

Perspectives on Future Directions in Vocational Psychology

Nancy E. Betz

The Ohio State University

This review highlights some themes of and issues raised by the 10 articles in this 30-year retrospective of the *Journal of Vocational Behavior*. Major research directions, described often as opportunities, include research on issues of diversity, especially including race and social class; uses and implications of new technologies for vocational behavior; organizational career development; and longitudinal research, especially on the phenomenon of work adjustment over the life span. Common issues raised as challenges to our field were whether to emphasize the use of newer qualitative methodologies and the degree to which we should expand our disciplinary focus (e.g., to sociology, economics, and education) versus strengthening our ties to and identity with psychology. The crucial importance of continuing to attract new researchers to vocational behavior was a frequently mentioned challenge. The article concludes with a summary of recommendations for the future. © 2001 Academic Press

In the year of the 30th anniversary of *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, it is an honor to be asked to comment on the articles of this group of scholars who represent leaders in the field of vocational research. They were asked by editor Mark Savickas to provide their own visions for the next 10 years, or more, of vocational research, including in their observations concerning the strengths and weaknesses of, opportunities for, and threats to vocational psychology.

The First Thirty Years

Before beginning my review of these articles, I recall the role of Samuel H. Osipow, Professor Emeritus of The Ohio State University, as founder of the *Journal of Vocational Behavior*. Speaking of visions, Sam had one—as he wrote after searching, often unsuccessfully, for outlets for his empirical research on careers, “it gradually occurred to me that a good, empirically-based periodical in which vocational matters were the focus was essential for the study of careers to progress” (Osipow, 1991, p. 291). Thirty years later, in large part because of the journal he founded, vocational psychology is flourishing, and it is a well-regarded field of applied psychology. Tinsley’s article herein documents the productivity of vocational psychologists, and the *Journal of Vocational Behavior* now has the highest impact rating (2.04) of any applied psychology journal.

¹ Address correspondence and reprint requests to Nancy E. Betz, Department of Psychology, 1885 Neil Avenue Mall, Columbus, OH 43210-1222. E-mail: betz.3@osu.edu.

In addition to this vision, Sam was even then a social activist. He made efforts to bring women onto the editorial board (not at all common in the 1970s) and served as an important mentor to many female scholars. Sam also encouraged research on the career development of women and racial/ethnic minority groups. The *Journal of Vocational Behavior* became known as a major outlet for research on women's careers, and it helped bring research on women's and minority career development into the mainstream, where it remains firmly today. (See also Tinsley's article herein.)

Given this leadership in research on the vocational development of women and minorities, it seems quite fitting that the most frequently and strongly emphasized directions in vocational psychology are those related to the objectives of diversity and social justice. I comment more extensively on this in the section to follow.

In addition to its fostering of research on the career development of women and minorities, traditions of psychometric excellence and the importance of basing research on theory were also established by Osipow. As can be seen in the articles herein, these emphases are still strong, and they are still essential to the quality and impact of our work.

In addition to reminding readers of the vision of the founder of this journal, Sam Osipow, Bruce Walsh reminds us of the series of articles contained in the 20-year (1991) retrospective on vocational research. This retrospective, orchestrated by Howard E. A. Tinsley, editor of *Journal of Vocational Behavior* from 1990 to 1998, included six topical review articles (Borgen, 1991; Chartrand & Camp, 1991; Hackett, Lent, & Greenhaus, 1991; London & Greller, 1991; Loscocco & Roschelle, 1991; Russell, 1991) followed by three response articles (Betz, 1991; Harmon, 1991; Osipow, 1991). Together these provided comprehensive reviews and analyses of the state of our field.

Opportunities: Research Directions

Now, in the year 2001, we are 30 years old, and it seems an appropriate time to "take stock" and look ahead. The articles in this volume do that very well. In reading these articles, I have observed a number of common themes or issues which will constitute the first focus of my remarks. Even though there are some common themes, there is (fortunately) considerable diversity as well of focus and emphasis. This is, in my opinion, a good thing. We have not come this far as a field without diversity of viewpoint and of method, and I am glad to see this continuing.

If there is a common theme among all these articles it involves the focus on diversity and social justice. Part of this emphasis is the continuation of our traditional focus on women's careers, but it is time now to more aggressively enlarge this focus to other underserved groups, including members of all racial/ethnic minority groups, people representing other cultures, people with disabilities, and people of varying sexual orientations. Key words here are "relevance," of our theories, concepts, and methods, and "inclusiveness" (Blustein and Lent). Few would disagree with the importance of this because of fundamental fairness and because the composition of the population is increasingly diverse. It is increasingly impossible

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