THE INTERSECTION OF VOCATIONAL INTERESTS WITH EMPLOYMENT AND COURSE ENROLMENTS

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Underlying thesis of this paper

- To find out what one is fitted to do and to secure an opportunity to do it is the key to happiness. Nothing is more tragic than failure to discover one's true business in life, or to find that one has drifted or been forced by circumstance into an uncongenial calling. A right occupation means simply that the aptitudes of a person are in adequate play, working with the minimum of friction and the maximum of satisfaction. (p. 240)
The relationship between interests and achievement

- 66% of students were best at the subject that was their first preference;
- 72% were best at a subject that was consistent with their vocational choice;
The relationship between interests and achievement

- The preference rank for best subject was 0.84 (ranks varied from 0 to 1); and
- The preference rank for the weakest subject was 0.19 (ranks varied from 0 to 1).
Why assess interests?

- a component of career development especially when people have some freedom of choice
Why assess vocational interests?

- interest assessment is founded on a person-environment fit theory that categorises both occupations and people in parallel ways
- other things being equal - people possessing interests similar to a particular occupation will probably find that type of employment rewarding
The implication is that in talking about interests we might actually be including components of ability, values and effort.
Gottfredson’s Theory of Compromise

• tried to explain why people often follow carers that do not match their interests
• looked at the external barriers that restrict our goals and opportunities
Gottfredson’s Theory of Compromise 2

• when people have to compromise their aspirations the sacrifices that they make are firstly in terms of their interests, next their prestige and finally the sex-typing of the occupation
Gottfredson’s Theory of Compromise 3

• For Gottfredson each individual develops a zone of acceptable alternatives
• Career development (i.e., work) was seen as a way of becoming a social self and it emphasises the public aspects such as gender, social class and intelligence
• Gottfredson treats occupational choices as a process of eliminating options and narrowing one’s choices and she sees that process beginning in childhood
The graph illustrates the prestige of different occupations on a masculinity-femininity scale. It shows a high prestige for judges and a low prestige for miners on the left, with the manicurist falling in the middle range. The y-axis represents prestige, with higher values indicating higher prestige.
John Dewey
Questionnaire

Introduction 1 2 3 Finish Results

Read each pair of work tasks. Think which one you would like the most. Mark the circle that matches your answer. If you are not sure, then just guess what is best for you. You have to choose one, and you cannot leave any blank.

Would you rather:

- Grow Crops
- Diagnose an Illness
- Design Buildings
- Help Families With Problems
- Prepare Tax Returns
- Visit Customers
- Measure Blocks of Land
- Make Diamond Rings
- Help Sick People in Hospital
- Organise Travel Plans
- Teach in a School
- Train for Sport
- Defend Someone in Court
- Manage a Library
- Look After Forests

or

- Fix Machines
- Fly a Plane
- Work in a Science Lab
- Paint Portraits
- Be in Charge of Workers
- Look After Children
- Sell Medicines
- Fix Lights
- Massage Sore Muscles
- Play in a Band
- Design Bridges
- Act in a Play
- Treat Sick Animals
- Write a Novel
- Help People with Injuries

Done
Results

Introduction 1 2 3 Finish Results

Below are listed the interest groups in order of your preference. The score next to the name shows how strongly your answers indicate an interest in that group. You can take a look now at some suggested occupations/career fields by clicking on the links at the bottom of the page, and you can combine these results with others in the next section (Exploring) to refine your choices.

Business
12
You like meeting people, talking, discussing, and leading others such as in law, politics, buying and selling. This involves business relations with people, as with travel agents, shopkeepers, executives and managers.

Office
11
You like working indoors with clerical tasks which involve organizing and being accurate. This may involve planning and controlling. Clerical jobs such as secretary, office worker, receptionist, bank clerk and computer operator are in this category. Also, this means you like to work with numbers and do calculations such as in finance or statistics. A high interest in this area means that you might like such office jobs as computer programmer, barrister or economist.

Practical
9
You like to work mainly with tools and equipment, making and fixing things as well as operating machines. Jobs in this area include pilots, factory workers, technicians and engineers.

Scientific
9
You like to discover ideas, observe, investigate and experiment. This includes medical and health occupations. Doctors, pharmacists, zoologists, dentists, chemists and physicists have high scientific interests.
The Career Wizard questionnaire is divided into sections on jobs, courses and hobbies. Read each question carefully. Think which option you like the most and mark that one. If you're not sure then just guess what is best for you. You have to choose one and you can't leave any blank.

**JOBS**

1. Grow Crops OR Fix Machines
2. Diagnose an Illness OR Fly a Plane
3. Design Buildings OR Work in a Science Lab
4. Help Families with Problems OR Paint Portraits
5. Prepare Tax Returns OR Be in Charge of Workers
6. Visit Customers OR Look after Children
7. Measure Blocks of Land OR Pharmacist-Chemist
8. Make Diamond Rings OR Fix Lights
9. Help Sick People in Hospital OR Massage Sore Muscles
10. Organise Travel Plans OR Play in a Band
11. Teach in a School OR Design Bridges
12. Train for Sport OR Act in a Play
13. Own a Shop OR Fix Computers
14. Defend Someone in Court OR Treat Sick Animals
15. Manage a Library OR Wait for a Newspaper
Interest Assessment

The Career questionnaire is divided into sections on jobs, courses and hobbies. Read each question carefully. Think which option you like the most and mark that circle. If you’re not sure then just guess what is best for you. You have to choose one and you can’t leave any blank.

Page 1 of 3

**Jobs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Farmer</th>
<th>OR</th>
<th>Mechanic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Doctor</td>
<td>OR</td>
<td>Pilot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Architect</td>
<td>OR</td>
<td>Scientist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Social Worker</td>
<td>OR</td>
<td>Artist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Accountant</td>
<td>OR</td>
<td>Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Sales Representative</td>
<td>OR</td>
<td>Child Care Worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Surveyor</td>
<td>OR</td>
<td>Pharmacist/Chemist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Jeweller</td>
<td>OR</td>
<td>Electrician</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Nurse</td>
<td>OR</td>
<td>Physiotherapist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Travel Agent</td>
<td>OR</td>
<td>Musician</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>OR</td>
<td>Engineer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Sportsman/Woman</td>
<td>OR</td>
<td>Actor/Actress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Business Owner</td>
<td>OR</td>
<td>Electronics Technician</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Lawyer</td>
<td>OR</td>
<td>Veterinarian</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results
Figure 2. Career interest preferences (N=7477).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Ou</th>
<th>Pr</th>
<th>Sc</th>
<th>Cr</th>
<th>Bu</th>
<th>Of</th>
<th>PC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
<td>7.59</td>
<td>8.37</td>
<td>7.66</td>
<td>10.16</td>
<td>10.97</td>
<td>7.85</td>
<td>10.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SD</strong></td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>4.19</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>3.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Proportion of total score</strong></td>
<td>12.0%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
<td><strong>16.1%</strong></td>
<td><strong>17.4%</strong></td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td><strong>16.5%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Ou= Outdoor; Pr = Practical; Sc = Scientific; Cr = Creative; Bu = Business; Of = Office; PC = People Contact; Note scores range from 0 to 18; The total score overall on the *Career Interest Test* is 63.*
employment
Figure 3. Types of occupations available in Australia (N=474).
Figure 4. Numbers of jobs in Australia (N=8.9 million).
### Distribution of courses and subject enrolments in the Higher School Certificate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Courses % of total</th>
<th>Enrolments % of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ou</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pr</td>
<td>22.6%</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sc</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cr</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bu</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PC</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classics/Modern languages</td>
<td>16.9%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>20.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>180</strong></td>
<td><strong>300200</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Distribution of interests, employment and course enrolments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Interests</th>
<th>Occupations</th>
<th>Courses¹</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ou</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pr</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>23.7%</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sc</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cr</td>
<td>16.1%</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bu</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
<td>24.9%</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PC</td>
<td>16.5%</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 5. Comparison of career interests, occupations and courses.