ABSTRACT

DISSERTATION: U.S. Young Adults’ Future Perceptions: Influence of Family Involvement and Gender

STUDENT: Yuri Choi

DEGREE: Doctor of Philosophy

COLLEGE: College of Health

DATE: December 2016

PAGES: 104

Future perceptions include an individual’s ambitions, beliefs, and views about future events in different life domains, reflecting the person’s future goals, important future life roles, and societal institutions. Due to the importance of understanding such future perceptions for career education and counseling, the present study examined U.S. young adults’ perceptions of future life roles and time horizon. Fifty-six U.S. male and female college students completed an online survey including demographic items and semi-structured questions regarding future perceptions. Results of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) revealed eleven major themes: (a) Work, (b) Partnership, (c) Parenthood, (d) Location, (e) Values, (f) Economic standard of living, (g) Education, (h) Family of origin, (i) Non-romantic companionship, (j) Future perception of others, and (k) Emotions. Results suggested that participants’ gender and their family’s involvement in their career decision-making influenced how they envisioned their future life roles in relation to several life domains. Furthermore, results indicated the majority of the students envisioned themselves between five to ten years into the future (69.6%). A 2 x 3 between-subjects ANOVA, however, revealed no significant differences in time horizon among U.S. young adults based on their family’s involvement in their career decision-making and gender. In addition, the findings
revealed no significant impact involving the interaction between these two variables on perceptions of U.S. young adults’ future life roles and time horizon. However, several of the major themes (Education; Partnership; Parenthood; Location) discovered varied in the frequency with which they were mentioned as a function of students’ gender and how involved their family was in their career decision-making (extremely involved, somewhat involved, and not at all involved). Limitations of the current study and implications for theory, research, and practice are discussed.

*Keywords*: future perceptions, time horizon, family involvement in career decision-making, gender, U.S. young men and women