

SELF-ESTEEM AND SATISFACTION WITH HOLLAND'S SDS

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Abstract

Two studies were conducted to assess the influence of self-esteem on student satisfaction with Holland's Self-Directed Search (SDS). Eleventh grade students from two high schools in Kings County, Nova Scotia rated the SDS according to two criteria: reasonableness and usefulness of the results. Two Likert type items were used to quantify the criteria. To differentiate high and low self-esteem groups, a median split of the total P scores of the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale was used. The satisfaction ratings of the high and low self-esteem groups were compared by means of T tests. In each study the high esteem group reported significantly greater satisfaction ($p < .05$) on the second criterion, planned use of the SDS results.

Résumé

On a mené deux études afin d'établir l'influence de l'estime pour soi-même sur le degré de satisfaction des étudiants à partir du Processus d'Auto-Evaluation Self-Directed Search (SDS) élaboré par Holland. Des étudiants de onzième année, de deux écoles secondaires du comté de Kings en Nouvelle-Ecosse, jugèrent le Processus (SDS) en fonction de deux critères: rationalité et utilité des résultats. Deux éléments de type 'likert' furent utilisés pour la quantification des critères. Afin de différencier les groupes dont l'estime pour soi-même est positif ou négatif, on a opéré une division médiane des résultats d'ensemble P de l'Echelle d'Auto-Concept du Tennessee (Tennessee Self-Concept Scale). L'échelle de satisfaction des groupes dont l'estime pour soi-même est positif ou négatif fut alors comparée par le moyen de T tests. Dans chaque étude on a pu noter un indice de satisfaction notablement plus grand ($p < .05$) dans le groupe positif, à propos du second critère, l'usage prévu des résultats du Processus (SDS).

Self-help techniques in career guidance have grown out of a response both to meet the growing demands for services under economically austere conditions and to make career guidance relevant and attractive to the ever increasing clientele (Grimmestad, 1975).

Holland (1971) developed a self-administered and self-interpreted instrument to provide a vocational counselling experience, the Self-Directed Search (SDS). Although many validation studies of the SDS have been conducted (Krivatsy & Magoon, 1976; McGowan, 1974; Nolan, 1974; Redmond, 1973; Zener & Schnuelle, 1976), further research needs to be done to determine which clients are satisfied using this self-directed program and which clients are not satisfied.

The purpose of this research was to determine if self-esteem moderates client satisfaction with a self-help career guidance instrument. Korman (1966, 1967b) has found that self-esteem affects vocational choice in several ways. In contrast to low self-esteem persons, high self-esteem persons have (a) personal traits consistent with their chosen occupations, and (b) a greater degree of

congruence between self-perceived abilities and the abilities required of the chosen occupations. Korman (1967a) also found that personal attributes and needs of high self-esteem persons were more predictive of vocational choice than were the personal needs and attributes of low self-esteem persons.

The work of Greenhaus (1971) lends additional support to the importance of self-esteem in vocational decision making. Greenhaus concluded from his findings that low self-esteem individuals tended to look externally toward social cues rather than at the degree of congruence in determining their occupational satisfaction, whereas individuals of high self-esteem look more toward the relevance of their self-perceived characteristics. A study by Greenhaus and Simon (1976) also reported that self-esteem was related to satisfying personal needs through occupational choice.

It would appear to follow logically that self-esteem would affect one's appreciation of the SDS results as this instrument simply serves as a method of translating personal attributes and needs into occupational options. It was predicted

that students of high self-esteem would report greater satisfaction with the SDS results than their low self-esteem counterparts.

METHOD

Two independent studies were designed to test the hypothesis that self-esteem would affect the satisfaction ratings of high school SDS users. The samples consisted of grade eleven students in two different high schools in Kings County, Nova Scotia. Self-esteem was operationalized as the *P* score on the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale (TSCS). Satisfaction with the SDS was measured by two Likert type items: (a) My summary code occupations seem reasonable to me, and (b) I plan to use the results in my future educational planning. These items have been used in other studies, to measure satisfaction with the SDS (Christensen, Gelso, Williams, & Sedlacek, 1975; Collins & Sedlacek, 1972). The Likert scale ranged from (1) strongly agree to (5) strongly disagree.

Procedure for Study 1

Forty-four grade eleven students were tested during class time. The TSCS was administered first followed one week later by the SDS. Both instruments were given with minimal instructions from the administrator (a graduate student). For the SDS, students were simply told that by completing it they would have the opportunity to learn something about themselves. No promise or indication of further help or assistance in interpretation was given. With the TSCS, students were told that their cooperation was needed for research purposes, and that although their names were required on the answer sheet, no one but the researchers would review their scores. Absenteeism on both testing days reduced the final sample to 36.

Procedure for Study 2

In the second school, instead of testing a "captured audience," the SDS was made available to any grade eleven student who wished to come to the guidance office to complete it. The availability of the SDS was advertised via the PA system as "an interest test designed to help students make vocational and educational decisions." The SDS booklet and occupations finder were placed on a table in the guidance office and students used them without assistance.

After three weeks, the 49 students who had voluntarily taken the SDS were asked to return to the guidance office at their convenience for the purpose of helping out in a research project. These students were informed that the research being done necessitated their taking another test. They were also assured of the confidential nature of the

test results. Twenty-two students agreed to take the TSCS.

RESULTS

For both studies a median split of the *P* scores on the TSCS was used to dichotomize high and low self-esteem groups. In the first study the mean *P* scores for the high and low group respectively were 353.36 and 294.54. For the second sample the mean *P* scores were 351.88 and 299.06. The mean and standard deviations of the two dependent measures for both samples dichotomized on self-esteem are presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1
Means and Standard Deviations of the Satisfaction Scores for High and Low Self-esteem Students

	Reasonableness		Usefulness	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Study 1				
High Self-Esteem	2.39	1.04	2.56	.86
Low Self-Esteem	2.94	1.16	3.22	1.11
Study 2				
High Self-Esteem	2.73	1.42	2.64	1.03
Low Self-Esteem	3.00	1.55	3.36	1.36

Mean scores for the high self-esteem groups ranged from 2.39 to 2.73 indicating mild satisfaction with the SDS. Mean scores for the low self-esteem groups ranged from 2.94 to 3.36 indicating mild dissatisfaction.

Significant differences in the mean scores for the high and low self-esteem groups for each dependent variable were determined by use of directional *t* tests for independent samples.

Study 1

In this study, where classroom testing was used, the high and low self-esteem groups did not differ significantly in regard to their ratings of the reasonableness of the results. As predicted the high self-esteem group did report significantly greater satisfaction with the SDS in terms of planned use of the results, $t(34) = 2.02, p < .05$.

Study 2

The results of this study involving the voluntary use of the SDS duplicates the results of the first study. There was no significant difference between high and low self-esteem groups regarding their assessment of the reasonableness of the SDS results. However, the groups did differ significantly in the predicted direction in their reported intent to use the results, $t(20) = 2.10, p < .05$.

DISCUSSION

Even with very small sample sizes, significant differences were found in both studies. Students with high self-esteem are apparently more willing to try to use the results of the SDS than their low self-esteem counterparts. Obviously, if many students with relatively low self-esteem do not intend to use the results of the SDS the indiscriminate administration of this self-help instrument makes little sense. Counsellors should be alert to the fact that simply having self-help devices available, or even systematically administering them may not meet the needs of many students.

It is of course possible that low self-esteem students are less appreciative of any kind of vocational guidance intervention strategy. However, observation of satisfaction and indications of the willingness to use information can be more readily assessed through direct counsellor-student contact.

The results of this study might also suggest to the school counsellor that the counsellor's commitment to personal growth should not be abandoned in the rush to implement career guidance programs in their schools. Knowing about oneself is important. Liking oneself would appear to be at least equally important.

More research is necessary to determine whether or not the findings of this study can be generalized to self-help programs other than the SDS. It would also be appropriate to substitute more objective criteria than the subjective satisfaction ratings used in this study.

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