. & Asher, G.N. (2017). A mindful self-compassion videoconference intervention for nationally recruited posttreatment young adult cancer survivors: feasibility, acceptability, and psychosocial outcomes. *Supportive Care in Cancer*, 25(6), 1759-1768. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00520-017-3586-y>
- Chio, F.H., Mak, W.W., Cheng, R.H., Hsu, A.Y. & Kwan, H.H. (2021). Can compassion to the self be extended to others: the association of self-compassion and other-focused concern. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 1-11. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2021.1913638>
- Cho, H., Yoo, S.K. & Park, C.J. (2021). The relationship between stress and life satisfaction of Korean University students: mediational effects of positive affect and self-compassion. *Asia Pacific Education Review*, 1-16. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12564-021-09676-y>
- Chwyl, C., Chen, P. & Zaki, J., 2020. Beliefs About Self-Compassion: Implications for Coping and Self-Improvement. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 0146167220965303. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167220965303>
- Coaston, S.C. (2017). Self-Care through Self-Compassion: A Balm for Burnout. *Professional Counselor*, 7(3), 285-297. <https://doi.org/10.15241/scc.7.3.285>
- Donovan, E., Bluth, K., Scott, H., Mohammed, M. & Cousineau, T.M. (2021). Feasibility and acceptability of implementing the Making Friends with Yourself intervention on a college campus. *Journal of American college health*, 1-8. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07448481.2021.1891077>
- Dundas, I., Binder, P.E., Hansen, T.G. & Stige, S.H. (2017). Does a short self-compassion intervention for students increase healthy self-regulation? A randomized control trial. *Scandinavian journal of psychology*, 58(5), 443-450. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/sjop.12385>
- Enck, G.G. (2013). Ideals of student excellence and enhancement. *Neuroethics*, 6(1), 155-164. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12152-012-9164-6>
- Falsafi, N. (2016). A randomized controlled trial of mindfulness versus yoga: effects on depression and/or anxiety in college students. *Journal of the American Psychiatric Nurses Association*, 22(6), 483-497. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1078390316663307>
- Germer, C. (2009). *The mindful path to self-compassion: Freeing yourself from destructive thoughts and emotions*. Guilford Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s1352465810000615>
- Germer, C. & Neff, K.D. (2019). *Mindful self-compassion (MSC). The handbook of mindfulness-based programs: Every established intervention, from medicine to education*, 357-367. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315265438-28>

- Gilbert, P. (2009a). *The compassionate mind: A new approach to the challenges of life*. London, UK: Constable & Robinson. <https://doi.org/10.7748/ldp.12.5.10.s15>
- Gilbert, P. (2009b). Introducing compassion-focused therapy. *Advances in psychiatric treatment*, 15(3), 199-208. <https://doi.org/10.1192/apt.bp.107.005264>
- Gilbert, P. & Procter, S. (2006). Compassionate mind training for people with high shame and self-criticism: Overview and pilot study of a group therapy approach. *Clinical Psychology & Psychotherapy: An International Journal of Theory & Practice*, 13(6), 353-379. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cpp.507>
- Gilbert, P., McEwan, K., Matos, M. & Rivis, A. (2011). Fears of compassion: Development of three self-report measures. *Psychology and Psychotherapy: Theory, research and practice*, 84(3), 239-255. <https://doi.org/10.1348/147608310x526511>
- Gough, D. (2007). Weight of evidence: a framework for the appraisal of the quality and relevance of evidence. *Research Papers in Education*, 22(2), 213-228. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02671520701296189>
- Haukaas, R.B., Gjerde, I.B., Varting, G., Hallan, H.E. & Solem, S. (2018). A randomized controlled trial comparing the attention training technique and mindful self-compassion for students with symptoms of depression and anxiety. *Frontiers in psychology*, 9, 827. <http://dx.doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.00827>
- Heffernan, M., Quinn Griffin, M.T., McNulty, S.R. & Fitzpatrick, J.J. (2010). Self-compassion and emotional intelligence in nurses. *International journal of nursing practice*, 16(4), 366-373. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1440-172x.2010.01853.x>
- Huang, J., Lin, K., Fan, L., Qiao, S. & Wang, Y. (2021). The Effects of a Self-Compassion Intervention on Future-Oriented Coping and Psychological Well-being: a Randomized Controlled Trial in Chinese College Students. *Mindfulness*, 12, 1-8. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-021-01614-8>
- Kirby, J.N. & Gilbert, P. (2019). Commentary regarding Wilson et al. (2018) "Effectiveness of 'self-compassion' related therapies: A systematic review and meta-analysis." All is not as it seems. *Mindfulness*, 10(6), 1006-1016. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-018-1088-8>
- Ko, C.M., Grace, F., Chavez, G.N., Grimley, S.J., Dalrymple, E.R. & Olson, L.E. (2018). Effect of seminar on compassion on student self-compassion, mindfulness and well-being: A randomized controlled trial. *Journal of American college health*, 66(7), 537-545. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07448481.2018.1431913>
- Krieger, T., Martig, D.S., van den Brink, E. & Berger, T. (2016). Working on self-compassion online: A proof of concept and feasibility study. *Internet interventions*, 6, 64-70. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.invent.2016.10.001>
- Kroshus, E., Hawrilenko, M. & Browning, A. (2021). Stress, self-compassion, and well-being during the transition to college. *Social Science & Medicine*, 269, 113514. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2020.113514>
- Long, P. & Neff, K.D. (2018). Self-compassion is associated with reduced self-presentation concerns and increased student communication behavior. *Learning and Individual Differences*, 67, 223-231. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lindif.2018.09.003>
- Long, R., Halvorson, M. & Lengua, L.J. (2021). A mindfulness-based promotive coping program improves well-being in college undergraduates. *Anxiety, Stress, & Coping*, 1-14. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10615806.2021.1895986>
- Moffitt, R.L., Neumann, D.L. & Williamson, S.P. (2018). Comparing the efficacy of a brief self-esteem and self-compassion intervention for state body dissatisfaction and self-improvement motivation. *Body Image*, 27, 67-76. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bodyim.2018.08.008>
- Muris, P. & Petrocchi, N. (2017). Protection or vulnerability? A meta-analysis of the relations between the positive and negative components of self-compassion and psychopathology. *Clinical psychology & psychotherapy*, 24(2), 373-383. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cpp.2005>
- Neff, K.D. (2003a). The development and validation of a scale to measure self-compassion. *Self and identity*, 2(3), 223-250. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15298860309027>
- Neff, K.D. (2003b). Self-compassion: An alternative conceptualization of a healthy attitude toward oneself. *Self and identity*, 2(2), 85-101. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15298860309032>
- Neff, K.D. (2011). Self-compassion, self-esteem, and well-being. *Social and personality psychology compass*, 5(1), 1-12. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1751-9004.2010.00330.x>
- Neff, K.D. & Beretvas, S.N. (2013). The role of self-compassion in romantic relationships. *Self and Identity*, 12(1), 78-98. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15298868.2011.639548>
- Neff, K.D. & Dahm, K.A. (2015). Self-compassion: What it is, what it does, and how it relates to mindfulness. In Ostafin, B.D., Robinson, M.D. and Meier, B.P. (Eds.). *Handbook of mindfulness and self-regulation* (pp. 121-137). Springer. New York, NY. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4939-2263-5_10
- Neff, K.D. & McGehee, P. (2010). Self-compassion and psychological resilience among adolescents and young adults. *Self and identity*, 9(3), 225-240. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15298860902979307>
- Neff, K.D. & Pommier, E. (2013). The relationship between self-compassion and other-focused concern among college

- undergraduates, community adults, and practicing meditators. *Self and identity*, 12(2), 160-176. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15298868.2011.649546>
- Neff, K.D., Bluth, K., Tóth-Király, I., Davidson, O., Knox, M.C., Williamson, Z. & Costigan, A. (2021). Development and validation of the Self-Compassion Scale for Youth. *Journal of personality assessment*, 103(1), 92-105. <https://doi.org/10.1037/t79032-000>
- Neff, K.D., Hsieh, Y.P. & Dejitterat, K. (2005). Self-compassion, achievement goals, and coping with academic failure. *Self and identity*, 4(3), 263-287. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13576500444000317>
- Neff, K.D., Kirkpatrick, K.L. & Rude, S.S. (2007). Self-compassion and adaptive psychological functioning. *Journal of research in personality*, 41(1), 139-154. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrp.2006.03.004>
- Neff, K.D., Pisitsungkagarn, K. & Hsieh, Y.P. (2008). Self-compassion and self-construal in the United States, Thailand, and Taiwan. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 39(3), 267-285. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022022108314544>
- Neff, K.D., Tóth-Király, I., Knox, M.C., Kuchar, A. & Davidson, O. (2021). The development and validation of the state self-compassion scale (long-and short form). *Mindfulness*, 12(1), 121-140. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-020-01505-4>
- Page, M.J., McKenzie, J.E., Bossuyt, P.M., Boutron, I., Hoffmann, T.C., Mulrow, C.D., Shamseer, L., Tetzlaff, J.M., Akl, E.A., Brennan, S.E. & Chou, R. (2021). The PRISMA 2020 statement: an updated guideline for reporting systematic reviews. *BMJ: British Medical Journal*, 372. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.n71>
- Quaglia, J.T., Soisson, A. & Simmer-Brown, J. (2020). Compassion for self versus other: A critical review of compassion training research. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 1-16. <https://doi.org/10.31231/osf.io/tkf2c>
- Raes, F. (2010). Rumination and worry as mediators of the relationship between self-compassion and depression and anxiety. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 48, 757-761. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2010.01.023>
- Raes, F., Pommier, E., Neff, K. D., & Van Gucht, D. (2011). Construction and factorial validation of a short form of the self-compassion scale. *Clinical Psychology & Psychotherapy*, 18, 250-255. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cpp.702>
- Rogowska, A.M., Kuśnierz, C. & Bokszczanin, A. (2020). Examining anxiety, life satisfaction, general health, stress and coping styles during COVID-19 pandemic in Polish sample of university students. *Psychology Research and Behavior Management*, 13, 797. <https://doi.org/10.2147/prbm.s266511>
- Savari, Y., Mohagheghi, H. & Petrocchi, N. (2021). A Preliminary Investigation on the Effectiveness of Compassionate Mind Training for Students with Major Depressive Disorder: a Randomized Controlled Trial. *Mindfulness*, 12(5), 1159-1172. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s12671-020-01584-3>
- Schellenberg, B.J., Mosewich, A.D., Bailis, D.S., Gaudreau, P. & Verner-Filion, J. (2021). When self-compassion loses its luster: ratings of self-compassionate and self-critical responding among passionate students. *The Journal of Experimental Education*, 89(2), 291-305. <https://doi.org/10.31234/osf.io/vk7n3>
- Sibbald, B. & Roland, M. (1998). Understanding controlled trials. Why are randomised controlled trials important?. *BMJ: British Medical Journal*, 316(7126), 201.
- Sinclair, S., Kondejewski, J., Raffin-Bouchal, S., King-Shier, K.M. & Singh, P. (2017). Can self-compassion promote healthcare provider well-being and compassionate care to others? Results of a systematic review. *Applied Psychology: Health and Well-Being*, 9(2), 168-206. <https://doi.org/10.1111/aphw.12086>
- Smeets, E., Neff, K., Alberts, H. & Peters, M. (2014). Meeting suffering with kindness: Effects of a brief self-compassion intervention for female college students. *Journal of clinical psychology*, 70(9), 794-807. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/jclp.22076>
- Sterne, J. A. C., Matthias, E., & Moher, D. (2011). Chapter 10: Addressing reporting biases. In J. P. T. Higgins & S. Green (Eds.), *Cochrane handbook for systematic reviews of interventions*. Version 5.1.0 The Cochrane Collaboration.
- Tóth-Király, I. & Neff, K.D. (2020). Is self-compassion universal? Support for the measurement invariance of the Self-Compassion Scale across populations. *Assessment*, 1073191120926232. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1073191120926232>
- Voelker, D.K., Petrie, T.A., Huang, Q. & Chandran, A. (2019). Bodies in Motion: An empirical evaluation of a program to support positive body image in female collegiate athletes. *Body Image*, 28, 149-158. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bodyim.2019.01.008>
- Wakelin, K.E., Perman, G. & Simonds, L.M. (2021). Effectiveness of Self-Compassion Related Interventions for Reducing Self-Criticism: A Systematic Review and Meta-analysis. *Clinical Psychology & Psychotherapy*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cpp.2586>
- Westerman, G., McCann, E. & Sparkes, E. (2020). Evaluating the effectiveness of mindfulness and compassion-based programs on shame and associated psychological distress with potential issues of salience for adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse: a systematic review. *Mindfulness*, 1-21. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-020-01340-7>
- Yarnell L. & Neff K. (2013). Self-compassion, Interpersonal Conflict Resolutions, and Well-being, *Self and Identity*, 12:2, 146-159, <https://doi.org/10.1037/e527772014-596>
- Yela, J.R., Crego, A., Gómez-Martínez, M.Á. & Jiménez, L. (2020). Self-compassion, meaning in life, and experiential avoidance explain the relationship between meditation and positive mental health outcomes. *Journal of clinical psychology*, 76(9), 1631-

1652. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jclp.22932>

Zessin, U., Dickhäuser, O. & Garbade, S. (2015). The relationship between self-compassion and well-being: A meta-analysis. *Applied Psychology: Health and Well-Being*, 7(3), 340-364. <https://doi.org/10.1111/aphw.12051>