Personality and Career Study

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Academic success is a useful predictor for career success.

Higher extroversion, conscientiousness, and agreeableness are correlated with higher career success.

INTRODUCTION

Success in General

- Success is defined as achieving a desired aim, goal, or purpose. [1]
- Success can lead to both physical and psychological benefits. [2]
- Success is measured in two different ways: objectively and subjectively
  - People tend to view their success in a subjective way. [3]

[1] Dyke & Murphy (2006);
[2] Fry (1976);
[3] Pan & Zhou (2015)

Academic and Career Success

- Subjective measures of academic success are feelings of accomplishment, persistence in getting a degree, and college satisfaction.
- Subjective measures of career success are career satisfaction and commitment to the career.
- Previous studies have found that academic success is a good indicator of career success. [1]
- The presence of a worldwide pandemic has increased stress levels in the population.
  - Over 40% of people have reported increased stress from their career and financial matters since COVID began. [2]

[1] Weinstein & Srinivasan (1974);
[2] Al Dhaheri et al. (2021)

Personality

- Personality is relatively constant through a lifespan. [1]
- The Big Five Personality Inventory considers extroversion, agreeableness, openness, conscientiousness, and neuroticism to be the most important traits to determine personality. [2]
- Personality is one predictor of how successful someone is. [3]
  - Previous research has suggested that personality traits such as conscientiousness, extroversion, and agreeableness can be predictors of academic and career success. [4]

[1] Roberts & DelVecchio (2000);
[2] Digman (1990);
[3] Harrell, Harrel, McIntyre, & Weinberg (1977);
[4] Alkış and Temizel (2018); Judge et al. (2007)

STUDY AIMS and HYPOTHESES

- The goal of this study is to learn more about the relationship between academic success, career success and personality and the predictive qualities these may have.

- Hypothesis 1: Greater academic success can predict greater career success.
- Hypothesis 2: There will be a significant, positive correlation between academic success and conscientiousness.
- Hypothesis 3: There will be a significant, positive correlation between career success and conscientiousness, agreeableness, and extraversion
- Hypothesis 4: There will be a significant decrease in career success during COVID-19 compared to before COVID-19.

METHODS

Participants

353 Winona State Alumni

- Gender
  - 66.9% (N= 236) women, 32.6% (N = 115) men
- Age:
  - 22-85 years (M = 45.69, SD = 15.98)
- Ethnicity:
  - Asian/Pacific Islander – 1.7%
  - African American – 0.3%
  - Hispanic – 0.6%
  - Caucasian – 94.9%
  - Other – 2.5%
- Education
  - Associates Degree - 0.8%
  - Bachelor's Degree – 55.8%
  - Graduate's Degree – 38.2%
  - Other – 5.1%

- Marital Status:
  - Married– 67.7%
  - Widowed – 2.0%
  - Divorced – 8.8%
  - Separated – 0.3%
  - Never Married – 21.2%
- Career Status:
  - Asian/Pacific Islander – 1.7%
  - African American – 0.3%
  - Hispanic – 0.6%
  - Caucasian – 94.9%
  - Other – 2.5%

Measures

- **Demographics:** Age, gender, education, ethnicity, marital status, and career status
- **Academic Success:**
  - Academic success was measured using self report. Participants were asked to reflect on their college experience and report their perceived success in three, author-generated questions.
- **Career Success:**
  - Career success was also measured using self-report. Two author-generated questions summarized how participants perceived career success.
- **Personality:** The Big Five Personality Inventory (Soto & John, 2017)
  - Participants responded to 30 statements relating to the 5 personality traits: extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, negative emotionality, and open mindedness. Items were scored on a 5-point scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Procedures

- The study was approved by the WSU IRB.
- Participants completed an online, anonymous survey assessing academic success, career success (before and during COVID) and personality.
  - Consent was obtained at the beginning of the survey.

Statistical Analyses

- Means and standard deviations were calculated for the descriptive variables.
- A linear regression and correlations were computed to understand the relationship between personality, academic success, and career success.
- A paired samples t-test was performed to determine if there was a difference between career success before and during COVID.

RESULTS

Academic and Career Success

- Linear regression showed that academic success contributed to approximately 5.2% of the variance in career success, R^2 = .052. ΔF (1, 226) = 12.39, $p < .001$.
- The regression coefficient indicates that for every increase in one's academic success, career success increased by 0.31, $b = 0.31$, $t(226) = 3.52$, $p < .001$.

Personality

- A correlation computation found that personality traits were correlated with academic and career success.
- See Correlation coefficients in table 1.

Before COVID – during COVID

- A paired samples t-test found a significant different in the reported success of participants before COVID (M = 3.93, SD = 0.80) and during COVID (M = 3.80, SD = 0.83; $t(218)$ = 2.50, p = .013).

Table 1

Table of Correlations for Main Variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Academic Success	--							
2. Career Success (Before COVID)	.23**	--						
3. Career Success (During COVID)	.14*	.53**	--					
4. Extraversion	.46**	.18**	.21**	--				
5. Agreeableness	.13*	.19**	.18**	0.09	--			
6. Conscientiousness	.26**	.25**	.25**	.36**	.167**	--		
7. Negative Emotionality	-.30**	-.28**	-.37**	-.32**	-.157**	-.32**	--	
8. Open Mindedness	.13*	0.09	.18**	.18**	.206**	0.07	-.14**	--

*Note: *$p < .05$, **$p < .001$, two tailed, N = 353*

DISCUSSION

- This research is intended to understand what factors can influence being successful in a career.
- The collected data supports the previous research and the original hypotheses and suggests that academic success can predict career success and certain personality traits are correlated with career success.
- In addition to the hypothesized relationships, positive correlations were found between extraversion, agreeableness, open mindedness and academic success. A negative correlation was also found between negative emotionality and both academic success and career success. Career success during COVID (but not before COVID) was positively associated with open mindedness.
- Winona State alumni participated in this study; however, it can also be applied to other graduates and people who work in diverse careers.
- By acknowledging one's own strengths and weakness, one can work to enhance skills that will lead them to be successful in the future.
- The study is limited by self-reported measures of success, correlational design, and possible confounding variables such as age.
- Additional recommendations for future research include studying how other factors such as age and other priorities in one's life affect careers success and differences between people who did not go to college or university and their career success.