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ANTICIPATED LIFE ROLE SALIENCE AND CAREER
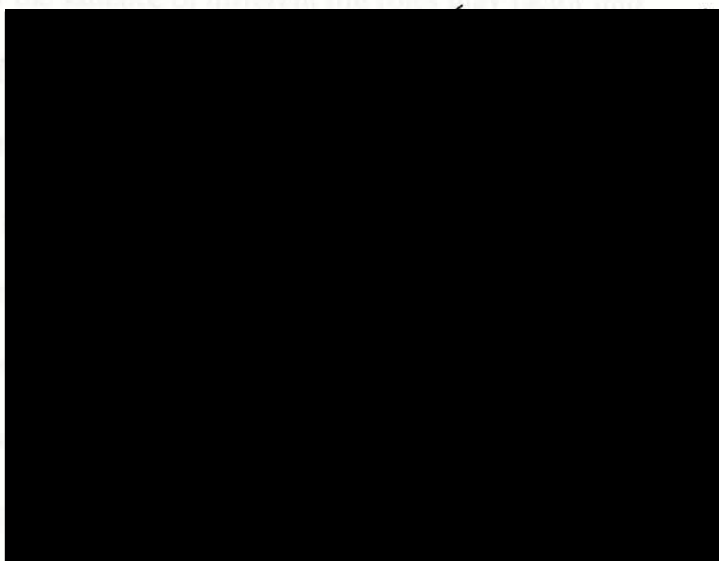
DECISION-MAKING DIFFICULTIES

by

Emily Anne Schedin

A Thesis
Submitted to the Graduate School
of The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts

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ABSTRACT

ANTICIPATED LIFE ROLE SALIENCE AND CAREER

DECISION-MAKING DIFFICULTIES

by Emily Anne Schedin

December 2013

With the dual-earner population increasingly becoming the norm, undergraduate

students are forced to consider the ways in which their career choice may affect their

future family life, as well as how their family life may affect their career. Research has

shown that undergraduate students may alter their vocational aspirations or adjust their

future family plans to avoid work-family role conflict thus implying that students are

making career decisions based on their prioritization of anticipated future life roles. The

present study sought to investigate how the salience of different life roles may factor into

the level of career decision-making difficulty (CDMD) experienced by undergraduate

students. A sample of undergraduate students (N=300) participated in an online survey

reporting information about their anticipated life role salience and current career

decision-making difficulty. Multicultural variables such as race, religiousness/

spirituality, and gender were also assessed. Using a measurement model the following

results were determined: 1) Participants with high parental role salience reported less

career decision-making difficulty than participants with low parental role salience; 2)

Participants with high marital role salience reported more career decision-making

difficulty than participants with low marital role salience; 3) White participants

reported higher family role salience than Non-White participants; 4) Participants who

identified themselves as religious and/or spiritual reported higher family role salience

than participants who did not consider themselves to be religious/ spiritual; 5) Women

reported higher family role salience than men. Implications of these findings as well as

suggestions for interventions are discussed.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The career decision-making of undergraduate college students is a complex process that causes more difficulty for some students than others (Amir & Gati, 2006; Barnett, Gareis, James, & Steele, 2003). As career indecision is one of the central issues in vocational psychology, vocational psychologists have regularly been conducting research to examine the career decision-making process and the variables that influence it (Amir & Gati, 2006; Mitchell & Krumboltz, 1987; Osipow, 1999; Osipow, Carney & Barak, 1976; Savickas, Carden, Toman, & Jarjoura, 1992; Slaney, 1988; Tinsley, 1992). One such variable found to be particularly influential to the undergraduate college population is anticipated work-family conflict (Cinamon, 2009). With the dual-earner family increasingly becoming the norm (Mason & Goulden, 2002), students are forced to consider the ways in which their career choice may affect their future family life, as well as how their family life may affect their career. Research has shown that students may alter their vocational aspirations or adjust their future family plans to avoid work-family role conflict (Mason & Goulden, 2002). However, research to date has yet to investigate whether work-family role conflict or conflicting role salience is related to career decision-making difficulty.

Career Decision-Making Difficulty

The process of making a decision in any context can be regarded as a cognitive function that results in the selection of a course of action among several options (Ferreira & Lima, 2010). The process of making occupational choices can often be especially stressful and anxiety-provoking which frequently leads to difficulty in decision-making

(Opisow, 1999). Career decision-making difficulties (CDMD) have been defined as the internal and external conflicts one faces before and during the process of making a career decision (Amir & Gati, 2006). Career decision-making difficulties account for the majority of vocational issues that compel individuals to seek professional help (Amir & Gati, 2006; Opisow, 1999). Experiencing career decision-making difficulty can often lead to avoiding the decision-making process, stopping it altogether, or making poor career decisions (Gati, Krausz, & Opisow, 1996). The psychological repercussions of making a regrettable career decision can affect individual self-esteem and self-efficacy in addition to external and situational consequences, such as strain on interpersonal relationships or financial instability (Gati & Amir, 2010). Given the prevalence of career decision-making difficulties in career counseling clients as well as the serious implications for addressing these issues, clinicians' first step is to locate and clarify the specific difficulties that are blocking their clients' career decision-making process.

In efforts to increase the efficiency of identifying career decision-making difficulties, professionals in the vocational psychology field have constructed instruments such as the Career Decision-Making Difficulties Questionnaire (CDDQ, Gati et al., 1996) and the Emotional and Personality-Related Career Decision-Making Difficulties Questionnaire (EPCD, Saka, Gati, & Kelly, 2008) to measure different facets of this construct. The use of these tools in recent empirical study has expanded the psychological theory behind the construct of career decision-making difficulty in terms of severity. While the CDDQ measures cognitive, information-related difficulties involved in career decision-making (e.g. lack of information or inconsistent information), the EPCD, as its title suggests, measures the emotional and personality-related difficulties of

career decision-making (e.g. pessimistic views, anxiety, and self-concept). According to the expert consensus of 28 career counselors, difficulties attributed to internal or emotional causes are considered more severe than external or cognitive-based difficulties (Gati, Amir, & Landman, 2010). Results of a cognitive-behavioral study by Andrews (2012) indicated that internal distress is significant in predicting negative career thoughts which effect vocational decision-making. Thus, the literature appears to suggest that special attention to emotional and personality-related (i.e. internal) aspects of career decision-making difficulty is warranted in clinical vocational practice as these issues exacerbate negative emotions and cognitions surrounding the career decision-making process (Andrews, 2012; Gati et al., 2010).

Additionally, internal career decision-making factors have been shown to influence external career decision-making factors and the way external conflicts are approached (Gati et al., 2010; Saka et al., 2008). Though applicable to many types of career decision-making issues, the influence of internal factors on career decision-making has been demonstrated in research concerning anticipated work-family conflict and career decision-making. Undergraduate students that attribute high importance to their future work role anticipate more work-family conflict than those who do not attribute high importance to their future work role (Cinamon, 2010). This internal valuing, or salience, of different life roles can lead to the anticipation of external conflict, whereby career and family-planning decisions are made accordingly (e.g. choosing a job with flexible, *family-friendly* hours or waiting longer to have children) (Barnett et al., 2003; Cinamon & Rich, 2005; Weer, Greenhaus, Colakoglu, & Foley, 2006). Additionally, Cinamon (2010) found that students who attributed high importance to their future work role also

demonstrated the lowest self-efficacy in managing work-family conflict. Thus, given that the importance of life roles impacts both internal and external factors of career decision-making, current research infers a relationship between the salience of one's life roles and the level of career decision-making difficulty one experiences.

Life Role Salience

Role salience, as explained by Super (1980), is a summation of attitudes, values, and commitment one denotes to the different roles they play throughout their lifetime. According to Super (1980), the combination of different life roles (e.g. worker, student, parent, citizen, homemaker) creates our lifestyle and the sequential combination of these roles creates *life space*. In theory, one has a limited amount of *life space* such that the addition of a new role in one's life or the expansion of a preexisting role will require the accommodation of some other current role. For example, if a woman's child gets sick and needs to be taken care of, the woman's parental role will expand to the consequence of taking time off of work, thus inhibiting her work role. Research supports that simultaneously engaging in multiple roles can enrich and increase satisfaction in one's life (Super, 1980). Yet, competing salient roles can sometimes lead to distressing experiences such as making sacrifices in one salient role to fulfill responsibilities in another salient role (Super, 1980).

Conflict between work roles and family roles has been shown to affect psychological well-being (Barnett et al., 2003; Super, 1980). Spillover theory indicates that a disturbance or change in one life role is likely to have an effect on other life roles that are occurring simultaneously. Somewhat related to the theory of *life space*, spillover theory (Niles & Harris-Bowlsbey, 2008) refers to the consequences one role has on

another. For example, a man that works all day in a stressful environment is then irritable with his family when he comes home at night. Barnett and colleagues (2003) stated that the salience of one life role can alter the degree of spillover onto other roles. Role salience has been used in current research as a moderator variable in the relationship between role conflict and well-being (Barnett et al., 2003). The salience of both work and family roles can affect psychological well-being directly as well as moderate the relationship between conflict and well-being (Noor, 2004); however, only high endorsement of work role salience has been found to exacerbate the negative effects of work-family conflict which causes increased distress (Amatea, Cross, Clark, & Bobby, 1986; Barnett et al., 2003; Noor, 2004). Further research on contributing factors to the anticipated salience of one's life roles could help to predict and minimize role conflict with more accuracy and, in turn, may aid career clinicians in guiding clients to make career decisions that will not conflict with their other salient life roles.

<div align="center">Multicultural Considerations</div>

Racial Identity

It has been stated in past research that development of racial identity is positively correlated with work values. In a study done by Carter, Gushue, & Weitzman (1994), a sample of White undergraduates were assessed using the White Racial Identity Scale (WRIS) and a measurement of work values commonly associated with traditional White American culture. Results supported their hypothesis that as White racial identity increases, the tendency to hold White American work values such as economic security, advancement, economic reward, prestige, achievement, and authority increases as well. Not surprisingly, participants with high scores on the WRIS were more likely to pursue

careers that could offer the status and power associated with the aforementioned traditional White American values. Participants on the opposite end of the spectrum who valued openness and intellect were reportedly more likely to make career decisions based on altruistic motives. This study is a solid example of the relationship between racial identity and its corresponding work values; therefore, it may be inferred that this is also representative of the potential relationship between race and work role salience as role salience is partially defined by values of a specific role.

Studies involving racial minorities show similar patterns. The majority of ethnic and racial minority groups in the U.S. identify with a collectivistic culture (Chung & Harmon, 1999; Mau, 2004). The values held in collectivist communities involve sharing resources, strong social influence, and consideration for the effect one's choices can have on others in the community. A study by Mau in 2004 measured White, African American, Hispanic, and Asian American high school and college students in their career decision-making abilities. Results indicate that Asian American students had the most career decision-making difficulties and White students had the least career decision-making difficulties. Given that Asian American culture was ranked highest in collectivistic values of all racial groups represented in this study, the results supported Mau's (2004) hypothesis that people of a collectivist culture would report more career decision-making difficulties due to higher levels of family role salience (potentially conflicting with one's work role) than people of an individualist culture. Following this train of thought, these results not only imply a relationship between race and role salience but also demonstrate a connection between role salience and career decision-making difficulty. Returning to the influence of racial identity, Mau (2004) explains his

hypothesis with reference to a cross-national study that demonstrated trends of increasing difficulty in career decision-making for younger generations of Asian American college students (Mau, 2001). This phenomenon has been associated with weak or fluctuating racial identity as these young adults attempt to adopt the norms of the dominant culture and maintain their racial identity as well as their culturally consistent salience of family roles (Brown, 2002).

Religiousness and Spirituality

In addition to racial implications, research has shown that general measures of religiousness or spirituality have a direct influence on the way work and family roles are perceived, as well as decision-making surrounding these roles. This relationship is theoretically sound, given that life role salience is defined by the perceived value of a given role which is shaped in part by one's deeply rooted beliefs (Noor, 2004). It is expected that some religious denominations are likely to have more emphasis on certain life roles; however, contrary to Davidson and Caddell's (1994) Calvanistic-based hypotheses that the role of work would be emphasized most in conservative Protestant organizations and less in Catholicism, Wilcox, Chavez, and Franz (2004) found that all Christian denominational teachings encourage family role participation over the materialistic rewards of the work role.

As further evidence for religious/ spiritual emphasis on family roles, Wilcox and colleagues (2004) also found that, despite the distinct difference in leniency between Christian denominations' discourse on issues of traditional and appropriate family roles, data from a National Congregations Study (NCS) reported that the majority of Christian ministry agree with the statement, "God approves of many different kinds of families."

Although none of the ministry representing conservative Protestants condoned this statement, NCS results show that all denominational organizations offered specialized religious support for non-traditional families such as single parents and working mothers.

The practice of unorganized religion or spirituality is also represented in the current literature as being particularly relevant in supporting the importance of family roles. A population of Latino family caregivers reported that spiritual practices, such as meditation and prayer, provide a sense of balance in their lives that give them strength to uphold their family responsibilities. Some participants in this study even stated that their spiritual beliefs and values led them to assume a caregiving role in their family, as they felt called to do so (Koerner, Shirai, & Pedroza, 2013). This stress alleviation for caregivers' burdens through spirituality was a finding also repeated in studies with more ethnically diverse populations (Pierce 2001; Theis, Biordi, Coeling, Nalepka, & Miller, 2003). Additional research testifies to the general idea that spirituality is an important factor in facilitating healthy marital and family functioning (Giblin,1996; Tanyi, 2005).

Gender

There are also gender implications for life role salience. Current research supports that role conflict is becoming increasingly common among women as they appear to have high salience in both work and family roles (Humbert & Lewis, 2008). . A recent meta-analysis was conducted for the purpose of informing Human Resource Departments about the significance of life role salience in job satisfaction (Batt & Valcour, 2001). This study demonstrated that one's endorsement of feminine characteristics (e.g. gentleness, empathy, sensitivity) is positively correlated with higher family role salience; thus, as women report that they tend to see themselves as more

feminine than men, women have significantly higher family role salience than men (Batt & Valcour, 2001) which implies that women are more likely to assume family-related responsibilities than men (Humbert & Lewis, 2008). Although the majority of recent literature appears to support that women generally have higher family role salience then men, this trend has shown to be more prevalent in *blue-collar* populations that demonstrate more traditional gender-roles as opposed to professional and higher-education populations (Batt & Valcour, 2001). Additionally, a study using a sample of medical graduate students presents contradicting information regarding the assumption that men have lower family role salience than women. Using aspects of the Life Role Salience Scales (LRSS; Amatea et al., 1986), Westring and Ryan (2011) assessed the anticipation of work-family conflict as it relates to life role salience. Results of this study demonstrate a high mean level of family role salience for both genders (4.24 on a 5 point likert-type scale).

There are also gender-specific implications for work role salience as it relates to (or conflicts with) family roles. The importance of the work role for women is demonstrated by Noor (2004) in a study examining the direct and moderating effects of role salience on work-family conflict and psychological well-being for employed women with children. This study measured the salience of both work and family roles and the subsequent impact on well-being. The results of this study show significantly higher family role salience than work role salience for this population; however, contradictory to Noor's prediction that maintaining the traditional caretaker role would be most relevant to women's well-being, data indicate that women's work-related self-image has more significant effects on well-being than does women's family-related self-image. This

work-related self-image may be reflective of women's work role salience given that the definition of role salience encompasses one's attitudes and values toward a given role (Super, 1980). The results of this study also suggest that higher levels of work role salience resulted in higher levels of role conflict. Noor (2004) postulates that these results may indicate women's high investment in both family and work roles and that role conflict is much more salient in the lives of women today due to the societal pressure for a wife or mother to take the role of the family caretaker as well as contribute to a dual-earner lifestyle.

Present Study

Based on the current literature, it appears that career decision-making difficulty (CDMD) is a central construct in the field of vocational psychology as well as a prevalent issue for the undergraduate student population (Amir & Gati, 2006; Mitchell & Krumboltz, 1987; Osipow, 1999; Osipow et al., 1976; Savickas et al., 1992; Slaney, 1988; Tinsley, 1992); thus, the etiology of career indecision deserves continued focus and attention in the growing body of CDMD literature. As undergraduate students are tailoring their career decisions to avoid future work-family role conflict, the literature appears to suggest that the anticipated salience of students' future life roles (and associated role-related sacrifices) is likely to make career decisions more difficult for some students than others (Cinamon, 2009; Mason & Goulden, 2002). Cultural norms and values appear to influence the anticipated salience of specific life roles for adult populations and should therefore be included in the conceptualization of undergraduate students' anticipated life role salience (Chung & Harmon, 1999; Mau, 2004).

The present study aims to establish and examine the relationship between anticipated life role salience and career decision-making difficulty within the undergraduate population. Additionally, multicultural influences on anticipated life role salience have been investigated in terms of race, religiousness/spirituality, and gender. In consideration of previous research it was hypothesized that 1) anticipated life role salience will predict career decision-making difficulty, 2) undergraduate participants with high work role salience will have more career decision-making difficulty than participants with low work role salience, 3) non-White participants will have higher family role salience than White participants, 4) participants who identify as religious or spiritual will have higher family role salience than non- religious or non-spiritual participants and 5) women will have higher family role salience than men. To clarify, the ambiguous wording of hypothesis 1 was intentional; it refers to the overarching concept that one's anticipated life role salience, in any given life role, in any direction (low or high), is likely to influence the level of difficulty they experience in making a career decision.

CHAPTER II

METHOD

Participants

The sample consists of students from the undergraduate college student body of a mid-sized, southeastern university. Based on sample size recommendations in the relevant literature for using Structural Equation Modeling (McQuitty, 2004; Schumacker & Lomax, 1996), data from 300 participants was used to ensure sufficient statistical power for the proposed research. The racial distribution in the sample for this study is 56.3% White and 43.7% Non-White participants. There was a total of 161 Female (53.7%) and 139 Male (46.3%) participants in this sample. A total of 82 different college majors were represented in this sample with the most common majors represented being Nursing (16%) and Psychology (15%). Additionally, eight participants (.03%) reported "undecided" as their college major status and seven participants (.02%) reported "undeclared" as their college major status. All participants were of traditional college age (i.e. between 18 and 25 years). Additional demographic information is found in Table 1.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of Sample

Characteristic	*n*	%
Gender		
Female	161	53.7
Male	139	46.3
Race		
White	169	56.3
Non-White	131	43.7
American Indian/ Alaskan Native	4	1.3
Asian/ Pacific Islander	1	.3
Black or African American	117	39
Hispanic	2	.7
Number of Children		
0	247	82.3
1	11	3.0
2	6	2.0
3 or more	9	3.0
Marital Status		
Single	279	93
Married	21	7
Homeowner		
Yes	21	7
No	279	93
Year In College		
Freshman	141	47
Sophomore	70	23
Junior	49	16
Senior	39	13

Procedure

With the approval of the university's Institutional Review Board, a survey consisting of an informed consent statement, demographic form, and the instruments of the study was advertised on the psychology department's online research recruitment site, SONA. This database allowed students currently enrolled in an undergraduate psychology course to receive class extra credit for their completion of the survey. The survey was accessible online through the use of Qualtrics. Due to the significantly lower rate of male enrollment in undergraduate psychology courses, additional male participants were recruited via personal presentations to Fraternity and Athletic organizations associated with the university though they were not compensated for their participation in any way.

Measures

The Demographic Form prompts participants to indicate their age, gender, race, and college status. This form also prompts participants to indicate whether they are decided or undecided about their college major, and if decided, which major.

The Career Decision Difficulties Questionnaire (CDDQ, Gati et al., 1996) was used in the current study to assess cognitive areas of career decision-making difficulty. The CDDQ is a 34 item questionnaire that uses a nine point likert-type scale for participants to respond to items on a continuum ranging from *(1) Does not describe me well* to *(9) Describes me well*. Examples of CDDQ items include, "I know that I have to choose a career, but I don't have the motivation to make the decision now (I don't feel like it)," and "It is usually difficult for me to make decisions". Thus, the higher the item score, the more the participant identifies that item as being true or characteristic of him or

herself. The CDDQ contains three subscales that measure specific areas of career decision-making difficulty. These subscales include: Lack of Readiness, Lack of Information, and Inconsistent Information. High cumulative scores for each subscale can be interpreted as experiencing more difficulty in that area and low cumulative scores can be interpreted as experiencing less difficulty in that area. The current study utilized all three subscales of the CDDQ as the observed variables measuring the latent variable, Cognitive Career Decision-Making Difficulty. According to Gati and Amir (2010) the test-retest reliability for the subscales before and after a two day delay period are .79 for Inconsistent Information, .85 for Lack of Information, and .70 for Lack of Readiness. The test-retest reliability for the CDDQ total score is .79. Median internal consistency reliability was found to be .86 for the three subscales and .94 for the total score (Gati & Amir, 2010). Construct and concurrent validity for the CDDQ has been demonstrated by Osipow and Gati (1998) as its total score is highly correlated to the total scores of the Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Scale (Taylor & Betz, 1983) and the Career Decision Scale (Osipow et al., 1976).

The Emotional and Personality-Related Career Decision-Making Difficulties Questionnaire (EPCD, Saka et al., 2008) was used in addition to the CDDQ as a measure of career decision-making difficulty; however, the EPCD assessed the emotional and personality-related aspects of those difficulties. Current research suggests that emotional and personality-related issues are most pervasive in college students' career decision-making (Amir & Gati, 2006; Amir, Gati, & Kleiman, 2008; Gati & Amir, 2010; Gati et al., 1996; Saka et al., 2008; Santos, 2001) which is why the EPCD was deemed appropriate for this study of college students. The short version of the EPCD, created by

Gati et al. in 2011, was used for the current study and includes 25 items total. Each item is measured by a nine-point Likert-type scale with responses on a continuum ranging from *(1) Does not describe me at all* to *(9) Describes me well.* Thus, the higher the item score, the more the participant identifies that item as being true or characteristic of him or herself. Three subscales designed to explore specific emotional and personality-related aspects of career decision-making are included on the EPCD. These subscales measure the following dimensions: Pessimistic Views, Anxiety, and Self-concept. An example of a Pessimistic Views item is, "Few careers are really interesting". An example of an Anxiety item is, "I am stressed because I need to deal with the complex process of choosing a career". An example of a Self-Concept item is, "I often feel that I am unsuccessful". High cumulative scores for each subscale can be interpreted as experiencing more difficulty in that area, and low cumulative scores can be interpreted as experiencing less difficulty in that area. Internal consistency reliability for the EPCD subscales were .71 for Pessimistic Views, .92 for Anxiety, and .83 for Self-Concept with a total internal consistency of .91 (Gati et al., 2011). The current study utilized all subscales for the EPCD to represent the latent construct, Emotional/ Personality Related Career Decision-Making Difficulty. Structural, convergent, and divergent validity for the original and short version of the EPCD have been tested and supported (Gati et al., 2011; Saka & Gati, 2007; Saka et al., 2008).

The Life Role Salience Scales (LRSS; Amatea et al., 1986) was used in the current study as a way to measure the personal importance and level of commitment that participants attribute to four specific life roles, which compose the measure's four subscales: Occupational, Marital, Parental, and Homecare. For the purposes of

addressing the hypotheses in the current study, the term *family role salience* refers to results regarding the Marital, Parental, and Homecare scales. The LRSS is a 40-item inventory using ten items for every role subscale. An example of an Occupational item is, "Having work/a career that is interesting and exciting to me is my most important life goal". An example of a Parental item is, "Although parenthood requires many sacrifices, the love and enjoyment of children of one's own are worth it all". An example of a Marital item is, "My life would seem empty if I never married". An example of a Homecare item is, "It is important to me to have a home of which I am proud". Responses to all items on the LRSS are indicated on a five point Likert-type scale of attitudes ranging from *(1) Disagree* to *(5) Agree* (Amatea et al., 1986). Thus, the higher the item score, the more the participant identifies that item as being true or characteristic of him or herself. High cumulative scores for each subscale can be interpreted as a strong value or commitment to a role, and low cumulative scores can be interpreted as weak value or commitment to a role. The LRSS has reportedly acceptable internal consistency with reliability coefficients ranging from .79 to .94 and test-retest correlation coefficients ranging from .58 to .87 across subscales (Amatea et al., 1986); however the time-delay was not reported. McCutcheon (1998) found evidence supporting construct validity with a correlation of .31 (p<.001) between the LRSS and Crumbaugh's Purpose-in-Life scales (Crumbaugh & Maholick, 1964).

The Fetzer Brief Multidimensional Measure of Religiousness/Spirituality (BMMRS; Fetzer Institute, 1999) was used in the current study as a means of measuring the religiousness and/or spirituality of participants. Although there are ten total sub-dimensions of this instrument, the current study utilized only the following four sub-

dimensions to represent the latent variable of Religiousness/Spirituality due to their topical relevance and acceptable psychometric properties: Daily Spiritual Experience (6 items), Private Religious Practices (3 items), Positive Spiritual Coping (3 items), and Religious Intensity (2 items). A total of 14 items from the BMMRS were used in this study. An example of a Daily Spiritual Experience item is, "I feel deep inner peace or harmony". An example of a Private Religious Practices item is, "Within your religious or spiritual tradition, how often do you meditate?" An example of a Positive Spiritual Coping item is, "I think about how my life is part of a larger spiritual force". An example of a Religious Intensity item is, "To what extent do you consider yourself a spiritual person?" Item response options vary between subtests, using dichotomous, multiple choice, and Likert-type formats. Due to this variation in scoring between subtests, high and low scores mean something different from one subscale to another (Neff, 2006). Lower scores on the Daily Spiritual Experience subtest represent more prevalent daily spiritual experiences in subject's life and higher numbers represent less daily spiritual experiences. Lower scores on the Private Religious Practices and Public Religious Practices subtests represent more frequent religious practices in subject's life and higher scores represent infrequent religious practices. Lower scores on the Positive Spiritual Coping subtest represent more frequent use of positive spiritual coping in subject's life and higher scores represent infrequent use of positive spiritual coping. Lower scores on the Religious Intensity subtest represent identification as being more religious/spiritual per subject self-report and higher scores represent being less religious/spiritual per client self-report. Reliability for the BMMRS subscales of interest have been reported as good to acceptable with alpha values of .72 for Private Religious Practices, .81 for Positive

Spiritual Coping, .77 for Religious Intensity, and .91 for Daily Spiritual Experience (Idler

et al., 2003). Support for construct validity includes significant correlations between the

BMMRS and the General Social Survey (GSS; an annual collection of data from the

American population regarding various aspects of societal functioning including self-

reported religiousness/ spirituality) (General Social Survey, University of Chicago,

1998).

CHAPTER III

RESULTS

Data Analysis

A measurement model (see Figure 1) was used to test the proposed theoretical model (see Figure 2) for the current study via analysis of collected data and assessment of the relationships among the observed variables: Occupational Role Salience, Marital Role Salience, Parental Role Salience, and Homecare Role Salience. The latent construct of Spirituality/ Religiousness is composed of four observed variables (i.e. Private Religious Practices, Religious Intensity, Positive Religious Coping, and Daily Spiritual Experience). Career Decision-Making Difficulty was measured from a cognitive and emotional/ personality perspective. The cognitive career decision difficulties latent variable is composed of 3 observed variables (i.e. Lack of Readiness, Lack of Information, Inconsistent Information). The emotional and personality career decision difficulties latent variable is also composed of 3 observed variables (i.e. Pessimistic Views, Anxiety, and Self-Concept). Variables of gender were coded as either woman (dummy code= 0) or man (dummy code= 1) and variables of race were coded as either White (dummy code= 0) or Non-White (dummy code= 1).

The data set was cleaned prior to analysis in order to detect and address any missing data or extreme values. Descriptive statistics were computed for the sample of this study to ensure that internal consistency of this data is adequate, indicated by a minimum reliability level of $\alpha = .70$. After constructing a measurement model specifically assessing the fit of the latent construct Religiousness/ Spirituality, all observed role variables and latent constructs were correlated with one another to create a
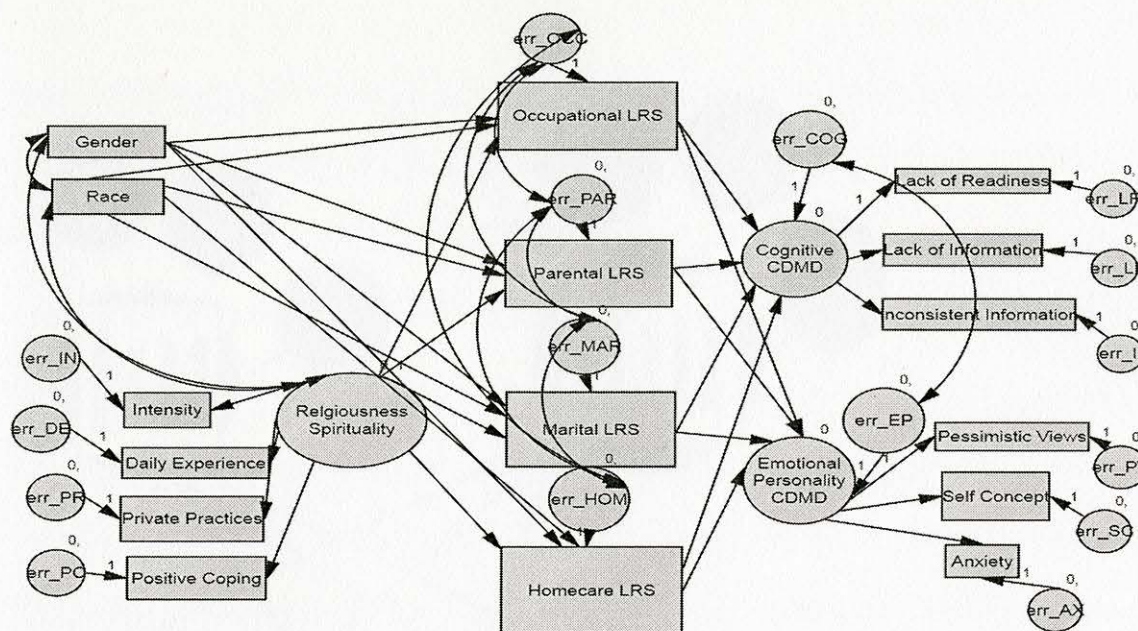
Figure 1. Measurement Model. LRSS: Life Role Salience Scale; EPCD- PV: Emotional and Personality-Related Career Decision-Making Difficulties Questionnaire- Pessimistic Views; EPCD-A: Emotional and Personality-Related Career Decision-Making Difficulties Questionnaire- Anxiety; EPCD- SC: Emotional and Personality-Related Career Decision-Making Difficulties Questionnaire-Self-Concept; CDDQ- LR: Career Decision Difficulties Questionnaire- Lack of Readiness; CDDQ- LI: Career Decision Difficulties Questionnaire- Lack of Information; CDDQ-II: Career Decision Difficulties Questionnaire- Inconsistent Information; BMMRS- DE: The Fetzer Brief Multidimensional Measure of Religiousness/Spirituality- Daily Spiritual Experience; BMMRS- PrP: The Fetzer Brief Multidimensional Measure of Religiousness/Spirituality- Private Religious Practices;; BMMRS-PC: The Fetzer Brief Multidimensional Measure of Religiousness/Spirituality- Positive Spiritual Coping; BMMRS-RI: The Fetzer Brief Multidimensional Measure of Religiousness/Spirituality- Religious Intensity
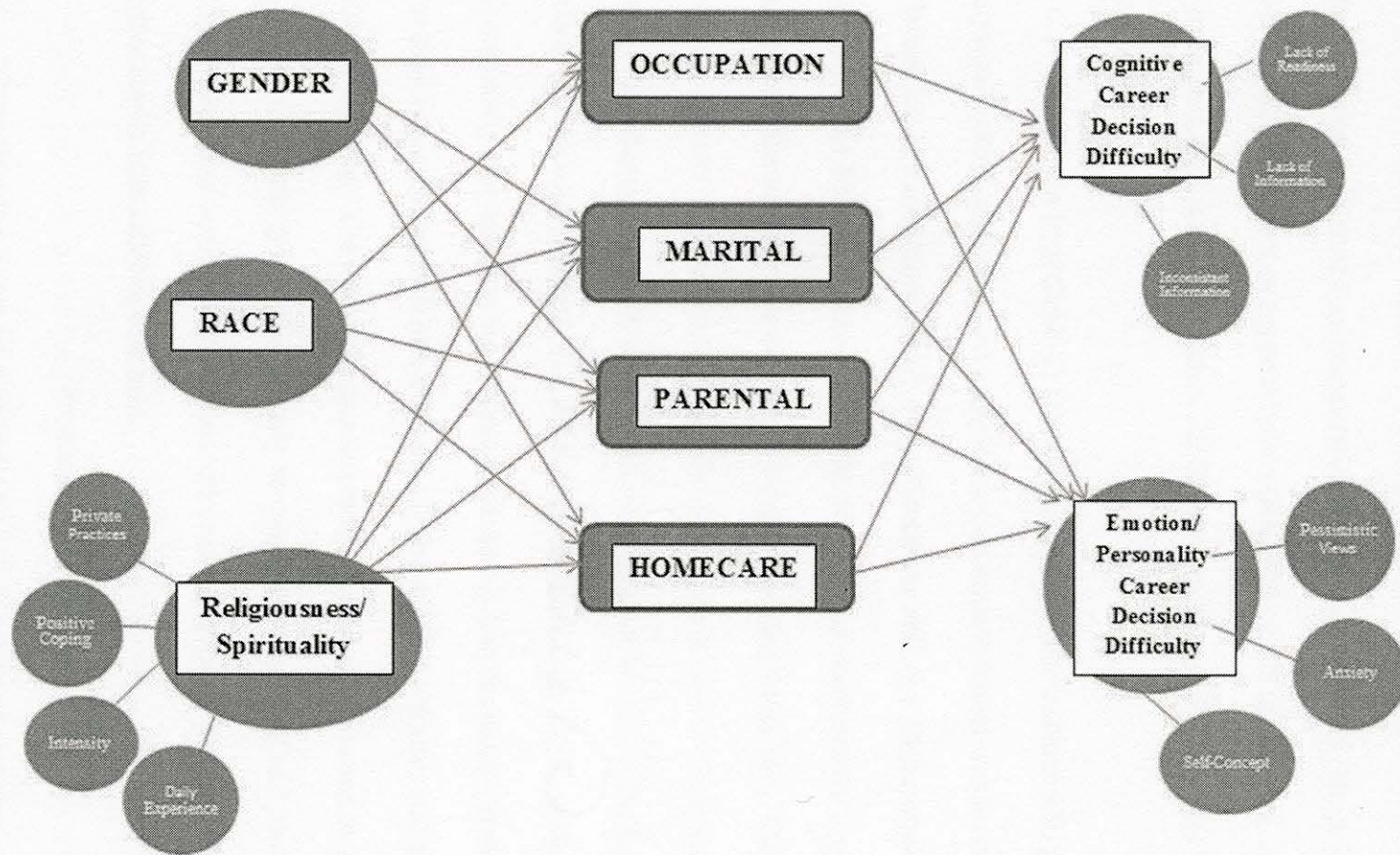
Figure 2. Theoretical Model.

complete measurement model to assess the fit of the model as a whole. An acceptable fit was achieved, indicated by a comparative fit index (CFI) > .95 (Hu & Bentler, 1999), a root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) < .05 (McQuitty, 2004), and a non-significant Chi Square (χ^2; Barrett, 2007); thus, each research question is addressed separately.

To address hypothesis 1) that anticipated life role salience will predict career decision-making difficulty, the complete measurement model was used to assess the relationship of each observed life role salience variable (i.e. Occupational Role, Marital Role, Parental Role, and Homecare Role) to the latent constructs of Cognitive and Emotional/Personality-related Career Decision-Making Difficulty. The output of this analysis was also used to address hypothesis 2) undergraduate participants with high work role salience will have more career decision-making difficulty than participants with low work role salience. To address hypothesis 3) non-White participants will have higher family role salience than White participants, the complete measurement model was used to assess the path between race (White and Non-White) and each life role salience variable. The complete measurement model was also used to address both hypothesis 4) participants who identify as religious or spiritual will have higher family role salience than non-religious or non-spiritual participants and 5) women will have higher family role salience than men.

Preliminary Procedures

Data cleaning began by eliminating duplicate data of participants who completed the survey more than once (N=74), eliminating unfinished surveys (N=69), and

eliminating unqualified participants such as graduate students (N=2). All data was scanned manually and via SPSS frequency analysis for appropriate range and found no abnormal responses. The data set initially contained 536 female participants and 161 male participants; therefore, in efforts to achieve a more equal representation of each gender group, 70% (N=376) of female participants were filtered out at random via an SPSS function resulting in a total of 139 males and 161 females (N=300). Missing data were replaced utilizing linear trend at point imputation. No pattern appeared to exist regarding participant or item correlated with these missing data; thus, 33 data points across 15 items were replaced using this method. Mahalanobis testing was utilized in addition to descriptive and fit statistics to test for the presence of outliers. Results of these tests indicated that no significant differences exist; therefore, data from all 300 participants were used in the following analyses.

. The correlation matrix represented in Table 2 demonstrates that all subscales within the same instrument were significantly correlated to one another as expected. Additionally, all subscales of the EPCD and CDDQ were significantly correlated ($p <$ .01). Parental Life Role Salience was significantly correlated with all subscales of both the CDDQ and EPCD. Occupational Life Role Salience also shows significant correlations with all subscales of the CDDQ and EPCD with the exception of CDDQ-Lack of Readiness scale. The only significant correlations present regarding Marital Life Role Salience included CDDQ-Lack of Readiness and BMMRS-Religious Intensity. The implications of these correlations will be explained in the discussion section. Alpha levels for all subscales were within acceptable range (i.e. above .70; LRSS-O: .82; LRSS-P: .91; LRSS-M: .83; LRSS-H: .88; CDDQ-LI: .96; CDDQ-II: .94; EPCD-PV: .79;

EPCD-SC: .85; EPCD-A: .92; BMMRS-PrP: .76; BMMRS-I: .75; BMMRS-PC: .81;

BMMRS-DE: .93) with the exception of CDDQ-LR which had an alpha level of .68 (See

Table 2). This issue will be discussed further in the discussion section.

<center>Measurement Model</center>

A measurement model was constructed via AMOS 20 to determine the extent to

which the instrument scales utilized in this study represent the latent variable of

Religiousness/Spirituality. This model was used to provide support for the latent variable

of Religiousness/Spirituality by utilizing the four scales of the BMMRS (i.e. BMMRS-I,

BMMRS-PrP, BMMRS-DE, BMMRS-PC). Results of this test support an adequate fit

(Chi-square = 11.57; CFI = .99; TLI = .94; RMSEA = 90% CI [.06, .2]). Therefore, this

latent variable is considered sufficient to include in the following complete measurement

model. Measurement models were not individually constructed for the latent variables

Cognitive Career Decision-Making Difficulty and Emotional/ Personality-Related Career

Decision-Making Difficulty because each latent variable has only three observed

variables; thus, the constructs would be 'just' identified and would have a perfect fit

(Schumacker & Lomax, 1996).

After determining the validity of the Religiousness/Spirituality latent variable, a

complete measurement model including all observed and latent variables was created to

test the proposed theoretical model (see Figure 2). The fit of this measurement model was

unsatisfactory given the high RMSEA (Chi-square = 875.453, $p < .01$; CFI = .73; TLI =

.64; RMSEA = 90% CI [.15, .17]). Upon further inspection of the output data for this

measurement model it was determined that the error terms of the latent CDMD constructs

should be correlated within the model due to a significantly high correlation (.9) between

Table 2

Means, Standard Deviations, Correlations, and Alpha Reliability

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1. LRSS-O	--													
2. LRSS-P	.29**	--												
3. LRSS-M	.27**	.53**	--											
4. LRSS-H	.49**	.59**	.47**	--										
5. EPCD-PV	-.15**	-.30**	-.01	-.27**	.--									
6. EPCD-A	-.12*	-.13*	.09	-.11	.70**	--								
7. EPCD-SC	-.13*	-.32**	.00	-.23**	.70**	.70**	--							
8. CDDQ-LR	.06	-.14*	.17**	-.09	.51**	.45**	.58**	--						
9. CDDQ-LI	-.18**	-.22**	.00	-.22**	.74**	.72**	.65**	.54**	.--					
10. CDDQ-II	-.24**	-.26**	-.01	-.29**	.73**	.67**	.64**	.50**	.87**	--				
11. BMMRS-DE	-.05	-.17**	-.10	-.10	.10	.17**	.20**	.10	.12**	.14*	--			
12. BMMRS-PrP	.13*	.02	.00	.10	.01	.10	.07	.02	.11*	.09	.69*	--		
13. BMMRS-I	-.03	-.11*	-.12*	-.03	.00	.03	.07	-.06	.12*	.05	.70**	.66**	--	
14. BMMRS-PC	-.04	-.13*	-.10	-.11	.05	.11	.12*	.04	.17**	.10	.83**	.68**	.67**	--
M	37.81	39.75	36.42	39.51	21.73	34.82	31.54	42.12	43.18	33.89	15.40	13.51	4.34	6.17
SD	6.53	8.93	7.56	7.43	9.25	16.20	12.99	11.71	22.66	17.78	7.91	5.81	1.61	2.65
Range	18-50	10-50	14-50	22-50	6-46	8-72	8-69	10-80	12-108	10-90	6-36	4-32	2-8	3-12
Possible Range	10-50	10-50	10-50	10-50	6-54	8-72	8-72	10-90	12-108	10-90	6-36	4-32	2-8	3-12
Sample Alphas	.82	.91	.83	.88	.79	.92	.85	.68	.96	.94	.93	.76	.75	.81

Table 2 (continued).

Note: LRSS-O: Life Role Salience Scale- Occupational; LRSS-P: Life Role Salience Scale- Parental; LRSS-M: Life Role Salience Scale- Marital; LRSS-H: Life Role Salience Scale- Homecare; EPCD- PV: Emotional and Personality-Related Career Decision-Making Difficulties Questionnaire- Pessimistic Views; EPCD-A: Emotional and Personality-Related Career Decision-Making Difficulties Questionnaire- Anxiety; EPCD- SC: Emotional and Personality-Related Career Decision-Making Difficulties Questionnaire-Self-Concept; CDDQ- LR: Career Decision Difficulties Questionnaire- Lack of Readiness; CDDQ- LI: Career Decision Difficulties Questionnaire- Lack of Information; CDDQ-II: Career Decision Difficulties Questionnaire- Inconsistent Information; BMMRS- DE: The Fetzer Brief Multidimensional Measure of Religiousness/Spirituality- Daily Spiritual Experience; BMMRS- PrP: The Fetzer Brief Multidimensional Measure of Religiousness/Spirituality- Private Religious Practices; BMMRS-RI: The Fetzer Brief Multidimensional Measure of Religiousness/Spirituality- Religious Intensity; BMMRS-PC: The Fetzer Brief Multidimensional Measure of Religiousness/Spirituality- Positive Spiritual Coping.

*p < .05. **p < .01.

Cognitive CDMD and Emotional/ Personality CDMD. The output from the adjusted measurement model (see Figure 1) supported an adequate fit (Chi-square = 237.8, $p <$ .01; CFI = .94; TLI = .9; RMSEA = 90% CI [.07, .09]). An additional measurement model was constructed which used both Cognitive and Emotional/Personality CDMD variables as indicators to create an overarching latent variable of CDMD given the correlation between the two CDMD variables was so extremely significant; however, this resulted in a significant worsening of fit for the measurement model (Chi-square = 40.83, $p < .01$; CFI = .97; TLI = .95; RMSEA = 90% CI[.08, .15]). Thus, the previous model that correlated the error terms of the Cognitive and Emotional/Personality CDMD variables demonstrated the best fit and was used to represent the following path analyses (see Figure 1).

Direct effects between gender, race, and Religiousness/ Spirituality on each of the four Life Roles (i.e. Occupational, Homecare, Marital, and Parental) were assessed. All Anticipated Life Role Salience variables were significantly correlated to one another (see Table 3). Additionally, the direct effect between each of the four Life Roles on Cognitive Career Decision-Making Difficulty and Emotional/ Personality Related Career Decision-Making Difficulty was tested. The standardized path coefficients can be found in Figure 3 and are listed below.

Table 3

Anticipated Life Role Salience Estimates

	Correlation	Covariance
Marital ⟷ Homecare	.46	24.16**
Parental ⟷ Homecare	.58	36.43**
Occupational ⟷ Homecare	.5	23.5**
Parental ⟷ Marital	.5	30.77**
Occupational ⟷ Marital	.3	14**
Occupational ⟷ Parental	.3	17**

**$p < .01$.

In this model, there were significant paths between certain cultural variables and Life Role Salience variables. Specifically, the path between Religiousness/ Spirituality and Parental Life Role Salience was significant ($\beta = -.16$, $p < .01$). The path between Religiousness/ Spirituality and Marital Life Role Salience was also significant ($\beta = -.16$, $p < .01$). The path between Religiousness/ Spirituality and Occupational Life Role Salience ($\beta = .01$) was non-significant. The path between Religiousness/ Spirituality and Homecare Life Role Salience ($\beta = -.08$) was also non-significant. The path between Gender and Parental Life Role Salience was significant ($\beta = -.19$, $p < .01$). The path between Gender and Marital Life Role Salience was significant ($\beta = -.11$, $p < .05$). The path between Gender and Homecare Life Role Salience ($\beta = -.13$, $p < .05$) was significant. The path between Gender and Occupational Life Role Salience was non-significant ($\beta = -.07$). The path between Race and Parental Life Role Salience was significant ($\beta = -.15$, $p < .01$). The path between Race and Marital Life Role Salience was also significant ($\beta = -.29$, $p < .01$). The path between Race and Occupational Life Role Salience was non-
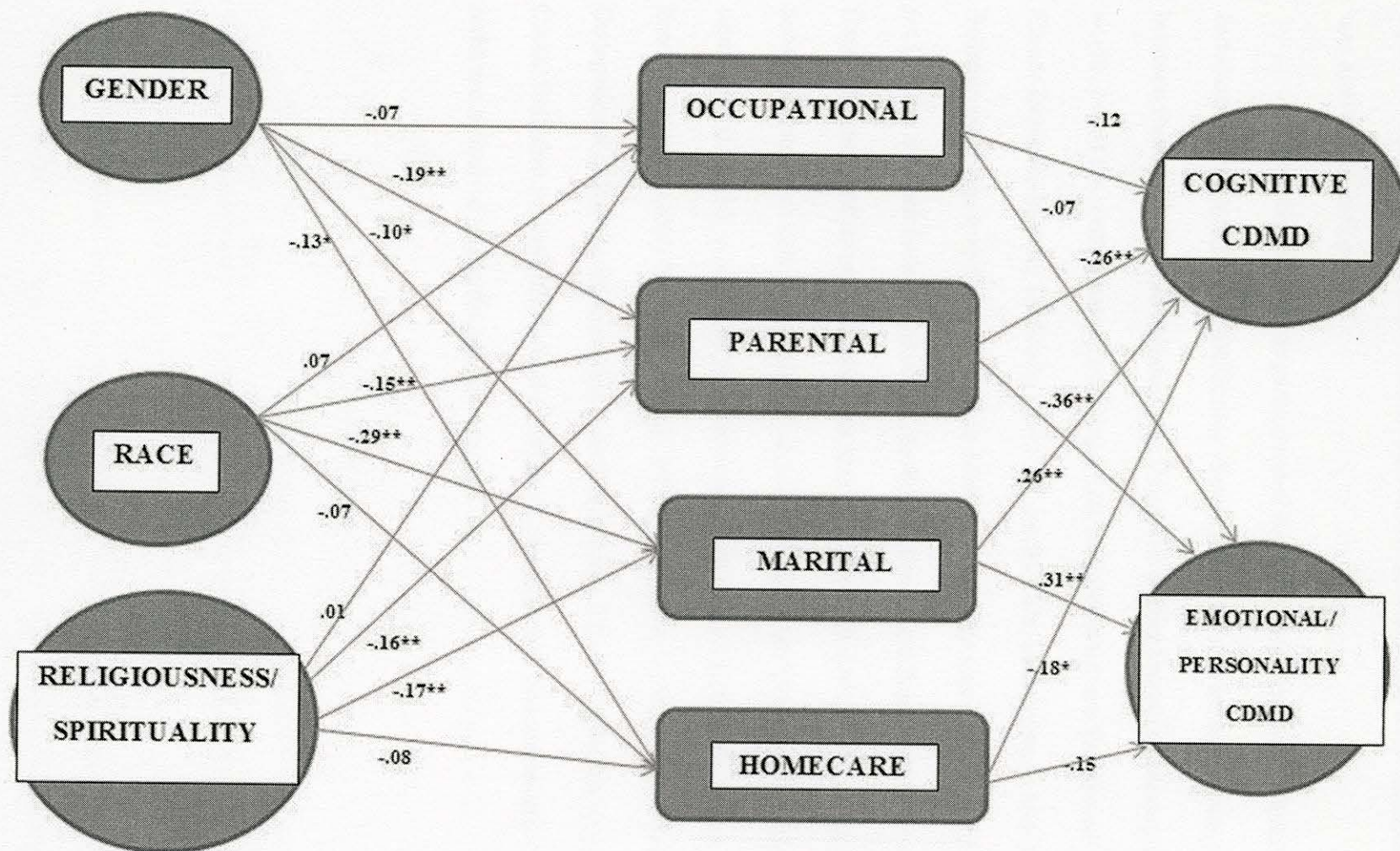
Figure 3. Standardized Correlation Coefficients. *p* < .05. **p* < .01.

significant (β =.07). The path between Race and Homecare Life Role Salience (β = -.07) was also non-significant.

Additionally, significant paths existed between variables of Life Role Salience and Career Decision-Making Difficulty. Specifically, there were significant paths between Parental Life Role Salience and Cognitive Career Decision-Making Difficulty (β = -.26, p<.01) as well as between Parental Life Role Salience and Emotional/ Personality Career Decision-Making Difficulty (β = -.36, p<.01). The path between Marital Life Role Salience and Cognitive Career Decision-Making Difficulty was significant (β = .26, p<.01) and the path between Marital Life Role Salience and Emotional/ Personality Career Decision-Making Difficulty was also significant (β =.31, p<.01). The path between Homecare Life Role Salience and Cognitive Career Decision Difficulty was significant (β = -.18, p<.05) but the path between Homecare Life Role Salience and Emotional/ Personality Career Decision Difficulty was not (-.15). Paths between Occupational Life Role Salience and both Cognitive (-.12) and Emotional/ Personality Career Decision making difficulties (-.09) were insignificant. The implications of these paths are addressed in the discussion section.

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

The current study examined the relationship between life role salience and career decision-making difficulty while considering the influence of preceding cultural variables such as gender, race, and religiousness/ spirituality. Recent literature regarding work-family conflict has demonstrated the impact of anticipated life role salience on one's career choice (Barnett et al., 2003). Additionally, prior research supports that difficulty making a career decision is one of the most common reasons people seek career counseling (Amir & Gati, 2006; Osipow, 1999). The current study aimed to fill the gap in the literature between life role salience and career decision-making difficulties by adding new variables to the body of literature investigating the etiology of career decision-making difficulty. The results of this study will aid providers in discerning the most appropriate area to focus intervention with their clients, as studies on spillover theory have highlighted the negative consequences associated with choosing a career that conflicts with one's other valued life roles (e.g. mental distress, damaged interpersonal relationships, and inability to fulfill responsibilities in all roles) (Niles & Harris-Bowlsbey, 2008).

Research Question 1

The first research question regarded whether or not anticipated life role salience related to career decision-making difficulty. The first hypothesis was that anticipated life role salience would predict career decision-making difficulty. This hypothesis was validated by the results, and the second hypothesis explains in what way. Based on the suggestions of previous research that higher work role salience increases the negative

effects of work-family conflict (Barnett et al., 2003; Noor 2004; Westring & Ryan 2011), the second hypothesis was that participants with high anticipated work role salience would have more career decision-making difficulties than participants with lower work role salience. However, the results did not reflect any significant relationship between work role salience and CDMD.

Instead, the results of this study suggest that participants with high anticipated parental role salience reported less career decision-making difficulties (both cognitive and emotion/ personality-related) than participants with low parental role salience. Essentially, this indicates that those who highly value being a parent may have less trouble making a career decision. Possible explanations for this trend include patterns of identity, goals, and motivation for mothers who combine a career and parenthood. A qualitative study by Giele (2008) supports that women who have equally high parental and occupational life role salience are characterized by ambitious and pioneering personality traits that allow them to view the responsibilities of parenting and the demands of their career as a challenge rather than a barrier. Given that the current sample consisted of participants who are all actively pursuing higher education, most likely for the purpose of future work opportunities, these goal-focused characteristics may account for the decrease in career decision-making difficulties among females with high parental role salience, though this does not account for males with high parental role salience represented in the current study. Indirect support for these results that apply to both male and female populations is offered by Lease and Dahlbeck (2009) in a study demonstrating that authoritarian parenting style is predictive of higher career decision-making self-efficacy for female college students with children and internal locus of

control is predictive of higher career decision-making self- efficacy for male college students with children; however, the existing literature lacks specific reference to the relationship between anticipated parenting and career decision-making difficulty.

Additionally, participants with high anticipated marital role salience reported more career decision-making difficulties (both cognitive and emotion/ personality-related) than participants with low marital role salience. In essence, if participants highly value engaging in a spousal role they may report more difficulty making a career decision. Possible explanations for this trend are reported in recent literature demonstrating that young adult women who anticipate early marriage are more likely to endorse a traditional view of marriage which places less emphasis on women's career development and more emphasis on combining spousal income (Carroll et al., 2007). Therefore, the increase in career decision-making difficulty among women with high anticipated marital role salience may be a reflection of more traditional views on marital roles resulting in ambiguity related to their own career choice, though the current literature does not offer any direct evidence of this nor does it provide possible explanations for the same phenomena within the male population. It is interesting that although parental and marital are both considered family roles and yet the CDMD implications for each role are significantly different. Although continued research is necessary to clarify the rationale for these differences, the current literature mentioned above lends itself to the possibility that someone can more easily predict the effects that parenting will have on their career and can plan accordingly (e.g. need a job with flexible hours or only looking for part-time positions), whereas someone may have more difficulty predicting the effects of marriage on their career in terms of monetary

responsibility, particularly if they are not currently dating the person they intend to marry.

It is worth mentioning that only anticipated homecare role salience demonstrated significant differences between the level of reported cognitive career decision-making difficulty and emotional/personality-related career decision-making difficulty. Participants with high anticipated homecare role salience reported more cognitive career decision-making difficulty than participants with low homecare role salience; however, emotional/ personality-related career decision-making difficulty was not significantly affected by anticipated homecare life role salience. This difference implies that the source of CDMD for those with high homecare role salience is most likely related to extrinsic cognitive factors as opposed to intrinsic emotional and personality-related factors. It also implies that the CDMD of persons with high homecare role salience is less *severe* than persons struggling with more emotional/ personality-related CDMD (Gati et al., 2010). Possible explanations for this trend are unclear given the lack of research specific to the relationship between homecare role salience and career decision-making difficulty, though intuitively it may be hypothesized that owning and maintaining a home may be more reliant on one's income (i.e. external career rewards) than one's emotional fulfillment in their career (i.e. internal career rewards).

Research Question 2

Our second research question regarded whether or not cultural variables such as race, religiousness/spirituality, and gender influence life role salience. The first hypothesis was that non-White participants would have higher family role salience than White participants. This prediction was based on previous research that non-White

populations often identify with a collectivist culture and value familism over individual success (Gaines et al., 1997). However, the results suggest that White participants reported significantly higher family role salience (i.e. marital and parental roles) than non-White participants. Possible rationales for this difference were investigated as these results contradicted a wealth of previous research. Interestingly, a recent study on life role salience in Black South African populations produced data suggesting that Black men and women are becoming increasingly more occupation-driven and less likely to assume domestic family roles (Bosch, de Bruin, Kgaladi, & de Bruin, 2012). Additionally, a qualitative study endorsed that African American women are more career driven and less likely to become homemakers even.after having children (Giele, 2008). This may give the outcome more context, given that 89% of the non-White sample is Black. Another possibility is that the White Southern population is more collectivist in nature than other White populations in considering other cultural factors (e.g. socio-economic status and religious denomination) have specific relevance to Southern culture which may influence one's affinity toward collectivism regardless of race (Gaines et al., 1997).

Next, self-identified religious and/or spiritual participants were hypothesized to have higher family role salience than less religious and/or less spiritual participants. This prediction was based on previous research which identified the emphasis on familial values and duties within most religious and spiritual practices (Tanyi, 2005; Wilcox, et al., 2004). The results supported this hypothesis, with religious and/or spiritual participants reporting significantly higher family role salience than less spiritual and/or religious participants. It is important to note that racial differences were present in the

distribution of religiousness/spirituality among the current sample; Black participants endorsed significantly higher levels of religiousness/spirituality than White participants (covariance: 1.15, p<.001). This finding is consistent with the results of previous studies from other geographical locations within the United States (i.e. Midwest, West Coast, Northeast) that report significantly increased religiousness/spirituality levels within populations of ethnic minority college students (Cervantes & Parham, 2005; Cokley, Garcia, Hall-Clark, Tran, & Rangel, 2012) with an emphasis on African American populations in particular (Ellison & Taylor 1996; Sherkat 2002). However, this raises more questions than it answers for the sample of the current study; Given that White participants reported higher family role salience than Non-White participants, and participants high in religiousness/ spirituality reported higher family roles salience, it is expected that White participants would have higher reported religiousness/spirituality. Needless to say, further exploration of the relationship between race and religiousness/spirituality as well as race and family role salience is warranted in future research.

Finally, the last hypothesis was supported in that female participants reported significantly higher family role salience than male participants. This prediction was based previous research which, with the exception of one study (Westring & Ryan, 2011), demonstrated that women have significantly higher endorsement of family roles than men (Batt & Valcour, 2001; Humbert & Lewis, 2008; Noor, 2004). Therefore, in this sample of college students, finding that family role salience was higher for women than men is consistent with prior research.

Clinical Implications

The findings of the current study are of particular importance to professionals providing career services to undergraduate students who are struggling with career decision-making difficulty. Understanding that life role salience is significantly related to the difficulties experienced when making a career decision gives clinicians another variable to consider when helping students who are stuck in during the career decision-making process. Therefore, the utilization of life role salience assessments and interview discussion is suggested as a means of providing a more inclusive context for conceptualizing students' vocational issues as they pertain to other future aspirations.

Given the results of this study, it is suggested that providers pay particular attention to clients with high marital role salience, as this appears to be related to more career decision-making difficulties. Specifically, the current literature implies that it will be important to inquire about clients' anticipated marital relationship regarding their perception of traditional versus dual career roles and financial independence as these factors may shed some light on their perceived sense of urgency in choosing a career (Carroll et al., 2007). For instance, some clients may view financial independence through the expectation that their income will not be shared with their spouse or that their income will be only partially shared with their spouse, giving them financial autonomy from one another. However, clients that demonstrate an affinity for the dual career lifestyle may experience CDMD due to conflicting high salience of both occupational and family roles. Future studies are encouraged to examine the interaction between the levels of occupational and family roles salience as it relates to levels of CDMD as this may give

more context to why persons with high marital role salience experience more CDMD than persons with low marital role salience.

The only construct that demonstrated significant differences between cognitive and emotional/ personality related CDMD was homecare life role salience. Clients with high homecare role salience are likely to experience more career decision-making difficulty than those with low homecare roles salience; however, these difficulties appear to be specific to the external cognition-related aspects of CDMD and are therefore presumed to be less *severe* than emotional/ personality related CDMD (Gati et al., 2010). As previously mentioned, this trend may be a result of focusing on the monetary logistics in owning a home, though further research is necessary to support this hypothesis. Therefore, clinicians helping clients with high homecare role salience are encouraged to utilize vocational interventions that address obstacles such as lack of information, inconsistent information, and lack of readiness while potentially integrating a focus on gathering income-related career information as it pertains to the client's desired home environment (Gati et al., 1996).

In terms of demographic implications, the results of this study suggest that when working with female clients, vocational practitioners might spend more time discussing the priority of family roles in relation to their work role. For instance, you might ask her how she pictures her career fitting in with her family (or anticipated family) life; what (if any) sacrifices is she willing to make in her family life to accommodate her career; what (if any) sacrifices is she willing to make in her career to accommodate her family? However, the lower family role salience of men in this sample might also imply that men may not be currently investing much time considering these family roles and the effects

that these roles might have on their desired career (on a scale of 1-5 regarding parental role salience women had a mean rating of 4.14 and men had a mean rating of 3.77; regarding marital role salience women had a mean rating of 3.72 and men had a mean rating of 3.54) and may benefit from exploring the various and possible life roles with a career professional.

Additionally, understanding a client's religiousness and/or spirituality appears to demonstrate the importance of anticipated family roles as well. Although there was no significant difference between the work role salience of White and non-White participants, practitioners may keep in mind that White clients demonstrated higher family role salience than non-White participants in this study. Previous research also demonstrates that African American women in particular are more career driven and less likely to become homemakers even after having children (Giele, 2008). In essence, if the client is female, identifies as religious/spiritual, or is White, more emphasis may be placed on how their anticipated family roles might influence their career decisions, as this may be a significant factor in their decision-making difficulty. Something to consider in this conceptualization is that Black women have been shown to place less emphasis on the value of marriage and are less likely to be married (Bosch et al., 2012); therefore, it is implied that Black women may be less likely than White women to have the option of choosing to be a homemaker or deciding not to engage in paid work. As previously mentioned, if the clients' demographic suggests low family role salience (male, non-religious/ non-spiritual, or non-White) they may benefit from an opportunity to thoroughly consider family-related issues during career counseling.

The results of this study gives us a starting point for conceptualizing clients' vocational needs, though most importantly it is suggested that providers engage in a follow-up conversation with students to review their results and gather clarification details about their salient life roles and how these might influence their career decision. Even if a provider is unable to formally assess life role salience of a client, , at the very least, practitioners are encouraged to take the time to discuss current or anticipated value and importance of other roles in their clients' lives in order to provide like more effective and relevant vocational services.

The results of this study support a need to take a step back and assess the broader aspects of our consumers' lives. The role of worker is rarely the only role people maintain in their life and thus it is counterintuitive to conceptualize a vocational concern without the context of the other life roles. Corporate Human Resource Departments have begun to acknowledge the massive impact of role salience on employee performance and retention and have since implemented movement toward more flexible training mediums as well as more flexible hours to accommodate their employee's other salient life roles (Batt & Valcour, 2001). Mauno, Kinnunen, and Feldt (2012) provide additional research to support the positive correlation between job satisfaction and family-supportive work environments across genders. Although these company reformations appear to be a move in the right direction, consider that career decision-making difficulty has been shown to contribute to poor career decision-making (Gati et al., 1996); thus, the existence of increasingly flexible work environments may not matter if someone faced with career decision-making difficulty chooses a career without considering how it may conflict with their other life roles. By discussing a client's anticipated life role salience, vocational

clinicians can help clients explore their options and identify careers consistent with the client's values and lifestyle that are more likely to result in increased job satisfaction, performance, and retention for that client.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

The current study was limited by demographic restrictions. All participants were enrolled in the same mid-sized, southeastern university and were of traditional college age (i.e. 18-25 years of age). Additionally, the racial distribution for the sample for this study was 56.3% White and 43.7% Non-White participants, with 89% of the Non-White sample being represented by Black participants. All female participants were enrolled in a psychology course at the time they completed the survey; however, male participants were recruited from fraternity and athletic organizations in addition to psychology course enrollment. Therefore, the gender-specific implications of this study may lack generalizability as they represent very particular pools of undergraduate students, though there is no current literature that suggests specific differences in life role salience between populations of men involved in fraternities or athletics.

It is suggested that future research utilize a more diverse sample while assessing the relationships between the constructs included in this study. It may also be important to investigate the differences between persons who are compensated for their participation in a study versus those that are not, as participants in the current study who were enrolled in a psychology course were given extra credit for their participation and participants recruited from fraternity and athletic organizations were not compensated in any way.

Due to researcher error, another major limitation is that two items from the extended version of the BMMRS Private Practices subscale were included in the online survey. Initially, one of these extended-version items was coded under the Private Religious Practices subscale and the other extended-version item was coded under the subscale of Public Religious Practices (which the current study intended to measure). After discovering this error, the subscale of Public Religious Practices was removed from the reported data as only one item was coded for that subscale. The extended-version item that was coded under Private Religious Practices was also removed and the data analyses were re-run. Although this change did not significantly alter the any of the subscale correlations, Religiousness/Spirituality measurement model, or fit within the measurement model, removing an entire subscale as well as any items from a subscale has the potential to completely alter the results and implications of a study. Consequently, in the event that such errors had gone undetected prior to the publication of this data, the results of this oversight could have been detrimental to the field of vocational psychology as practitioners who chose to incorporate the results of this study into their practice would have been at risk of utilizing unsupported interventions (Bakker & Wicherts, 2011).

Considering that many aspects of the results did not support the initial hypotheses regarding relationships between the constructs of this study, though possible explanations are suggested for the outcome data, further exploration of these relationships is encouraged for future studies (see specific suggestions in the discussion of research questions 1 and 2). It would be interesting to test whether or not the results of these relationships in the current study would be replicated within a more culturally diverse

sample and the implications of these results (i.e. within a sample of greater racial diversity, ethnic diversity, socio-economic diversity, expanded geographical representation, expanded age range, and diversification of education level). Given the significant (and surprising) relationships between Non-White populations and anticipated life role salience, it would be interesting to consider a more in-depth exploration of ethnicity as it relates to life role salience by utilizing a more ethnically diverse sample. Additionally, given that the current study found significant relationships between cultural factors of religiousness and ethnicity and life role salience as well as between life role salience and career decision-making difficulty, future research may investigate these constructs within a model which designates cultural variables as a moderator of the relationship between life role salience and career decision-making difficulty. Future research may also consider directly measuring collectivistic versus individualistic variables as opposed to using race as a proxy of underlying cultural values.

Another limitation worth mentioning is that the reliability alpha for the Lack of Readiness subscale of the CDDQ was unsatisfactory ($\alpha = .68$). Interestingly, this deficit was also found in a previous study in which the Lack of Readiness scale's alpha was .60 and .63 (McConnell, Yowell, Mohn, Leuty, & Schedin, 2013). Unfortunately, this suggests that the results of this scale should be interpreted with caution as they may not be truly representative of the participants' lack of readiness to engage in the career decision-making process.

By utilizing the theoretical framework of career development and life-space theory the relationship between life role salience and career decision-making difficulty was examined in addition to assessing the influence of cultural variables such as gender,

race, and religiousness/spirituality on life role salience. Significant findings of this study include support for the assumption that undergraduates who value the role of parenting and anticipate participating in this role at some point in their life tend to have less difficulty making a career decision than persons that do not value the role of parenting in their lives. The current study also supports that undergraduates who value the marital role and anticipate participating in this role at some point in their life tend to have more difficulty making a career decision than persons that do not value the role of marriage in their lives. Demographic implications of the present study suggest that White undergraduate populations tend to value family roles more highly than Non-White populations and undergraduates that consider themselves to be religious or spiritual tend to value family roles more highly than persons that do not consider themselves to be religious/ spiritual. Additionally, the current study suggests that undergraduate women tend to value family roles more highly than men. These findings support the need for vocational professionals to address the salience or importance of different life roles, particularly when assisting clients that feel *stuck* in their vocational development or cannot make a career decision.

APPENDIX A

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPLICATION

Informed Consent

The University of Southern Mississippi

Authorization to Participate in Research Project

Consent is hereby given to participate in the study titled: *Life Role Salience and Career Decision-Making*

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to assess the potential influence anticipated life roles (i.e., occupational, parental, marital, and homecare) can have on career decision-making difficulty for college students.

Description of Study: Participants in this study will be asked to complete several questionnaires that assess difficulties in relation to career development as well as importance of other life roles. All questionnaires completed will be done so anonymously and all responses will be kept confidential. All resulting data will be combined, all identifying information will be removed, and the data will be entered into a computer database program and appropriately analyzed. This process does not incorporate any invasive procedures and participants can expect questionnaires to take approximately 1 hour to complete.

Benefits: Potential benefits of this research include a better understanding of the variables affecting college students' career development and the potential of partial fulfillment of class credit if applicable to you.

Risks: This is a minimal risk study that does not ask significantly personal questions and as a result there do not appear to be any major risks related to completing the questionnaire. Participants may experience distress when completing some questionnaires as subject matter may be personal or provoke discomfort. Should participants experience distress and wish to seek counseling services, they can contact the USM Student

Research Project: Life Role Salience and Career Decision-Making Difficulty

Demographic Questionnaire

*Age:*_____

Gender

○ *Male (1)*
○ *Female (2)*
○ *Other (3)* _____

Sexual Orientation

○ *Heterosexual (1)*
○ *Homosexual (2)*
○ *Bisexual (3)*
○ *Transgender (4)*
○ *Other (5)*

NOTE: Some questions in this survey pertain to the subject of marriage. For the purpose of this study, please answer as though marriage were legal for couples of all sexual orientation.

*College Major:*_____

Racial/Ethnic Background

○ *American Indian/Alaskan Native (1)*
○ *Asian/Pacific Islander (2)*
○ *Black or African American (Non-Hispanic) (3)*
○ *Hispanic (4)*
○ *White or European American (Non-Hispanic) (5)*
○ *Other (please specify) (6)* _____

Year in College

- ○ *Freshman (1)*
- ○ *Sophomore (2)*
- ○ *Junior (3)*
- ○ *Senior (4)*
- ○ *Graduate Student (5)*

What is your current marital status?

- ○ *Single (1)*
- ○ *Married (2)*
- ○ *Separated (3)*
- ○ *Divorced (4)*
- ○ *Widow/widowed (5)*

Do you have any children?

- ○ *Yes (1)*
- ○ *No (2)*

*How many children do you have?*_____

Do you own your own home?

- ○ *Yes (1)*
- ○ *No (2)*

This survey is seeking to determine information about your anticipated or other career roles.

Do you consider yourself to be working full time in your desired career field?

- ○ *Yes (1)*
- ○ *No (2)*

APPENDIX B

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD NOTICE OF COMMITTEE ACTION

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
118 College Drive #5147 | Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001
Phone: 601.266.6820 | Fax: 601.266.4377 | www.usm.edu/irb

NOTICE OF COMMITTEE ACTION

The project has been reviewed by The University of Southern Mississippi Institutional Review
Board in accordance with Federal Drug Administration regulations (21 CFR 26, 111),
Department of Health and Human Services (45 CFR Part 46), and university guidelines to ensure
adherence to the following criteria:

- The risks to subjects are minimized.
- The risks to subjects are reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits.
- The selection of subjects is equitable.
- Informed consent is adequate and appropriately documented.
- Where appropriate, the research plan makes adequate provisions for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of the subjects.
- Where appropriate, there are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and to maintain the confidentiality of all data.
- Appropriate additional safeguards have been included to protect vulnerable subjects.
- Any unanticipated, serious, or continuing problems encountered regarding risks to subjects must be reported immediately, but not later than 10 days following the event. This should be reported to the IRB Office via the "Adverse Effect Report Form".
- If approved, the maximum period of approval is limited to twelve months.

Projects that exceed this period must submit an application for renewal or continuation.
PROTOCOL NUMBER: 12121301
PROJECT TITLE: Life Role Salience and Career Decision-Making Difficulty
PROJECT TYPE: New Project
RESEARCHER(S): Emily A. Schedin
COLLEGE/DIVISION: College of Education & Psychology
DEPARTMENT: Counseling Psychology
FUNDING AGENCY/SPONSOR: N/A
IRB COMMITTEE ACTION: Expedited Review Approval
PERIOD OF APPROVAL: 12/13/2012 to 12/12/2013

Lawrence A. Hosman, Ph.D.
Institutional Review Board

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