

**From West to East:**  
**Career Development and Employability enhancement**  
**Among College Students in the US, Hong Kong, and Mainland China**

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# Career Development

## from a Perspective of Vocational Psychology

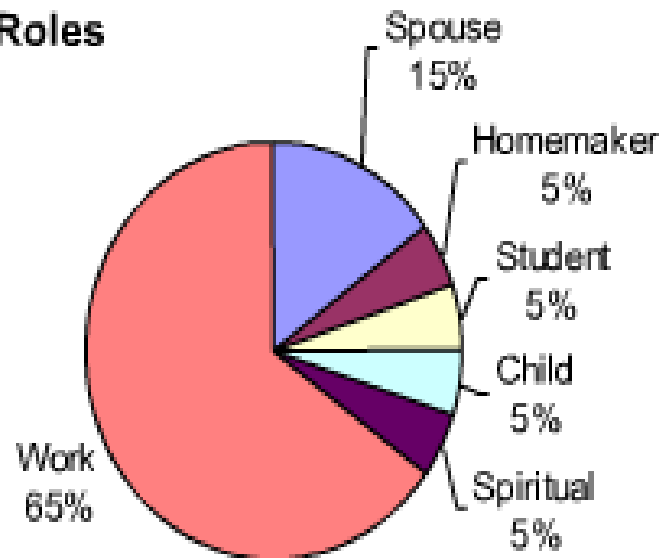
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- \* **Two things in life: Interpersonal relationship & career development (Elder, 1998)**
- \* **Career development:** the person's creation of a career pattern, decision-making style, integration of life roles, values expression, and life-role self concepts in terms of influences by individual features and contextual factors (Pope, 2009, Super, 1980).
- \* **One's career landscape:** (developing) vocational interests, (making) career exploration, (overcoming) career decision-making difficulties, and (achieving) career identity (Hoekstra, 2011; Tokar, Fischer, & Subich, 1998).

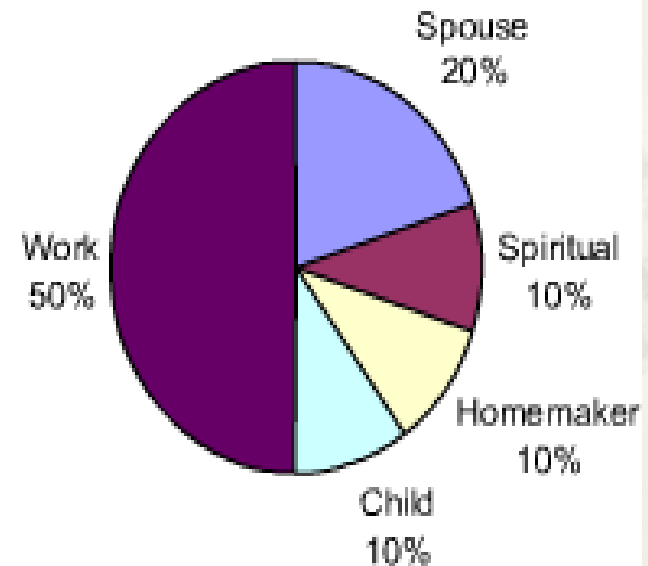
# Super's Life Career Rainbow (LCR)

## Current and Future Life Career Rainbow

**Current Roles**

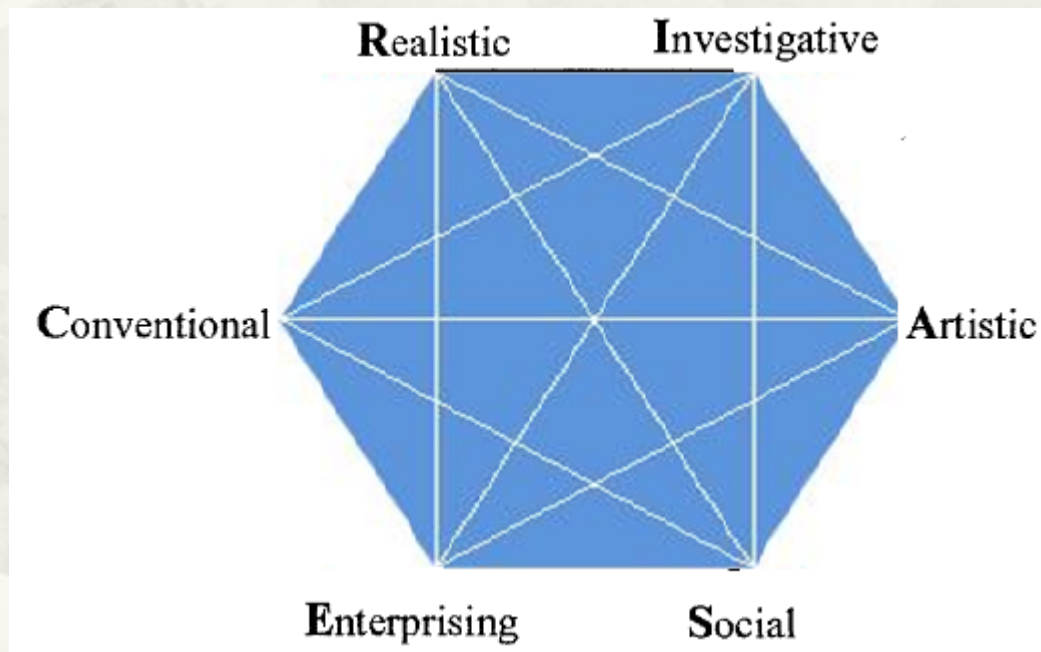


**Ideal Roles**



# Basic psychological constructs

- \* Vocational interests: Circumplex Model (Holland, 1973)



# Career exploration:

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- \* Career search behaviors, reactions to exploration, and beliefs about exploration (Stumpf et al., 1983):
  - \* (i) Self-Exploration (CSE) subscale that measures behavior engaged in self assessment and introspection in career exploration,
  - \* (ii) Environment Exploration (CEE) subscale that examines the extent of career exploration in the work environment.
  - \* (iii) Intended-Systematic Exploration, (iv) Frequency, (v) Amount of Information, (vi) Focus, and (vii) Number of Occupations Considered
- \* One sample item in CSE -- “To what extent have you reflected on how your past integrated with your future career?”

# Career decision making (difficulties) (CDMD)

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- \* A three-category taxonomy of career decision-making difficulties (Gati & Saka, 2001) : Lack of Readiness at the beginning stage prior to the decision process, and Lack of Information and Inconsistent Information during the decision process.

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- \* (a) Lack of Readiness: (i) Lack of Motivation, (ii) General Indecisiveness, and (iii) Dysfunctional Beliefs (e.g., such as irrational expectations, dysfunctional beliefs and thoughts concerning the career decision-making beliefs).
  - \* (b) Lack of Information (i) Lack of Information about Career Decision-Making Process, (ii) Lack of Information about the Self, (iii) Lack of Information about Occupations, and (iv) Lack of Information about Ways of Obtaining Additional Information;
  - \* (c) Inconsistent Information: (i) Unreliable Information, (ii) Internal Conflicts, and (iii) External Conflicts.

# Personality: Universal & culture-specific dimensions

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- \* Intrapersonal traits: Big five –

- \* **Neuroticism (N)** :Proneness to psychological distress, excessive cravings or urges, unrealistic ideas; **Extraversion (E)** :Capacity for joy, need for stimulation; **Openness (O)**: Toleration for & exploration of the unfamiliar; **Agreeableness (A)**: One's orientation along a continuum from compassion to antagonism in thoughts, feelings, and actions; **Conscientiousness (C)**: Individual has degree of organization, persistence, and motivation in goal-directed behavior

- \* Other dimensions?

- \* E.g., Interpersonal traits were ignored?

- \* Face? Family Orientation? Harmony? in Chinese/Confucian/Eastern settings



## The Cross-cultural ( Chinese ) Personality Assessment Inventory , CPAI , 1996 ; CPAI-2 , 2001 ; CPAI-A, 2005 )

### *Social Potency Factor ( 領導性因素 )*

- NOV Novelty (新穎性)
- DIV Diversity (多樣化)
- DIT Divergent Thinking (多元思考)
- LEA Leadership (領導性)
- L-A Logical vs Affective Orientation (理智-情感)
- AES Aesthetics (唯美感 / 藝術感)
- E-I Extraversion vs Introversion (外向-內向)
- ENT Enterprise (開拓性)

### *Accommodation Factor ( 容納性因素 )*

- DEF Defensiveness (Ah-Q Mentality) (阿 Q 精神)
- G-M Graciousness vs Meanness (寬容-刻薄)
- INT Interpersonal Tolerance (容人度)
- S-S Self vs. Social Orientation (自我-社會取向)
- V-S Veraciousness vs Slickness (老實-圓滑)

### *Dependability Factor ( 可靠性因素 )*

- RES Responsibility (責任感)
- EMO Emotionality (情緒性)
- I-S Inferiority vs Self-Acceptance (自卑-自信)
- PRA Practical Mindedness (務實性)
- O-P Optimism vs Pessimism (樂觀-悲觀)
- MET Meticulousness (嚴謹性)
- FAC Face (面子)
- I-E Internal vs External Locus of Control (內-外控制點)
- FAM Family Orientation (親情)

### *Interpersonal Relatedness Factor ( 人際取向因素 )*

- T-M Traditionalism vs. Modernity (傳統-現代化)
- REN Ren Qing (Relationship Orientation) (人情)
- SOC Social Sensitivity (人際觸覺)
- DIS Discipline (紀律性)
- HAR Harmony (和諧性)
- T-E Thrift vs Extravagance (節儉-奢侈)

# Intellectual styles

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- \* Intellectual style, as an collective term for such constructs as learning style, cognitive style, and thinking style, refers to one's preferred way of processing information (Zhang & Sternberg, 2006), and has been employed to explore the influences of individual differences on human performance in different domains.
- \* One of original intentions to propose the construct of intellectual style is to increase our capacities to predict or explain human behaviors in different fields including vocation.

## Three types of styles (Stenberg, 1997):

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- \* Type I styles are creativity-generating : **legislative, judicial, hierarchical, global, and liberal thinking styles**
- \* Type II styles are characterized by norm-conformity : **executive, conservative, monarchic, and local styles**
- \* Type III styles manifest the characteristics of both Type I and Type II styles, depending on the stylistic demands of the task at hand: **internal, external, oligarchic, and anarchic styles**

# **Cultural Differences of Career Development among American and Chinese College Students—Empirical Evidence**

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## Study 1:

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- \* Compared to Career Exploration and Decision-Making Difficulties between: American students(371), Hong Kong students (372),
- \* HK students reported more career decision-making difficulties and a more restricted career exploration process.

## Career Decision-making Difficulties: US vs HK

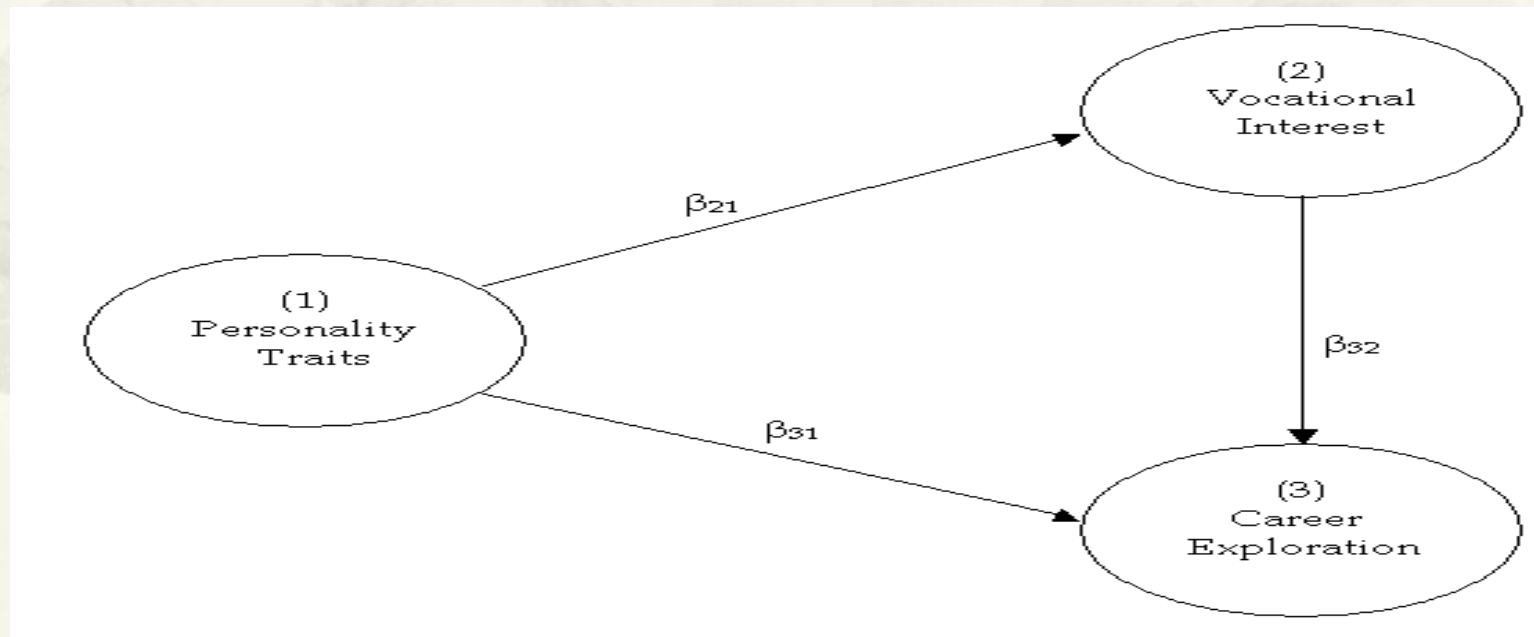
	<u>American</u>		<u>Hong Kong</u>		<i>F</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
<b>Lack of Readiness</b>					
Lack of Motivation	2.92	1.59	4.78	1.87	109.62***
General Indecisiveness	5.51	1.94	6.11	1.76	27.04***
<b>Lack of Information</b>					
about Process	3.88	2.15	5.24	2.01	34.12***
about the Self	3.39	2.01	5.29	2.17	81.24***
about Occupations,	3.79	2.09	5.31	1.81	64.66***
about Ways of Obtaining Additional Information	3.07	1.90	5.19	1.90	142.21***
<b>Inconsistent Information</b>					
Unreliable Information	3.11	1.78	4.55	1.82	57.42***
Internal Conflicts	3.61	1.72	4.83	1.60	52.16***
External Conflicts	2.65	1.78	3.54	1.99	16.22***

# Career Exploration: US vs HK

	<u>American</u>		<u>Hong Kong</u>		<i>F</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
Environment Exploration, Self Exploration	2.53	.95	1.99	.88	28.81***
Intended-Systematic Exploration	2.08	.95	2.07	.89	
Amount of Information Focus	2.79	.97	2.46	1.00	12.87***
Number of Occupations Considered	2.28	.98	2.85	1.32	35.54***

## Study 2

- \* Compared the pattern of relationships among personality, vocational interests, and career exploration between 369 American and 392 Hong Kong university students.
- \* A mediated model





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- \* Significant mediating effect of Enterprising interest type on the relation of Social Potency (Intrapersonal personality dimension) to the two dimensions of CSE& CEE in the Hong Kong sample.
  - \* Significant mediating effect of Artistic vocational interest on the association between Social Potency and CSE in the American Sample
  - \* Interpersonal relatedness factor (highlights relational personality dimension) had added value in predicting career exploration in HK cultural context.

## Study 3

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- \* Examining the contributions of thinking styles to two career-relevant constructs in the process of career development: Vocational interests, & career exploration among 463 Shanghai college students

## Different styles showed significant effects on career development by different modes

### \* Thinking styles to vocational interests

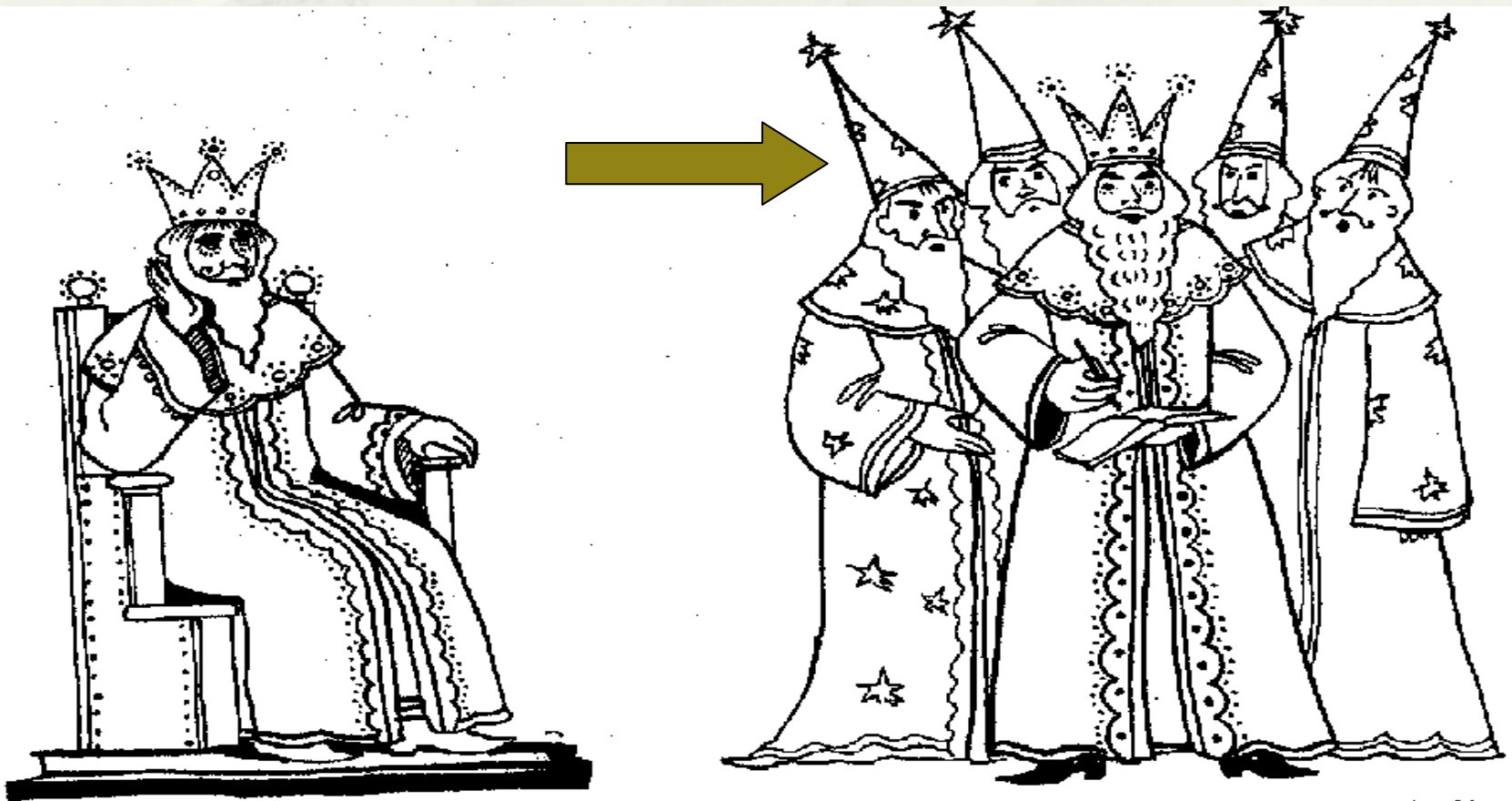
	$R^2_{\text{Total}}$	$R^2_{\text{sex}}$	$R^2_{\text{Styles}}$	$\beta_{\text{Style1}}$	$\beta_{\text{Style2}}$	$\beta_{\text{Style3}}$	F
Artistic	.18	.08	.11	.17 <sub>judicial</sub> **	.15 <sub>external</sub> *		5.17***
Social	.14	.01	.13	.16 <sub>judicial</sub> **	.27 <sub>external</sub> ***		3.69***
Enterprising	.17	.01	.17	.18 <sub>judicial</sub> **			4.79***

\* Influences of Judicial and external styles were sig.



- \* Judicial people: like to judge, evaluate, and analyze the words and actions of others.

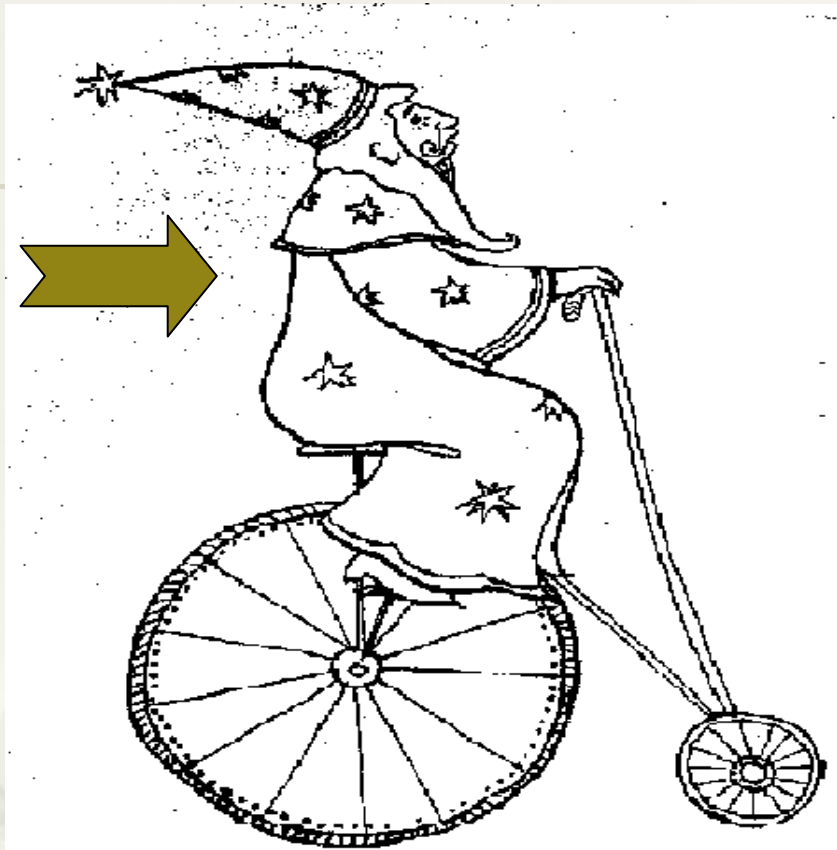
- \* External style prefers engaging in tasks that allow him/her to work with other people through interaction



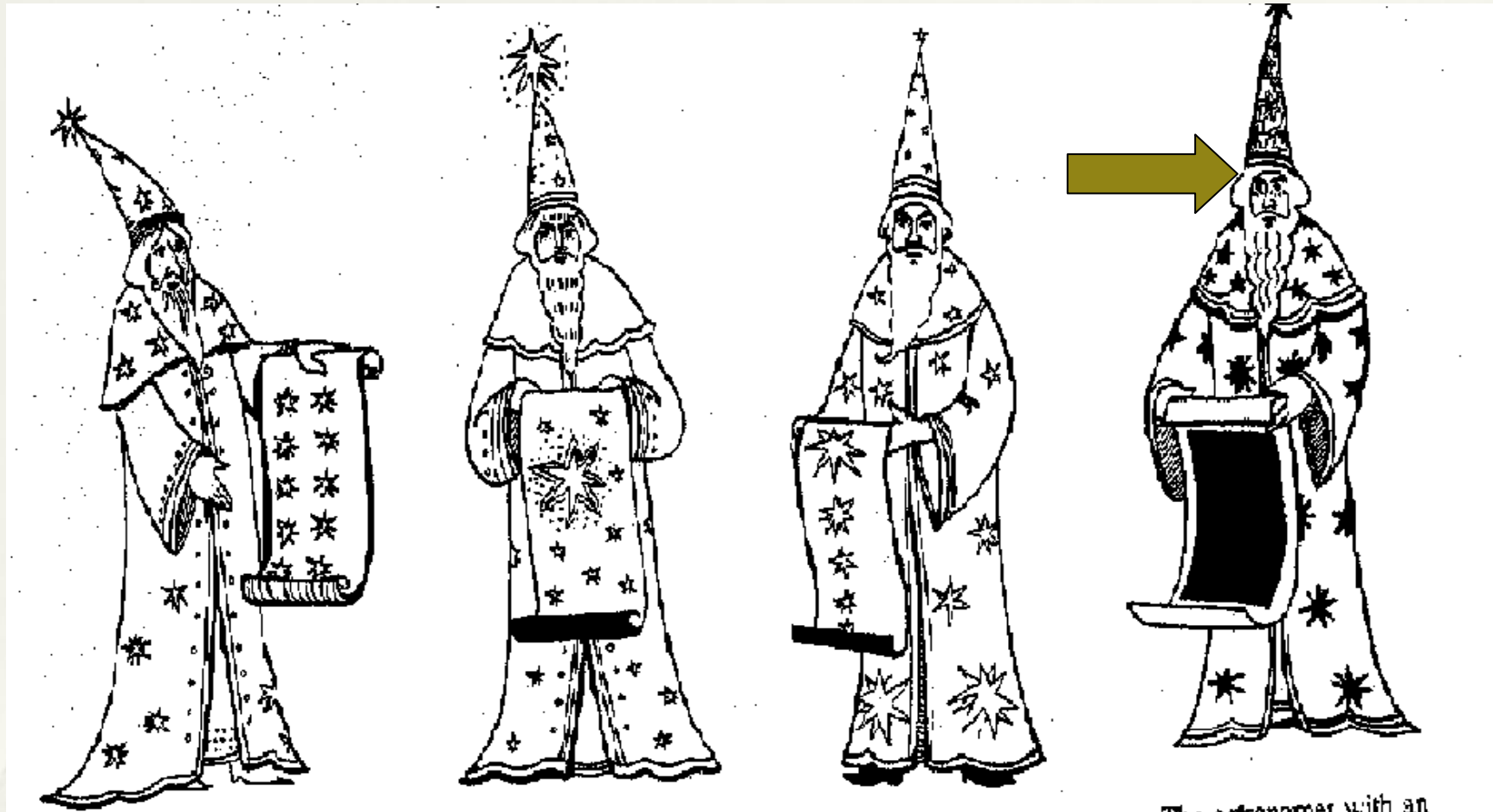
# Thinking style to career exploration

	$R^2_{\text{Total}}$	$R^2_{\text{sex}}$	$R^2_{\text{Styles}}$	$\beta_{\text{Style1}}$	$\beta_{\text{Style2}}$	F
Environment exploration	.12	.01	.11	.22 <sub>hie</sub> ***		3.12***
Self-exploration	.12	.00	.12	.19 <sub>jud</sub> **		3.25***
Focus	.10	.00	.10	.15 <sub>jud</sub> *	-.17 <sub>ana</sub> **	2.40**

- \* Influences of Liberal, judicial and analytical styles



- \* liberal style enjoys going beyond existing rules and procedures and engaging in novel and ambiguous tasks



- \* the anarchic style enjoys working on tasks that allow flexibility as for what, where, when, and how one works, and avoids systems of almost any kinds.

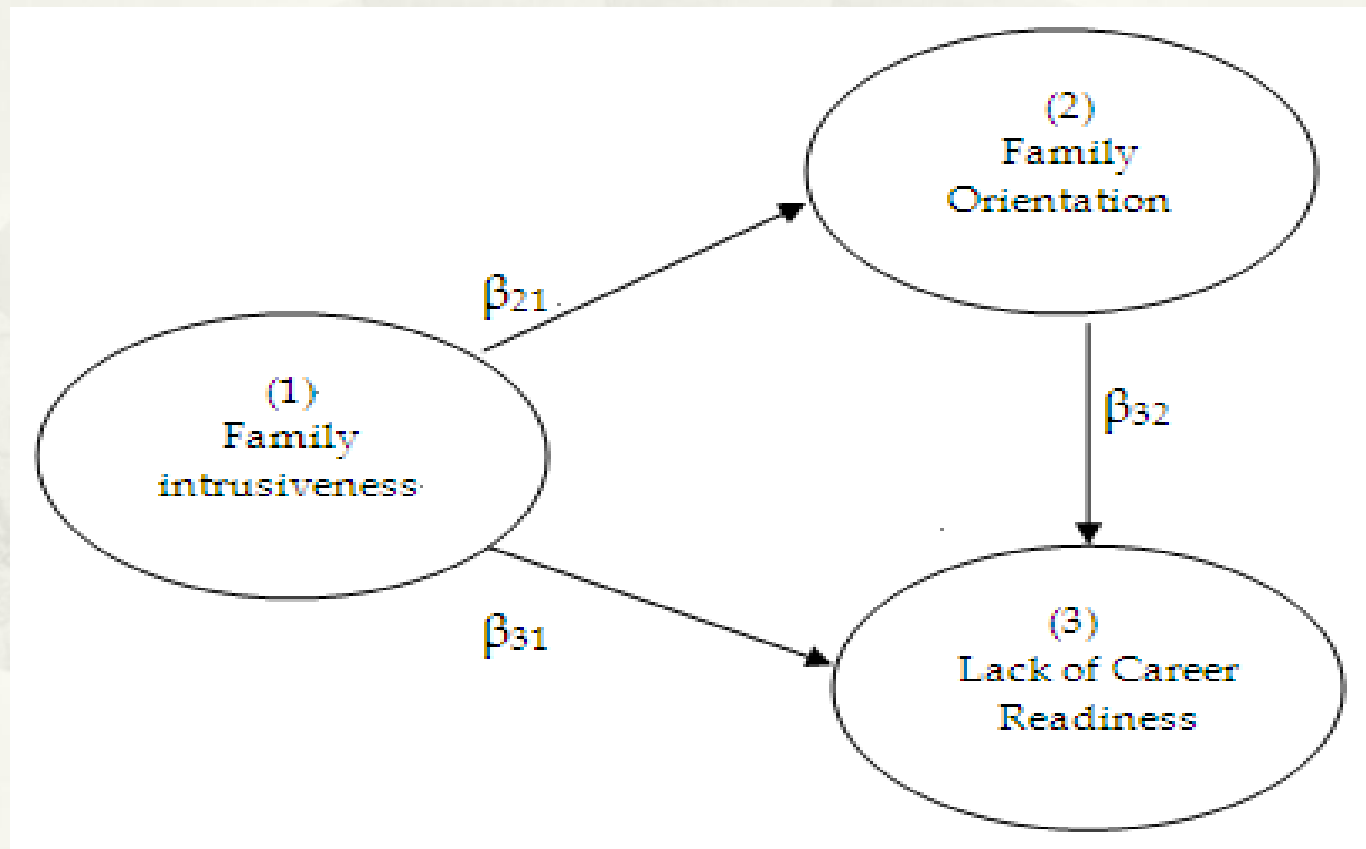


# Study 4:

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- \* Compared Family intrusiveness (Family factor) and Family Orientation (one of interpersonal personality trait) on Career Decision-Making Difficulties in Readiness between Hong Kong and US college students

## Examined the mediated model among Hong Kong and US colleges students



## Stage 1: Hong Kong sample

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- \* 1563 freshmen and sophomores confirmed this mediated model
- \* Good family relationship could lessen the effect of unsuitable parental intrusiveness on youth career decision-making in Hong Kong students

## Stage 2: 390 Hong and 360 US college students

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- \* Mediating model confirmed in both cultures
- \* Family factor (e.g., family intrusiveness, family support, parenting style) could influence students to overcome difficulties in the process of career decision making across cultures
- \* Interpersonal traits mediated the causal train

# Discussion & Conclusions

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- \* **1. Cultural Differences in Career Development**
- \* Students in Chinese settings reported more career decision-making difficulties than their counterparts in the US context
- \* Students in Chinese settings reported more restricted career exploration process.

# Chinese Settings

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- \* East & West: Youth adults might have very different career development approaches, processes, or patterns.
- \* Chinese culture emphasizes a harmony atmosphere among family members, even though youth generation's autonomy or independence is often inhibited.
- \* Accordingly, youth generation's career development is firstly obeyed with family's needs, and sometimes "career attachment".

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- \* Vital objective of Chinese college students' career development is to find a “good” job  
-----higher salary and better reputation.
  - \* This circumstance-bound tend of career development might lead lower aspirations or motivations among the Hong Kong participants.

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- \* Accordingly, with regards to college students in the Chinese context, one more important issue in career counseling should encourage student to perform independent career motivation or aspiration (Mau & Bikos, 2000).



# The US Setting

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- \* Youth adults from the USA or Western might often emphasize that the most important feature of a job should firstly match with one's vocational interests or personal attributes.
- \* A more harmony family relationship between the American college students and their parents might be more helpful to well prepare for their career decision-making together with their parents, who are advanced in some aspects like life and work experiences.

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**\* 2. Salient factors to career development across cultures**

\* Personality: intrapersonal dimensions & interpersonal dimensions

\* Intellectual styles

\* Family variables: parental intrusiveness

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**\* 3. Government Choices of Career Development Education and employability enhancement in China**

- \* Providing youths with career development plan earlier
- \* Encouraging youths to make vocational decisions more independently
- \* Encouraging parents to equally help their offspring in vocational development

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Thank You Very Much!

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