

RGC Ref. No.: <u>UGC/FDS15/H06/18</u> (please insert ref. above)
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**RESEARCH GRANTS COUNCIL  
COMPETITIVE RESEARCH FUNDING SCHEMES FOR  
THE LOCAL SELF-FINANCING DEGREE SECTOR**

**FACULTY DEVELOPMENT SCHEME (FDS)**

**Completion Report**  
(for completed projects only)

<p><b><u>Submission Deadlines:</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Auditor's report with unspent balance, if any: within <b>six</b> months of the approved project completion date.</li> <li>2. Completion report: within <b>12</b> months of the approved project completion date.</li> </ol>
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**Part A: The Project and Investigator(s)**

**1. Project Title**

Vocational Identity, Career Development and Graduate Adjustment: A longitudinal study of sub-degree students in Hong Kong

**2. Investigator(s) and Academic Department(s) / Unit(s) Involved**

Research Team	Name / Post	Unit / Department / Institution
Principal Investigator	Dr. CHEUNG Raysen Wai-leung / Associate Professor	Department of Counselling & Psychology, Hong Kong Shue Yan University
Co-Investigator(s)	Professor CHUI Wing-hong / Professor	Department of Applied Social Sciences, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University
Co-Investigator(s)	Dr. CHEUNG Chau-kiu / Associate Professor	Department of Social and Behavioural Sciences, City University of Hong Kong
Others	N/A	N/A

**3. Project Duration**

	Original	Revised	Date of RGC / Institution Approval (must be quoted)
Project Start Date	1/1/2019	1/7/2019	24/10/2018

Project Completion Date	31/12/2020	30/6/2021 31/12/2021	24/10/2018 31/3/2021
Duration ( <i>in month</i> )	24	30	31/3/2021
Deadline for Submission of Completion Report	31/12/2021	30/6/2022 31/12/2022	24/10/2018 31/3/2021

## **Part B: The Final Report**

### **5. Project Objectives**

#### 5.1 Objectives as per original application

1. *Test and validate the vocational identity status assessment of sub-degree students in the Hong Kong context*
2. *Test a model of the implications of vocational identity status on sub-degree students' career development during their transition from school to work*
3. *Identify different vocational identity groups, and advise career development services accordingly*
4. *Inform education practice and policy regarding sub-degree students' career development and graduate adjustment*

#### 5.2 Revised objectives

Date of approval from the RGC: N/A

Reasons for the change: N/A

- 1.
- 2.
3. ....

### 5.3 Realisation of the objectives

*(Maximum 1 page; please state how and to what extent the project objectives have been achieved; give reasons for under-achievements and outline attempts to overcome problems, if any)*

A quantitative, three-wave longitudinal study was conducted to validate the Vocational Identity Status Assessment (VISA; Porfeli et al., 2011), and test a model of the temporal impact of vocational identity processes and statuses in the Hong Kong context. Sub-degree students first responded to survey in the winter semester in 2019 (wave 1) and again in the Spring semester in 2020 (wave 2), and finally in early 2021 upon graduation (wave 3).

From the data we obtained from 578 final year students in wave 1, we found the assessment of VISA have satisfactory psychometric properties for use in the Hong Kong context. Six vocational identity statuses were empirically derived through the cluster analysis method, and they significantly distinguished variables of wellbeing, career development as perceived academic performance. Objective 1 to test validate VISA in the Hong Kong context was achieved. From a longitudinal sample from 360 students participating in the first two waves, we found correlations between vocational identity processes and career adaptability as well as perceived employability. Vocational identity statuses significantly predicted subsequent levels of career adaptability and perceived employability. From a longitudinal sample of 229 students participating in three waves, we established the impact of prior vocational identity processes on subsequent career growth, agency hope and study satisfaction upon graduation. Our data are supportive of the model on the temporal effect of vocational identity processes on subsequent self-perceived employability and career adaptability near graduation, and then on academic and career adjustment upon graduation. Objective 2 was satisfactorily achieved.

From the first two waves of study, we have demonstrated identify statuses differ, with more advanced status like achievements are related to higher levels of wellbeing and career development, while less advanced status like diffusion to lower. Moreover, to promote service development in relation to vocational identity status assessment, we conducted a focus group study after wave 2. We conducted 12 focus group sessions (2 sessions for participants in each status identified) to explore the career experience and service needs of individuals in respective vocational identity status groups. Integrating quantitative and qualitative results, we are in a good position to advise on how to tailor developmentally appropriate interventions. Objective 3 was achieved.

Research results were disseminated among different stakeholders to inform professional practice and public policy. Conference paper presentations were conducted in conferences of the Federation of Self-Financing Institutions of Hong Kong which represents the local educational sector, in international career guidance and counselling conferences for career practitioners, as well as in the 9th Cross-Strait Forum on Psychological Guidance and Counseling at Universities at Taiwan, Hong Kong Macau and Mainland China in 2022 to the regional community of scholars and practitioners in guidance and counselling for university students. Key findings were also disseminated directly to Education Bureau, Labor and Welfare Bureau of Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Student Services Association (HKSSA), and the Federation for Self-financing Tertiary Education (FSTE). Objective 4 was achieved.

The longitudinal data collection of this project spread from 2019, during end of social unrest, to 2021. During social unrest and COVID outbreak. universities were closed and online classes were conducted. Students experienced more uncertainties as compared to a usual time. Data collection was extended, and sample size was adjusted as reported in the interim report. The first and second waves of the survey started around October 2019 and March 2020, respectively. In both waves, data collection was extended till the end of the semester. Subsequently, with persistent efforts, the challenges were overcome, and we managed to collect longitudinal data required to complete the project.

## 5.4 Summary of objectives addressed to date

<b>Objectives</b> <i>(as per 5.1/5.2 above)</i>	<b>Addressed</b> <i>(please tick)</i>	<b>Percentage Achieved</b> <i>(please estimate)</i>
1. Test and validate the vocational identity status assessment of sub-degree students in the Hong Kong context	<p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <p>A sample of 578 obtained at wave 1, which is sufficient and appropriate for the validation of the VISA assessment. The validity and reliability of the assessment obtained were supported. Confirmatory factor analysis conducted for VISA scales, and cluster analysis applied to identify the vocational identity statuses. We have presented results in a Conference and submitted research journal on this.</p>	100%
2. Test a model of the implications of vocational identity status on sub-degree students' career development during their transition from school to work	<p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <p>With the longitudinal data collected at wave 1 and wave 2, we established the impact of vocational identity on subsequent perceived employability and career adaptability. To further test the model related to students' graduate transition, we completed wave 3 to trace the impact of vocational identity on graduate transition of students in terms of career growth, perceived employability and satisfaction in job or study. Results are supportive of the claims.</p>	100%
3. Identify different	<p style="text-align: center;">✓</p>	100%

<p>vocational identity groups, and advise career development services accordingly</p>	<p>This objective is addressed by our mixed methods design. With quantitative study we first identify the different vocational identity status groups. Then a focus groups study can be conducted to understand how career development services can be tailored to specific status groups. We completed the quantitative part and then proceeded to the focus group study in 2020.</p> <p>We conducted 12 focus group sessions (2 sessions for participants in each status identified) to explore the career experience and service needs of individuals in respective different vocational identity status groups.</p>	
<p>4. Inform education practice and policy regarding sub-degree students' career development and graduate adjustment</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <p>As the research proceeded, we have liaised with education administrator and student affairs professionals to support our data collected. They expressed keen interest in our research results. We disseminate results in conferences and publications to inform education practice and policy regarding sub-degree students' career development and graduate adjustment. Findings are disseminated to the educational sector, professional associations and related Government Bureaus as further detailed in this report.</p>	<p>100%</p>

## 6. Research Outcome

### 6.1 Major findings and research outcome

*(Maximum 1 page; please make reference to Part C where necessary)*

First of all, from the data we obtained from 578 final year students, we found the assessment of Vocational Identity Status Assessment (VISA; Porfeli et al., 2011) has satisfactory psychometric properties. The structure of vocational identity processes with dimensions of commitment, exploration, and reconsideration was supported by confirmatory factor analysis. Six vocational identity statuses were empirically derived through the cluster analysis method, and they significantly distinguished variables of wellbeing, career development as perceived academic performance. Six statuses are achievement (11%), moratorium and searching moratorium (34%), undifferentiated (29%), foreclosure (12%) and diffusion (14%). Results of reliability and validity of the assessment were detailed in a journal paper under review by the Journal of Career Assessment (<https://journals.sagepub.com/description/JCA>).

Secondly, from a longitudinal sample from 360 students participating in the first two waves, we found vocational identity impacted on their subsequent career adaptability as well as perceived employability. Accordingly, we demonstrated that vocational identity statuses identified among students differentiated their levels of career adaptability significantly in the following semester in a conference paper presentation in the National Career Development Conference of the United States in 2021. Moreover, we highlighted that the commitment dimension of vocational identity predicted subsequent career adaptability and perceived employability in a conference paper in International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance International Conference in 2021.

Thirdly, from a longitudinal sample of 229 students participating in three waves, we established the impact of prior vocational identity processes on subsequent graduate adjustment. From hierarchical multiple regressions, we found the dimensions of vocational identity at wave 1 significantly explained variance of hope as positive resource at wave 3 and presented the result at the Federation for Self-financing Tertiary Education (FSTE) Conference in 2022. Moreover, from hierarchical multiple regressions, we found the commitment dimensions of vocational identity at wave 2 significantly predicted career growth, life satisfaction and perceived employed at wave 3, exploration dimension at wave 2 predictive of perceived employability at wave 3, while the process of career self-doubt negatively related life satisfaction at Time 3. Related findings were presented in the 9th Cross-Strait Forum on Psychological Guidance and Counseling at Universities at Taiwan, Hong Kong Macau and Mainland China in 2022.

Fourthly, to promote service development in relation to vocational identity status assessment, we completed a focus group study on the career experience of different vocational identity groups. From quantitative data, we understand the status groups differ in their levels of psychological adjustment and career development. Integrating quantitative and qualitative results, we have proposed to present the service needs of different groups in a conference paper at the 2023 Asia Pacific Career Development Association Conference.

Besides, we further explore vocational identity in the educational context. We found vocational identity, as operationalized by Holland's vocational identity scale, contributed more to perceived employability as compared to commitment to educational institutions. It was also found positively related to subsequent well-being and negatively to anxiety and depressive symptoms. Results are respectively detailed in a journal paper in the Australian Journal of Career Development (<https://journals.sagepub.com/description/ACD>) and a presentation at the FSTE Conference in 2020.

## 6.2 Potential for further development of the research and the proposed course of action (Maximum half a page)

With the Vocation Identity Status Assessment validated in Hong Kong, there will be further utilization in research, practice and assessment. First of all, it can be utilized as pre-and-cost assessment for career guidance and intervention, assessing how far interventions change vocational identity in term of exploration, commitment and reconsideration. Moreover, further studies may apply this assessment to other student populations at different levels and specializations of study. The VISA has attracted research interest in South China as well. There is room to conduct comparison study between students in Hong Kong and other cities in the Greater Bay Area by comparing their vocational identity development to inform theory and practice.

We propose to utilize VISA to contact a pilot study on vocational identity of student in undergraduate and postgraduate counselling programs at Hong Kong Shue Yan University. Moreover, with the support of the Co-operative Education Centre, Faculty of Engineering of City University of Hong Kong, we plan to conduct a pre-and-post assessment study next year among engineering undergraduate student participated into work internships assessing their changes in vocational identity utilizing our VISA assessment. On the other hand, we have liaised and discussed with Dr Jiahong Zhang of Sun Yet-Sen University (Shenzhen Campus), who previously conducted a study a validation study of VISA assessment in South China. We shall collaborate to develop a research proposal on a comparison study of vocational identity and career mobility between undergraduate students in Hong Kong and Shenzhen. This proposed study has potential manpower policy impact, and we consider the Public Policy Research Funding Scheme of Policy Innovation and Co-ordination Office of the Hong Kong Government for funding application.

## 7. Layman's Summary

*(Describe in layman's language the nature, significance and value of the research project, in no more than 200 words)*

A longitudinal study was conducted to validate the Vocational Identity Status Assessment (VISA; Porfeli et al., 2011), and test the impact of vocational identity on subsequent career development and graduate adjustment among 578 final years sub-degrees in Hong Kong. Satisfactory psychometric properties were obtained for applying it in the Hong Kong context. A profile of vocational status groups with varying levels of career exploration, commitment and reconsideration was found. We also demonstrated a positive impact of vocational identity on subsequent career adaptability and perceived employability, as well as adjustment upon graduation. The validated assessment in this study will facilitate further studies among college students and emerging adults in career transition. It can also be utilized as pre-and-cost assessment for career guidance and intervention, assessing how far interventions change vocational identity. Moreover, developmentally appropriate career counseling practices can be designed in collaboration with practitioners and adopted in training and development of career professionals.

**Part C: Research Output****8. Peer-Reviewed Journal Publication(s) Arising Directly From This Research Project**

*(Please attach a copy of the publication and/or the letter of acceptance if not yet submitted in the previous progress report(s). All listed publications must acknowledge RGC's funding support by quoting the specific grant reference.)*

The Latest Status of Publications				Author(s) (denote the corresponding author with an asterisk*)	Title and Journal / Book (with the volume, pages and other necessary publishing details specified)	Submitted to RGC (indicate the year ending of the relevant progress report)	Attached to this Report (Yes or No)	Acknowledged the Support of RGC (Yes or No)	Accessible from the Institutional Repository (Yes or No)
Year of Publication	Year of Acceptance (For paper accepted but not yet published)	Under Review	Under Preparation (optional)						
N/A	N/A	2022	N/A	Raysen Cheung, *Qiuping Jin, Kenny Yeung, Hin Long Lau, Wing Hong Chui	Vocational Identity Statuses Among Sub-Degree Students in Hong Kong: Pattern Identification and Relationship to Academic Performance, Journal of Career Assessment	N/A	Yes (Attachment 1)	Yes	No
N/A	N/A	2022	N/A	CHEUNG Chau-kiu *CHEUNG Wai Leung, Raysen Wing Hong Chui	Employability, Vocational Identity, and Commitment to the Education Institution among Sub-degree Students in Hong Kong, Australian Journal of Career Development	N/A	Yes (Attachment 2)	Yes	No

**9. Recognized International Conference(s) In Which Paper(s) Related To This Research Project Was / Were Delivered**

*(Please attach a copy of each conference abstract)*

Month / Year / Place	Title	Conference Name	Submitted to RGC (indicate the year ending of the relevant progress report)	Attached to this Report (Yes or No)	Acknowledged the Support of RGC (Yes or No)	Accessible from the Institutional Repository (Yes or No)
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December 2020 Online Hong Kong	Vocational Identity, Career Support and Subsequent Psychological Adjustment among Sub-Degree Students in Hong Kong.	Federation for Self-financing Tertiary Education FSTE Conference: Emotional and Mental Wellbeing for Whole Person Development (online Conference)	N/A	Yes (Attachment 3)	Yes	No
June 2021 Virtual Conference By NCDA USA	Vocational Identity and Career Development: A Longitudinal Study of Sub-Degree Students in Hong Kong.	NCDA Global Career Development Conference – virtual session, National Career Development Association, USA.	N/A	Yes (Attachment 4)	Yes	No
October 2021 Online from Riga, Latvia	The mediation of life satisfaction between career commitment and subsequent employment readiness.	The 44 <sup>th</sup> International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance International Conference October 2021. (Online)	N/A	Yes (Attachment 5)	Yes	No
December 2021 Online from Singapore	Assessing vocational identity status and its relationship with psychological well-being among tertiary students in Hong Kong.	Singapore Conference on Applied Psychology. (Online), Singapore.	N/A	Yes (Attachment 6)	Yes	Yes
June 2022 Hong Kong	The impact of vocational identity development on hope among sub-degree graduates: A longitudinal study.	FSTE Conference 2022: Cultivating Well-being and Whole Person Development, Federation for Self-financing Tertiary Education, Hong Kong	N/A	Yes (Attachment 7)	Yes	Yes
July 2022 Online Hong Kong	職業身份認同歷程對其畢業後感知就業能力、職涯成長、及生活滿意度的影響:香港大專生的縱向研究。	第九屆海峽兩岸暨港澳地區高校心理輔導與諮詢高峰論壇 29/7/2022。(線上)	N/A	Yes (Attachment 8)	Yes	Yes

Accepted	Assessing career needs of different vocational identity status groups of sub-degree students	New Look at Careers in a Rapidly Changing World 2023 APCDA Conference May 16 – 26, 2023	N/A	Yes (Attachment 9)	Yes	No
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#### 10. Whether Research Experience And New Knowledge Has Been Transferred / Has Contributed To Teaching And Learning

*(Please elaborate)*

To inform the implications of our findings to the tertiary education sector in Hong Kong, two conference paper were presented in the conferences of Tertiary educational sector two conferences of The Federation for Self-financing Tertiary Education (FSTE), which aims to advance the quality, promote collaboration and share good practices in the self-financing tertiary education sector in Hong Kong. The conferences were attended by experts and practitioners in higher education and social services in this sector.

To inform implications of our findings among career professionals, conference papers were presented conferences organized by leading and representative professional associations which advance professional standards and practices in career guidance and counseling, namely the International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance (<https://iaevg.com/>), the National Career Development Association in the United States (<https://www.ncda.org>). We are also accepted to present in the 2023 Conference of the Asia Pacific Career Development Association (<https://apcda.wildapricot.org>).

To disseminate our findings to stimulate interests and discussion regionally, we presented in the 9<sup>th</sup> Cross-strait Four Regions Psychological Guidance and Counselling Summit. Our presentation was attended by over 30 scholars, practitioners, and administrators in the field of counseling and psychological counseling in mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Macau.

Transferred knowledge and research experience of this project in sharing session organized by the Hong Kong Professional Counseling Association (<https://www.hkpca.org.hk>), with over 100 participants attended in June 2022. Participants were professionals, including counsellors, social workers and other career practitioners, as well as counselling and social work students. (Attachment 10)

Delivered a Train-the-trainer session on vocational identity and psychological adjustment: Relations and Service Implication as invited by the School of Continuing and Professional Education of City University of Hong Kong and attended by a group of student affairs professionals and administrators in March 2021. In response to the PI's presentation, the group reflected on how the student affairs department in tertiary institutions may facilitate vocational identity of students early in their first year of study, how to integrate student services to promote vocational identity development in tertiary, as well as the different strategies to help the career development in general degrees programs as compared to vocation-oriented programs. (Attachment 11)

Contributed to teaching and learning of teaching in the undergraduate course of COUN450 Career & Employment Counselling and CP509 Clinical Seminar: Vocational Psychology and Counselling. Research finding and related career intervention were introduced in class to illustrate implications and local application of the model of vocational identity, which enhanced student learning and motivation.

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Disseminate research results with professionals and administrators of Student Affairs Office of the College of Professional and Continuing Education, the Hong Kong Polytechnic University.

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A postgraduate student applied the validated Chinese measure of Vocational Identity Status Assessment in this project in her master dissertation entitled “Mindfulness on Vocational Identity: The mediation role of Career Decision-making Difficulties” and submitted dissertation for her degree of Master of Social Sciences in Counselling Psychology at Hong Kong Shue Yan University.

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Published an article entitled “Dr. Raysen Cheung’s Interim Findings on Vocational Identity and Well-being of Sub-degree Programmes Students” at HKSYU newsletter of Hong Kong Shue Yan University to enhance awareness of the study.

<https://newsletter.hksyu.edu/en/dr-raysen-cheungs-interim-findings-on-vocational-identity-and-well-being-of-sub-degree-programmes-students/>

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Key findings were also disseminated directly to Education Bureau, Labor and Welfare Bureau of Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Student Services Association (HKSSA), and the Federation for Self-financing Tertiary Education (FSTE).

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## 11. Student(s) Trained

*(Please attach a copy of the title page of the thesis)*

Name	Degree Registered for	Date of Registration	Date of Thesis Submission / Graduation
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

## 12. Other Impact

*(e.g. award of patents or prizes, collaboration with other research institutions, technology transfer, teaching enhancement, etc.)*

We have validated a Chinese version of the Vocation Identity Status Assessment (VISA) that can be applied in research, assessment and practice for researchers and practitioners to use in the Hong Kong context.

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We have fostered collaboration with Student Affairs Office of the College of Professional and Continuing Education, the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, which has supported data collection of this project. We have also worked with SCOPE, City University of Hong Kong in disseminating research results. We shall build on the established working relationship for future collaboration on research and professional practice.

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The PI is Director of the Student Learning and Development Laboratory at Hong Kong Shue

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Yan University. The Laboratory will play an instrumental role in further studies in relation to this project and innovating career counselling practice to foster vocational identity development.

One of the co-authors of research papers of this project is Dr Qiuping Jin from Renmin University in Beijing. She will further utilize the VISA assessment in longitudinal studies to understand the impact of vocational identity among different student populations in Mainland China in longer terms and upon graduation. Therefore, in future, there will be additional collaboration opportunities between Dr Jin and the investigators of the current project.

### 13. Statistics on Research Outputs

	Peer-reviewed Journal Publications	Conference Papers	Scholarly Books, Monographs and Chapters	Patents Awarded	Other Research Outputs (please specify)	
<b>No. of outputs arising directly from this research project</b>	2 under review	7	N/A	N/A	Type	No.
					Article in HKSYU Newsletter Nov and Dec 2021 Combined Issue	1

### 14. Public Access Of Completion Report

*(Please specify the information, if any, that cannot be provided for public access and give the reasons.)*

Information that Cannot Be Provided for Public Access	Reasons
N/A	N/A