

Educational Aspirations: The Contribution of Personality, Self-Efficacy, and Interests

Patrick J. Rottinghaus, Lori D. Lindley, Melinda A. Green, and Fred H. Borgen

Iowa State University

In a sample of 365 college students, the authors examined the incremental role of personality, self-efficacy, and interests in explaining level of educational aspirations. Measures were the Adjective Check List (ACL) (Gough & Heilbrun, 1983), the Skills Confidence Inventory (Betz, Borgen, & Harmon, 1996), and the six General Occupational Themes (GOTs) of the Strong Interest Inventory (Harmon, Hansen, Borgen, & Hammer, 1994). The Big Five personality dimensions were estimated from the ACL using John's (1990) method. The authors predicted that each of these domains would make independent contributions to explaining level of educational aspirations (1 = bachelor's, 2 = master's, and 3 = doctorate). Sequentially, following Lent, Brown, and Hackett's (1994) social cognitive career theory, blocks of the Big Five, six General Conference Themes, and six GOTs were entered into a hierarchical regression predicting educational level. With the addition of each block, R^2 rose from .10, to .26, to .29 for the total sample; similar incremental predictions were obtained separately for women (.13, .29, and .32) and men (.13, .30, and .37). © 2002 Elsevier Science (USA)

Key Words: interests; personality; Big Five; self-efficacy; Strong Interest Inventory; educational aspirations; social cognitive career theory.

Although the process of career choice has been widely investigated, vocational psychologists have less frequently examined educational aspirations. Yet career aspirations and educational aspirations are closely intertwined in many ways. Many careers require a specific level of education. One cannot be a doctor, lawyer, teacher, or psychologist without the requisite level of education (cf. Arbona, 2000). The current study examined the psychological characteristics of college students aspiring to different levels of educational attainment (bachelor's degree, master's degree, and doctoral degree). Specifically, this study investigated the incremental effects of personality, self-efficacy, and interest domains in predicting college students' educational aspirations. Predictions about educational aspirations were

A version of this article was presented at the 109th annual convention of the American Psychological Association, San Francisco, August 2001. We thank the staff of Consulting Psychologists Press for their support of this project. We are grateful to Susan X Day for her helpful comments on an earlier draft of this article.

Address correspondence and reprint requests to Patrick J. Rottinghaus, Department of Psychology, Iowa State University, W283 Lagomarcino Hall, Ames, IA 50011. E-mail: protting@iastate.edu.

drawn from Holland's (1973, 1985, 1997) theory of vocational personalities; the Five-Factor Model (Costa & McCrae, 1992); and Lent, Brown, and Hackett's (1994) vocational adaptation of Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory to career behaviors.

Lent and associates' (1994) social cognitive career theory (SCCT) provides a comprehensive theoretical explanation for career choice. According to SCCT, person inputs (including attributes such as personality traits) and background contextual affordances affect learning experiences, which in turn influence self-efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations. These processes are precursors to interest development, subsequently influencing choice goals such as educational aspirations. In addition, Lent and colleagues postulated that self-efficacy and outcome expectations each have a direct effect on career choice goals and actions, whereas person inputs have an indirect effect on these mechanisms through contextual influences.

Numerous studies have provided strong support for the propositions related to the influence of self-efficacy and interests on career choices (Fouad & Smith, 1996; Lapan, Shaughnessy, & Boggs, 1996; Lopez, Lent, Brown, & Gore, 1997). However, most studies were not comprehensive in that they investigated these processes within the domains of math and science alone (Swanson & Gore, 2000; Tracey & Hopkins, 2001; for an examination of additional subject matter domains, see Smith & Fouad, 1999). Likewise, the influence of personality on vocational behavior has not been explicitly examined within the framework of SCCT.

Many studies have demonstrated the influence of personality on career aspirations, orientation, and choice (Tokar, Fischer, & Subich, 1998). For instance, Rojewski and Yang (1997) showed that a combination of internal locus of control and self-esteem predicted the prestige level of career aspirations of high school students. In a study of 663 adolescent women, O'Brien and Fassinger (1993) found that agentic characteristics, including mathematics confidence, instrumentality, and career confidence, related positively to career orientation and choosing science-related, prestigious, and nontraditional careers. These findings relate to the current study by demonstrating the connection among personality, self-efficacy, and career choice tendencies.

Because interests are empirically linked with personality (Larson, Rottinghaus, & Borgen, 2002) and considered by many to be an expression of personality (Holland, 1997), clarifying the incremental contribution of each set to various career goals and behaviors strengthens the scientific understanding of career development. Investigating how these processes operate for the outcome variable of educational aspirations would further establish the theoretical propositions of SCCT. Therefore, the current study examined the unique and joint effects of personality traits, self-efficacy, and interests in the educational aspirations of college students.

Domains of Personality, Self-Efficacy, and Interests

The Five-Factor Model (Costa & McCrae, 1992) served as the basis for personality variables under investigation. This descriptive representation of the broad structure of personality traits was constructed over the past 60 years through the

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