

Career Narratives to Understand Adolescent Career Identity Development: Exploratory Mixed-Methods Comparative Study Using Three Theories

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Every Learning Moment Can Change a Life

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Using Marcia's Model to Examine Critical Features of Career Identity

Study 1: Marcia's Model of Identity

- Description of the original dataset, methods and results

Marcia's Model

Two Continua

- **Self-exploration:** Whether the individual is actively engaged in self and career exploration
- **Self-commitment:** Whether the individual has committed to a career occupation and plan

Four Identity Statuses

- Achieved identity
- Moratorium identity
- Foreclosed identity
- Diffuse identity

		Exploration	
		Present	Absent
Commitment	Present	Identity Achievement	Foreclosure
	Absent	Moratorium	Identity Diffusion

Method

- Open-ended online survey responses to items based on Van Esbroeck's decision-making model
- Sample Demographics: 14 high schools from four states in U.S.; 1653 Participants [49% 10th grade, 51% - 12th grade; 51% White, 29% African American, 13% Latino/a, 4.2% Native American and 2% Asian American; 39% free/reduced lunch; 7.7% Students with disabilities

Items Generated Using Van Esbroeck et al.'s Decision Making Model

- Sensitization
- Self-exploration
- Environment exploration
- Exploration of relationship between self and environment
- Decision

Sample Items

- 18 open-ended items
 - What are some occupations you are considering right now?
 - What are you doing right now to prepare you for these occupations?
 - What are the next steps you need to take to prepare to enter one of the selected occupations?

Analytic Plan

- Grounded-theory approach
- Marica's (1966, 1980) four ego-identity status were used to create a rubric

Narratives Classified into Decision-Making Patterns

Marcia's Ego Statuses	Decision-Making Pattern
Achieved	Deliberate
Moratorium	Exploring
Foreclosure	Impulsive/Disengaged
Diffusion	Overwhelmed

Results

	Career Decision Making Patterns			
	Achieved	Moratorium	Foreclosed	Diffuse
	Deliberate	Exploring	Impulsive	Overwhelmed
Disabilities	19%	21%	53%	7%
Without Disabilities	22%	18%	56%	4%

Compared to Foreclosed (Impulsive)

Achieved (Deliberate) and Moratorium (Exploring) types:

Reported more:

- Access to quality learning environments
- Academic motivation
- Goal setting
- Career search self-efficacy

Reported less:

- Academic stress
- Career decision-making difficulty

Comparing Marcia's Model, McAdams' Model and Howard & Walsh's Model

Boston University

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Purpose of Secondary Analyses

Study 2: Comparison of Howard and Marcia

Study 3: Comparison of McAdams and Marcia

Integration: Comparison of McAdams and Howard and all three models in relation to key resiliency/social emotional learning skills

Method

- 90 narratives were randomly selected from individuals classified using Marcia's model as Foreclosed (n=30), Moratorium (n=30) and Achieved (n=30)
- Six were removed because they were unable to be classified into both McAdams and Howard's models.
- Final N = 84

Coding Process

- Two research teams: one focused on Howard's model and the other focused on McAdam's model
- All team members reviewed all 90 narratives and coded simultaneously
- Two coding approaches were used
 1. Used code 0 & 1 to show whether or not the subject attained each categorical code (Attained = 1; Not attained = 0)
 2. Used the number as the highest stage the subject attained
- After individual coding, each team met together and made consensus on all codes
- Compiled all codes of the three models (Marcia, McAdam, Howard) and enter data into SPSS for analysis

Presentation of the Studies and Results

- Description of each model
- Sample responses derived from each model
- Crosstabulation and correlation between Marcia and Howard and McAdams, respectively
- McAdams/Howard Cross-Tabulation and Correlation
- Comparison of how well the three models predict students resiliency/social emotional learning skills

Howard & Walsh's Children's Conceptions of Career Choice and Attainment Model

Howard & Walsh's Model of Career Conceptions

- Career development research has illuminated the importance of beginning career work with children prior to adolescence (Hartung, Porfeli, & Vondracek, 2005; Schultheiss, 2008; Trice & Rush, 1995)
- Children as young as 4-years-old make judgments about the suitability of careers (Trice & Rush, 1995)
- However, few career theories address needs of children and those that do are fragmented (Schultheiss, 2008)

Children's Conceptions of Career Choice and Attainment Model (Howard & Walsh, 2010)

The Children's Conceptions of Career Choice and Attainment (CCCA; Howard & Walsh, 2010) captures the nature of *how* children and youth are conceptualizing key career development processes.

Association	Fantasy-based thoughts about careers & career choices; No understanding of processes
Sequence	Explained in concrete terms & understand choice and attainment as separate processes
Interaction	Choosing job/career is a process involving a dynamic interaction of awareness of personal attributes & environmental opportunities

The CCCA Model

Level 1: Pure Association	Observable, concrete factors
Level 2: Magical Thinking	No consideration of skills
Level 3: External Activities	Automaticity (assumption that taking by the necessary steps, they will automatically get the job)
Level 4: Internal Processes & Capacities	Begins to match self to job
Level 5: Interaction	Considers immediate environmental causes (i.e. job characteristics & job availability)
Level 6: Systemic Interaction	Considers systemic causes (i.e. conditions of labor market & employment trends)

Methods

- Responses from sample data (n=90) were coded using a modified grounded theory approach according to the CCCA model to determine participants sophistication of reasoning and 84 were included in the analysis
- CCCA classifications were then compared with Marcia's classifications.

Results

84 of the 90 were classified and the results indicated:

- 31 were classified as Level 3 - External Activities
- 25 were classified as Level 4 – Internal Processes and Capacities
- 13 were classified as Level 5 - Interaction
- 15 were classified as Level 6 – Systemic Interaction

The CCCA Model: Sample Responses

Level 3: External Activities	“You need a high school degree and some experience in the work place and a degree from college.”
Level 4: Internal Processes & Capacities	“I really like chemistry and to experiment and I’m really good at math.”
Level 5: Interaction	“I need to know how much education is needed, the need for it in my area, the benefits, the salary, what types of things I would need to provide and/or offer.”
Level 6: Systemic Interaction	“There is a huge demand for people in the medical field because of the current economic crisis we are in. I could(n)’t care less how much I get paid. I will do it for free if I had to. It’s what I want to do.”

The CCCA Model: Level 3 Sample Responses

- “Graduate high school, then go to college and be qualified.”
- “Get good grades, learn a lot about the job, work hard, fill out applications, and then get an interview with the manager.”
- “When i apply and get accepted.”
- “Attending high school and finishing to go to trident and take the classes that are need for the occupation”

The CCCA Model: Level 4 Sample Responses

- “A love for the game of baseball, basketball, and football is a great interest that will help me prepare for an occupation in sports. Skills that I possess such as being proficient on a computer, knowledgeable of athletics, friendly, willing to learn new things, work hard, reliable, committed, and organized...”
- “I feel that math might prevent me from getting into law school. I am not good in math, but always try my hardest”
- “I think that I would need a good voice, schooling, know how to read music, and have at least a bachelor's degree....”

The CCCA Model: Level 5 Sample Responses

- “Income, skills needed, job availability, job locations, education requirements etc.”
- “I need to know how much education is needed, the need for it in my area, the benefits, the salary, what type of things i would need to provide and/or offer...”

The CCCA Model: Level 6 Sample Responses

- “One of the main reasons that could prevent me from entering these jobs is the economy. It is more difficult than ever in this nation to get a job, and even more so in South Carolina. Another obstacle is tuition to college. I might not have enough money to enter college, and from the way things are going in my family currently, there's a big chance that I would have to go through college on scholarships.”
- “Trends in society have some effect on my possible career options. For instance, with the recent economic down turn, I have considered taking more science/medical courses in college for a possible career option in the medical field.”
- “Since the economy has been going into a recession, today you have to look at different job outlooks that are going to be here not gone tomorrow...”

Howard/Marcia Crosstabs/Correlation

	Foreclosed	Moratorium	Achieved
Level 3: External Activities	15	13	3
Level 4: Internal Processes & Capacities	5	9	11
Level 5: Interaction	6	3	4
Level 6: Systemic Interaction	1	2	12
r	= .414		

Howard/Marcia Sample Responses

■ CCCA Level 3 & Foreclosed

- “getting ready for the schooling, salary hours and just the basics of a job”

■ CCCA Level 3 & Moratorium

- “fear of blood and needles would prevent me from being a vet. I love kids and animals and I have most of the talents needed. they will give me experience”

■ CCCA Level 4 & Moratorium

- “I need a four year college degree. If it is to hard to get a job in that career field, or if the pa is not enough.”

■ CCCA Level 4 & Achieved

- “I am in leadership class this year and it really helps me with the communication of others. Also, my mother lets me practice on her hair and do experiments with it. I feel like i am more experienced with cosmetology right now then a lot of peolpe who just go and decide they want to go to cosmetology school. But I defantly need school to because I have a lot to learn. shadowing and interviews with peolpe who are teachers and cosmetologist.”

Howard/Marcia Sample Responses

■ CCCA Level 5 & Foreclosed

- “Zooligist, Veterinary Medicine
- 8 years to be a vet, and Zooligy, biology, and animal behavior
- The trends in society don't really affect my job because there will always be a need for animal care as long as there are animals.”

■ CCCA Level 5 & Moratorium

- “Graphic Designer, architect, or some kind of engineer.
- the pay, how many jobs are available in the occupations, the general structure of these occupations.
- good at math, creative, good thinking skills, good problem solving skills. interested in graphics and designing.”

■ CCCA Level 5 & Achieved

- “Child care, teaching, counseling, or opening my own restaurant
- money, access to proper classes, the area that i live in, the economy, the need...I need to know how much education is needed, the need for it in my area, the benefits, the salary, what type of things i would need to provide and/or offer...”

McAdam's Life Story Model

McAdams' Life-Story Model

- Youth internalize and construct life stories situated within setting, scenes, character, plot and theme in order to have a psychosocial unity and purpose.
- In transitions to the world of work, youth's narratives help identify how they explore interests, skills and values; form career goals; and engage in career decision-making.
- Youth's narrative identity will inform how they reconstruct the past, interpret the present, and anticipate the future in terms of career identity and career readiness.

(McAdams, 1985, 1993, 2001, 2006, 2010)

McAdams' Life-Story Model

Layers	Descriptions
Social Actor	Encompassing semantic representations of traits and social roles; relatively non-conditional constructs.
Motivated Agent	Specifying personal goals that a person makes regarding exploration and commitment to life project; contextualized in time, place or role.
Narrative Author	Synthesizing episodic information about the self into a coherent life story; to explain why the actor does what it does and why the agent wants what it wants.

Results

- 84 of the 90 were able to be classified and the totals included:
 - 24 classified as Social Actor
 - 33 classified as Motivated Agent
 - 27 classified as Narrative Author

McAdams Model: Sample Results

Codes	Descriptions
Social Actor	Characteristics, traits -i.e. “I like numbers and an accountants deal with numbers and I am a good athlete for a professional athlete.”
Motivated Agent	Values, hopes, long-term desired goals -i.e. “It is something I have had my heart set on for a while, I love taking care of people and people need to be taking care of. I’m the person who always wants to be there and help.”
Narrative Author	Life narrative: Constructing the past, present and future -i.e. “Since I have worked in the dentist office I am around dental hygienists and I can really picture myself doing what they do. Sometimes I assist with them and I already have joy doing that so I’m sure I am suitable for this occupation!”

McAdams/Marcia Crosstabs/Correlation

	Foreclosed	Moratorium	Achieved
Social Actor	<u>10</u>	<u>14</u>	0
Motivated Agent	<u>10</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>12</u>
Narrative Author	<u>7</u>	2	<u>18</u>
r	= .388		

Example of Forclosed/Social Actor

- Some of the occupations I am considering are law and forensics. Some interest that I have are knowing how everything happens and how I see everything. Some shows tell me a little of what it is like. My teacher and parents will tell me and the colleges will tell me whether it is good for me or not. I am interested in them because of the shows they put out and the way it looks, and also the pay. And such a job will give me a good life in the future for my family so that they can live as good as me.

Example of Moratorium/Social Actor

- “I can play an instrument very well. I am very funny. I can work with my hands and am not afraid to get dirty.”
- “I think that these are the few jobs that I will be good at. I don't really know but the mechanic job will save me a lot of when it comes time to fix my vehicles. The comedian job could lead to new friends and parties. The orchestra job would lead to me using my talent of playing the cello in the future. The construction job would lead me to be able to create my own home and other things.”

Example of Forclosed/Motivation Agent

- "I am considering Military after college of course. The only thing that I'm really doing is getting in physical shape and keeping my grades up, As well as talking to my family about it." "I'm physically in shape, love to shoot weapons, and I love to work on planes with my grandfather I'm also good with the money that I spend. I'm seventeen, I believe now would be a good time to start trying to achieve what I want to be."

Example of Moratorium/Motivated Agent

- "Any type of service oriented work. I am on the move and not grounded anywhere. I am spending some time in South Africa instead of/before I go to college. This will hopefully give me a sense of what serving and living abroad would look like. I have a deep passion for other people and love to help. I will hopefully be able to talk with a Peace Corps. recruiter to see if I'm eligible and/or what I need to do in order to be eligible. I love to travel and learn different cultures. I want to experience the world before I become grounded and don't have much of an opportunity to do so."

Example of Achieved/Motivated Agent

- As of right now I am considering Law. I have taken Law Education and will be attending Youth Court for my junior year. I have a very strong personality and know when I am being taken advantage of. I love to argue and find myself always getting my point across. I feel as though I would never get tired of being a lawyer it seems fun and full of challenges and I think that is the best way to live life. Being a lawyer will not only make me happy but will also be my lifelong dream.

Example of Forclosed/Narrative Author

- I plan on becoming a landscape architecture photographer or graphic design. My Family influenced me. My dad always lets me help him with around the house projects indoor and out and I think that helped me build my creativity. My mom is a big into flowers and I find that I also enjoy working with them. I like being able to use my creativity with hands on projects and I also like being outdoors. Next step I need is any activity that would give me more experience with landscape design and graphic design.

Example of Achieved/Author

- "I am considering being a paediatrician. I am helping out with my little cousin that lives with me, so that is helping me learn how to play with little kids. I also hang out with my friends all the time to help with my people skills. My doctor influenced me to become a doctor when I was little. He enjoyed his job because he enjoyed working with kids, not because of the money. He didn't care about the money. He told me, ""If you love you job, you never work a day in your life."" Next steps I need are to graduate high school, then go to college for pre-med, then go to med school. I decided on mine when I was eight years old. I am not giving up on my dreams for anyone."

- Those classified as Narrative Author (McAdams) were more likely to have been classified as Achieved identity (Marcia)
 - This may indicate that the ability to link one's past, present, and future aspirations into a narrative is facilitated by active exploration of one's interests, values, and skills as well as directly exploring those careers through having access to work-based learning opportunities

- Foreclosed and Moratorium identity patterns were equally associated with classifications of Social Actor and Motivated Agent within McAdams Model
- More investigation is needed to understand whether Moratorium/ Social Actor, Foreclosed/ Social Actor, Moratorium/Social Agent, and Foreclosed/Social Agent offer characteristics that could warrant a sub-classification

Comparing McAdams' and Howard's Models

Comparing McAdams and Howard

	Social Actor	Motivated Agent	Narrative Author
Level 3: External Activities	16	11	4
Level 4: Internal Processes & Capacities	6	12	7
Level 5: Interaction	1	5	7
Level 6: Systemic Interaction	1	5	9
r	= .465		

Howard/McAdams Sample Responses

- **CCCA Level 3 & Social Actor**

- “a PE coach or anything that involves sports.
- first id probably have to go to college like for anything else, and would have to get better with kids”

- **CCCA Level 4 & Motivated Agent**

- I'm considering being a doctor and starting my own small children's company. I'm not completely sure if I'm going into the Air Force or not.
- I'm taking all the courses I need to get into a good college and I'm taking summer college courses. I'm a volunteer at the hospital and I go with my Uncle when he is on call.

- **CCCA Level 5 & Motivated Agent**

- **INSERT QUOTE**

- **CCCA Level 5 & Narrative Author**

- **INSERT QUOTE**

Comparing Marcia, McAdams and Howard Derived Classifications With Indicators of Resiliency/Social Emotional Learning Skills

($\beta = -.238$;
 $p = .03$)

Exploratory Mixed Methods Design

- With each individual classified into one identity category in each model, it is possible to use a quantitative approach to comparing how well they predict a range of career readiness indicators and other social/emotional (resiliency) indicators.

Predictors

Each identity measure was treated as an ordinal scale with:

- Marcia: Achieved > Moratorium > Foreclosed
- Howard: Systemic Int. > Interaction > Int. Proc > Ext. Act.
- McAdams: Narrative Author > Mot. Agent > Social Actor

Analytic Plan

- Stepwise regression was used to determine which combination of predictors were associated with the outcomes.
- Follow analysis was conducted to determine whether the relationship was linear or curvilinear.

Criterion Variables

Career Search Self-Efficacy (34 items; $\alpha = .97$)

- Perceived confidence to perform self-exploration, career exploration, and planning/management tasks.
- “Describe your skills and abilities to an employer” and “Know where to find information about possible employers.”
- Subscales: Self-Management ($\alpha = .96$), Career Planning ($\alpha = .91$), Career Awareness ($\alpha = .88$), Interviewing ($\alpha = .87$), and Networking (.86) (Solberg et al., 2010).

Academic Self-Efficacy (25 items; $\alpha = .95$)

- Degree to which one believes they can successfully perform a range of academic tasks.
- Sample items include “preparing for a test” and “asking a teacher for help outside of a lesson.”
- Subscales include: Social ($\alpha = .92$), Classroom ($\alpha = .90$), and Test Taking ($\alpha = .88$).

Academic Stress (23 items; $\alpha = .94$).

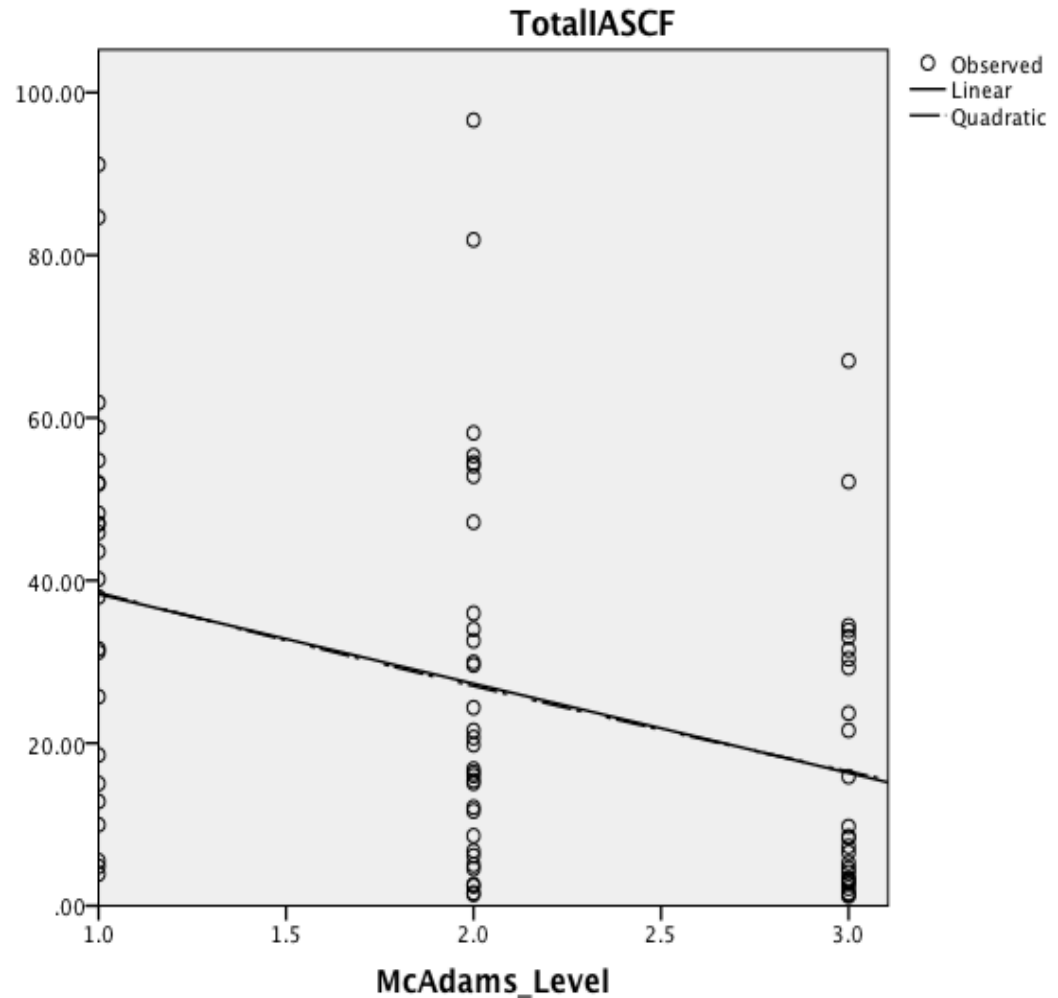
- Addresses how often an individual experiences difficulties completing a variety of academic-related tasks.
- Sample items: “I have difficulty managing both home and school responsibilities (housework and school work); I have difficulty handling relationships with other people; and I have difficulty due to my family experiencing money problems.
-
- Subscales: Academic ($\alpha = .85$), Social ($\alpha = .86$), and Financial ($\alpha = .86$).

Career decision-making difficulty (*Ideas and Attitudes on Academic-Career Future Scale* (IASCF; Nota & Soresi; 17 items, .96).

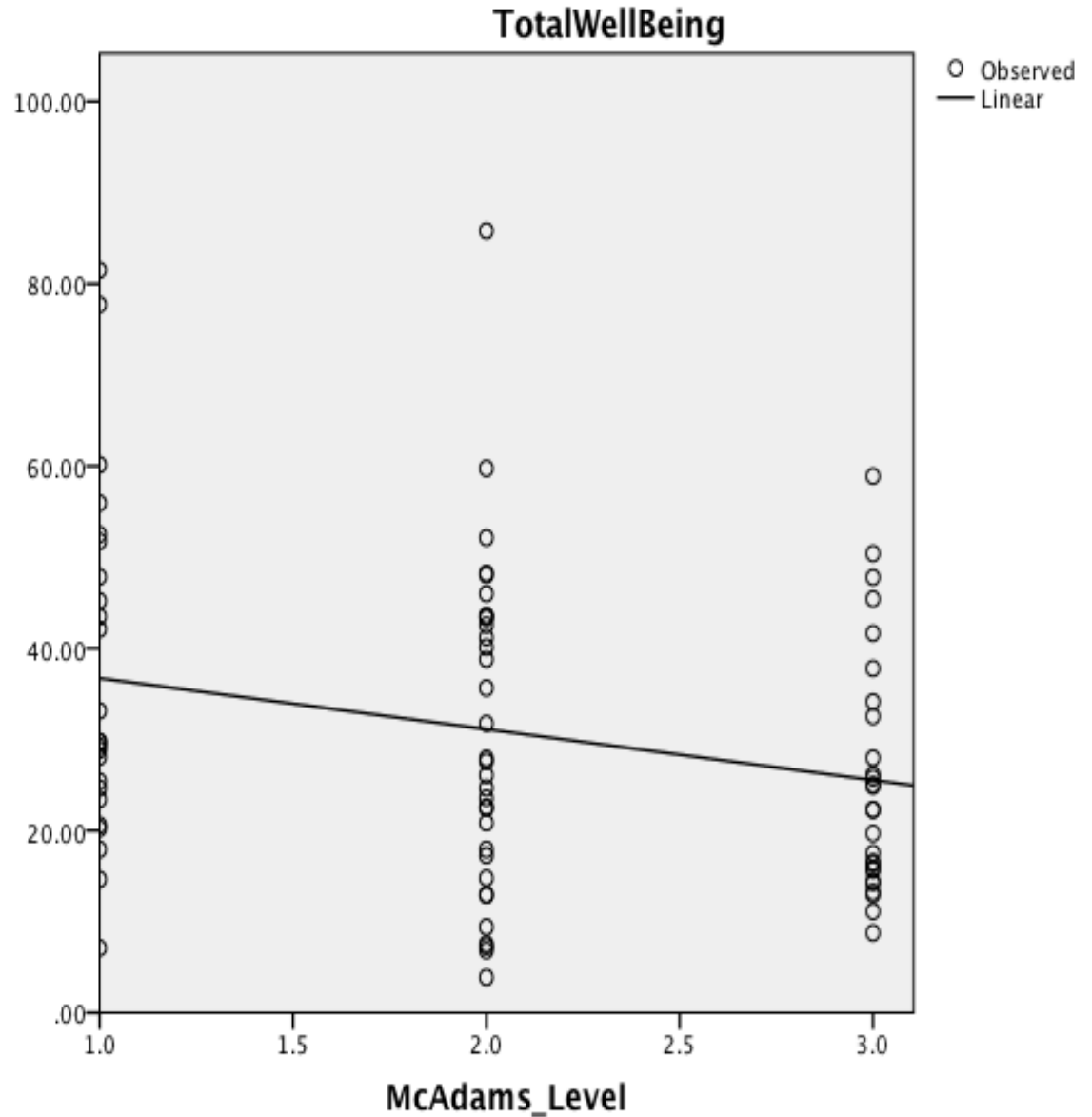
- Addresses the challenges related to engaging in career decision processes
- Subscales: Lack Information ($\alpha = .92$), Undecided ($\alpha = .90$), and Indecisive ($\alpha = .82$).

- Career Decision-Making Difficulty

McAdams' model explained 13.6% of the variance as a linear model with no improvement for the curvilinear estimation ($\beta = -.369$; $p = .01$)



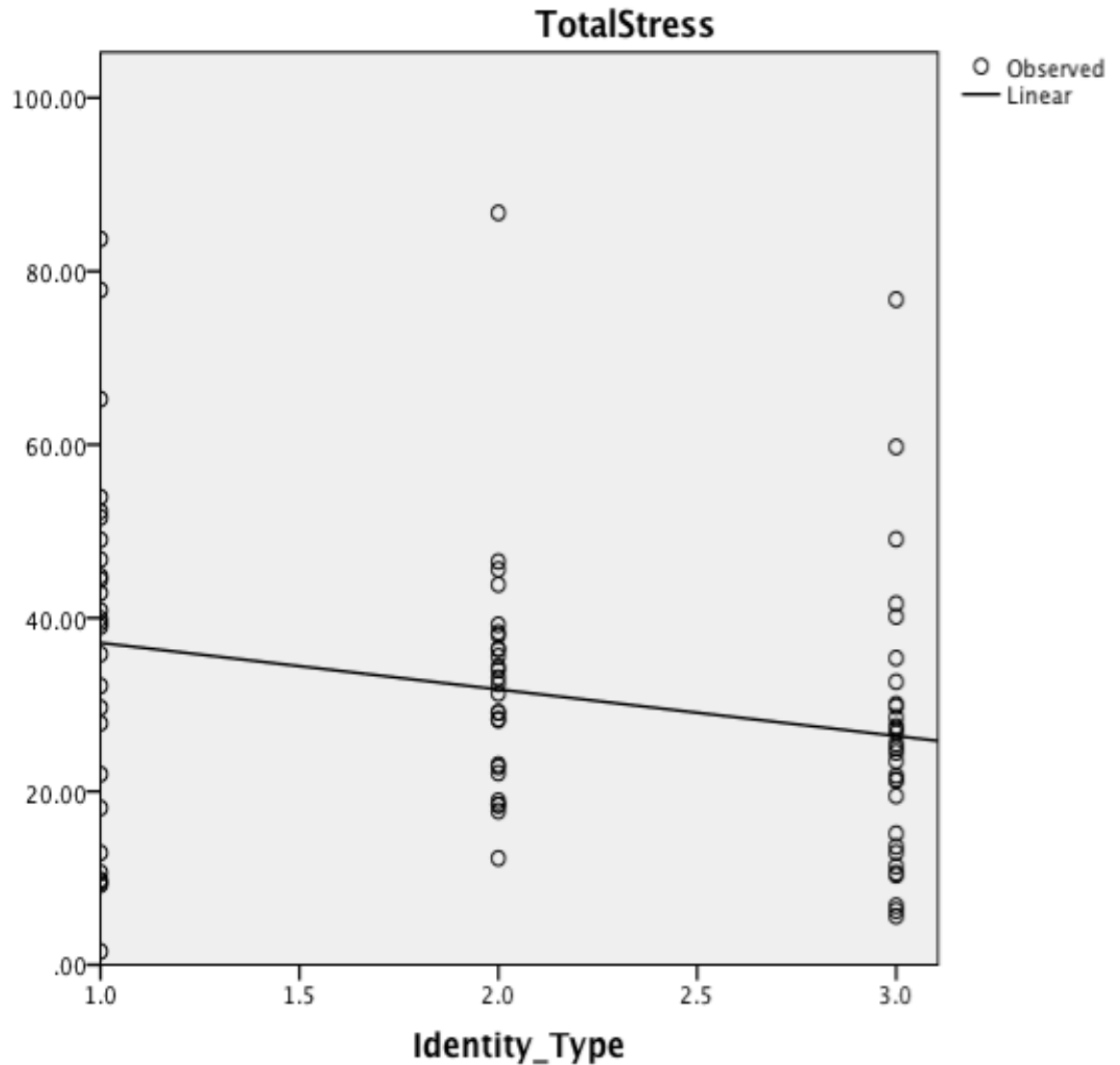
- Distress (Well-Being)
- McAdams' model explained 4.9% of the variance ($\beta = -.251$; $p = .02$).



- **Academic Stress**

McAdams' model explained 4.5% of the variance

($\beta = -.238$; $p = .03$)

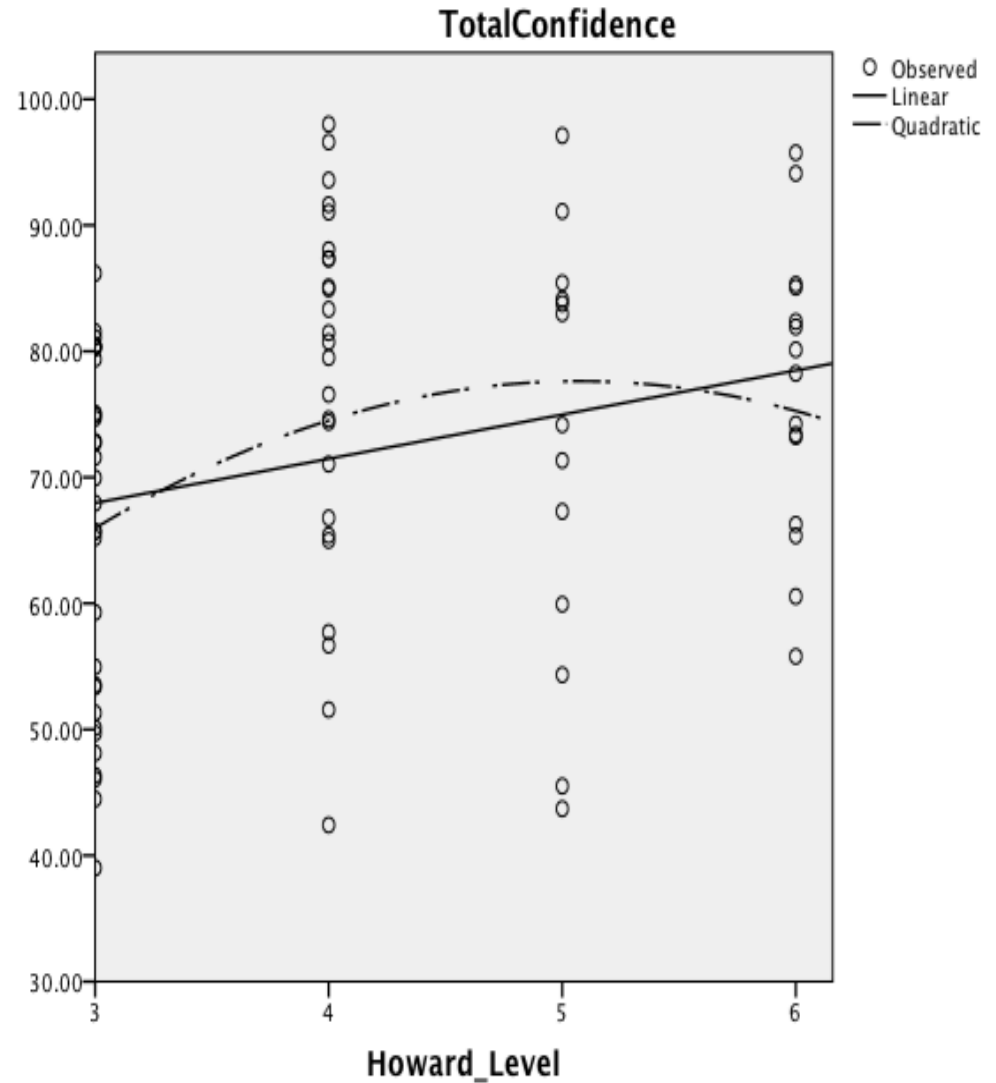


■ Academic Self-Efficacy

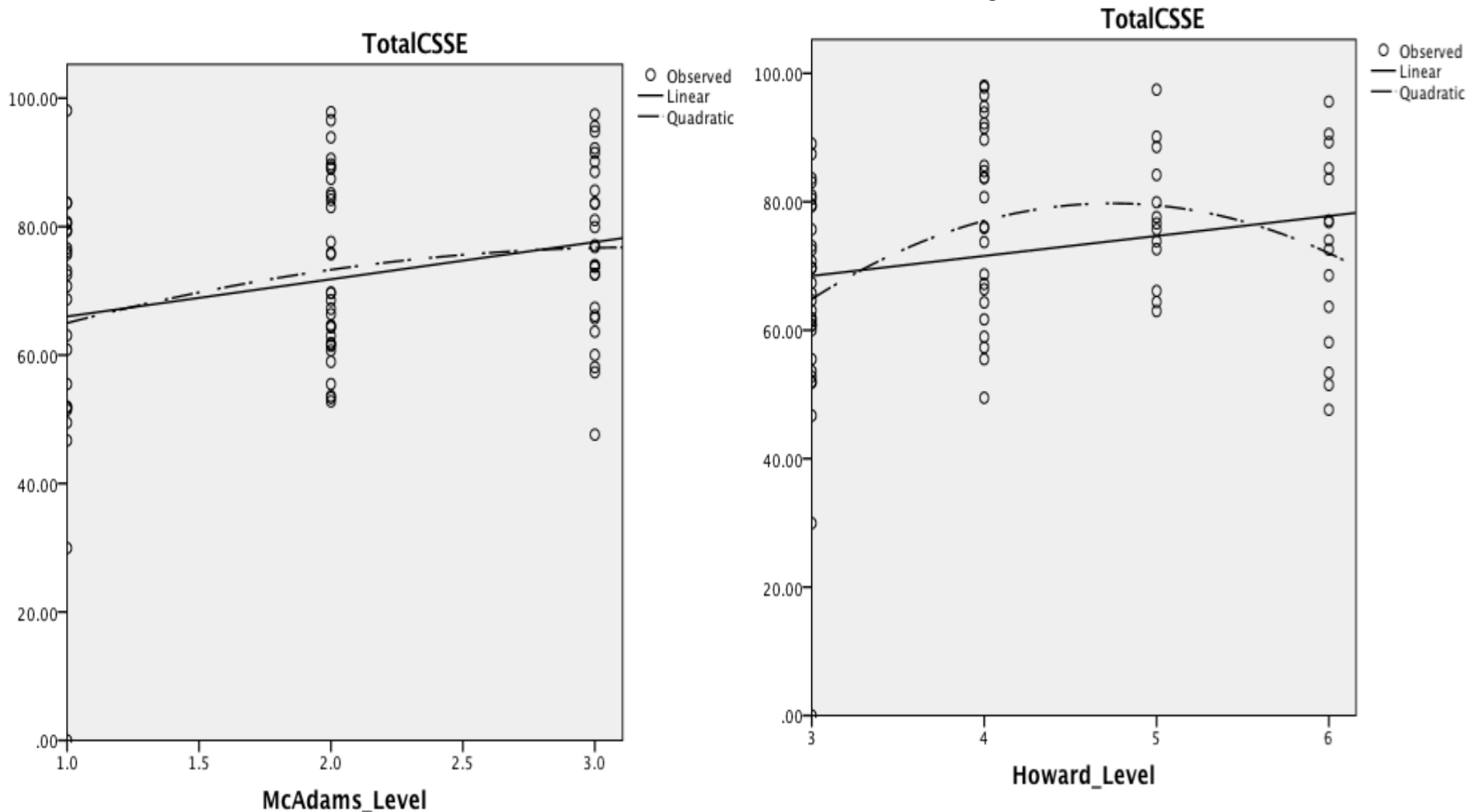
Howard's model explained 5.6% of the variance as a linear estimate and 7.7% of the variance as a curvilinear estimate

($\beta = .259$; $p = .01$);

McAdams was n.s.



Career Search Self-Efficacy



Howard model explained 3.3% of the variance in CSSE as a linear estimate ($\beta = .21$; $p = .05$) and 11% of the variance as a curvilinear estimate. McAdams accounted for 6.5% as a linear and 5.9% ($\beta = .277$; $p = .01$) as a curvilinear estimate.

Discussion