Survey of Needs and Expectations for Academic Advising in a Hong Kong University

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Universities in Hong Kong implemented a new 4-year undergraduate curriculum in 2012, and many initiated academic advising programs to help students from different academic backgrounds and with various levels of preparedness to review their options and manage challenges in college. For this study, we administered a questionnaire survey to discover students' views on and expectations for academic advising. The results show an overall positive evaluation of academic advising from students, who expected academic advisors to help them understand their study options and preferred a developmental over a prescriptive approach. Students reported that discussing career issues was their greatest need for academic advising.

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In 2012, the Hong Kong government implemented a major education reform. Formerly, students attended a secondary school for 7 years, and university undergraduate-degree programs lasted for 3 years. Now students attend a secondary school for 6 years, and university degree programs last for 4 years. The reform was principally aimed to implement a credit-based university education system that aligns with that of mainland China and most developed countries, replace two public secondary school examinations with one, and redesign and implement a comprehensive and balanced secondary school curriculum. Under the new 4-year undergraduate curriculum, both generic and discipline-specific competencies received renewed emphasis. The general education courses provided by most universities include Chinese and English languages, subjects across different study disciplines, service-learning projects, physical education courses, university orientation seminars, and a personal development program. Students may need to commit a substantial amount of time and effort to fulfill these requirements, which most do within their first 2 years at the university.

The new 4-year curriculum introduced some new challenges for university students and instructors. First, under the new program, the university graduation requirements are more complex: Students must choose and complete a wide range of general education and major subjects. Second, students may be admitted to a university without a decided major. In the past, significant numbers of students chose their major only after their first year at the university. Third, students may be admitted to a university on the basis of their local public examination qualification (Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education) or other qualifications (e.g., the International Baccalaureate, General Certificate of Education, associate degrees, or other tertiary qualifications). As a result of these new policies, students' educational backgrounds, levels of maturity, and scopes of preparedness for university study range dramatically. The graduation requirements, especially those regarding general education, can vary among students according to admission qualifications or language and mathematics competency scores. Therefore, the universities introduced academic advising to help students transition to university life and make appropriate study plans.

In academic advising, an academic or nonacademic member of an institution (usually a higher education institution) provides guidance to a student on an academic, social, or personal matter (Kuhn, 2008). O'Banion (1972/2009) defined academic advising as a dynamic process that includes the following dimensions: exploration of life goals and vocational goals, choice of programs and courses, and creation of course schedules. According to Ender, Winston, and Miller (1982), academic advising, a developmental process in which students receive assistance to clarify and pursue their life and career goals, comprises a decision-making process for students to realize their educational potential.

The experience with academic advising under the new undergraduate curriculum in Hong Kong

was limited. Many universities only recently set up an advising program to meet the challenges created by the new curriculum. Most of the literature on academic advising was conducted in or is based on a North American context (Broadbridge, 1996). However, recently, many universities in Asia started providing academic advising. For instance, a Japanese university pioneered academic advising in 2008 (Morikawa, 2011). In a conference discussion, representatives of universities in China, Qatar, Oman, Kuwait, and the United Arab Emirates explained that the definition of academic advising is still being established on their campuses (Haghamed, 2016).

Experience with academic advising in the region also remains limited. Therefore, to provide academic advising that addresses the needs of students in Hong Kong, students' views on advising must be acquired and understood. For this study, we administered an institution-wide survey to determine the views of students attending a Hong Kong university, including their expectations for academic advising and their advising needs. We also investigated student preferences for a developmental or a prescriptive approach to academic advising.

Literature Review

Students' Expectations of and Need for Academic Advising

Before the implementation of the new undergraduate curriculum, academic advising in Hong Kong took the form of personal tutoring, which comes from a tradition in British higher education institutions in which personal tutors monitor students' academic work, intellectual development, and personal interests (Earwaker, 1992). Personal tutors monitor academic progress and achievement as well as provide learning assistance when needed. Unlike academic advising, personal tutoring does not address students' overall study planning, management of factors that contribute to students' academic success, or the ways students might make optimal use of their higher education opportunities. Knowledge of the personal tutoring experience of students who followed the former 3-year university curriculum inadequately informs the current practice of academic advising. Furthermore, students accustomed to personal tutoring may find academic advising a novel experience and possess little knowledge about the purposes of or goals for advising. Therefore, understanding students' views on the concepts and practices of academic advising, specifically their perceptions of the goals for it and support of it, remains important for implementing effective practice. Perhaps most importantly, university leadership needs to discern the relationship university students expect to experience with their academic advisors, the help they want to receive from them, and the frequency with which they intend to meet with them.

To provide appropriate academic advice to students, advising leadership must recognize the types of information and support university students in Hong Kong hope to gain from the advising process. On the basis of surveys of undergraduates attending a U.S. university, Smith and Allen (2006) identified 12 functions of academic advising. They found that surveyed students considered accurate information about graduation requirements the most important advising function, but other important ventures included offering advice about choosing subjects that link students' academic, career, and life goals and information about university regulations and policies. However, the findings were based on data collected from students attending U.S. universities and may not equate to the expectations of students attending universities in Hong Kong. Therefore, as Smith and Allen did in the United States, we aimed to obtain information about the advising needs of undergraduates in Hong Kong.

Students' Preferences for Academic Advising Approach

Different approaches in academic advising involve different sets of strategies that academic advisors use in practice (Drake, Jordan, & Miller 2013). In the 1970s, when academic advising was initiated as a "defined and examined activity," Crookston (1972/2009) described and compared two different approaches—prescriptive and developmental—academic advising, and this delineation exerted a powerful influence on the trajectory of advising (Kuhn, 2008). The two approaches described by Crookston were subsequently considered the traditional normative approaches (Hagen & Jordan, 2008).

Through the prescriptive advising approach, advisors provide information pertaining to course selection, explain registration procedures, and ensure that students enroll in the appropriate courses. Prescriptive advising presupposes a relationship between academic advisors and students in which students expect academic

advisors to provide them with solutions but not necessarily address holistic academic concerns (Crookston 1972/2009). Fielstein (1989) referred to prescriptive advising as the traditional, didactic, and directive approach.

In developmental advising, a mutual relationship between advisor and student is emphasized such that both parties engage in learning and developmental tasks (Crookston, 1972/2009; King, 2005). Crookston (1972/2009) defined developmental advising as "concerned not only with a specific personal or vocational decision but also with facilitating the student's rational processes, environmental and interpersonal interactions, behavioral awareness and problem solving, decision-making, and evaluating skills" (1972, p. 5).

Researchers have investigated students' preferred academic advising approach. Some concluded that university students prefer the prescriptive approach (Fielstein, 1989; Motterella, Fritzsche, & Cerabino, 2004; Smith, 2002); others found that students prefer the developmental approach (Broadbridge, 1996; Herndon, Kaiser, & Creamer, 1996; Winston & Sandor, 1984). Because findings show no consistent preference on the approach, conclusions about the most appropriate or effective in meeting students' needs remain elusive. The limited research conducted on the academic advising of Chinese students focused on their social adjustment (Mortenson, 2006), value systems, and worldviews (Yang, Harlow, Maddux, & Smaby, 2006), and the learning issues of Chinese students studying in colleges and universities in English-speaking countries (Zhang & Brunton, 2007). Review studies suggest that prescriptive advising may be an appropriate developmental intervention with multicultural populations, including Chinese students (Brown & Rivas, 1994). However, no study specifically focused on Chinese students' preferred advising approach. The present study partially fills this research gap.

Method

With the aim of discovering Hong Kong students' views on academic advising for the first time in an institution-wide study, we chose a survey method to gather numerical data to subject to statistical tests. Through a questionnaire, we collected information about the following surveyed students at a university in Hong Kong: current engagement with academic advisors in their program-of-study department or the central advising office at the university; views on and expectations of academic advising; preferences of the advising approach (prescriptive vs. developmental); and academic advising needs.

Participants

The sample was composed of 1,303 students attending a publicly funded university in Hong Kong. Of these, 829 (63.6%) were first-year students, and 454 (34.8%) were second-year students; 20 students (1.5%) did not indicate their year of study. Each university student, including every participant, is assigned two academic advisors: one from the student's program-of-study department to provide guidance on major subjects and one from the central advising office who addresses general education requirements. The university recommended that students meet with each academic advisor at least once during their first year of study; hence, the study participants were expected to follow this directive. More female (55.3%) than male participants (44.7 %) volunteered for the study, and all schools and departments in the university were represented.

Instrument

For the survey, we developed a questionnaire with four sections based on the *Academic Advising Inventory* (AAI) by Winston and Sandor (2002); we focused particularly on Part V of the AAI to which respondents indicate their views about an ideal advisor using a prescriptive–developmental continuum. To fit the local context, we discarded some AAI items (e.g., "My advisor tells me what would be the best schedule for me"), and we amended most of the statements; for example, we changed "My advisor tells me what I must do in order to be advised" to "I prefer academic advising telling me what exactly is expected from me as an advisee." The *AAI Manual* provides a detailed description of the scales of developmental–prescriptive advising and of advisor–advisee activity, which each features subscales comprising items on decision making, personal development, and the understanding of policies and regulations of the institution. In developing the instrument, we referred to the *AAI Manual* guidelines on these scales and subscales. Table 1 outlines the structure of the Hong Kong questionnaire, which had sections on respondents' opinions about the overall evaluation of academic advising (5 items); expectations of

Table 1. Structure of survey questionnaire

Section	Number of Items	Reliability (Cronbach's α)
1. Students' opinion academic advising	5	.81
2. Expectations about academic advisors		
• Academic counselors (central advising unit)	4	.68
• Academic advisors (faculty in department)	4	.69
3. Preferences for approach of academic advising:		
• Developmental advising	6	.78
• Prescriptive advising	6	.79
4. Students' needs in academic advising	12	.86
5. Students' background information and their experience in academic advising	7	n.a.

Note. n.a. = not applicable. Item 6 of Section 1 was excluded from the reliability estmiation of the scale because it was less consistent with the other five items.

academic advising (8 items); preferences for advising approach (12 items); academic advising needs (12 items); and background information (7 items). In the first four sections of the questionnaire, the students were asked to rate (on a 5-point Likert scale) the degree to which they agreed with certain statements. The fifth and final section contained multiple-choice questions used to gather demographic information about the students and information about their experiences with academic advising.

Analysis of the internal consistency of the first four questionnaire sections showed that the Cronbach's α values were acceptable (ranging from .68 to .86). This indicates that the items were consistent under each section of the questionnaire (see Table 1). We conducted an exploratory factor analysis of questionnaire Sections 1, 3, and 4 to examine the structural validity of the measures. The first 5 items of Section 1 (students' opinions) formed a coherent set of items and a single factor that explained 57.02% of the total variance. The factor loadings ranged from .68 to .79. From Section 3 (advising approach), two factors were extracted concerning the preferred (developmental or prescriptive) style of academic advising (see Table 2). The two-factor solution explained 50.30% of the total variance, and all factor loadings were significant; however, Item 19 loaded on both approaches of advising. All the items in Section 4 loaded significantly onto a single factor representing the students' academic advising needs. The factor solution explained 40.17% of the variance. Overall, the key sections of the questionnaire demonstrated good structural validity and internal consistency.

Procedures

We administered two rounds of surveys. In the first round, we surveyed the second-year students who had been admitted to the university in 2012. These were among the first cohort of students studying the new 4-year undergraduate curriculum, and they had received academic advising at the university for one academic year. In the second round, we surveyed first-year students, who were among the second cohort of students to follow the new 4-year curriculum. At the time we conducted the second round of the survey, the participating students had completed the first semester of university study.

For both rounds of the survey, we invited (via e-mail) all the students in both cohorts to participate; the students who volunteered then completed the questionnaire online. In the second round of the survey, we also made hard copies of the questionnaire available for the students to complete after they finished an advising session at the university's central advising office. Upon inviting them to participate in the study, we gave students a brief explanation of the purpose of the study and the specifics of their involvement.

Before they could participate, they were required to sign a consent form or indicate their consent on the online survey web site. The ethical standard of this study was reviewed and endorsed by the head of the central advising office and the research ethics committee of the sponsoring institution.

Results

Meetings with Academic Advisors

Most of the students (70%) had met at least once with the academic advisors from their

Table 2. Rotated factor matrix of the items on the style of academic advising

Questionnaire Item	Component 1	Component 2
26. When I face with difficulties, I prefer Academic Advising allowing the discussion of alternatives but I will make the decision on my own.	.73[a]	.04
23. I prefer Academic Advising referring me to campus resources and let me explore on my own.	.69[a]	.07
15. I prefer Academic Advising helping me learn how to look for information about subjects and programmes of study.	.61[a]	.32
18. I prefer Academic Advising teaching me how to choose the subjects wisely.	.60[a]	.36
22. I prefer Academic Advising allowing the sharing of ideas about academic matters and I am fine that there is no specific instruction from the advisor.	.59[a]	.26
19. I prefer Academic Advising allowing me to tell my advisor my expectation on Academic Advising.	.56[a]	.48
16. I prefer Academic Advising telling me details about subjects and programmes of study.	.53[a]	.38
24. I prefer Academic Advising making direct contact with campus resources and I will just need to follow my advisor's instructions.	.02	.77[a]
25. When I face with difficulties, I prefer Academic Advising telling me my alternatives and I will be told which one is the best choice.	.16	.72[a]
17. I prefer Academic Advising telling me which subject is the best for me.	.33	.67[a]
21. I prefer Academic Advising giving me specific instructions on what I should do for academic matters.	.39	.59[a]
20. I prefer Academic Advising telling me what exactly is expected from me as an advisee.	.46	.52[a]

Note. Component 1 = developmental advising; Component 2 = prescriptive advising. Instrument was administered in British English; items are presented verbatim.
[a]Indicates highest loading for the factor.

program-of-study department and nearly all of them (93%) had met with their academic advisor from the central advising office. The median number of meetings the students reported for each academic advisors was one. Approximately one half (47%) of the students indicated that they had only attended one-to-one meetings with academic advisors from their program-of-study department; most of the other students (39%) had met with these advisors in small-group meetings; 14% of the students reported attending both personal and group meetings. More than one half (56%) of students reported meeting one-to-one with advisors from the central advising office, and fewer than one third (32%) attended small-group meetings.

Students' Opinions on the Current Practice of Academic Advising

A factor analysis showed that 6 items formed a unidimensional scale with factor loadings from .45 to .77. This result indicates that the items on students' opinions about academic advising formed a coherent set. Table 3 shows that most students agreed with Items 1–5. Two of the items received the highest mean rank: The students agreed that academic advising helps them understand their study options ($M = 4.0$, $SD = 0.7$) and make their study plans ($M = 3.9$, $SD = 0.7$). The scores for Item 6 were lower ($M = 3.4$, $SD = 0.9$) than for the other items. The female participants gave a higher mean rating than did the male participants for the current practice of academic advising, but the difference was insignificant ($t = 2.32$, $p = .06$). The first-year students gave significantly higher ratings ($M = 3.89$, $SD = 0.5$) for the current practice of academic advising than second-year students did ($M = 3.62$, $SD = 0.2$; $t = 9.27$, $p < .001$).

Students' Expectations of Academic Advisors

The students expected the academic advisors from their own program-of-study department to be knowledgeable about their major of study; they expected the advisors from the central advising office to be knowledgeable about

Table 3. Opinion of the current practice of academic advising

	Likert Scale: 1–5		
Questionnaire Item	***M***	**Median**	***SD***
1. I know the types of support and services I can get from Academic Advising at the university.	3.8	4.0	0.7
2. Academic Advising is important for my university study.	3.8	4.0	0.7
3. Academic Advising helps me understand my study options and graduation requirements.	4.0	4.0	0.7
4. Academic Advising helps me adjust to my university life (e.g., knowing the difference between secondary education and university study).	3.8	4.0	0.7
5. Academic Advising helps me plan for my study.	3.9	4.0	0.7
6. I had expected some sort of support like academic advising before I became a university student.	3.4	4.0	0.9
Average ratings for items 1–6	3.8	3.8	0.5

general education and related university requirements. The students did not expect that their academic advisors would get to know them very well or would help them connect with professors or teaching staff. When asked if they would like to have more meetings with their academic advisors, the students agreed or remained neutral ($M = 3.55$ for meeting with a faculty advisor and $M = 3.54$ for meeting with an advisor from the central advising office). Overall, first-year students reported higher expectations of academic advisors from their program-of-study department than did second-year students, and they returned significantly higher scores than their second-year peers on Item 8 (helping them connect to the professors and teaching staff in their program of study) ($t = 2.05$, $p = .04$), Item 10 (know them well) ($t = 2.03$, $p = .04$), Item 13 (having more meetings with their academic advisors in the department) ($t = 4.62$, $p = .04$), and Item 14 (having more meetings with their academic advisors from the central advising office) ($t = 7.35$, $p < .001$). The second-year students expressed higher expectations than first-year students only on Item 9 (faculty academic advisors in the department are knowledgeable about matters related to their major study) ($t = 4.75$, $p < .001$). The male students were significantly more likely to expect their academic advisor from the central advising office to know them well (Item 10) than were female students ($t = 2.97$, $p = .003$). The female students were more likely to expect faculty academic advisors from their own department to be very knowledgeable about their major study (Item 9) than were the male students ($t = 2.79$, $p = .05$). See Table 4.

Students' Preference for Advising Approach

We calculated the mean scores for the students' preferred academic advising approach (developmental or prescriptive). Paired t tests revealed a significantly stronger preference for developmental advising ($M = 3.96$, $SD = 0.45$) over prescriptive advising ($M = 3.75$, $SD = 0.55$; $t = 18.25$, $p < .001$). We conducted further paired t tests, taking into account gender, year of study, and the program-of-study department; we found a preference for developmental advising over prescriptive advising (the scores remained unchanged from the initial analysis among the different subgroups of sample).

Students' Academic Advising Needs

In the questionnaire, we included 11 types of advising needs (Table 5); of these, the students rated 3 as the most important: They reported that they needed their academic advisors to provide information about the career aspects of their program of study; give them advice when they encounter academic problems; and discuss their academic, career, and personal goals. Most of the students wanted their academic advisors to focus on their career development; enhancing their academic performance; and helping them to set academic, career, and personal goals. See Table 5.

We found no gender-related differences in the students' academic advising needs except with regard to advice on choosing suitable subjects or program of study ($t = 2.51$, $p = .012$): The male students expected more from their advisors than the female students did. First-year students expressed a stronger need for advising than second-year students did, and first-year students showed a significantly higher expectation on all

items than second-year students did, except with respect to getting information about the career aspects of their program of study (e.g., career paths and internships).

Discussion

Meetings with Academic Advisors

Most of the students (93%) met with their academic advisors from the central advising office; approximately 70% of them had met with academic advisors of their program-of-study departments. The central advising office stands as a student service unit, and the academic advisors in it work full-time and come from a background in and have experience with mental-health or career counseling, student guidance, teaching, and social work. Hence, we expected academic advisors from the central advising office to persist in making appointments with students and show particular competence at interviewing and advising. Indeed, central office advisors tried to make personal phone calls and send e-mails inviting their assigned advisees to meet with them. They also pledged to advise all first-year students, and very nearly fulfilled this promise in the first two years of in operation: Approximately 95% of first-year students received advising from the central office in academic years 2012-2013 and 2013-2014.

Approximately 50% of all academic advising is conducted in one-to-one meetings; academic advisors from the students' own program-of-study departments tended to hold more small-group meetings (39%) than did academic advisors from the central advising office (32%). Group appointments require more preparation than one-to-one appointments and facilitators find attending the needs of individuals more challenging in group sessions. However, group advising has emerged as common for both cohorts of students, and academic advisors from both the program-of-study departments and the central office used it. In the small groups, students tended to be more relaxed, and advisors could gain an understanding of the ways networks of students study together and help each other in handling challenges in pursuit of academic success.

Advisee Opinions and Expectations

In general, the results show that the students agreed that academic advising provides helpful support: For 5 of the 6 questions related to opinions of academic advising, the students generally ranked advising with high scores (M between 3.8 and 4.0). In particular, students thought that academic advising helped them understand their study options and graduation requirements, which they reported as the most important aspect of advising, and they reported that advising assisted them in planning their studies, which they ranked as the second most important advising function. By ranking the importance of academic advising for their studies and indicating awareness of the support they could obtain from advising—the cohorts gave nearly equal ratings for the support for studies, and both ranked it third among the items—respondents acknowledged the value of advising. The student responses indicated their surprise about the availability of academic advising at the university ($M = 3.4$). These results comport with two university goals for academic advising: (a) help students acquire accurate information about the academic regulations and graduation requirements and (b) assist students in developing and implementing a study plan.

Students expected only academic advisors from their program-of-study department to show knowledge about curricula and studying. Students did not express strong expectations for advisors from their own program-of-study department to engage in relationship building with them; their motivation to meet more frequently with these advisors was not particularly strong. This finding is consistent with the frontline experience of faculty advisors, who have remarked (in contexts other than this study) that students vary a great deal in their motivation to see them.

Several reasons may explain the study findings about faculty advisors. First, university students in Hong Kong may believe that they should manage their own studying independently and that they do not need to see advisors frequently. Second, they may think that only weak students need to see advisors. Third, students may be wary about revealing their personal issues and concerns to advisors who are members of the academic staff; that is, they may feel apprehension about the effect of any divulged personal issues on the grading of their academic performances.

Students' Preference for Academic Advising Approach

The results support the contention that students prefer developmental over prescriptive advising. Students indicated partiality for a two-way interactive relationship with their advisors, and they want options and active participation in

Table 4. Students' expectations of academic advisors

Summary of Questionnaire Item	*M*	Median	*SD*
Faculty Advisors			
7. Knows me well	3.71	4.00	0.77
8. Helps me connect to the professors and teaching staff in my programme of study	3.76	4.00	0.76
9. Is knowledgeable about matters related to my major study	4.11	4.00	0.66
13. Want more than 1 meeting/year	3.55	4.00	0.80
Central Advising Office Advisors			
10. Knows me well	3.63	4.00	0.75
11. Helps me understand the general education requirements	4.12	4.00	0.63
12. Is knowledgeable about matters related to the general education requirements	4.15	4.00	0.63
14. Want more than 1 meeting/year with my academic advisor	3.54	4.00	0.78

Note. Instrument was administered in British English.

the advising process. The surveyed students showed a strong predilection for making their own decisions independently. The results of our study also suggest that the plans of the institution to promote developmental advising matches students' preferences. The developmental style can be used to help students identify their academic and personal development goals; they can engage in development advising processes to explore possible career paths and study options (e.g., study stream, also called a *concentration*, and a declared minor). Thus, our findings support universities in Hong Kong strategically promoting developmental academic advising, and we suggest they provide training in developmental advising approaches.

Despite the statistical outcomes on student preferences, the mean score for developmental advising was not much higher than that for prescriptive advising. The prescriptive style of advising provides needed clarification about study requirements, academic regulations, subject registration, and resources for suitable academic support. Academic advisors should use prescriptive advising in cases for which students need specific and directed advice.

Students' Advising Needs

Regarding student needs from academic advising, both first- and second-year students reported a strong yearning for their advisors to give them information about the career aspects of their program of study. This suggests that students are particularly interested in discussing career development or career-related issues when they meet with their advisors. Academic advisors, especially those from the students' own program-of-study departments, should be prepared to provide guidance on postcollege matters.

Students also consult an academic advisor for assistance in overcoming academic problems. Therefore, academic advisors need preparation in resolving academic concerns, such as those related to study skills, adjustment to university life, and improvement in academic performance. Students aspire to advance their own basic or soft skills (e.g., language, communication, critical thinking, and presentation) and their profession-related competencies. Advisors require awareness of the various forms of academic support available within their university, such as workshops or courses provided by student services, assistance offered by the university library staff, and learning support units (e.g., a language center). Some academic departments have taken the initiative and organized tutorials, peer tutoring, and study skills workshops for their students.

Suggestions for Practice and Development of Academic Advising

The results of our study also suggest a few ways to enhance the academic advising services provided in Hong Kong universities to meet their students' expectations, needs, and preferences. First, although academic advising was new to Hong Kong universities, surveyed students reported expectations for advisor knowledge about programs of study and for advising that addresses academic and career issues. This finding explains the reasons that students do not expect their advisors to know them well and the perception that personal and emotional issues extend outside the scope of academic advising. However, personal and emotional issues (family, finances, lifestyle, and peer relationships) may affect

Table 5. Students' advising needs

Student Ranking	Questionnaire Items by Item Number	*M*	Median	*SD*
1	34. I would like Academic Advising to focus more on providing information about the career aspect of my programme of study (e.g., career paths and internships).	4.11	4.00	0.68
2	36. I would like Academic Advising to focus more on giving me advice when I encounter academic problems (e.g., study skills, adjustment to university life, poor academic performance. . .etc.).	4.03	4.00	0.62
3	35. I would like Academic Advising to focus more on discussing about my academic, career, and/or personal goals and helping me make plans to achieve these goals.	4.01	4.00	0.66
4	33. I would like Academic Advising to focus more on providing information about the academic aspect of my programme of study (e.g., curriculum, assignment requirements, study pattern, etc.).	3.98	4.00	0.66
5	32. I would like Academic Advising to focus more on ensuring I have registered for the right subjects to fulfil the graduation requirements.	3.95	4.00	0.71
6	31. I would like Academic Advising to focus more on helping me make decisions on choosing the suitable subjects/programme of study.	3.90	4.00	0.70
7	38. I would like Academic Advising to focus more on providing information about scholarships and/or other financial support for my study.	3.88	4.00	0.71
8	29. I would like Academic Advising to focus more on helping me build study skills for better academic performance.	3.85	4.00	0.72
9	30. I would like Academic Advising to focus more on connecting me to resources in the university.	3.84	4.00	0.68
10	27. I would like Academic Advising to focus more on explaining University policy, graduation requirements, how to register for subjects etc.	3.73	4.00	0.79
11	37. I would like Academic Advising to focus more on giving me advice when I encounter personal problems.	3.62	4.00	0.79
12	28. I would like Academic Advising to focus more on getting to know more about me (e.g. your academic background, personal interests, etc.).	3.61	4.00	0.79

Note. Instrument was administered in British English, and items are presented verbatim.

academic performance. Therefore, academic advisors need training in the screening of issues related to adjustment to university life or mental health issues, and they must make timely referrals to counseling services when necessary. In practice, practitioners may struggle in drawing a clear line between personal and academic issues; some advisors support advisees in handling issues that are not strictly academic but linked to academic performance, such as managing study stress, setting priorities, and improving time management and study skills; some advisors bring the skills and experience to assist students with personal challenges.

Second, surveyed students reported that they need academic advisors to provide information on the career aspects of their program of study. Career advising should be an integral part of academic advising. Students should not make study plans or academic decisions without an

understanding of the relationships between career paths and educational decisions, and their academic advisors should help them gain this understanding (Gordon, 2006). Academic advisors should also encourage students to explore their career goals, understand the ways educational experiences can prepare them for the workplace, and support their achievement of career goals (Gore & Metz, 2008). Advisors can use various tools, such as Holland's taxonomy (Murphy, 2012), the theory of multiple intelligences (Gardner, 2011), and the Myers-Brigg Type Indicator (Bayne, 2004), to help students understand the extent to which their personalities, interests, and abilities comport with their academic and career goals. Advisors should encourage students to make full use of university resources, such as career and placement services. Furthermore, King (2008) suggested that academic advisors should serve as hubs connecting students to on-campus offices and resources. Academic advisors should maintain awareness of all the relevant on-campus resources and refer students to places that provide advanced career advice and encourage advisees to make full use of these resources.

Third, we recommend the use of developmental rather than prescriptive advising because students prefer the former. Developmental advising involves the establishment of a relationship between advisor and advisee, and the scope of such advising extends beyond purely academic matters (Grites, 2013). If they employ the developmental approach, academic advisors can urge students to explore educational, personal, and career goals within a holistic framework. Academic advisors should give university students an opportunity to reflect on their interests, strengths, and weaknesses to facilitate learning and help them make appropriate study plans. Universities that provide new academic advisors with training can turn practitioners into more than an information provider to a knowing advising professional who asks probing questions and offers appropriate guidance.

Limitations of the Study

Several limitations characterize the study. First, participants' responses to the survey questions were based on their opinions of academic advising but did not provide any information about the reasons for their perspectives. Employing qualitative methods (e.g., conducting interviews and focus-group meetings) would have allowed for probing the reasons behind the students' expressed views, expectations, and preferences. Second, we used a convenience sample that was not fully representative of the student population. However, as the sample was fairly large, a significant sampling error seems unlikely. Third, the respondents' experiences with academic advising varied greatly, and when they completed the questionnaire in the second round, some first-year students had not met with their academic advisors. Students, faculty members, and staff at the universities may not have engaged in advising previously. Hence, some of their opinions may reflect secondhand impressions or their own conceptual understanding of academic advising rather than their actual experience with practice.

In the future, researchers might recruit groups of students who report different levels of satisfaction and their perceptions of the best outcomes for academic advising, and they might examine the ways students' understanding of, experience with, and readiness for academic advising affect their satisfaction with and their descriptions of the outcomes for academic advising. Researchers might extend the findings through a mixture of qualitative and quantitative methods. Likewise, they could employ case studies to examine the way students' experiences of advising link to their satisfaction with the outcomes of academic advising, and researchers might access survey data to analyze the correlations among the processes and outcome variables of academic advising.

Conclusion

Little academic advising was practiced in Hong Kong universities before the introduction of the new 4-year degree curriculum in 2012. Furthermore, most research on academic advising has been conducted in the North American context, and the extent to which the findings relate to Hong Kong remained unknown. We aimed to fill these gaps in the literature and to provide insight into academic advising in Hong Kong to aid the further development of this newly introduced practice. We recruited first- and second-year students, who were among the first admitted to a Hong Kong university under the new undergraduate curriculum, and we administered a questionnaire survey (in two rounds) to determine their needs for, expectations of, and preferences for academic advising. The results showed that both groups of students agreed that academic advising helped them understand their study options and graduation requirements; they reported definitively about the

type of support available from academic advising, and they also indicated their perceptions of academic advising as fairly important. They reported that the acquisition of information about the career aspects of their program of study was most the most important function of academic advising followed by assistance with academic problems and advice on ways to improve basic skills and profession-related competencies.

Both groups of students reported a significant preference for developmental advising. Therefore, we recommend that academic advising address the need of university students for information about their studies and provide assistance in resolving personal and emotional issues that might affect student academic performance. Furthermore, to meet students' perceived needs, academic advising should also help students acquire specific career-related information. In response to the student preferences for developmental advising, practitioners should act as more than information providers and adopt a developmental approach with their advisees. Although the study provides an overview of students' needs and expectations with respect to academic advising, it does not provide any insights into the reasons behind the students' questionnaire responses.

The participants' experiences of academic advising also varied, and the responses they gave may reflect their conceptual understanding of academic advising rather than their actual experiences with it. Therefore, we recommend that a qualitative study be conducted so that the reasons for students' views, expectations, and preferences can be elucidated. Studies on ways students' experiences of academic advising relate to their levels of satisfaction with their perceived outcomes of academic advising might reveal ways in which academic advising might be enhanced in Hong Kong universities.

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