

Abstract

This study investigated the determinants of career choices among Hong Kong college women. Western research has emphasized internal/psychological qualities and neglected the effect that perceived external/sociological barriers may have particularly in non-Western cultures. Seventy-six Chinese female undergraduates were surveyed and classified in terms of their self-reported career intentions (masculine, neutral, and feminine). Questionnaires were administered to measure their conformity to gender roles, perceived career barriers, and gender role attributes. A mediation model was established for career intentions. Female-role conformity was the most powerful explaining variable. Furthermore, conformity mediated the effects of perceived external barriers and gender role attributes. Findings highlight the importance of perceived external barriers in leading to traditional feminine occupational interests among young Chinese women. Possible explanations and implications for further studies are discussed.