

LOCUS OF CONTROL AND CONSISTENCY OF MEASURED VOCATIONAL INTERESTS

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Abstract

The study examined the relationship between Rotter's (1966) concept of locus of control and certain constructs from Holland's (1966) theory. The Kuder DD Occupational Interest Survey (OIS) and Rotter's I-E Scale were administered to 162 freshmen male students at Acadia University. Primary and secondary vocational types, and consistent and inconsistent patterns were established from the OIS following Holland's classification system. Intellectual and Realistic types differed significantly at the .05 and .01 level respectively from the remaining four vocational types in the direction of greater external control. Individuals with consistent patterns were significantly (.05 level) more internally controlled than those with inconsistent patterns.

Résumé

Le but de notre étude était d'examiner les relations existant entre le concept de Rotter sur le locus de contrôle (1966) et certains aspects de la théorie de Holland (1966). Cent soixante-deux étudiants d'Acadia, tous de sexe masculin, inscrits en première année d'études, ont subi le test Kuder DD sur les motivations occupationnelles (OIS). Les vocations de type primaire ou secondaire, les schémas de comportement conséquents ou inconséquents déterminés par le test OIS ont été classés selon le système de Holland. Aux niveaux .05 et .01 respectivement, les types intellectuels et réalistes différaient de manière significative des 4 autres types vocationnels et cela dans le sens d'un contrôle extérieur plus important. Les sujets au comportement conséquent présentaient, au niveau .05, un contrôle interne plus significatif que leurs homologues inconséquents.

Holland (1966) maintains that stability of vocational choice is a function "of both the dominant characteristics and the consistency of the personality pattern (p. 43)." Thus, Holland considers Realistic and Intellectual types more stable than the Artistic, Social, Conventional, or Enterprising types, and combinations of any two of the six types sharing common psychological traits as more stable than those that do not. Further, Holland sees "stability" or "consistency" as an index of the individual's ability to resist external pressure; the individual with a consistent pattern having greater self-direction than a person with an inconsistent pattern.

Foster and Gade (1973) have already discussed the theoretical similarities between vocational consistency and Rotter's (1966) locus of control. While their research disclosed no

significant interaction between the two constructs, it raised questions which partially prompted the present study.

Specifically, the present investigation was a response to two questions: Do Intellectual and Realistic types differ from Holland's remaining four types in terms of locus of control? Do individuals with consistent patterns differ from individuals with inconsistent vocational patterns in terms of Rotter's construct?

Method

The data were drawn from 162 freshman male students at Acadia University who took the Kuder DD Occupational Interest Survey (OIS; Kuder, 1966), during the 1971 freshmen orientation program and subsequently volunteered to take Rotter's (1966) I-E Scale.

Table 1
 Comparison of Mean I-E Scores Between
 Intellectual Types and Social, Enterprising,
 Conventional and Artistic Types Combined

Vocational type	N	Mean	SD	t	p
Intellectual	65	11.34	4.05	2.18	.05
Social, Enterprising, Conventional, Artistic	47	9.68	3.84		

Table 2
 Comparison of Mean I-E Scores Between
 Realistic Types and Social, Enterprising,
 Conventional and Artistic Types Combined

Vocational type	N	Mean	SD	t	p
Realistic	51	11.88	3.75	2.86	.01
Social, Enterprising, Conventional, Artistic	47	9.68	3.84		

Table 3
 Comparison of Mean I-E Scores for Consistent
 and Inconsistent Vocational Patterns

Vocational pattern	N	Mean	SD	t	p
Consistent	94	10.42	3.8	2.31	.05
Inconsistent	69	11.87	4.1		

Each OIS occupational scale for men was classified according to Holland's six vocational types outlined by Holland, Whitney, Cole, and Richards (1969). For this study, only the first category of the 4-way classification was used. For example, social worker, with a code of SIEA, was simply placed in the Social category.

The primary vocational type was determined by finding the highest number of occupational scales representing one of Holland's six vocational types. Only scores within .06 of the top occupational scale were considered. Similarly, the next highest number of scales representing one of the five remaining vocational types and falling within .06 of the top scale became the secondary vocational type. In cases of ties, that is, where there were an equal number of scales representing two vocational types, the scores of the scales for each type were averaged by transforming the correlation coefficients into Fisher's "Z", taking the arithmetic mean of the "Zs", and converting the "Z" into the equivalent correlation (Garret, 1962). The higher mean score became the primary type.

Consistent and inconsistent vocational patterns were determined by referring to the "hexagonal model" described by Holland et al. (1969). Primary-secondary types occupying adjacent positions on the hexagon were considered consistent. As well, Artistic-Enterprising and Conventional-Social combinations in either order, were considered consistent because a higher correlation exists between them than some types lying side by side. The remaining combinations were considered inconsistent.

The I-E Scales were scored in the direction of external control.

Results

Table 1 indicates that Intellectual types differed significantly in the direction of external control from Social, Enterprising, Conventional, and Artistic types treated as a single variable.

Similarly, Table 2 shows that Realistic types differed significantly in an external direction from the four vocational types treated as a single variable.

As Table 3 demonstrates, individuals with consistent vocational patterns were significantly more internally controlled than those with inconsistent patterns.

Discussion

The results supported certain theoretical considerations advanced by Foster and Gade (1973). Individuals with consistent vocational patterns were indeed more internally controlled than individuals with inconsistent patterns. While further research is obviously needed, the results do seem to hold some promise for expanding our knowledge of the vocationally indecisive individual.

Following Holland's position, however, it was difficult to explain just why Intellectual and Realistic types were more externally controlled than the other four types. Cultural influences, of course, may play a part. Mean I-E scores reported elsewhere (Rotter, 1966; Parsons and Schneider, 1974) for U.S. and Canadian students have tended to be lower than that of the present sample.

Conceivably then, in a rural maritime setting characterized by a heavy economic reliance on nature i.e. fishing, farming, and mining, which in turn engenders a certain 'realistic' outlook on life, and by traditional familial and religious ties, parents may not only have a greater hold over their children than in urban areas, but more actively support and encourage scientific or mechanical interests because of their perceived utilitarian value. Again, such speculation calls for more research.

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