

Abstract of thesis entitled:

“Parental Academic Socialization Goals and the Development of Children”

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It is well accepted that parenting influences the development of children. As educational and academic success are highly valued in Chinese culture, two studies were conducted to examine the influence of parenting in relation to academic socialization on children's development. One hundred and forty one Hong Kong Chinese grade six students and their mothers participated in both studies. There were four major objectives of the present research. According to the contextual model of Darling and Steinberg (1993), parenting is a function of parental socialization goals, styles and practices. In Study 1, a new and comprehensive measure of parental academic socialization goals was developed by incorporating past literature and conducting interviews with parents. The new measures were then administered to primary six students and their parents. Factorial validity and reliability of the measure were satisfactory. The two factors of the scale were called “failing goals” and “fulfilling goals” respectively. Study 2 further investigated the influence of perceived parental academic goals on children's academic development. Children's academic achievement and test anxiety were regressed onto children's perceived parental academic socialization goals. It was found that the “failing goals” dimensions positively explained academic achievement and test anxiety. In addition, parental

socialization goals explained parenting styles and practices (Darling & Steinberg, 1993). Values and beliefs of parents, which define their socialization goals, could come from their perceived societal norms. Therefore, perceived societal norms for academic socialization goals were measured by the aggregation of mothers' estimations of parental goals held by other mothers in society. The results suggested that perceived societal norms positively explained child perceived parenting styles. Finally, based on Darling and Steinberg's contextual model and other past literature, a model which defined parental socialization goals, styles and practices as three separate but related constructs, was developed. Its validity and joint effect on academic achievement was verified using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM).