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Career Anchors, National Culture and Leave Intent of MIS Professionals in Taiwan

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Abstract

This study focuses on the career anchors of MIS professionals and adopts the well-established career theory, Schein’s Career Anchors, as the fundamental theory in this study. The present paper attempts to investigate the relationship between career anchors and leave intent of MIS professionals in Taiwan. The study adds the cultural construct, Chinese Relationalism, into its research model, in order to comprehend the role of Chinese Relationalism in the context of the career anchor model.

Three career anchors: technical competence, autonomy, and entrepreneurship, have direct (negative or positive) and significant impacts on the intents of MIS professionals to leave their employment. This study establishes that Chinese Relationalism impacts on the technical competence, geographical security, identity, lifestyle, and various career anchors of MIS professionals and also moderates the relationships between autonomy, entrepreneurship and the leave intent of MIS professionals in Taiwan.

Academically, this study proposes a research model based upon career anchors and intent to leave, and adds Chinese Relationalism into this model. In addition, it develops a qualified reliability and validity questionnaire. Practically, the results of this study could provide enterprises with a useful point of reference for employing and retaining MIS professionals.

Keywords: Career Anchor, Intent to Leave, MIS Professionals, Chinese Relationalism
1. INTRODUCTION

A continuing challenge in managing MIS professionals is the high turnover rate in the profession. Human resource is a very important asset of an organization, and includes the staff’s capability to contribute to the company, staff training provided by company, and the implicit agreement between staff and company. Ever since statistics have been kept, the turnover of MIS professionals has been problematic for organizations. Annual turnover in the IS field ranged between 15% and 20% during the 1960s and the early 1970s. In the late 1970s, the turnover ran to as high as 28% annually and to 20% in the early 1980s. By the 1990s, the turnover rate had reached 25% to 33% annually. Many Fortune 500 firms have a 25% to 35% turnover rate among their MIS professionals (Hayes 1998). The high turnover rate among MIS professionals reached nearly 20 percent in 1987 (Connolly 1988), about twice the average for business managers and professionals (Guimaraes & Igbaria 1992, Lucas 1989). Recently, the annual turnover rate of MIS professionals has been 20% (Witaker 1999), the rate from April 1998 through March 2001 being considerably higher than other professional workers (Campione et al. 2002, Thatcher et al. 2002-3). In short, in the 21st century, MIS professionals’ turnover remains a chronic problem (Adams et al. 2006, Mobely et al. 1979).

Many scholars have found a close relationship between national culture and organization, with culture being a potential variable to explain the career orientation construct (Gerpott 1988, Joseph et al. 2007, Wong 2007). Schein (1986, 1984), Derr and Laurent (1987) support the idea that there should be more investigation into MIS professionals’ career orientations from the perspectives of different national cultures. However, to date, these perspectives have remained ignored, leading to a dearth of research in this field. As national culture is another important factor influencing the turnover of MIS professionals (Gerpott 1988, Joseph et al. 2007, Wong 2007), in order to establish whether national culture has a significant impact on career anchor and Taiwanese MIS professionals’ intent to leave, this study incorporates the national culture dimension (Chinese Relationalism) into the research model.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Intent to Leave

According to Fishbein and Ajzen (1975, p. 369), the best indicator for forecasting behavior is intention results in behavior. In light of this, Mobley et al. (1978, 1979) added the conception of intention into the model of employee turnover, suggesting that there should be a mediating variable between job satisfaction and turnover, and that intention is the best way to measure the voluntary turnover of employees. Though intent to leave might not measure precisely the turnover behavior, the concept of intent to leave has already been adopted in many scholarly fields as the best indicator for forecasting turnover behavior (Krau 1981, Mobley et al. 1979).
2.2 Career Anchors and Research Hypotheses

Career anchor is career orientation; it is a self-concept of career that refers to the combination of an individual’s needs, attitudes, values, and talents in the process of career development (Schein 1978). It is shaped by long-term testing and accumulated experience, in terms of the aspects of self-development, learning, family, and work. DeLong (1982) adopted the five career anchors of Schein (1978) as his basic model, and chose male graduate students of Purdue University as his focus of investigation. DeLong (1982) suggested that three more career anchors: service, variety and identity, should be added in the career anchor model. When investigating these eight career anchors, a number of scholars found that security embraces different meanings. As a consequence, they suggested that the security anchor should be separated into organizational stability and geographical security (Crepeau et al. 1992, Igbaria & Baroudi 1993). Meanwhile, Chang (2005) highlighted the importance of “learning motivation” (Chang 2005) as a career anchor, referring to the extent to which companies provide learning opportunities for MIS professionals.

The majority of extant research related to career anchors has adopted the Career Orientations Inventory, originally proposed by Schein (1978), adjusted by DeLong (1982) (Crook & Crepeau 1997, Jiang et al. 2001, Sumner & Yager 2004) and measured by Igbaria and Baroudi (1993) (Igbaria et al. 1999, Wynne et al. 2002). To date, no study has been based upon a survey combining more than two kind of careers. Barooudi (1988), Crepeau (1992), Sumner and Yager (2004) suggested that MIS professionals possess a variety of career anchors, and that, as a consequence, there should be more than nine career anchors in the career anchor model. For this reason, the present study attempts to develop a career anchor survey which is appropriate for MIS professionals today. Thus, on the basis of the above review of literature (Chang 2005, Crepeau et al. 1992, DeLong 1982, Igbaria & Baroudi 1993, Schein 1978), the following thirteen career anchors are proposed:

1. **Managerial Competence**: the pursuit of a higher managerial level and greater responsibility for policy making.
2. **Technical Competence**: focusing primarily on the exercise of technical expertise.
3. **Organizational Stability**: seeking loyalty, and tenure security.
4. **Geographic Security**: linking oneself to a particular area on a long-term basis.
5. **Autonomy**: a situation in which the individual is free from organizational constraints and control.
6. **Service**: dedication to helping other people and contributing to doctrines.
7. **Entrepreneurship**: preference for establishing a new business or new product independently of others.
8. **Pure Challenge**: preference for conquering difficult tasks or problems and for overwhelming competitors.
9. **Lifestyle**: concern for integration of individual, family and career.
10. **Identity**: Strong desire for status and prestige pertaining to certain organizations.
11. **Variety**: Desire to work on a number of different tasks.
12. **Creativity**: the building of self-affirmation through creation.
13. **Learning Motivation**: an incentive which motivates an individual to achieve a specific goal, to participate in a specific action, to satisfy one’s knowledge growth, and then to initiate learning behavior.

According to the results of the Psychological Contracts study, the interactions of career stages, career
anchors, and preferred duration of employment have significant effects on employees' intent to leave (Chang 2005, Hsu et al. 2003, Ferratt & Agarwal 2000, Wynne et al. 2002). Thus, the $H_1$ hypothesis is stated as follows:

$H_1$: The career anchors of MIS professionals have a direct effect on their intent to leave.

As thirteen career anchors have been defined, so thirteen sub-corollaries of $H_1$, $H_{1-13}$, are stated.

Igbaria et al. (1995), Igbaria and McCloskey (1996) hypothesized that culture has an impact on technical competence, managerial competence, work safety (organizational stability), geographical security, autonomy, service, entrepreneurship, pure challenge, and lifestyle in their comparison study of MIS professionals in South Africa, Taiwan, and America. Moreover, Marshall and Bonner (2003) found that culture has a significant impact on entrepreneurship, technical competence, organizational stability, and lifestyle (Marshall & Bonner 2003). Likewise, Joseph et al. (2007) developed a contextual turnover model for information technology professionals, believing national culture to be another important factor. In light of this, the present study suggests that in order to understand the relationship between career anchor and Taiwanese MIS professionals' intent to leave, it is necessary to view the whole structure from the national cultural dimension. As a preamble to this view, the following introduction to Chinese Relationalism (Chinese guanxi) is provided.

2.3 Chinese Relationalism

Ho (1995) pointed out that Chinese culture has a relational orientation, a concept that describes ordinary behavior in Chinese culture, where the self is not an independent entity. For this reason, the transfer of the individualism characteristic of Western culture to the Chinese relationalist culture will cause conflict. In Chinese culture, individuals' social behavior depends on their social relationship (Jacobs 1979). The Chinese tend to apply different rules of social exchange when dealing with people of different relations. Due to the deep impact of guanxi on Chinese culture, an individual's social relation is a very important source of power. One's power is determined by the extent of control exercised by an individual over resources and his/her particular relationship network. The more powerful network an individual has, the greater the advantages he/she will enjoy (Hwang 1987).

Hwang (1987) developed the conceptual framework of Face and Favor Theory, based on the social exchange theory, for fathoming the dynamic relationships among these concepts. He divided interpersonal relationships into two parts: (1) The expressive component: in order to satisfy affective feelings, one will manipulate others to procure some desired material resource from family, close friends and other congenial groups. They can also generate an individual's feelings of affection, warmth, safety, and attachment. (2) The instrumental component: human beings have strong desires to enlist help from outside resources; thus, they will try very hard to manipulate others to attain their personal goals. These two components are always mixed.

Adopting this framework, Face and Favor Theory subdivides relationships further into three parts, represented by a dotted line and a solid line, to show the degrees of permeability between the
psychological boundaries used by a Chinese:  (1) **Expressive ties**: this is generally a relatively permanent and stable social relationship within families. (2) **Mixed ties**: this kind of relationship, which has been termed a particularistic tie, occurs mainly among relatives, neighbors, classmates, colleagues, teachers and students who share a common area. The members of mixed tie networks know each other and keep a certain expressive component in their relationship, but it is never so strong that all participants in this tie are able to express their authentic behavior as freely as the members in the expressive tie. (3) **Instrumental ties**: an individual must establish instrumental ties with other people outside his family to attain his material goals. The dotted line means that it is easier for a person of instrumental tie to become one of mixed tie by *la guanxi* (seeking relation).

In view of this, *guanxi* in Chinese culture is based on factors that promote shared social experience between and among individuals (Chiao 1982, King 1991). Moreover, the crucial difference is that these norms of reciprocity are much more socially situated than they are in the Western context (Chung & Hamilton 2001). On the other hand, even in modern contexts, many Chinese have lived in encapsulated communities that are hierarchically organized, with major economic and other resources controlled by a few power figures who could arbitrarily allocate resources (Hwang 1987). For this reason, the present study focuses on the mixed tie of *Face and Favor Theory* to understand the extent to which Chinese Relationalism has an effect on the leave intent of MIS professionals. This construct is also analyzed to establish the extent to which it has an effect on the career anchor direction of MIS professionals.

In studies by Igbaria et al. (1995), Igbaria and McCloskey (1996), and Marshall and Bonner (2003), it has been asserted that the culture construct has a significant effect on the career anchor of MIS professionals. The present study defines Chinese Relationalism in the following way: “the resource allocator always considers the relation with the petitioner before distributing the resource, which means Chinese always behave as the consequence of consideration of their relations with others.” Thus, the study sets out to understand the way in which Chinese Relationalism impacts on MIS professionals in Chinese cultural society. On the basis of the review of literature discussed above, this study proposes \( H_2 \) stated as follows:

\[ \text{H}_2: \text{Chinese relationalism has a direct effect on the career anchors of MIS professionals.} \]

Again, due to the identification of thirteen career anchors, there are thirteen sub-corollaries of \( H_2 \), \( H_{2-1} \sim H_{2-13} \).

According to the *Face and Favor Theory* (Hwang 1987), the resource allocator always considers the relation with the petitioner before distributing resources, meaning that the Chinese always behave as the result of considering their relations with others. Therefore, this study speculates that Chinese Relationalism may influence the intent of Taiwanese MIS professionals to leave. In light of the review of literature discussed above, the study proposes \( H_3 \):  

\[ \text{H}_3: \text{The Chinese Relationalism of MIS professionals has a direct effect on their intent to leave.} \]
Gerpott et al. (1988) argue that national culture may have a moderate impact on the relationship between the career anchor of MIS professionals in West Germany, Britain, and USA and their intent to leave. For this reason, the present study attempts to understand the extent to which MIS professionals in Taiwan will decide to retain a current employment position under the pressure of interpersonal relationships. To this end, the study proposes $H_4$ stated as follows:

$H_4$ : Chinese Relationalism has a moderate impact on the relationship between career anchors of MIS professional and their intent to leave.

Once again, as thirteen career anchors have been defined, thirteen sub-corollaries of $H_4$, $H_{41-13}$, are stated.

Finally, this study proposes the research model (see Figure 1) on the basis of the review of literature provided above to understand the interactions among the career anchors of MIS professionals, Chinese Relationlism, and intent to leave.

![Figure 1: Research Model](image)

3. Research Method

3.1 Research Design

The questionnaire consisted of the 13 kinds of career anchor, Chinese Relationalism and intent to leave construct (see Appendix). To ensure the validity of the questionnaire, it was developed in two stages:

1. **First stage:** 57 MIS professionals were selected as our subjects. In this pilot test, the data pertaining to factor and reliability analysis were used and some items were deleted to satisfy the requirements of validity and reliability. The questionnaire included:
   - (A) Thirty-five items relating to career anchor (DeLong 1982, Igbaria & Baroudi 1993);
   - (B) Four items relating to the learning motivation of career anchors developed by this study;
   - (C) Three items pertaining to intent to leave (Mobley et al. 1978); and
   - (D) Four items relating to Chinese Relationalism developed by the present study.

2. **Second stage:** 770 MIS professionals were selected as our subjects, from whom research data was collected. This study use a Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 = completely disagree to 7 = completely agree, to express the opinion of each respondent.
3.2 Sampling

In order to improve the response rate, researchers randomly telephoned the senior manager and MIS department manager of a large number of institutions and companies. They were invited to participate in questionnaires for this study, and stamped addressed envelopes were provided. Upon acceptance of our invitation to participate in the study, each company manager informed us of the number of questionnaires required. In this way, the MIS professionals in the participating companies became our survey subjects. The companies in our sample included public institutions, public manufacturers, hospitals, banks, insurance firms, and companies from the electronics and communications industries.

A total of 770 samples were collected between May and December 2003. Five hundred and fifty-six MIS professionals (response rate: 72.12%) completed questionnaires. Among them, 486 (valid response rate: 63.12%) were considered valid responses. This high response rate is attributed to the use of a corporate representative/sponsor in the dissemination and collection of the survey instrument.

4. Results

4.1 Scale and Validation

The first step in scale validation is to assess convergent validity with two different assessments: (1) individual item reliability and (2) construct reliability. The individual item reliability is assessed by examining the item-to-construct loadings for each construct that is measured with multiple indicators, with the exception of the type of power. As shown in Table 2, the multiple indicators of individual item reliability are all higher than 0.7 (Chin 1998), except pure challenge (0.5938), which, nevertheless, is higher than the 0.35 standard of Guilford (1965). The composite reliability scores are used to measure the internal consistency among the items of a given construct. All variables in this study, including organizational stability, geographical security, technical competence, managerial competence, creativity, autonomy, service, variety, identity, entrepreneurship, pure challenge, lifestyle, learning motivation, Chinese Relationalism, and intent to leave, are all above 0.92, with their average variances extracted (AVE) also being over 0.85 (Fornell & Larker 1981, Hair et al. 1998). This indicates that each dimension has good inner-construct consistency (Bearden & Kinsella 1993) (Table 1).

Second, discriminate validity is evaluated for the measurement scales using each indicator’s loading on its own construct as well as its cross-load on all other constructs. The indicators’ loadings for each construct are higher than the cross-loadings for the indicators of other constructs. Moreover, scanning the rows, each indicator has a higher loading with its construct than cross-loading with any other construct. This provides evidence that our research constructs have discriminate validity (Chin 1998).
4.2 Structural Model

The structural model is evaluated using LISREL version 8.3. For models with a good fit, the chi-square normalized by the degree of freedom (P2/df) should not exceed 5 (Bentler & Bonnet 1980), the Bentler-Bonnet non-normed fit index (NNFI), comparative fit index (CFI), goodness of fit index (GFI), and normed fit index (NFI) should exceed 0.9, the adjusted goodness of fit index (AGFI) should exceed 0.9; and the standardized root mean square error of approximation (SRMR) should not exceed .08. For the current structural model (see Table 2), P2/df does not exceed 5, suggesting an adequate model fit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fit Index</th>
<th>Contents</th>
<th>Reference Index</th>
<th>Reference Literatures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$\chi^2$</td>
<td>1454.035</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\chi^2$/df</td>
<td>1.943897</td>
<td>&lt;3</td>
<td>Carmines &amp; MacIves, 1981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GFI</td>
<td>0.878</td>
<td>&gt;0.9</td>
<td>Bentler &amp; Bonnett, 1980; Bentler, 1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGFI</td>
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<td>&gt;0.9</td>
<td>Bentler &amp; Bonnett, 1980; Bentler, 1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NFI</td>
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<td>&gt;0.9</td>
<td>Bentler &amp; Bonnett, 1980; Bentler, 1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NNFI</td>
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<td>&gt;0.9</td>
<td>Bentler &amp; Bonnett, 1980; Bentler, 1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFI</td>
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<td>&gt;0.9</td>
<td>Bentler &amp; Bonnett, 1980; Bentler, 1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SRMR</td>
<td>0.0485</td>
<td>&lt;0.08</td>
<td>Hu &amp; Bentler, 1999</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: The Fit Index Analyses of Research Model

Next, the path significance in the research model is evaluated, and the variance explained (R² value) by each path examined. The significance and the relative strength of individual paths specified by the research model are also evaluated, as summarized in Table 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypotheses</th>
<th>Results (t-value)</th>
<th>Hypotheses</th>
<th>Results (t-value)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$H_{1,1}$</td>
<td>-0.55</td>
<td>$H_{2,1}$</td>
<td>1.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$H_{1,2}$</td>
<td>-5.18</td>
<td>$H_{2,2}$</td>
<td>2.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$H_{1,3}$</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>$H_{2,3}$</td>
<td>-0.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$H_{1,4}$</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>$H_{2,4}$</td>
<td>4.69</td>
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<tr>
<td>$H_{1,5}$</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>$H_{2,5}$</td>
<td>0.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$H_{1,6}$</td>
<td>-1.21</td>
<td>$H_{2,6}$</td>
<td>0.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$H_{1,7}$</td>
<td>3.01</td>
<td>$H_{2,7}$</td>
<td>-1.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$H_{1,8}$</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>$H_{2,8}$</td>
<td>0.46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Item-to-Construct Loadings, Construct Reliability and AVE of Factors
Table 3: Research Hypotheses and Testing Results

According to the previous outcomes of \( H_1 \), as three career anchors have significant impacts on intent to leave, namely, Technical Competence (\( H_{1-2} \)), Autonomy (\( H_{1-5} \)), and Entrepreneurship (\( H_{1-7} \)), we need only to test the three constructs in \( H_4 \) (i.e. \( H_{4-2} \), \( H_{4-5} \), and \( H_{4-7} \)). The results indicate that Chinese Relationalism does have a moderately significant impact on the relationships between autonomy (\( H_{4-5} \)) and intent to leave and entrepreneurship (\( H_{4-7} \)) and intent to leave. Finally, Figure 2 presents all significant results of hypotheses in this study.

5. Discussion

5.1 Effects of the Career Anchors of MIS professionals on their Intent to Leave (\( H_{1-1} \sim H_{1-13} \))

(1) Technical Competence: at the 0.05 significance level, the technical competence (\( \beta = -5.18^* \)) of the MIS professional is negatively associated with intent to leave in this study, meaning that the MIS professionals who concentrate on technical work may virtually never quit their jobs, a finding which supports \( H_{1-2} \). And which is also supported by Gerpott et al. (1988), who found that the technical competence of R&D professionals in West Germany and USA has a significant impact on their intent to leave. The greater the technical effort of the MIS professional in terms of IT/IS expertise, the less willing s/he is to leave.

(2) Autonomy: at the 0.05 significance level, the autonomy (\( \beta = 2.97^{**} \)) of the MIS professional is
found to be positively associated with intent to leave in this study. This means that the MIS professionals who prefer to make their own decisions and cannot tolerate the constraint of organizational norms are likely to quit their jobs, a finding that supports H_{1.6}. This contrasts with Chang (2005) and Hsu et al. (2003), who believed that the autonomy of the MIS professional has no significant impact on his/her intent to leave.

At the same time, this study finds that autonomy is one of the least important career anchors of MIS professionals in Taiwan, and that those with high levels of autonomy are very likely to quit. This finding may result from the fact that the major sample in the study consisted of employees rather than SOHO (Small Office, Home Office) status workers. Thus, need for familiarization with the organizational norms of a company reduces the need for autonomy. However, once the need for autonomy arises, leading the MIS professional to struggle to tolerate the organizational norms, quitting is the only option.

(3) Entrepreneurship: at the 0.05 significance level, the entrepreneurship ($\beta=3.01^{**}$) of MIS professionals is found to be positively associated with intent to leave in this study, which means the MIS professionals who prefer to develop their own business are likely to quit their jobs. This finding supports H_{1.7}. While Hsu et al. (2003) believe that the entrepreneurship of the MIS professional has no significant impact on intent to leave, Jiang and Klein (2002) think that the entrepreneurship is associated with intent to leave, which means when an entrepreneurial opportunity arises for the MIS professional, his/her intent to leave increases. Thus the result of the present study is consistent with the contentions of Jiang and Klein (2002).

At the same time, this study found that entrepreneurship is one of the most unimportant career anchors of MIS professionals in Taiwan, and that those with strong preference for entrepreneurship are extremely likely to quit. This finding may be the result of the fact that the majority of the sample participants in this study were employed rather than having SOHO status instead, reducing the need for entrepreneurship among MIS professionals. However, once the MIS professional develops a strong passion for entrepreneurship, s/he may quit without hesitation.

5.3 Effects of Chinese Relationalism on the Career Anchors of MIS professionals (H_{2.1}~H_{2.13})

(1) Technical Competence: at the 0.05 significance level, Chinese Relationalism is positively associated with the technical competence ($\beta=2.24^{**}$) of MIS professionals in this study. This means that the MIS professionals who retain their current job under the pressure of relationship are very likely to concentrate on technical work, a finding that supports H_{2.2}. As Marshall and Bonner (2003) believe that culture has a significant impact on technical competence, it is evident that the result of this study is consistent with their contentions (2003).

(2) Geographical Security: at the 0.05 significance level, Chinese Relationalism is positively associated with the geographical security ($\beta=4.69^{**}$) of MIS professionals in this study. This means that the MIS professionals who retain their current jobs due to relationship pressure are highly likely
to prefer working in familiar geographic or work environments, a finding that supports $H_{24}$. And accords with Hwang (1987), who argues that the Chinese emphasize the importance of *guanxi*.

(3) **Lifestyle:** at the 0.05 significance level, Chinese Relationalism is negatively associated with the lifestyle ($\beta = -2.03^*$) of MIS professionals in this study, indicating that the MIS professionals who retain their current job under the pressure of relations are very likely not to be concerned about quality of life. In other words, the MIS professional who emphasizes the value of interpersonal relationship is highly likely to sacrifice his life quality under pressure from friends, relatives, or colleagues. This finding supports $H_{29}$. Hwang (1987) argues that Chinese value highly *guanxi*, and Marshall and Bonner (2003) believe that culture has a significant impact on lifestyle. Therefore, the result of the present study in this respect is consistent with the contentions proposed by Hwang (1987), Marshall and Bonner (2003).

(4) **Identity:** at the 0.05 significance level, Chinese Relationalism is positively associated with the identity ($\beta = 2.15^{**}$) of MIS professionals in this study. This indicates that the MIS professionals who retain their current employment as the result of pressure from relationships are very likely to seek employment with famous companies or to push for promotion, a finding that supports $H_{30}$ and validates the viewpoint of Hwang (1987). This result is echoed in such Chinese proverbial phrases as: “winning glory for one’s fatherland,” “losing our family’s face,” “having no face to go back home to see one’s elders.”

(5) **Variety:** at the 0.10 significance level, Chinese Relationalism is negatively associated with the variety ($\beta = -1.66^*$) of MIS professionals in this study. This suggests that the MIS professionals who retain their current employment under the pressure of maintaining good relations are highly likely to prefer the monotonous tasks and unvarying work styles. This result supports $H_{31}$ and is inconsistent with the perspective of Marshall and Bonner (2003). Their finding could be explained by the fact that most of their subjects came from Western Australia, USA, South Africa and UK, and so had, indeed, inherited the values of Western culture. This is a possible reason for the absence of any significant impact of culture on variety in their study.

### 5.4 Effect of Chinese Relationalism on the Intent to Leave of MIS Professionals ($H_3$)

The Chinese Relationalism ($\beta = 1.29$) of MIS professionals has no significant impact on intent to leave in this study. This means that intent to leave will not be changed by relations with others, a finding that does not support $H_3$. According to the *Face and Favor Theory* (Hwang 1987), a resource distributor always considers the relation with the postulant before distributing, which means the Chinese always act after considering their relations with others. Thus, the study speculates that Chinese Relationalism may influence the intent to leave of MIS professionals in Taiwan. However, our result does not accord with the viewpoint of Hwang (1987). This could be due to the fact that while the intent to leave of MIS professionals will be influenced by variety of career anchors, it will be influenced by only a single cultural factor (Chinese Relationalism). For this reason, our study
confirms that the cultural factor does not have a direct effect on the intent to leave of MIS professionals.

5.5 Moderate Effects of Chinese Relationalism on the Relationship between Career Anchors of MIS Professionals and their Intent to Leave (H₄-1~H₄-13)

According to the finding of this study, Chinese Relationalism has moderately significant impacts on the relationships between the autonomy (F=10) of the MIS professional and intent to leave, and between the entrepreneurship (F=12.977) of the MIS professional and intent to leave. This means that Chinese Relationalism can strengthen the intent to leave of MIS professionals who prefer making their own decisions without organizational norms, or who prefer to build their own businesses or new services. This supports H₄-5 and H₄-7. Beger (1991) believes that culture serves as the conductor, with the entrepreneur functioning as the catalyst (to entrepreneurship). Therefore, among individuals who are motivated by factors such as financial rewards, achievement, social advancement, career, and individual fulfillment, for these conditions or motives to cultivate into entrepreneurship, a national culture that supports and encourages entrepreneurial activity is needed (Lee & Peterson 2000). Moreover, Lumpkin and Dess (1996) have outlined five salient dimensions of entrepreneurial orientation, namely, autonomy, innovativeness, risk taking, proactiveness, and competitive aggressiveness; thus, autonomy is an element of entrepreneurship. There is an old Chinese adage: “It is better to be a chicken’s head than a cow’s tail,” which means that it is better to be the boss of a small company than a low-level worker in a large company. This adage illustrates the Chinese preference for starting an enterprise and being the boss of a company. It is clear therefore, that the result of this study is in accord with the viewpoint of Berger (1991), Lee and Peterson (2000), Lumpkin and Dess (1996).

6. Contribution and Conclusions

As well as applying Schein’s career anchor model to the career anchor preference and intent to leave of MIS professionals in Taiwan, this study adds Chinese Relationalism as a cultural dimension into this research model. In view of the fact that the MIS professional career processes vary according to career orientations (Baroudi, 1988; Crepeau et al., 1992; Sumner & Yager, 2004), this study has developed a suitable and highly reliable career anchor survey by combining and organizing previous career anchor measures and literature. The study has also added learning motivation to the list of career anchor constructs (Chang, 2005).

Increasing numbers of scholars are beginning to believe that the relationship between characteristics of a national culture and organizations is extremely close. For this reason, the present study has considered it likely that culture is a variable to explain the career orientation structure. Although Schein (1984, 1986), Derr and Laurent (1987) recognized the value of adopting the perspectives of national culture and organizational sub-culture in a study related to the career orientation of MIS professionals, other researchers have been slow to adopt such a perspective. As a consequence, the
present study has investigated the career anchor model from a Chinese Relationalist cultural perspective, in contrast to previous studies that only discuss the simple one cultural role in career anchor model (Marshall & Bonner, 2003; Gerpott et al., 1988). At the same time, the study has examined cultural roles in the career anchor model in a variety of ways, finding that Chinese Relationalism not only has a significant impact on career anchors of MIS professionals in Taiwan, but also has a moderately significant impact on the relationship between career anchor and intent to leave. Practically, the high turnover ratio of MIS professionals will lead to the delay and failure of projects and increased capital risk for enterprises. To reduce this turnover ratio and to retain quality MIS professionals, organizations should heed the following two directions:

1. **Provide inducements to satisfy the career needs of MIS professionals:** According to the results in this study, the most important career anchors of MIS professionals in Taiwan are lifestyle, organizational stability, and learning motivation. In light of this, in order to satisfy the career needs of MIS professionals, while at the same time maintaining the stability of organizations and providing stable and long-term job security, enterprises should introduce corporate welfare policies designed to help employees find balance between work and family life. In addition, providing a healthy learning environment encourages employees to grow within organizations. Such strategies are good ways to reduce intent to leave among MIS professionals.

2. **Eliminate the factors that increase MIS professionals’ intent to leave:** From the results of this study, it is clear that 3 career anchors, technical competence, autonomy, and entrepreneurship, have significant impacts on Taiwanese MIS professionals’ intent to leave. Technical competence is negatively associated with intent to leave, meaning that the MIS professionals who concentrate on technical work rarely quit their jobs. On the other hand, autonomy and entrepreneurship are positively associated with intent to leave, indicating that the MIS professionals who prefer to make their own decisions, cannot tolerate the constraints of organizational norms and prefer to develop their own businesses are likely to quit their jobs. For this reason, enterprises would benefit from heeding the following suggestions to retain qualified MIS professionals: (A) Provide a healthy learning environment for MIS professionals who put emphasis on technical competence for researching and developing further technical skills. (B) Allow highly autonomous MIS professionals to make their own decisions as far as possible and adjust the bonus system to encourage them to think independently. (C) By continuing to develop new products and services, it is possible to reduce the intent to leave of highly entrepreneurial MIS professionals.

The study has a number of limitations. Firstly, due to the fact that the research sample is limited to Taiwan, there are no samples from other countries to compare different results between different cultures and different geographical regions. Secondly, as this study focuses exclusively on MIS professionals, there are no other professional samples to compare different results between different businesses and different occupations. Thirdly, as the research subjects are MIS professionals from a wide variety of enterprises, the business range is very wide. This makes it hard to analyze the
differences of each company in terms of enterprise sub-culture. For this reason, the study did not employ the company culture and R&D department of sub-culture proposed by Gerpott et al. (1988) in the research model. Finally, Hwang (1987) argues that before a requester asks the resource distributor for more, the resource distributor always considers the relationship with the requester first, indicating that the Chinese change their decisions depending on their guanxi with others. However, this study only analyzed the relationship between Chinese Relationalism (Chinese guanxi) and the intent to leave of MIS professionals, and did not include the direct impacts of turnover behavior and the moderate impacts between intent to leave and turnover behavior.

In light of this fact, it is necessary for future research to investigate the same issue with different samples from other national geographical regions and cultures in order to attempt to understand the differences between the various research structures. It would also be useful for future studies to analyze different occupational professionals to compare the different results and relations among various professionals, national culture, career anchors, and intent to leave. Moreover, different company cultures and MIS department sub-culture could be focused upon to further investigate the relation between career anchors and intent to leave of MIS professionals. With findings from such studies, it would be possible to establish whether guanxi has a direct impact on the turnover behavior of MIS professionals, or a moderate impact on the relation between intent to leave and turnover behavior.

References


