

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my heartfelt thanks and appreciation to my advisor, Dr. Ming-chung Yu for his kindness, patience, and constant encouragement. His continuous support and guidance made this thesis possible. Also, sincere appreciation must go to Dr. Chia Yi Lee and Dr. Chi-yee Lin, members of my oral defense committee, for giving valuable suggestions and comments to refine my thesis.

Sincere gratitude also goes to Yu-chen Hsiang, an ETMA classmate, whose deepest care and encouragement helped me keep on doing the study.

Finally, I would like to express my deepest thanks to my dear parents and my beloved son, Willy. Their endless love and considerate understanding have made this work possible.

