



Anxiety and career exploration: Gender differences in the role of self-construal[☆]

Erin E. Hardin^{*}, Femina P. Varghese, Uyen V. Tran,
Aaron Z. Carlson

Department of Psychology, Texas Tech University, Box 42051, Lubbock, TX 79409-2051, USA

Received 14 December 2005

Available online 30 June 2006

Abstract

Given the social nature of many tasks involved in exploring and committing to a career, we hypothesized that social anxiety would correlate to exploration and commitment, even after controlling for general anxiety. We also hypothesized that self-construal and gender would interact with social anxiety in relation to exploration and commitment. In a sample of predominantly European American undergraduates ($n = 161$), higher social anxiety associated with lower vocational commitment for both women and men, after accounting for general anxiety. For women, interdependence was also associated significantly with vocational commitment. Social anxiety correlated to environmental exploration only for men low in independence. Neither social anxiety nor self-construal associated with environmental exploration for women or foreclosure for either group.

© 2006 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Keywords: Career exploration; Environmental exploration; Tendency to foreclose; Vocational exploration and commitment; Anxiety; Gender; Self-construal; Independence; Interdependence

[☆] An earlier version of this research was presented at the 113th Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association in Washington, D.C. We are grateful to Krista Leubner, Charlene Gray, and Jamie Hernandez for help with data collection and analysis, and to David Blustein for helpful comments on an earlier version of this manuscript.

^{*} Corresponding author. Fax: +1 806 742 0818.

E-mail address: erin.hardin@ttu.edu (E.E. Hardin).

1. Introduction

Exploration of the work world and oneself is a critical task in vocational development (Gottfredson, 2002; Jordaan, 1963; Super, 1957). Career exploration is particularly relevant during late adolescence when individuals are crystallizing their career choice (e.g., Super, 1957). So-called *environmental exploration* allows the individual to gain knowledge about career opportunities and the realities of different jobs, whereas *self-exploration* leads to knowledge about one's own interests and abilities. Together, environmental and self-exploration provide information about how well one's interests and abilities match specific occupations, which in turn facilitates the selection of an appropriate and meaningful occupation.

In addition to distinguishing between *what* one explores (self or environment) during the process of choosing and committing to a career, distinctions have also been made in *where* one is in the process and *how* one approaches it. According to Blustein, Ellis, and Devenis's two-dimensional model (1989), "vocational exploration and commitment" (VEC) captures *where* one is in the process. This VEC dimension is a continuum intended to capture the full range of the career decision-making process as described by developmental theorists (e.g., Gottfredson, 1981; Super, 1957), in which individuals begin with an awareness of the need to make a career decision, but lack necessary information about themselves and the world of work to be able to make a confident career decision. This undecided state is followed by an exploratory phase in which individuals acquire information about themselves and the work environment through the processes of self- and environmental exploration. This information, in turn, enables individuals to crystallize their interests and make confident career choices.

How one approaches exploration is captured by Blustein, Ellis, and Devenis's (1989) tendency to foreclose (TTF) dimension, with an openness to the process on one end, and a tendency to foreclose on the process at the other end. "A strong tendency to foreclose is defined by the desire to commit to important educational and career decisions as soon as possible and an analogous attempt to adhere to these choices even in the face of disconfirming evidence," (Blustein et al., 1989, p. 347). This tendency to foreclose may occur at any point in the career decision-making process, leading an individual to restrict his or her career exploration or leading to a premature commitment to a career choice.

Consistent with Blustein's (1997) call for a more context-rich perspective on career exploration, it is important to examine both intrapersonal and cultural factors that influence career exploration. One variable that may be considered both a personal and a contextual variable and that has been consistently linked to the career decision-making process is anxiety. Previous research has focused on the role of trait anxiety in the career decision-making process (Callanan & Greenhaus, 1990, 1992; Gloria & Hird, 1999; Greenhaus & Connolly, 1982). Trait anxiety refers to one's tendency to experience anxiety in response to a wide range of situations and triggers (Spielberger, 1966). In light of the social nature of many of the tasks involved in career exploration (particularly environmental exploration), variables related to the more specific construct of social anxiety have also been explored as important predictors of the exploration and commitment process. For example, past research has found that shy college students seek less career-related information and are more undecided about their careers than non-shy students (Phillips & Bruch, 1988). Another study found that although shyness was unrelated to environmental and self-exploration, shy students were lower in career maturity than less shy students (Hamer & Bruch, 1997).

متن کامل مقاله

دریافت فوری ←

ISIArticles

مرجع مقالات تخصصی ایران

- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه تمام متن مقالات انگلیسی
- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه ترجمه شده مقالات
- ✓ پذیرش سفارش ترجمه تخصصی
- ✓ امکان جستجو در آرشیو جامعی از صدها موضوع و هزاران مقاله
- ✓ امکان دانلود رایگان ۲ صفحه اول هر مقاله
- ✓ امکان پرداخت اینترنتی با کلیه کارت های عضو شتاب
- ✓ دانلود فوری مقاله پس از پرداخت آنلاین
- ✓ پشتیبانی کامل خرید با بهره مندی از سیستم هوشمند رهگیری سفارشات