Career Maturity, Career Decision-making Self-efficacy, Interdependent Self-construal, Locus of Control and Gender Role Ideology of Chinese Adolescents in Hong Kong

LEE Ching May, Mimi

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Principal Supervisor: Dr. WU, William Y H

Hong Kong Baptist University

August 2007
ABSTRACT

The study proposed a career readiness model with five career-related attributes of which the relationship between career maturity and gender role ideology was mediated by interdependent self-construal and career decision-making self-efficacy, while the relationship between locus of control and career maturity was mediated by career decision-making self-efficacy. The model was tested by path analysis, using a sample of 502 Chinese Secondary Four students in Hong Kong. The statistical results of the career readiness model suggested satisfactory goodness of fit, with 15% of the total variation in career maturity explained by the career-related attributes in combination. Gender role ideology had a direct positive effect on career maturity, with the indirect effect mediated by interdependent self-construal and career decision-making self-efficacy. Locus of control had a direct negative effect on career maturity and an indirect effect mediated by career decision-making self-efficacy. With the exception of the effects of gender role ideology on career decision-making self-efficacy and interdependent self-construal on career maturity, all the other hypothesized paths were supported by the data. After controlling the effects of the three background variables of gender, participation in career-related activities and participation in extra-curricular activities on the career readiness model, the estimated path coefficients of the five career-related attributes with the inclusion or exclusion of the background variables were statistically consistent.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Declaration i
Abstract ii
Acknowledgements iii
Table of Contents iv
List of Tables vii
List of Figures viii

Chapter 1. Introduction 1
  1.1 Background of the Study 3
    1.1.1 High Youth Unemployment Rate 4
    1.1.2 The New Academic Structure for Senior Secondary Education (NSS) 5
    1.1.3 Female Participation in Labour Force 6
    1.1.4 Cultural Relevance of Existing Career Theories 8
  1.2 Justification and Significance of the Study 9
    1.2.1 Factors Affecting Career Readiness of Chinese Adolescents in Hong Kong 9
    1.2.2 Cultural Gaps in Existing Career Theories 10
    1.2.3 Cultural Biases in Career Guidance and Education 12
  1.3 Delimitations of the Study 12

Chapter 2. Literature Review 14
  2.1 Conceptualization of Career Readiness and Career Maturity 14
    2.1.1 Career Readiness of Adolescents 15
    2.1.2 Career Maturity of Adolescents 17
      2.1.2.1 Super’s Theory of Vocational Development 18
      2.1.2.2 Crites’s Model of Career Maturity 20
      2.1.2.3 Correlates of career maturity of adolescents 21
  2.2 Factors Affecting Career Maturity 23
    2.2.1 Career Decision-making Self-efficacy 23
    2.2.2 Locus of Control 26
    2.2.3 Interdependent Self-construal 29
    2.2.4 Gender Role Ideology 33
### 2.3 Background Variables

- **2.3.1 Gender** 39
- **2.3.2 Participation in Career-related Activities in School** 44
- **2.3.3 Participation in Extra-curricular Activities in School** 46

### 2.4 Cultural Issues

- **2.4.1 Research Related to Career Readiness of Adolescents** 47
- **2.4.2 Assessment Related to Career Readiness of Adolescents** 49
- **2.4.3 Career Counseling and Guidance** 49

### 2.5 Summary

50

### Chapter 3. Methodology

52

- **3.1 Career Readiness Model** 52
- **3.2 Purpose of Study** 57
- **3.3 Hypotheses** 58
- **3.4 Operational Definitions of Terms** 60
- **3.5 Participants** 61
- **3.6 Instrumentation** 63
  - **3.6.1 Career Maturity Inventory (CMI)** 64
  - **3.6.2 Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Scale – Short Form (CDMSE-SF)** 66
  - **3.6.3 Attitudes Toward Women Scale (AWS)** 68
  - **3.6.4 Interdependent Subscale of Self-Construal Scale (SCS-INT)** 70
  - **3.6.5 Rotter Internal-External Locus of Control Scale (I-E Scale)** 71
  - **3.6.6 Demographic and Background Information Questionnaire** 72
- **3.7 Procedures** 73
  - **3.7.1 Pilot Study** 73
  - **3.7.2 Main Study** 74
- **3.8 Data Analysis** 76

### Chapter 4. Results

79

- **4.1 Descriptive Statistics** 79
- **4.2 Reliability of the Measures** 80
- **4.3 Correlation Analysis** 82
- **4.4 Path Analysis: Testing the Basic Career Readiness Model** 85
- **4.5 Path Analysis: Testing the Extended Career Readiness Model** 89
- **4.6 Hypotheses Testing** 95
- **4.7 Summary of Results** 97