

**THE INFLUENCE OF BIRTH ORDER AND GENDER ON NARCISSISM AS IT
RELATES TO CAREER DEVELOPMENT**

A Dissertation

by

CLARE MARIE DUFFY

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

August 2011

Major Subject: Counseling Psychology

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Approved by:

Chair of Committee,	Daniel Brossart
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ABSTRACT

The Influence of Birth Order and Gender on Narcissism as it Relates to Career Development. (August 2011)

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This study explored the relationship between self-development as evidenced in the domain of narcissism and the process of vocational development as evidenced in career values, planning, and decisiveness/self-efficacy. It was suggested that this relationship would be impacted by family birth order and gender. Heinz Kohut's theory of self-psychology was utilized to understand narcissism from both an adaptive and maladaptive, developmental perspective. A review of narcissism and self-development theories was included to provide a comparative and comprehensive approach. Literature indicated that the development of narcissism was influenced by birth order and gender. Additionally, a review of the literature suggested a connection between Kohut's theory of the self and narcissism and aspects of the career development process, such as planning, decision-making, and occupational values.

The sample consisted of 346 undergraduate students. Structural Equation Modeling was performed to test causal hypotheses. The major findings of the current study were that superiority (a measure of grandiosity) predicts altruistic career values and career decisiveness. Superiority is a slightly better predictor of altruistic career values than decisiveness. Additionally, goal instability (idealizing) predicts altruistic career

values and career decisiveness. Goal instability had a predictive value that was nearly three times stronger for decisiveness. The results indicated that birth order and gender were not moderator variables in examining the relationship between goal instability and superiority.

This study provided insight into the relationship between narcissism and the vocational/career development processes. These relationships may be important for career counselors and other related professionals. These findings may encourage counselors to assess and understand a client's narcissistic tendencies and individual representations when assisting in the career development process. A client's values regarding career options, along with his/her associated self-efficacy and ability to make important decisions, appear to be factors to consider when counseling an individual through vocational/career development. Limitations of the study were addressed and directions for further research discussed.

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“Tough times don’t last, tough people do.”

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This study explored the relationship of self-development, specifically narcissism, to vocational and career development. Further, the relationship between narcissism and the vocational/career development process was thought to be influenced or preceded by birth order and gender.

Narcissism has been viewed from many different perspectives and may manifest differently in individuals. Definitions of narcissism range from a developmental normalcy, potentially comprised of both positive and negative attributes, to a pathological disorder that exhibits debilitating interpersonal characteristics (American Psychiatric Association, 1994; Kohut, 1977). The development of narcissism from any perspective is thought to be influenced by dispositional factors, such as birth order and gender. Research suggests that the development of narcissism is influenced not only by the parent-child relationship as proposed by Heinz Kohut (1971), but also by the individual's placement in the family system (Adams, 1972; Belmont, 1977). Gender is another factor likely to contribute to the developmental process. For example, Sigmund Freud (1957) suggested that gender has played a role in narcissism. Recently, research also supports Freud, suggesting that there are gender-based differences in the development of narcissism (Buss & Chiodo, 1991; Philipson, 1985; Richman & Flaherty, 1988; Watson & Biderman, 1994).

This dissertation follows the style of *The Journal of Counseling Psychology*.

Narcissistic traits appear to not only influence the individual's perception of himself/herself, but also the individual's relationship with the work world. Vocational development is an important facet of individual and social development and is likely to be influenced by the adaptive and maladaptive aspects of narcissism. Robbins and Patton (1985) applied Kohut's theory of the self and narcissism to the career development process and suggested that facets of narcissism can affect an individual's career planning and decisiveness. Furthermore, researchers have demonstrated that an individual's values play an important role in career development (Brown, 2002; Elizur et al., 1991; Super, 1995). Research by Johnson (2002) found that these values develop during the individual's early years and were hypothesized in this study to be linked to the development of narcissism.

The following chapter will review the relevant literature regarding narcissism in the development of the self, career development as it relates to narcissism, and birth order and gender. This dissertation explored the relationship between self-development, specifically the domain of narcissism, and the process of vocational development as captured in the domains of career values, planning, and decisiveness/self-efficacy. It was suggested that this relationship would be moderated by family birth order and gender, revealing intergroup differences. The conceptual model and specific research questions are presented at the conclusion of Chapter II.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Narcissism in Self-Development

The term narcissism is widely used and there have been many different definitions, approaches, and uses of the term. Some definitions have viewed narcissism as a pathological personality disorder, while others define the term from a developmental and normal perspective. Increasingly, research in the area of narcissism includes both an adaptive and maladaptive aspect of the term. The following is a discussion of narcissism from its many perspectives.

In 1898, narcissism was first introduced into the psychological literature by Havelock Ellis. Ellis used the term “narcissus-like” to describe a psychological attitude (as cited in Strachey, 1957, p. 17). The term has evolved through the years to include an early developmental stage, an object relationship phenomenon, and a defense mechanism to protect the self, and it has eventually evolved into a term that relates to self-esteem (Kohut, 1966; Pulver, 1970). The third edition of the *American Psychiatric Association’s Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM) includes the first description of Narcissistic Personality Disorder (American Psychiatric Association, 1980). Since the initial designation of this disorder, there have been few changes. The fourth edition of the DSM now contains the current diagnostic criteria used in the mental health field. A diagnosis of Narcissistic Personality Disorder includes a “pervasive pattern of grandiosity (in fantasy or behavior), the need for admiration, and a lack of empathy, beginning in early childhood and present in a variety of contexts” (American Psychiatric Association, 1994, p. 658). As mentioned previously, this glimpse into the

definition of narcissism focuses on the maladaptive attributes of a narcissist. However, the DSM-IV also states, “Many highly successful individuals display personality traits that might be considered narcissistic. Only when these traits are inflexible, maladaptive, and persisting and cause significant functional impairment or subjective distress do they constitute Narcissistic Personality Disorder” (American Psychiatric Association, 1994, p. 661). Although the American Psychiatric Association’s recognition of Narcissistic Personality Disorder is an identifiable moment in the development and use of narcissism, theorists and researchers have been developing, studying, and implementing the term for decades.

Maladaptive Perspective. Perhaps the most recognized use of the term narcissism is as a pathological, maladaptive personality trait. This construct is used to describe individuals who display grandiosity and/or vulnerable affects and self-states (Cain, Pincus, & Ansell, 2008). The commonly used Narcissistic Personality Inventory approaches narcissism from a definition that considers the construct to be overt (external expression) and/or grandiose (Raskin & Hall, 1979). Another scale, The Narcissistic Personality Disorder Scale, also views narcissism as maladaptive, but as covert (internal expression), and discusses narcissists as hypersensitive (Ashby, Lee, & Duke, 1979). Narcissism is thus considered to be pathological when the individual is self-involved, self-centered, and lacking in empathy for others. These characteristics are seen to be fixed and chronic and are stable, regardless of the individual’s environment. Maladaptive narcissists do not interact with the world from a reality-based perspective, but rather from a fantasy-based one. They see themselves and their role in the world as special and

unique (Masterson & Lieberman, 2004). The above characteristics of narcissism create a disconnected and maladaptive relationship with the outside environment.

Adaptive and Maladaptive Perspective. From a clinical perspective, Sigmund Freud (1914) was one of the first to address narcissism from a dual perspective—both as a maladaptive and adaptive function of the personality. Well known for his development of the concept of the id, ego, and superego, Freud also included this perspective of the self into his view of narcissism. Freud viewed a narcissist as an individual who loves “what he himself is, what he himself was, what he himself would like to be, and someone who was once part of himself” (Freud, 1914, p. 90). Also known for his attention to the sexual development of individuals, Freud saw narcissism as a normal stage in sexual development occurring between autoeroticism and object love (Freud, 1914). Freud used the construct to explain developmentally normal primitive feeling and thinking (Freud, 1955). Freud’s use of the term is expansive, and historians think of it as an integral part of the development of his theory (Bing, McLaughlin, & Marbury, 1959; Teicholz, 1978).

Following in Freud’s footsteps, Kernberg (1975) continued a focus on the classic psychoanalytic model of intrapsychic conflict (the pull between drive and defense) and developed his perspective on narcissism with the id, ego, and superego in mind. Kernberg believed that narcissism was a dysfunctional development of the self and pathological narcissism was a result of unintegrated grandiose or devalued self and object representations. Kernberg recognized the influence of the parent-child relationship in the development of narcissism. When cold and unempathic parents do not respond or react to a child, the child feels deprived and unloved during a stage of maximum dependency, leading to aggression. The child will then use two principle defenses: splitting and

projection. The child attributes a negative and unsafe view onto external objects. *Splitting* can be seen as a reaction to negative events and perceptions, and the *grandiose self* (a term developed by Kohut and discussed later) is developed to maintain any sense of good and positive self and object representations. The grandiose self is constructed from leftover positive aspects of the child from early experiences (the real self), the imaginary version of the self developed to compensate for frustration and protect against the rage-filled bad self (the ideal self), and the imaginary version of accepting and loving parents (the ideal object) (Kernberg, 1970; Kernberg, 1974b). An interesting aspect of Kernberg's perspective on narcissism is that, while self-love and self-esteem (or self-regard) appear to be a normal aspect of the individual, narcissism is not instinctually present in everyone. Kernberg (1975) states in his model that external factors, such as environmental sources of gratification and aspiration, appropriately uncritical superego, along with a well-developed healthy ego ideal, and proper object relations, are necessary for a healthy development of regulated self-esteem. Kernberg utilized a continuum or spectrum of narcissism to recognize the range of narcissism. This continuum ranges from pathological narcissism (intense conflicts around both aggression and love), through malignant and destructive narcissism, to the narcissism present in psychopathic personality disorder (Kernberg, 1975; Kernberg, 1974a). Furthermore, Kernberg recognizes that there may be both immature and normal versions (of narcissism) (Kernberg, 1998).

Kohut also viewed narcissism as both potentially adaptive or maladaptive and highly developmental in nature. Heavily influenced by Freud, Kohut's development of the psychology of the self emphasized that narcissism was a normal and developmental process for each individual. Central to his theory, Kohut believed that each individual develops as a bipolar self (along two poles) and strives to become a cohesive and mature self, with narcissism being a normal part of this process (see *Figure 1*) (Kohut, 1966; Kohut, 1971). Kohut (1966) theorized that these two systems or poles were the narcissistic or grandiose self (ideal self) and the idealized parent self (ideal other). The grandiose pole is comprised of exhibitionism, assertiveness, and ambitions. On the other hand, the idealizing pole is comprised of idealization, admiration, and goals. Immature grandiosity grows through appropriate assertiveness to eventually become healthy ambition. The idealized internal image of admired parents develops into a stable system of values. Kohut not only believed that this development of narcissism was vital to the development of a healthy, cohesive self, but it was also important in the development of self-esteem (Kohut, 1977). From Kohut's perspective, the development of narcissism begins in infancy. As an infant, the individual has no recognition of his/her self as an independent being, because the psychic structures of self-representation have not yet developed. The infant has a grandiose form of self-esteem and a natural tendency to be an exhibitionist. Because of this and his/her inability to separate himself/herself from others, the infant experiences everything as part of himself/herself instead of being able to separate external forces, such as parents or caretakers. Kohut emphasizes the importance of *mirroring* by parents or caretakers, so that, as a result, the child feels connection, approval, and empathy. Kohut refers to these representations as *self-objects*, in which the

self and others are represented. At this stage, the child and parent are one and the same and the child is unable to express either empathy or any introspective awareness. It is through normal and non-traumatic lapses in parental mirroring and idealizing responses, such as empathy, that the child is gradually able to depend on himself/herself to internally regulate a sense of security and ability. In other words, in normal development, the child is able to increasingly rely on internal, rather than external sources. Kohut also theorized that the self is almost never an accomplished fact. In healthy development, as maturity increases, so does development of the self. Even in normal, healthy development, an individual may experience unsupportive, unempathetic environments. This environment can create anxiety and the individual may regress to a less cohesive self. In the case of abnormal or pathological development, the child experiences a faulty self-development and renders the maladaptive use of interpersonal relations to promote self-expression. Disorders of the self are the result of severe and or chronic frustrations of narcissistic needs (either mirroring or idealizing) of the child (Kohut, 1971; Kohut, 1977).

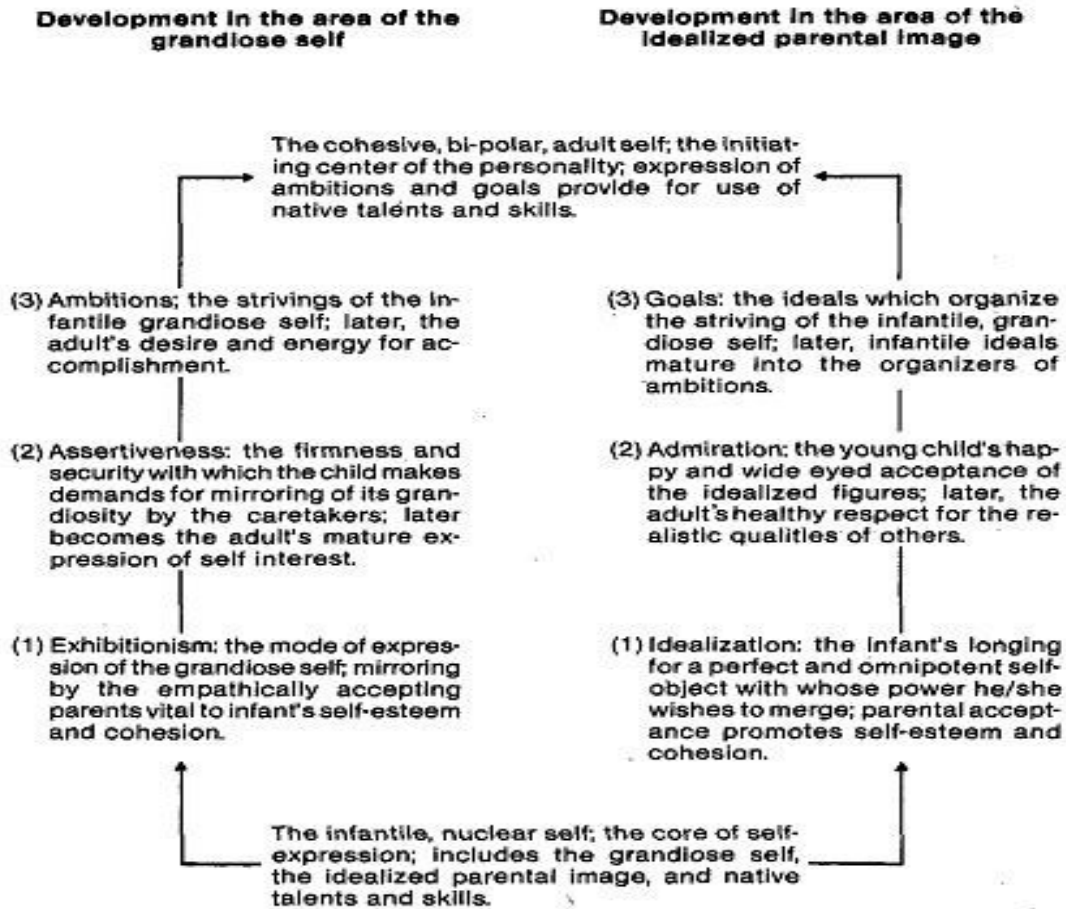


Figure 1. The parallel lines of the development of the self (Patton, Connor, & Scott, 1982).

To empirically measure narcissism as Kohut described it, investigators have developed four narcissism scales. The Superiority Scale (Robbins & Patton, 1985) and Pseudoautonomy Scale (Lapan & Patton, 1986) assess Kohut's grandiosity pole of narcissism. Pseudoautonomy refers to "hypersensitivity to and defensive independence of others who are perceived as critical, unresponsive, or otherwise unappreciative of his or her presence and self-expression" (Lapan & Patton, 1986, p. 140). Superiority is used to

describe less mature forms of grandiose self-expression, such as an arrogant opinion of the individual as superior to others (Robbins & Patton, 1985). Kohut's idealizing pole of narcissism is assessed with the Goal Instability Scale (Robbins & Patton, 1985) and Peer-Group Dependence Scale (Lapan & Patton, 1986). Robbins and Patton (1985) refer to the individual's sense of depletion, along with an absence of goals that would assist in organizing their activities as goal instability. Lapan and Patton (1986) use peer-group dependence to explain a defensive attachment to others as a substitute for his or her own internal ideals or goals. For purpose of this study, Kohut's theory of narcissism and the above mentioned scales were used to define and measure narcissism. As indicated originally by Kohut (1971) and supported by the work of Lapan and Patton (1986) and Robbins and Patton (1985) grandiosity and idealizing will be studied as independent constructs that, in conjunction, are used to understand narcissism.

Comprehensive Approach to the Development of the Self

Having looked at development of the self through a perspective that revolves closely around narcissism, it is also important to set these concepts within a broader and more comprehensive developmental view of the self and narcissism. Because the above-mentioned theorists suggest that narcissistic traits or tendencies can be part of normal development in the early stages of life, Susan Harter's (1999) developmental theory is helpful in providing a comprehensive and inclusive perspective on construction of the self from infancy through adolescence. What follows also compares, contrasts, and integrates Harter's conceptual approach with the above-mentioned theorists.

Harter (1999) suggests that the self is both a cognitive and social construct. In line with Kohut (1966), Harter focused on developmental periods and the assumed cognitive

abilities and limitations of those periods. This theory emphasizes that an individual is not only able to identify himself/herself (i.e., student, man or woman, sister or brother, psychologist or physician, etc.), but the individual also has the ability to reflect and evaluate himself/herself (i.e., *good* student or *bad* student). It is this evaluation of the self that provokes an emotional reaction and appraisal of the self (Harter, 1988). Just as Kohut (1971) and his theory of self-psychology suggests, Harter's theory incorporates the different developmental stages of individuals and the relevance of what these stages provide in terms of ability and awareness as a human being. Harter uses three developmental periods to describe the process of construction of the self. These periods are early childhood, middle childhood, and adolescence (Harter, 1988).

During early childhood, the individual is able to provide specific examples of observable physical characteristics, behaviors, possessions, abilities, and preferences. There is little stability and coherence to the description of the self, and fantasies and wishes dominate descriptions of behaviors and abilities rather than direct self-observation. The individual is able to evaluate or criticize others but is unable to critically observe and evaluate himself/herself. The child is unable to differentiate between the ideal self and the real self and circulates around extreme positive and inflated self-statements (Harter, 1988). Both Harter (1999) and Kohut (1971) agree that during the very early years of an individual, there is no concept of the self and no separation of selves from the caretakers.

In middle childhood, the individual has a more stable and organized sense of his/her attributes. The individual is able to separate himself/herself and the evaluation of self from others. The child begins to focus on abilities, interpersonal characteristics, and

emotional attributes and can integrate behaviors into generalized concepts about the self. Because the individual is now able to evaluate himself/herself while observing others, s/he is able to use social comparison as a reference point. It is at this stage that the child becomes aware that others are critically evaluating him/her and can result in an adoption of outside attitudes and a tendency to evaluate him/her based on outsiders' evaluations, a similar concept to Kohut's "mirroring." Kohut's theory (1977) might also suggest that trauma could produce developmental damage, resulting in an individual who is revealing narcissistic tendencies represented by either pseudoautonomy or increased peer-group dependence. A more positive and independent development is represented by more accurate appraisal of the self, based on social comparisons and a realistic observation (both positive and negative) of the self (Harter, 1988).

During adolescence, the individual is able to focus on different roles and relationships, providing a more abstract sense of self. This stage can involve intense preoccupation with the self, in part, due to internal conflict and confusion over creating a more integrated identity. A more integrated identity often involves forming a theory of the self in which all attributes across and within the self are consistent. The opinions of significant others, especially peers, are important during this stage, and an imaginary critical audience can create confusion between self-criticism and external evaluations. This confusion can promote vacillation between positive and negative self-evaluations (Harter, 1988). From a self-psychology perspective, this stage in the development of the self and the tendency to vacillate rapidly between positive and negative self-concepts may foster an unsuccessful cohesion of the self and result in the development of narcissistic tendencies. If the adolescent is able to develop an accurate and

developmentally appropriate self-understanding, Kohut (1977) would suggest that the individual is on the path to a more cohesive and healthy self. Alternatively, if the adolescent is unable to traverse through the proliferation of positive and negative selves and develop a consolidated sense of self, he/she may be likely to represent a grandiose or idealized narcissistic self.

Harter (1985) identified the significant internal views of one's competence in the domains that constitute the self-concept. These *self-perceptions*, as Harter described them, consist of:

- *global self-worth*, the degree to which an individual likes or is satisfied with himself/herself and the way one leads his or her life;
- *discrepancy*, the difference between the level of importance assigned to a specific domain and the level of competence reported in that domain by an individual may be positive or negative;
- *scholastic competence*, the individual's perception of his/her competence or ability within the realm of scholastic performance;
- *athletic competence*, the individual's perception of his/her competence or ability when performing sports and outdoor games;
- *social acceptance*, the degree to which an individual feels accepted by peers or feels popular;
- *physical appearance*, the degree to which an individual feels happy with physical characteristics that influence the way he/she looks and the degree that one feels good-looking; and

- *self-perception of health*, the individual's perception of the overall condition of his/her body and mind with respect to performing vital, life-sustaining functions (Harter, 1985; Harter, 1988; Harter, 1999).

An overinflated and/or defensive internal view of one's self and one's competencies can be associated with Kohut's (1971) identification of the grandiosity pole of the development of self. For example, if an individual sees himself/herself as a highly athletic, well-liked, healthy, and attractive individual, but is disturbed by feedback from those around him/her that the opposite is true, he/she would be exhibiting narcissistic tendencies, as represented by increased superiority and pseudoautonomy. On the other hand, an insecure and/or negative view of one's self and one's competencies could be represented by Kohut's description of the idealizing pole. An example of this type of narcissism would be an individual who is highly dependent on others for evaluation of self, seeks social connections to feel more secure, and has difficulty and lack of direction and drive in scholastic and/or athletic pursuits.

To some, Kohut's view of narcissism and development of the self is unique and outside the typical view of how narcissism (usually pathological) develops. For those who consider narcissism to be strictly maladaptive and only associated with individuals who have had dramatically faulty development of the self, Kohut's approach could appear to normalize this personality flaw. But, when perhaps a better known and more widely accepted theory of the development of self, such as that of Susan Harter, is examined, Kohut's theory is more easily applied and understood.

Factors Influencing Self-Development and Narcissism

The following sections explore the proposition that narcissism does not develop in a vacuum. Its development may be influenced, not only by parent-child experiences, but also by variables that may also impact the development of the self and narcissism. Specifically, the role of birth order and gender in the development of narcissism and its subsequent influence on career development is explored.

Birth Order. Along with other theorists, Kohut's approach to the development of the self and narcissism examines the dyadic relationship between the parent and child. Perhaps a more familial and systemic view of the development of the psychological disposition of an individual would also provide insight into narcissism and its contributing factors. Research suggests that birth order is one factor that plays a role in an individual's development (Belmont, 1977). Theories regarding birth order have, for the most part, focused on parental and familial socialization during the early years. Adams (1972) categorized these theories under six headings: 1) intrauterine or physiological influences; 2) only-child uniqueness; 3) dethronement; 4) anxious and relaxed parent; 5) sibling influence; 6) economic.

The first heading, Intrauterine or Physiological Theory, suggests that the individual is influenced before birth by the ordinal positioning. Adams (1972) suggests that the earlier child benefits from a younger mother's "richer uterine environment" (p. 413). Thus, the fewer pregnancies, the more nutriment the mother has to offer. An alternative theory would suggest the opposite. The alternative theory suggests that latter born siblings benefit from a more experienced mother. The more experienced mother is likely to have an easier time during pregnancy and birthing. Both theories suggest that the

earliest stage in the development of an individual can impact such things as health and intelligence.

The second approach, Only-child Uniqueness, suggests that, because of the lack of socialization in siblings, the only-child is raised with an adult-orientation and is more likely to be directed towards adult ways and concerns. Another view of the only-child is that these individuals are ego-motivated or self-centered. Because the child is not surrounded by age-related mates, he/she is more often on his/her own and is forced to manage life independently. When the only child is with the parents, the parents' attention is focused on that child and is not shared with siblings. This creates an individual who is more likely to view the world with himself/herself as the center (Adams, 1972). More recent research suggests that only-children are not unique, instead, most are like the oldest children in other families (Ernst & Angst, 1983).

Dethronement is the third heading, according to Adams (1972). The youngest child and the only-child will never experience dethronement, but the oldest and middle children will find that the attention of the parents is lost with the addition of new siblings. The oldest child will experience the undivided attention of the parents until he/she is dethroned by the birth of a sibling. The middle child will not experience a monopoly of the parents' attention, and the youngest is never dethroned. As the older siblings leave the home, the youngest child will experience a monopoly over the parents' attention. According to this theory, the only-child and the youngest child are most alike, and the oldest and middle child are most like each other. The most significant difference between the oldest and middle child is that the oldest child is more likely to be affected by dethronement, because he/she experienced a monopoly of the parents' attention and the

middle child did not. The siblings who were dethroned are likely to be more independent and more competitive.

First-born/oldest children who experience parents who are overly protective and indulgent will likely be less independent, resourceful, and self-sufficient, according to the fourth typology. Under the Anxious or Relaxed Parent theory, the first-born may receive more attention, but that attention may be less efficient, and the child may find the parent to be interfering, extreme, and inconsistent. This is likely to lead to increased anxiety for the child. On the other hand, the first-born child may experience a relationship with the parents that is indulgent and protective, leading to less anxiety but increased dependence. If a child incurs dethronement, that child experiences a decrease in affection, approval, and acceptance, which, in turn, leads to increased anxiety, difficulty with independence, and difficulty with the development of a social personality.

Adams' fifth category is called the Sibling Influence Theory. This theory is considered to be connected with either the Dethronement or Anxious-Parent Theory, which clarifies the differences between first- and later-borns (Adams, 1972). Early research by Sutton-Smith and Rosenberg (1970) found that the gender and power of one's sibling significantly impacts personality development. This research suggested that sibling interactions have a powerful impact on an individual's behavior and personality. This is considered to be a partial theory and is more applicable to later-born children than first-born or only children (Adams, 1972).

The final theoretical approach to birth order is Economic. This theory has a more narrow application and has been used primarily to account for ordinal differences in achievement. There are two competing approaches to this theory. The first suggests that,

because the oldest child reaches college age first, that child is less likely to experience competition for resources. Another approach suggests that, because the parents are more likely to increasingly experience improving financial success, the younger children experience more economic advantages than the older ones. This theory also suggests that the older children may be helpful, due to their increasing ability to contribute to the family economy (Adams, 1972).

Regardless of the theoretical approach, it is apparent that there are significant differences between the experiences and psychological development of children, depending on their ordinal placement in the family. Belmont, Wittes, and Stein (1977) found that family-structure variables do play a significant role in psychological and intellectual development. Research regarding eminence reveals that first-born children are more likely to be considered extraordinary achievers (Clark & Rice, 1982; Schubert, Wagner, & Schubert, 1977; Terry, 1989), and research assessing the relationship between birth order and intelligence has found that, the more siblings in a family, the lower the children's intelligence quotients (Rodgers et al., 2000).

Specifically related to this study is the finding by Curtis and Cowell (1993) that firstborn and only-children scored significantly higher on standardized measures of pathological narcissism. This finding supports Belmont, Wittes, and Stein's (1977) earlier mentioned research, which suggests that sibling ordinal placement is influential in the psychological development of individuals and also follows that there are considerable similarities between only-children and oldest children (Ernst & Angst, 1983).

Gender. Research suggests that, just as an individual's relative experience as a member of a familial system can influence the development of the self and specifically

narcissism, so is the individual's gender. There are a variety of suggestions in the literature that point to the relevance of gender in the development of the self and narcissism.

Sigmund Freud (1957) suggested that gender and narcissism converged during the phallic stage of psychosexual development. He believed that it was when experiencing the Oedipal complex that children, because of their gender, differed in their responses. During the Oedipal complex, the child is forced to surrender the tide with the mother. The boy would experience castration anxiety, leading to Oedipal trauma. This narcissist injury would then be healed by a phallic identification with the father. In the girl, the absence of a penis leads to an incomplete feeling and results in an Oedipal trauma. According to Freud, the girl, unable to repair the injury because she views the mother as powerless and therefore fails to identify, continues to experience feelings of inadequacy.

The DSM-IV (1994) states that 50%-75% of individuals diagnosed with Narcissistic Personality Disorder are male. Philipson (1985) suggests that this disproportionate representation of men suggests that narcissistic personality traits are gender-related. Philipson writes that narcissism is not gender-neutral, rather, society tends to encourage narcissistic characteristics in men. In modern society, men are encouraged to be aggressive, feel entitled, dominant, appear independent, and avoid showing empathy for others. On the other hand, society encourages women to be empathic, maintain social ties, and be nurturing. Perhaps notable are the possible evolutionary psychology explanations or goals for the different genders. The characteristics that are encouraged for males are all conducive towards financial or professional success, while the characteristics encouraged for women are all conducive

towards mothering success (Philipson, 1985). Following Philipson's research, Richman and Flaherty (1988) designed a study to explore gender differences in narcissism. They posited that both males and females exhibit narcissist traits, but perhaps for different desired outcomes. The study revealed that, according to the DSM-III (1980), Narcissistic Personality Disorder was represented in both genders. They found that gender differences could be seen in specific traits. Males were more likely to be grandiose, fantasize about unlimited success, and lack empathy. Women, on the other hand, were more likely to show narcissistic traits, such as extreme concern with physical appearance and other related traits that foster the merger with idealized others (Buss & Chiodo, 1991; Philipson, 1985). Richman and Flaherty (1990) followed this research to find that "narcissistic expression will vary by gender: women are more likely to attach themselves to outstanding figures, whereas men will desire to be those figures" (p. 76). Watson and Biderman (1994) agreed with previous research and added, "males are more likely to display pathological grandiosity of the Narcissistic Personality Disorder, while females are more likely to be immaturely dependent" (p. 501). Thus, gender and birth order appear as likely moderators in the relationship between the development of narcissism and vocational development.

Career Process

In a study by Robbins and Patton (1985), researchers applied the theoretical approach of Heinz Kohut to career development. They reviewed and applied Kohut's theory by stating that, without a cohesive and normally developed self, "the person lacks the capacity to empathize fully with others, is extremely vulnerable to criticism, separation, and loss, and cannot formulate realistic life plans or sustain the striving

necessary to implement them” (Robbins & Patton, 1985, p. 222). Kohut (1977) suggests that, even beyond what is considered to be the typical time period of self-development, relations with others will affect the maintenance of even a normal or successfully developed cohesive self. Robbins and Patton (1985) posit that Kohut’s theory of self-development and narcissism may be highly applicable to individual career development. More specifically, the process of career planning can be seen through Kohut’s construct of grandiosity, and career decisiveness can be seen through idealization, as the individual will need to be able to accurately appraise his or her own natural talents and skills, then be ambitious enough to follow through and pursue the identified course of action (Robbins & Patton, 1985). Donald Super’s (1957) well-known work in the field of vocational psychology also gives support to this application of Kohut’s theory. Super suggests that an individual’s career choice is an attempt to implement his/her self-concept. He clarifies that both choosing and implementing career plans depend on self-confidence and appropriate attainable goals (Super, 1957). Just as Kohut views narcissism as part of normal development and cohesion of the self, normal lapses in the self due to stressful times, such as career planning and development, may occur (Kohut, 1984). Conversely, the healthy development of the self, and specifically narcissistic development, should have an important positive role in the formation of vocational choice and career-related values.

Career-Related Values. Career values focus on the attainment of important and desirable future outcomes (Sagiv, 2002). An individual’s values assist in the decision of what he *should* do and, in turn, assist with the decision process (Katz, 1993). Vocational psychology research has demonstrated that occupational values play a significant role in

occupational choices (Brown, 2002; Elizur et al., 1991; Super, 1995). Furthermore, these values are thought to be stable over time and directly and indirectly shape future occupational choices (Marini & Brinton, 1984). Not only do the individual's values affect the choices that he/she makes, but these same values are shown to affect the individual's evaluation of the work environment and satisfaction with the job (Young & Parker, 1999; Knoop, 1991). Johnson (2002) suggests that lasting occupational values are developed during childhood and adolescence. Although older children and adolescents report placing little value on power (Weisgram & Bigler, 2005a), they are likely to highly value money, security, and time with family (Lee, 1984; Ovadia, 2001; Thomas & Sheilds, 1987).

Career Planning. Along with an individual's career values, planning is also an important aspect or part of the vocational process. For most individuals, career planning leads to insight and direction and provides a strategy to cope with ambiguous role requirements and demands (Gray, Gault, Meyers, & Walther, 1990). Career planning is considered to be equivalent to goal setting and can be a primary influence on career behaviors. Career planning allows for the identification of goals, which leads to organization and evaluation of career behaviors (Gould, 1979). Rogers, Creed, and Glendon (2008) found that personality can help to predict which individuals are more likely to engage in career planning. These authors found that individuals who are more conscientious, extraverted, and open are more likely to engage in planning, while neurotic individuals are less likely to plan. Gray et al. (1990) considered the career planning process to be an individual and proactive responsibility. They suggested that the planning process allows the individual to maintain self-determination and control over

his/her life, contributes to better career decisions and success, and can also serve as a way for the individual to maneuver through the life stages and develop meaningful non-work roles that complement career roles. Research supports the suggestion that career planning has beneficial consequences. Gould (1979) found that individuals with more participation in career planning have increased career effectiveness, including salary, career involvement, adaptability, and identity resolution. Identity resolution (i.e., self-awareness) would perhaps be most consistent with Heinz Kohut's theory of self-development; both Gould and Kohut conceptualize behavior on the trajectory of self-development. Also in line with Kohut's theory are similar findings by Pazy (1988), in which career planning contributed to performance, attitude, and identity.

Career Decision-Making. One other aspect of career development related to this study is the decision-making process. Career decisions are defined as "choices individuals make about occupations, education, training, and employment" (Sampson, Reardon, Peterson, & Lenz, 2004, p. 7). Perhaps related to Kohut's view of the adaptive and maladaptive functions of narcissism, Sampson et al. (2004) found that individuals who think positively about themselves and their abilities related to career decisions tend to make effective decisions. On the other hand, individuals who think negatively of themselves and their ability to make decisions regarding their careers, are more likely to experience difficulty and avoid the career-decision process. Crites (1978) further suggests that successful career decision-making is facilitated by competence in accurate self-appraisal, gathering occupational information, goal selection, making plans, and problem solving.

The concept of self-efficacy was first applied to the career decision-making process by Hackett and Betz (1981). They found that career decisions were influenced by self-efficacy beliefs, regardless of gender. Individuals who experienced lower levels of self-efficacy were more likely to have difficulty with career decisions. Based on Bandura's (1977) definition of self-efficacy, expectations are a significant mediator of both behavior and behavior change. In vocational psychology, self-efficacy is used to summarize the possibility that low expectations of self-efficacy with regard to career behavior may prevent optimal career choice (Betz & Hackett, 1986). It is intriguing to speculate that the Banduran concept of self-efficacy, as applied to vocational psychology, has some shared variance with the Kohutian concept of self-development.

Research also suggests a connection between narcissistic traits and career decision-making abilities. Mako (1991) found that higher levels of career indecision were associated with lower levels of authority and self-sufficiency and higher levels of exhibitionism. In other words, researchers found that more indecisive individuals tend to feel less competent, become followers, yet be more exhibitionistic. Mako stated that, for "individuals with narcissistic tendencies, a higher level of career decidedness may be based primarily upon participating in and valuing self-exploration activities" (p. 127).

Statement of the Problem

This study explored the relationship between self-development, specifically the domain of narcissism, and the process of vocational development, as specifically captured in the domains of career values, planning, and decisiveness/self-efficacy. It was suggested that this relationship would be moderated by family birth order and gender, revealing intergroup differences. These relationships are expressed in the following conceptual model (Figure 2):

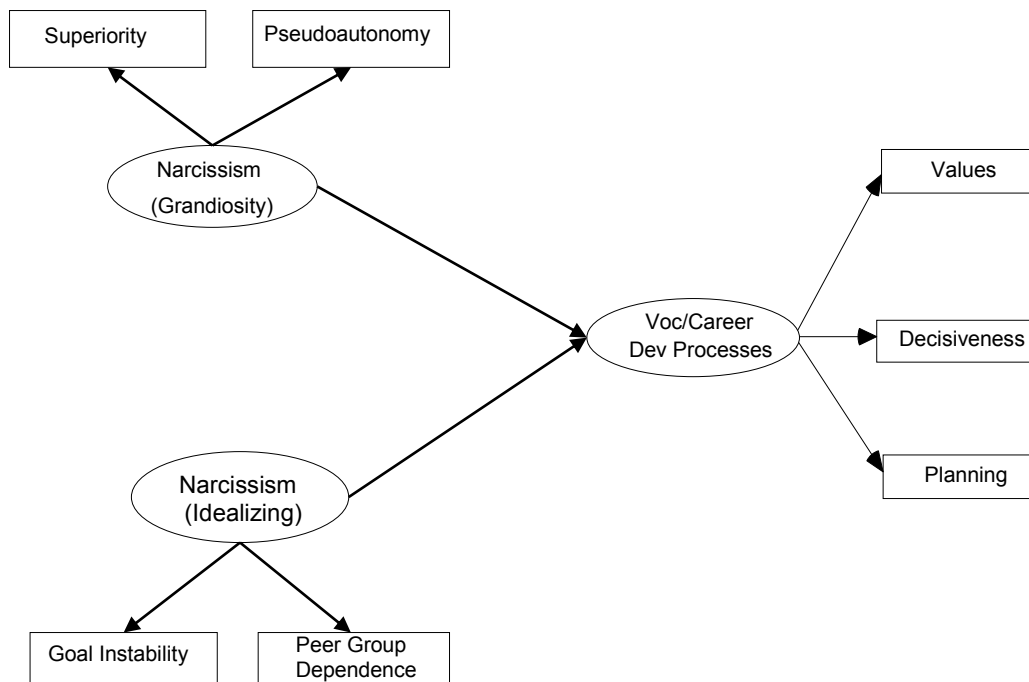


Figure 2. Conceptual model.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Research Question 1: Is the proposed model empirically supported?

The two poles of narcissism, grandiosity and idealizing, influence the vocational/career development process. Each of the main constructs, Grandiosity, Idealizing, and Vocational/Career Development Process are measured by several variables. Grandiosity is measured by superiority and pseudoautonomy; Idealizing is measured by goal instability and peer-group dependence; and Vocational/Career Development Process is measured by values, decisiveness, and planning.

Research Question 2: Does birth order operate as a moderating variable that influences the relationship between narcissism and the vocational/career development process?

Supplemental Hypothesis 1: Grandiosity will be a stronger predictor of the vocational/career development process for oldest/only children than for other birth-order groups.

Supplemental Hypothesis 2: Idealizing will be a stronger predictor of the vocational/career development process for oldest/only children than for other birth-order groups.

Research Question 3: Does gender operate as a moderating variable that influences the relationship between narcissism and the vocational/career development process?

Supplemental Hypothesis 3: Idealizing will be a stronger predictor of the vocational/career development process for women than for men.

Supplemental Hypothesis 4: Grandiosity will be a stronger predictor of the vocational/career development process for men than for women.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Participants

Participants in this study were 346 undergraduate students over the age of 18. They were gathered as a sample of convenience from two large southwestern universities and a southwestern community college. Participants were recruited both in person and via email. The sample consisted of 237 females (68.5%) and 109 males (31.5%). Additionally, the participant's ordinal placement in his/her family of origin was assessed: 127 (36.7%) participants reported being a first-born child, 71 (20.5%) the middle child, 120 (34.7%) reported being the youngest child, and 28 (8.1%) were the only child.

Ethnicity of the participants was not a focus of the study and this data was not collected. The sample of convenience is likely to be similar to the reported student ethnic demographics of each university or college (percentage of participants from each school is unknown). Texas A&M University's ethnic demographics for 2009 were as follows: White/Caucasian (68.7%), Latino/Hispanic (13.1%), African-American (3.3%), Asian-American (4.7%), and Native American/American Indian (0.6%). Sam Houston State University's ethnic demographics for 2009 were as follows: White/Caucasian (71.3%), Latino/Hispanic (11.4%), African-American (14.4%), Asian-American (1.2%), and Native American/American Indian (0.7%). Blinn College's ethnic demographics for 2009 were as follows: White/Caucasian (77%), Latino/Hispanic (11%), African-American (7%), Asian-American (1%), and Native American/American Indian (0%).

Participants were asked to partake in the study with the permission of their professor. A face-to-face invitation was presented in three undergraduate classes, while

email invitations were presented to five undergraduate classes. As an incentive, participants were offered an opportunity to be placed in a drawing to win one of six gift certificates to an online store (1 in 60.7 chances of winning). Additionally, three professors offered extra credit points in their respective courses as added compensation and incentive.

A total of 349 students responded to the request to participate. Three of the respondents only completed the demographic questions (the first three items) and were ultimately removed from the final data set. A total of 346 participants completed the survey and were considered in the final analysis.

This research proposal was submitted to the Texas A&M University Office of Research Compliance—Institutional Review Board and was approved without modifications. Similarly, the study received approval from the Sam Houston State University Institutional Review Board. Because the community college did not have its own review board, it was determined by Texas A&M University Office of Research Compliance—Institutional Review Board that their approval would apply.

Instruments

Seven brief instruments and a limited number of additional research and demographic questions were used to collect identified data. Each participant completed the Goal Instability Scale (GIS) (see APPENDIX A), Superiority Scale (SS) (see APPENDIX B), Pseudoautonomy Scale (PS) (see APPENDIX C), Peer-Group Dependence Scale (PGDS) (see APPENDIX D), Career Planning Scale (CPS) (see APPENDIX E), Occupational Values Scale (OVS) (see APPENDIX F), and Career

Decision-Making Self-Efficacy—Short Form Instrument (CDMSE-SF) (see APPENDIX G).

In addition, the participants were asked, “Are you male or female?” and “Are you first-born, a middle child, the youngest child, or an only child in your family?”

The Goal Instability Scale (GIS). The GIS was developed by Robbins and Patton (1985) to examine Kohut’s self-psychology concept of idealizing. The GIS, along with the SS, PS, and PGDS, was used to assess an overall view of narcissism from a self-psychology approach (Brossart, 2001). The GIS has been found to specifically correspond to maladaptive measures of narcissism (Watson et al., 1988). The GIS is a 10-item self-report that uses six-point Likert-type items ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 6 (strongly disagree). Options 1 through 3 offer options that represent a range of agreement, while options 4 through 6 offer options that represent a range of disagreement. Items include the inability to set goals and direction, confusion about self, and inability to finish projects. A score on the GIS is calculated by adding the Likert-type responses. Scores range from 10 to 60 (Robbins & Patton, 1985). Higher scores on the GIS represent greater goal stability and directedness, while lower scores represent greater goal instability (Blustein & Palladino, 1991). In turn, as goal instability increases (represented by higher scores on the GIS), the degree or severity of narcissism increases. Robbins and Patton (1985) generated data with this test that had strong psychometric properties indicated by an alpha reliability of .81, test-retest reliability of .76, and factorial stability.

The Superiority Scale (SS). The SS is a 10-item instrument designed to examine Kohut’s self-psychology concepts of mirroring and grandiosity. The SS, along with the

GIS, PS, and PGDS, was used to assess an overall view of narcissism (Brossart, 2001). Items assessing the individual's wish to be admired, unrealistic appraisal of self, and exhibitionism, are provided using Likert-type items. Scaling consisted of six options, including 1 (strongly agree), 2 (agree), 3 (slightly agree), 4 (slightly disagree), 5 (disagree), and 6 (strongly disagree). Scores on the SS range from 10 to 60. Higher superiority is seen with more frequent agreement with the items (Robbins & Patton, 1985). Because increased agreement is represented by lower scores, low scores indicate a tendency toward superior self-expression (Blustein & Palladino, 1991). In turn, an increased sense of superiority is associated with increased narcissism. Research provides support for convergent validity of the Superiority Scale (SS) as a measure of narcissistic behaviors and, specifically, measuring grandiose-exhibitionistic development. This measure also corresponds well with the more traditional Narcissistic Personality Inventory (Robbins, 1989; Robbins & Patton, 1985; Watson, McKinney, Hawkins, & Morris, 1988; Emmons, 1984). Robbins and Patton (1985) reported robust psychometric properties, as indicated by a test-retest reliability of .80, internal consistency of .76, and factorial stability.

Pseudoautonomy Scale (PS). The PS consists of eight forced-choice items to measure the individual's hypersensitivity to and defensive independence on others who are "perceived as critical, unresponsive, or otherwise unappreciative of his or her presence and self-expression" (Lapan & Patton, 1986, p. 140). The PS was designed to assess Kohut's (1986) notion of grandiosity. The PS, along with the GIS, SS, and PGDS, was used to provide an overall measure of narcissism for each respondent (Brossart, 2001). Based on Kohut's (1984) theory, the PS was originally designed for a clinical,

adolescent population, but it has since been adjusted to make the items more appropriate and accurate for use with college-age participants (Watson, Biderman, & Boyd, 1989). The PS has been found to assess the maladaptive aspect of narcissism (Sawrie, Watson, & Biderman, 1991; Watson & Biderman, 1994). Higher scores on the PS scale represent greater narcissism. Lapan and Patton (1986) reported sufficient psychometric properties, with a test-retest reliability of .75 and a coefficient alpha of .57.

The Peer-Group Dependence Scale (PGDS). The PGDS is an eight-item, forced-choice item measure designed to assess Kohut's (1986) concept of idealizing. This instrument assesses the individual's anxiety regarding identification with and separation from a group, leading to impairment in idealization (Lapan & Patton, 1986). The PGDS, along with the GIS, SS, and PS, was used to assess an overall view of narcissism (Brossart, 2001). Based on Kohut's (1984) theory, the PS was originally designed for a clinical, adolescent population but has since been adjusted to make the items more appropriate and accurate for use with college-age participants (Watson, Biderman, & Boyd, 1989). Higher scores on the PGDS indicate heightened narcissism. Lapan and Patton (1986) reported finding a coefficient alpha of .70.

Career Planning Scale (CPS). The CPS was based on Gould's (1979) career planning model that measures the extent to which career plans exist, how frequently career plans are changed, how clear the plans are, and whether or not a strategy exists for achieving goals (Gould, 1979). The instrument contains six items measured with a Likert-type format. Possible answers range from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." A high score indicates more effective career planning. The CPS was tested on three separate

groups of subjects. Aryee and Debrah (1993) reported an overall alpha of .83 (alpha coefficients were above .70 for each group).

Occupational Values Scale (OVS). The OVS was developed by Weisgram and Bigler (2005a) to assess occupational values of individuals. The scale is comprised of 16 items measuring four values: altruism, family, money, and power. Participants were asked to indicate how much they would like to have a job that incorporates aspects of each of the values. Possible answers ranged from “not at all” to “very much.” Higher scores represent an increased importance regarding the value. For an adult population, the coefficient alphas ranged from .74 to .92 for each subscale (Weisgram & Bigler, 2005a).

Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy—Short Form Instrument (CDMSE-SF). The CDMSE-SF was designed to measure an individual’s degree of belief that he/she can successfully complete tasks necessary for making career decisions. This scale was used to assess career decisiveness, which the authors view as an indication of vocational self-efficacy. Items relate to accurate self-appraisal, gathering occupational information, goal selection, making plans to implement the decision, and problem-solving. Responses were designed with a 5-level confidence continuum ranging from “no confidence” at all to “complete confidence.” The short form includes five 5-item scales, totaling 25 items in all. Increased scores on the CDMSE-SF represent greater career decisiveness and more positive vocational self-efficacy. The internal consistency reliability ranged from alpha coefficients of .73 (self-appraisal) to .83 (goal selection) for the 5-item subscale and yielded an alpha of .94 for the 25-item total score (Betz, Klein, & Taylor, 1996).

Procedure

Data were collected from voluntary participants in undergraduate classes at two large southwestern universities and a southwestern community college. Participants were encouraged, but not required, to participate in the study. Each potential participant was informed about the objectives and confidentiality of this project. Students who were contacted through a face-to-face visit in a class were informed of the procedure and purpose of the study, then encouraged but not required to provide their email address. Once a student had provided his/her email address, we then contacted them via the provided email address with additional information about the study (see APPENDIX H). In the informational email, the student was provided a consent statement and received a link to a website where he/she could complete one of three intended surveys. The three surveys contained identical questions, but the surveys presented in different orders of presentation. Each participant completed the Goal Instability Scale (GIS), Superiority Scale (SS), Pseudoautonomy Scale (PS), Peer-Group Dependence Scale (PGDS), Career Planning Scale (CPS), Occupational Values Scale (OVS), Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy—Short Form Instrument (CDMSE-SF), and three additional demographic and research questions. The students were also reassured that their data would remain anonymous. Upon completion of the survey, the student was provided with instructions on how to be entered into the drawing for the gift certificates and how to receive extra credit from the participating professor. As previously arranged with participating professors, in order to receive extra credit, the students were either required to print out the final page of the completed survey and turn it in to the professor or send an email to the address provided. Students who wished to be included in the drawing for the six gift

certificates were instructed at the end of the survey to send an email to the address provided to be entered into the drawing. This procedure prevented students' names from being linked to their responses to the questionnaire. Student participants were informed that, once sufficient time had passed for all participants to complete the survey, the drawing would be conducted. Participants were informed that the six winners would be contacted via email to claim their prize. The winners were asked to provide a mailing address so that the gift certificates could be delivered by mail.

The students reported taking between 10 and 25 minutes to complete the survey. Because of the personal nature of the data, all information remained anonymous.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

To avoid order effects, three forms of the survey were created. Each form contained the same items, but the order of the items varied. There was a random, but relatively equal distribution of the surveys to possible participants, and completion of each form is as follows: Survey 1 (43.1%), Survey 2 (31.0%), and Survey 3 (25.9%). The three separate data sets were exported from Survey Monkey and combined appropriately into one master data set to be used for analysis. All analyses were performed using SPSS and AMOS.

The Career Planning Scale (Gould, 1979) was created with two reverse-scored items (Items 1 and 5); the responses to these two items were reverse-scored as specified according to the test manual. Additionally, the scores on the Superiority Scale and Goal Instability Scale (Robbins & Patton, 1985) were reversed to improve the interpretability of narcissism in conjunction with the Peer-Group Dependence Scale and the Pseudoautonomy Scale (Lapan & Patton, 1986). This allowed for all of the scales to represent increased narcissism with increased scale scores.

An evaluation of the missing data provided support to remove three of the original participants, producing a sample size of 346. The three participants who were removed answered only the first three demographic questions and left the balance of the survey incomplete. After removal of these data, the maximum amount of missing data for each variable was 1.4%. In all, 99.4% of the dataset was not missing (i.e., out of the 29,580 total data cells, 170 data cells had missing data). With an awareness of the possible issues and distortions related to missing data, an evaluation of possible explanations, such as

missing completely at random (MCAR), missing at random (MAR), and missing not at random (MNAR), were considered. Listwise deletion was considered for the analyses, but this would have eliminated 19.9% of cases, which was judged to be too high a number of lost cases, especially given that SEM is a large n procedure. Additionally, the items that included missing data were evaluated. The items did not appear to provide insight into possible explanations for the missing data. Therefore, the data was judged to be missing completely at random. Furthermore, there was an extremely low percentage of missing data. Because of these two considerations, mean imputation was performed in SPSS to replace missing data.

An exploratory factor analysis was performed using principle axis extraction with varimax rotation in SPSS to assess the factor structure of each scale. Because the interest was in the number of factors and not the combination of items that make up the factor, a rotation was not initially used. In order to most effectively evaluate the number of factors, the Guttman Rule and Screen Test were utilized. Additionally, the Larsen and Warne's Modified Guttman Rule was utilized in the evaluation. This rule involves calculating a 95% confidence interval for every eigenvalue and retaining the factors for which the entire confidence interval is above one (Guttman, 1954; Larsen & Warne, 2010). These analyses showed that all scales measured one single factor, except for the Occupational Values Scale (Weisgram & Bigler, 2005a). The factor structure of the Occupational Values Scale, with the current sample, revealed two factors instead of one. Inspection of the items that made up the two factors indicated that one group of items was concerned with altruism in one's career, while another group of items was concerned with the importance of money and power. Weisgram and Bigler (2005a) initially discussed

altruism, family, money, and power as four different occupational values. For purposes of this study, Weisgram and Bigler's (2005a) four occupational values were condensed into two concepts: altruism (altruism and family values) and prestige (money and power values). In order to create dependent variables, factor scores for both altruism and prestige were created. For the purpose of this study, altruism is defined as career values that are motivated by a selfless concern (Example OVS items: "I would like a job that gives me the opportunity to help other people"; "I would like a job that allows me to take time off when I become a parent."; and "I would like a job that aids the needy."). Prestige is defined as career values that are motivated by the desire to impress or influence based on success, wealth, or reputation (Example OVS items: "Gives me the opportunity to make important decisions."; "Allows me to be in a position of power."; and "Allows me to earn a great deal of money."). Finally, for the decision-making variable, a sum score was utilized, as suggested by the instrument's creators. This appeared to be a viable option, since the scale was found to be unidimensional.

Because an instrument's reliability is not a property of the test, but is rather a property of the data (Thompson & Vacha-Haase, 2000), the reliability for each scale from the current sample was analyzed. The Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy—Short Form Instrument ($\alpha = .941$), the Goal Instability Scale ($\alpha = .870$), the Superiority Scale ($\alpha = .848$), Peer-Group Dependence Scale ($\alpha = .697$), and Career Planning Scale ($\alpha = .914$) demonstrated acceptable reliability with the current sample. The Pseudoautonomy Scale showed low reliability with these data ($\alpha = .499$). The Pseudoautonomy Scale was originally evaluated on a sample that consisted of half clinical participants (psychiatric inpatient) and half general (psychologically normal) participants. The current sample was

composed of college students who were presumed to be functioning at a normal level and is a general, not clinical, sample. This difference may have been a possible reason for the drastic difference in reliability estimates of the instrument compared with the instrument's initial sample. Because this instrument's eight items could not produce sufficiently reliable data, it was eliminated from further analysis.

Parceling

In order to improve the factor loadings, reduce the error variance, and create more normally distributed observed variables, parceling was used with the Goal Instability Scale, Superiority Scale, and Peer-Group Dependence Scale (Little, Cunningham, & Shahar, 2002). Parceling was previously used with the analysis of these instruments and was shown to have positive results (Brossart, 2001).

The results from an exploratory factor analysis of these three instruments were used to create the most effective and interpretable parcels as seen in Table 1, Table 2, and Table 3.

Table 1. *Goal instability factor loadings*

Items	Factor Loading
Item 1	.30
Item 2	.53
Item 3	.58
Item 4	.77
Item 5	.76
Item 6	.51
Item 7	.80
Item 8	.82
Item 9	.61
Item 10	.72

Table 2. *Superiority factor loadings*

Items	Factor Loading
Item 1	.40
Item 2	.52
Item 3	.54
Item 4	.62
Item 5	.75
Item 6	.67
Item 7	.61
Item 8	.54
Item 9	.60
Item 10	.72

Table 3. *Peer-group dependence factor loadings*

Items	Factor Loading
Item 1	.37
Item 2	.57
Item 3	.66
Item 4	.39
Item 5	.73
Item 6	.69
Item 7	.28
Item 8	.17

As shown in Table 1, Table 2, and Table 3 above, parcels were formed by taking the item with the highest factor loading and summing it with the item with the lowest factor loading. From the remaining items, the item with the highest factor loading was summed with the item with the lowest factor loading. This process continued until all of the scale's items were formed into item parcels (Table 4).

Table 4. *Item parceling*

Scale	Parcel Label	Parcel Composition
Goal Instability	Parcel 1	Items 8 and 1
	Parcel 2	Items 7 and 6
	Parcel 3	Items 4 and 2
	Parcel 4	Items 5 and 3
	Parcel 5	Items 10 and 9
Superiority	Parcel 1	Items 5 and 1
	Parcel 2	Items 10 and 2
	Parcel 3	Items 6 and 3
	Parcel 4	Items 4 and 8
	Parcel 5	Items 7 and 9
Peer-Group Dependence	Parcel 1	Items 5 and 8
	Parcel 2	Items 6 and 7
	Parcel 3	Items 3 and 1
	Parcel 4	Items 2 and 4

After parceling as shown in Table 4 above, the reliability of the three scales was analyzed. The Goal Instability, Superiority, and Peer-Group Dependence Scales showed good reliability ($\alpha = .870, .861, \text{ and } .715$, respectively).

Structural Equation Modeling

Structural equation modeling is a large n statistical technique. Therefore, it was necessary to verify that the sample size at hand was large enough to test. After parceling, the ratio of sample size ($n = 346$) to observed variables was found to be adequate for structural equation modeling. Several models were tested, with varying numbers of

observed variables. All ratios were at least 19:1, which was adequate for the analyses in this study. Without parceling, the ratio of sample size to observed variables would have been at least 12:1 for every model. The larger ratio with item parceling should make parameter estimates more stable (Kline, 2005).

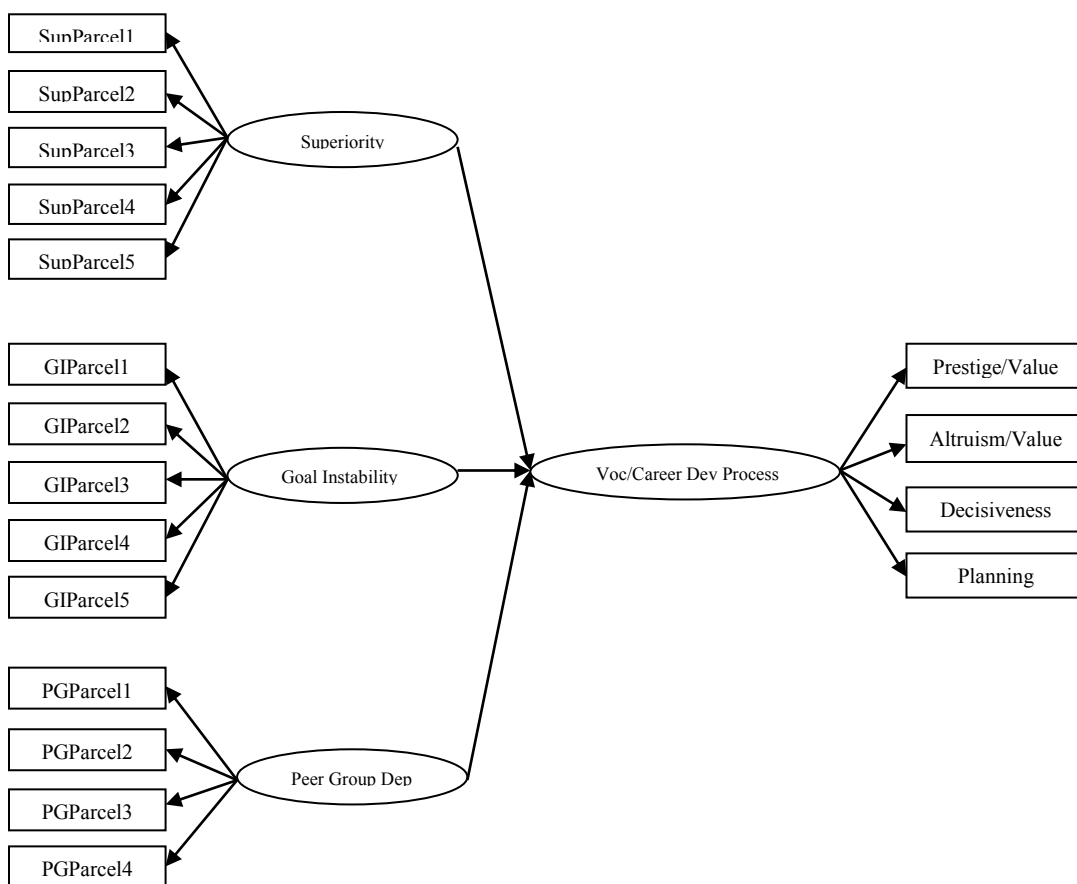


Figure 3. Initial analysis model.

Because SEM rests upon the assumption of multivariate normality (Kline, 2005), it is important to examine the observed data at hand for violations of this assumption. Univariate descriptive statistics were calculated and skewness and kurtosis values were examined for violations of normality. As shown in APPENDIX J all skewness and kurtosis values were within acceptable ranges for use in SEM (Hau & Marsh, 2004).

Multiple fit indices were used to adequately evaluate the structural model (Hu & Bentler, 1995). This evaluation included Chi-square (χ^2) with the corresponding degrees of freedom (df), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), and Comparative Fit Index (CFI). A CFI value of .90 or greater and an RMSEA value of .08 or lower were deemed beforehand to indicate an adequate fit of the model between groups. These guidelines, although not universally accepted, are supported in the literature based on confirmatory factor analysis (Sun, 2005, p. 249). Additionally, modification indices were examined to see if there were any meaningful covariance or regression paths that had not been previously theorized.

An initial SEM analysis was performed. According to theory, the results indicated that the career-planning variable showed an unfeasible negative relationship with the latent factor vocational/career development process ($\beta = -.65$). In other words, the relationship between career planning and the vocational/career development process was highly inconsistent with prevalent theory about these variables. The results indicated that career planning would have a negative impact on the career development process, which is not theoretically plausible. Previous researchers (e.g., Gould, 1979; Gray, Gault, Meyers, & Walther, 1990; Pazy, 1988) have found these two variables to be positively related both theoretically and empirically. Therefore, the negative relationship that was

found with this model was cause for concern. For this reason, career planning was removed from further analysis, which improved the fit statistics ($\chi^2 = 444.13$, $df = 133$, $p < .001$, $CFI = .867$, $RMSEA = .082$, 90%, $CI = [.074, .091]$).

SEM analysis of the model without career planning found that the path from peer-group dependence to vocational/career development process was not statistically different than zero ($p = .626$). Because there was not a statistically significant path between peer-group dependence and the vocational/career development process, the peer-group dependence latent factor and all of its indicator variables were eliminated from the model for the sake of parsimony.

Modification indices for the model displayed in Figure 3 were examined to see if there were any meaningful covariance or regression paths that had not been previously theorized. Although there were some modification indices that were statistically significant ($p < .05$), none of them were theoretically significant or meaningful and therefore did not improve interpretation of the data. This supported the belief that the observed variables in the model formed three separate coherent factors.

The resulting model, after eliminating peer-group dependence, is displayed in Figure 4. This model fit the data marginally well ($\chi^2 = 235.1$, $df = 63$, $p < .001$, $CFI = .907$, $RMSEA = .089$ 90%, $CI = [.077, .101]$). The standardized parameter estimates for the paths are presented in the figure below.

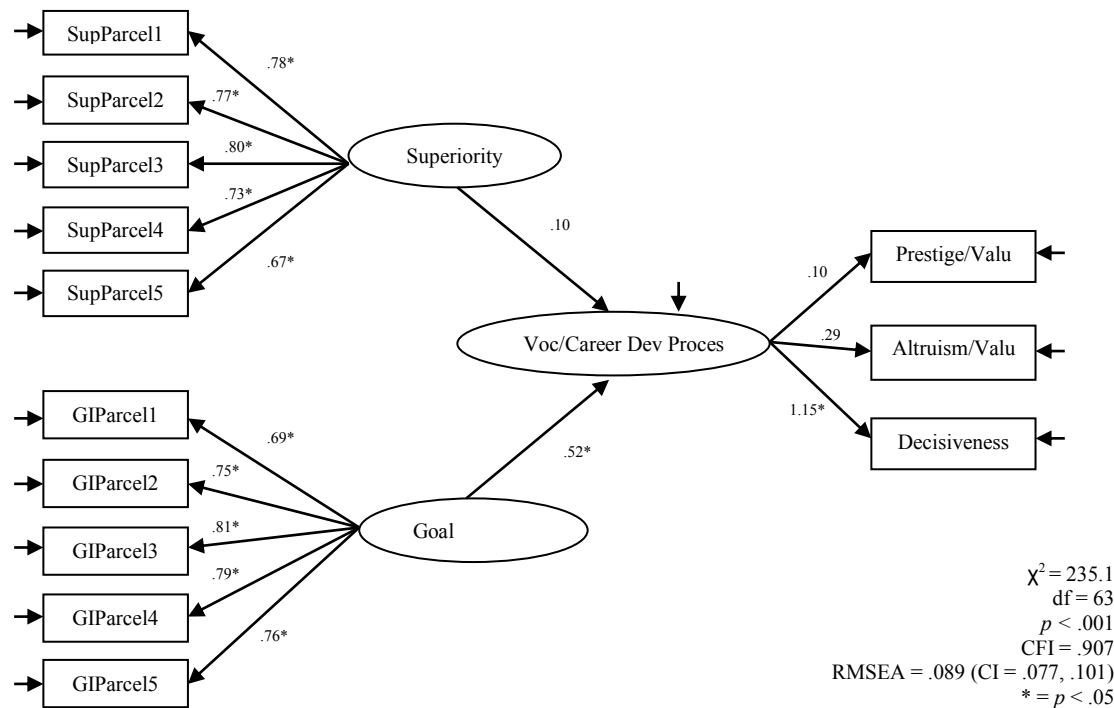
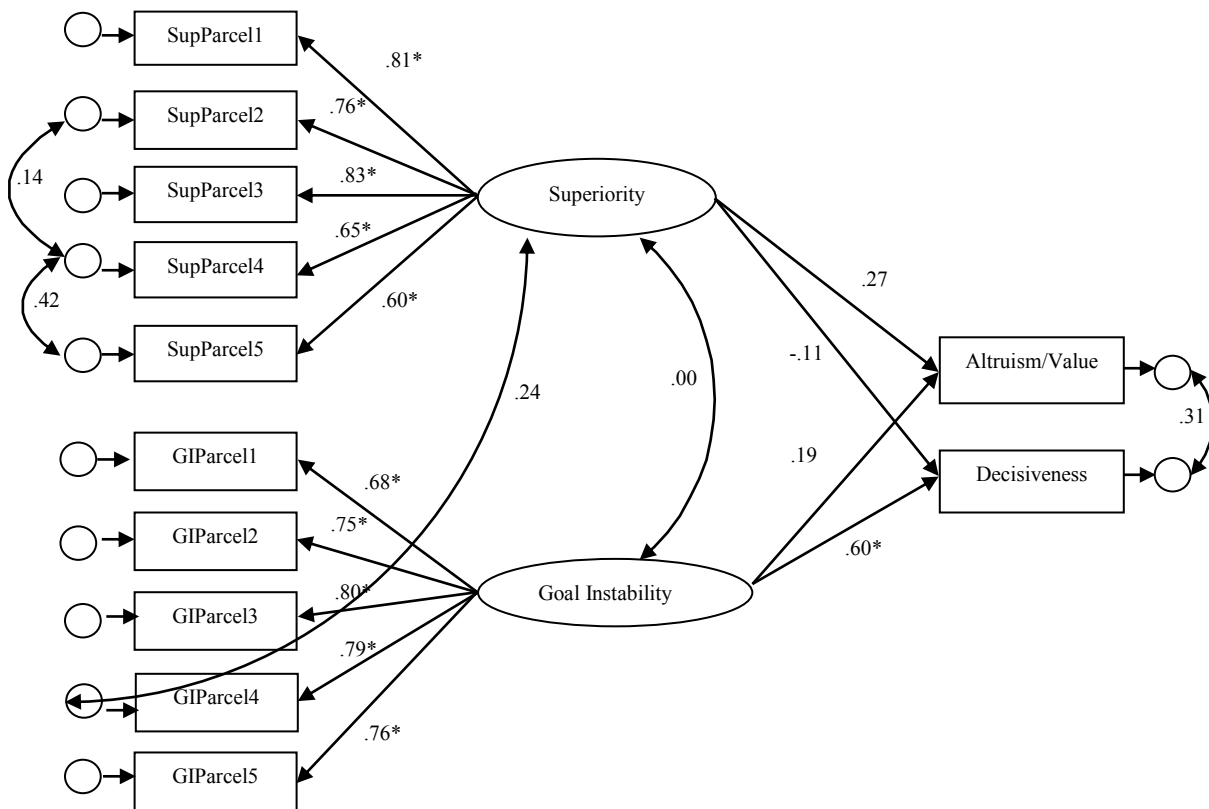


Figure 4. Preliminary model.

Despite the improved fit indices of the model in Figure 4, it was determined that further modification of the model was needed. The prestige career value was eliminated after additional analysis, because it did not inter-correlate sufficiently with the other two observed dependent variables (altruism career values and decisiveness) to form a coherent factor, as demonstrated by the low factor loading (.10) and mathematically impossible 1.15 decisiveness standardized factor loading. This left only two observed variables in the vocational/career development process factor. The latent variable was eliminated, because latent variables with only two indicators are usually very unstable (Kline, 2005). Therefore, the direct impact of superiority and goal instability on the observed variables was modeled as shown in Figure 5.



$\chi^2 = 69.9$
 $df = 48$
 $p = .021$
 $CFI = .988$
 $RMSEA = .036$ (CI = .015, .054)
 $* = p < .05$

Figure 5. Best fit model. Please note that superiority and goal instability latent constructs are uncorrelated, even though the correlation between the two was unconstrained.

Figure 5 contains additional covariance paths that none of the previous models contained. Modification indices (MIs) were examined in order to determine what constraints on the model needed to be loosened for the model fit to improve. All MIs greater than 3.84 (which is statistically significant at $p \leq .05$) were examined. The covariance associated with the largest MI was added and all parameters were then re-estimated. This process was repeated four times until the resulting model fit the data sufficiently well. The final outcome of this process is displayed in Figure 5 ($\chi^2 = 69.9$, $df = 48$, $p = .021$, $CFI = .988$, $RMSEA = .036$, 90% , $CI = [.015, .054]$). Theory was also considered when deciding which modifications to make to the model, and all added paths made sense both theoretically and logically. For example, goal instability parcel 4 (“I don’t seem to make decisions by myself” and “I lose my sense of direction”) and goal instability parcel 5 (“I have confusion about who I am” and “It’s hard to find a reason for working”) could correlate, because both parcels include items that appear to evaluate the individual’s confidence in her/his ability to function independently.

Multi-group Analysis

Multi-group modeling attempts to apply the same statistical model to different groups within a sample. Thus, multi-group modeling was utilized to analyze birth order and gender. If the fit indices of the multi-group analysis indicated a high level of goodness of fit, this indicated that the same model applied well to both groups. Moreover, any differences in the relationships among constructs in the two groups would be neither practically nor clinically significant. For the purpose of this multi-group analysis, the RMSEA and CFI fit statistics were examined, because they have been found to be somewhat robust in avoiding model misspecification (Fan, Thompson, & Wang, 1999).

In this analysis, the unconstrained, measurement weights, measurement intercepts, structural weights, structural residuals, and measurement residuals models were assessed. Beginning with the most basic model, each model had one additional group of estimated parameters that were constrained to be equal across groups. The first model, labeled the unconstrained model, assessed the fit of the data to the pattern of the item parcels and latent variable relationships (i.e., the pattern of arrows among model components). Although the unconstrained model restricted the pattern of relationships among observed and latent variables, it is called the unconstrained model, because the values associated with those paths were not constrained to be equal across groups and were freely estimated for each group. The second model, labeled measurement weights model, was identical to the unconstrained model, except it required the values of paths between item parcels and latent variables to be equal across groups (Meredith, 1993). The third model, the measurement intercepts model, was identical to the previous model, but with the added constraint that item parcel intercepts were constrained to be equal across groups. The fourth model, structural covariance model, was identical to the previous model, except the single covariance between superiority and the error variance for goal instability parcel 4 (see Table 4 for test items that correspond to goal instability parcel 4) is constrained to be equal across groups. The final model, measurement residuals model, was identical to the previous model, but forced the error variances on item parcels to be equal across groups. In Tables 5 (gender) and 6 (birth order), results of the multi-group analysis are shown.

Multi-group Analysis of Gender

An important first step, however, in multi-group analysis, was to ensure that the initial unconstrained model fit both groups well enough for later invariance tests of more constrained nested models to proceed. It was also important to examine any modifications to the model in the initial model (Figure 5), which might have been appropriate for only one group or theoretically plausible for models that would have applied to one group and not others. The fit indices for the unmodified initial models for males indicated good model fit ($\chi^2 = 69.9$, $df = 48$, $p = .021$, $CFI = .963$, $RMSEA = .065$, 90%, $CI = [.026, .096]$) (Figure 6). An examination of MIs revealed that the best modification to the model was the addition of a covariance path between the superiority latent variable and the error variance for goal instability parcel 1. The new fit statistics ($\chi^2 = 56.9$, $df = 47$, $p = .153$, $CFI = .983$, $RMSEA = .044$, 90%, $CI = [0, .081]$) were an empirical improvement over the unmodified initial model for males. However, the additional covariance does not clarify interpretation, nor does it provide any new theoretical information. For these reasons and also because the unmodified model fits the males' data well, it was decided to keep the unmodified initial model for males. The fit statistics for the unmodified initial model for females were: $\chi^2 = 56.9$, $df = 48$, $p = .178$, $CFI = .992$, $RMSEA = .028$, 90%, $CI = [0, .053]$ (Figure 7). This indicated that the initial model fits the data for females even better than it does for males. MIs were examined for the females' model but none were found that would make a noteworthy improvement in fit. Therefore, the initial model was retained for females. Attempts were also made to examine radically different, theoretically meaningful non-nested models for both males

and females, but none could be constructed that fit the data for either gender as well as the model in Figure 5.

Table 5. *Multi-group analysis: Gender*

Model	NPAR	χ^2	DF	CFI	RMSEA	90% CI	AIC
Unconstrained	84	126.930	96	.982	.031	.013, .044	-65.07
Measurement weights	72	147.874	108	.977	.033	.018, .045	-68.126
Measurement intercepts	60	213.185	120	.947	.048	.037, .058	-26.815
Structural covariances	58	216.667	122	.946	.047	.037, .058	-27.333
Measurement residuals	42	265.466	138	.928	.052	.042, .061	-10.534

As seen in Table 5, the fit indices worsen as more constraints across groups are added to the model, as was expected (Kline, 2005). Unquestionably, the fit indices show that there was strict invariance across genders in the final model. Based on the guidelines from Sun (2005), there is also an acceptable level of fit in the most constrained model in Table 5. However, researchers who use more stringent criteria to judge invariance may make an argument that the strictest model in Table 5 does not show invariance across genders because CFI = .928 and RMSEA = .052. Although there is popular support for such a judgment (Hu & Bentler, 1999), any invariance across genders in residuals is

likely to be irrelevant to the practitioner and not noticeable in day-to-day counseling/career counseling. Therefore, the relationships among superiority, goal instability, altruistic career values, and decisiveness are basically the same for people, regardless of gender.

Individual Group Model Evaluation of Gender. Although strict invariance was found across gender groups, it is still enlightening to examine the parameter estimates for each group. The gender group parameter estimates are featured in Figures 6 and 7.

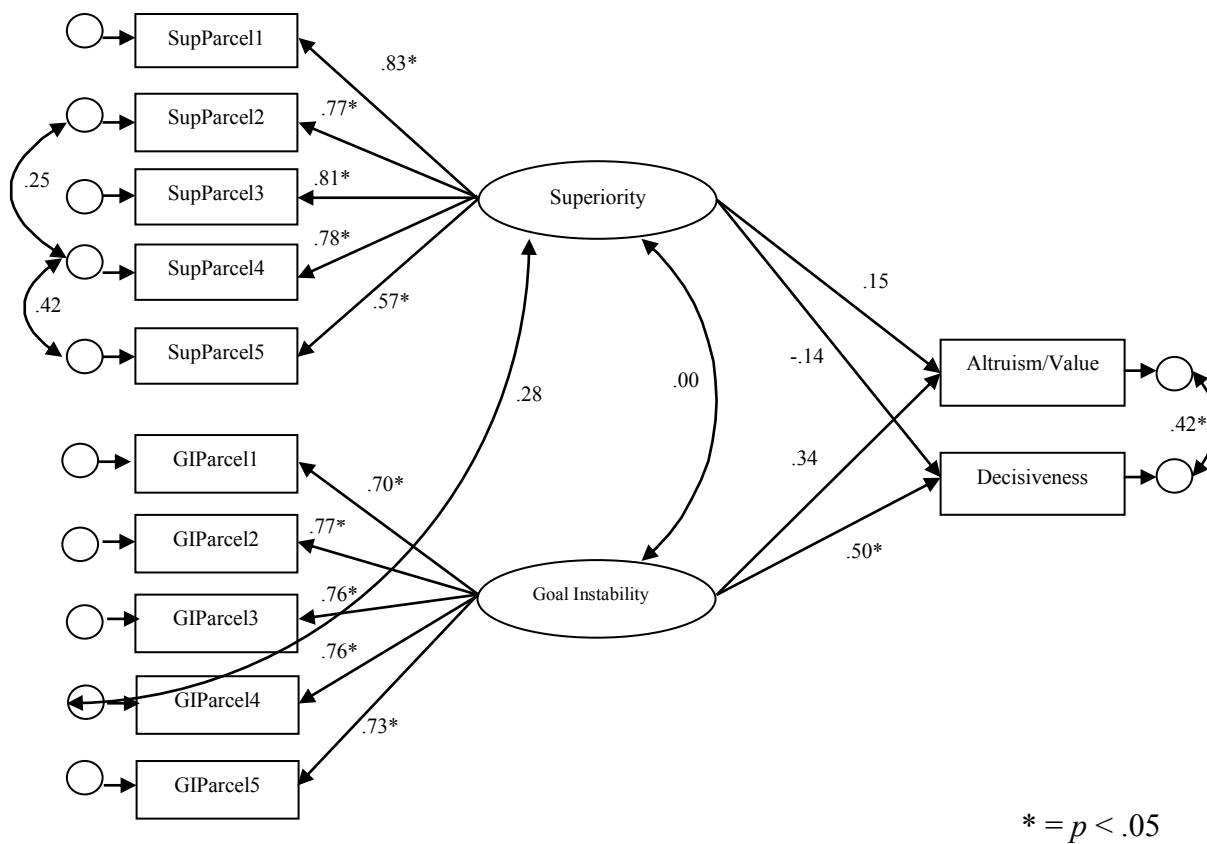


Figure 6. Model evaluation: Males.

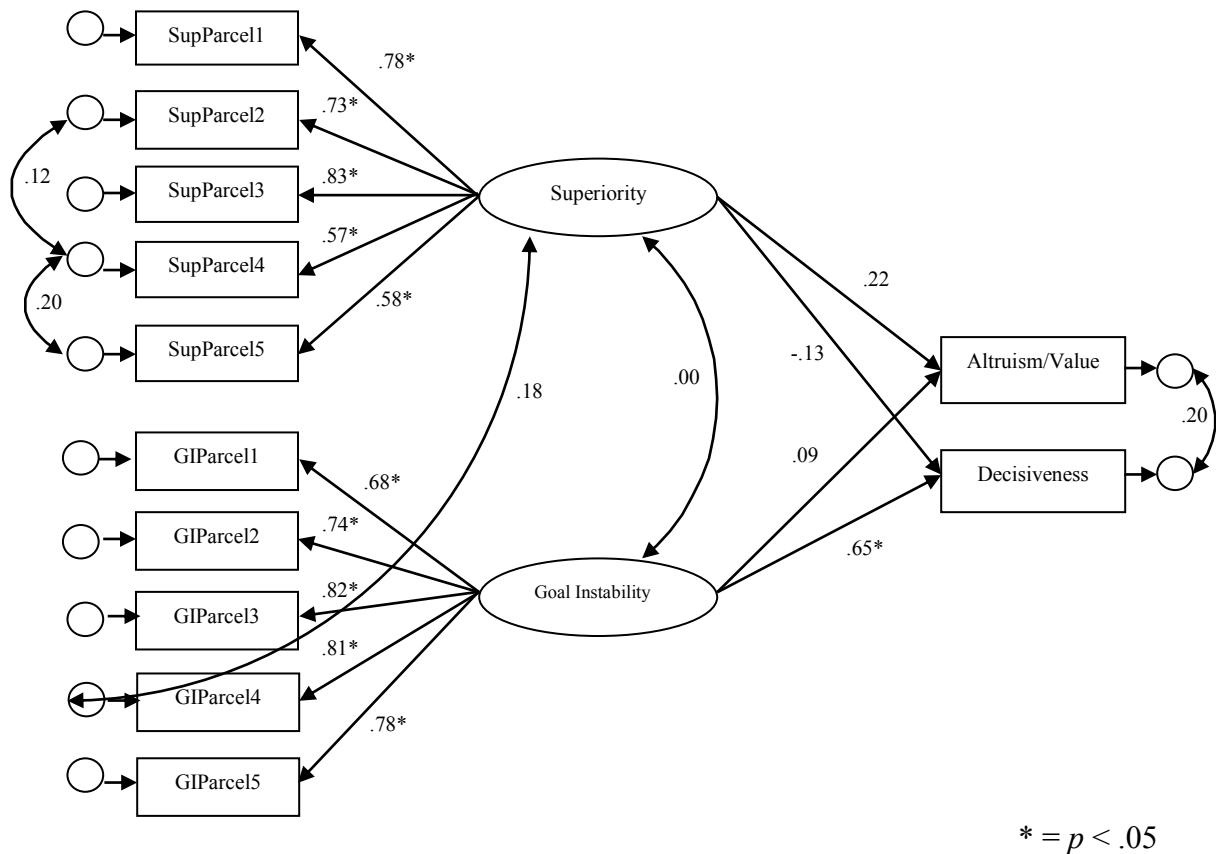


Figure 7. Model evaluation: Females.

One noticeable difference between the parameter estimates for the different genders on the unconstrained initial model is that parcel factor loadings, in general, were higher for women than for men, which indicated that the relationships among the constructs is stronger for women than for men. Figures 6 and 7 also show a large difference in the path from goal instability to altruistic career values. For women, this path was only .09, whereas for men, this path was .34. This indicated that men who exhibit more goal instability also exhibit more altruistic career values as compared to women. Another path that was noticeably different for the genders was from goal instability to decisiveness. For men, this path was .50, and for women it was .65. This

finding indicated that, as compared to men, women who exhibit more goal instability also exhibit more decisiveness. Finally, there was one error covariance between superiority parcels 4 and 5, which was .42 for men and .20 for women. This indicated that the item parcel contained more construct irrelevant variance for men than for women. These parameter estimates, especially the estimates involving the dependent variables, shed important light on Table 5 and the degree of any model differences between genders. Only the clinically significant findings discussed above will be discussed further in the discussion section.

Multi-group Analysis of Birth Order

As with gender, the initial unconstrained model was assessed to ensure that all groups of birth order fit well enough to proceed with later invariance tests of more constrained nested models. An initial analysis of birth order tested a model that would not converge. To address this issue, the two most similar categories—only children and firstborns—were combined (Curtis & Cowell, 1993; Ernst & Angst, 1983). The result was three categories: oldest/only children; middle children; and youngest children. It was also important to examine any modifications to the initial model (Figure 5) that might have been appropriate for only one group, or which were theoretically plausible models that would have applied to one group and not others. The fit indices for the unmodified initial models for oldest/only children indicated good model fit ($\chi^2 = 59.7$, $df = 48$, $p = .182$, CFI = .986, RMSEA = .040, 90% CI = [0, .069]) (Figure 8). The fit statistics for the unmodified initial model for middle children were ($\chi^2 = 55.8$, $df = 48$, $p = .379$, CFI = .978, RMSEA = .048, 90% CI = [0, .095]) (Figure 9). And finally, the fit statistics for the unmodified initial model for youngest children were ($\chi^2 = 50.4$, $df = 48$, $p = .379$, CFI =

.996, RMSEA = .020, 90% CI = [0, .064]) (Figure 10). The good fit indices for all three groups indicated that the initial model in Figure 5 was a good starting point for a multi-group analysis of the three birth-order groups. MIs were examined for all three birth-order groups and none were found that would make a noteworthy improvement in fit. Attempts were also made to examine radically different, theoretically meaningful non-nested models for all birth-order groups, but none could be constructed that fit the data for any birth-order group as well as the model in Figure 5.

Table 6. *Multi-group analysis: Birth order*

Model	NPAR	χ^2	DF	CFI	RMSEA	90% CI	AIC
Unconstrained	126	166.057	144	.988	.021	.000, .034	-121.943
Measurement weights	102	191.574	168	.987	.020	.000, .033	-144.426
Measurement intercepts	78	212.257	192	.989	.018	.000, .030	-171.743
Structural covariances	74	213.218	196	.991	.016	.000, .029	-178.782
Measurement residuals	42	279.269	228	.972	.026	.013, .035	-176.731

The evidence for strict invariance across birth-order groups is even stronger than the evidence for invariance across genders. Even the strictest model tested in multi-group analysis (measurement residuals, Table 6) shows excellent fit statistics (CFI = .972,

RMSEA = .026). Therefore, the relationships among superiority, goal instability, altruistic career values, and decisiveness are the same for people, regardless of their ordinal position in the family.

Individual Group Model Evaluation of Birth Order. Although strict invariance was found across birth-order groups, it is still enlightening to examine the parameter estimates for each group. The birth-order group parameter estimates are shown in Figures 8-10.

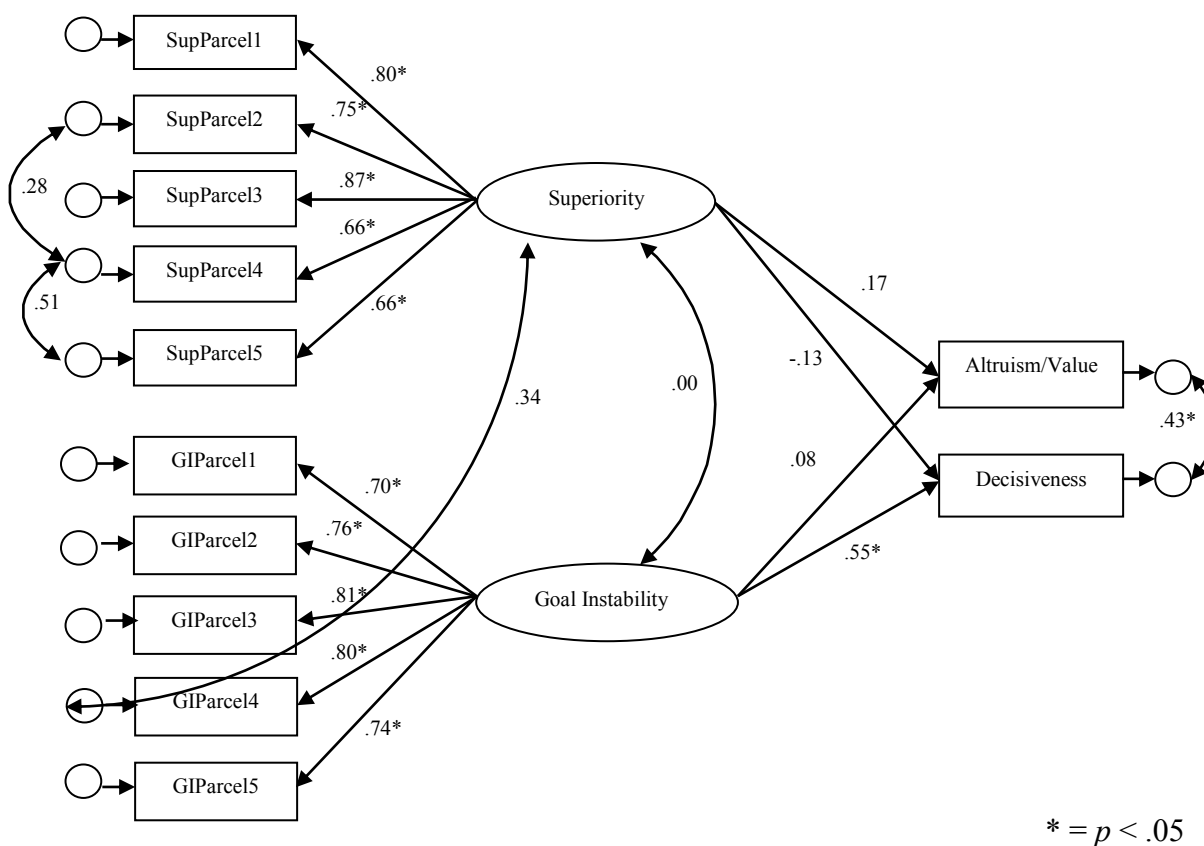


Figure 8. Model evaluation: Oldest/only children.

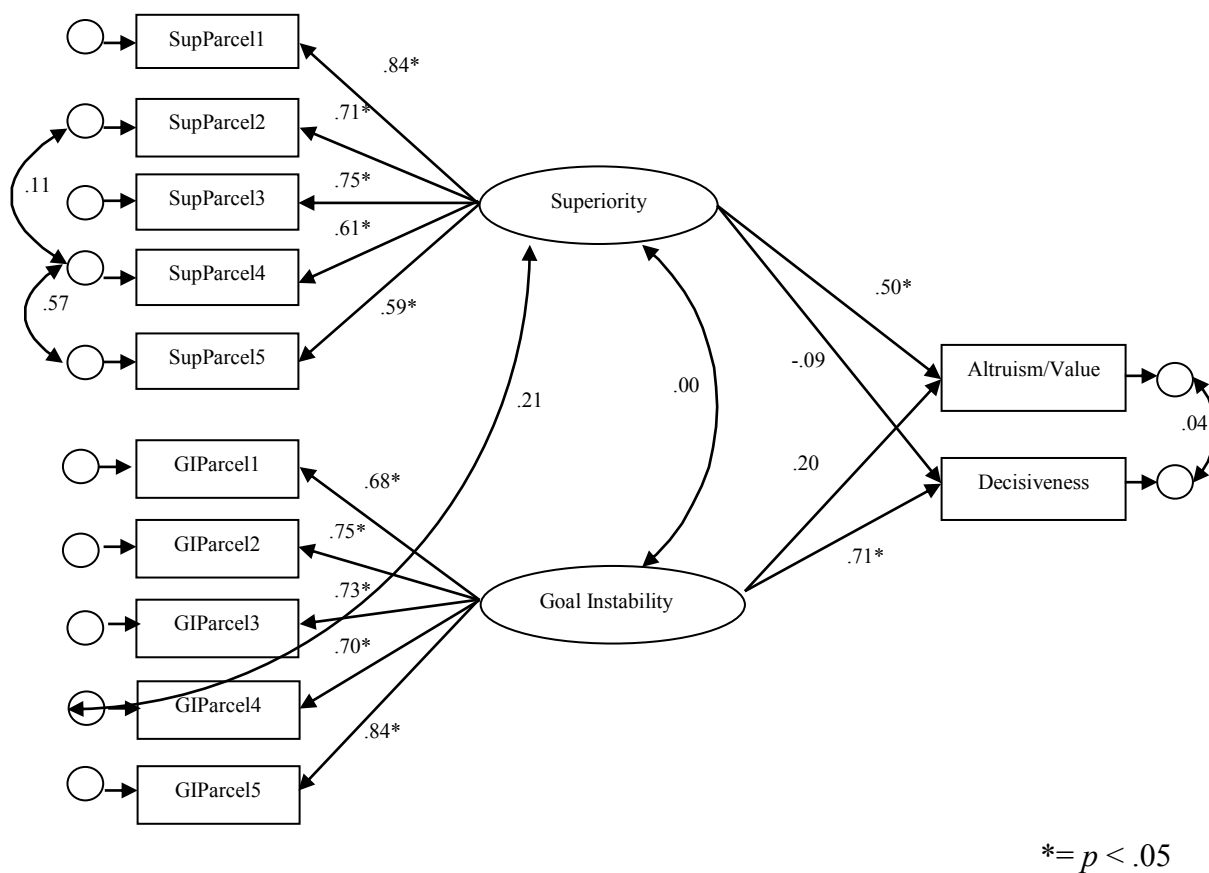


Figure 9. Model evaluation: Middle children.

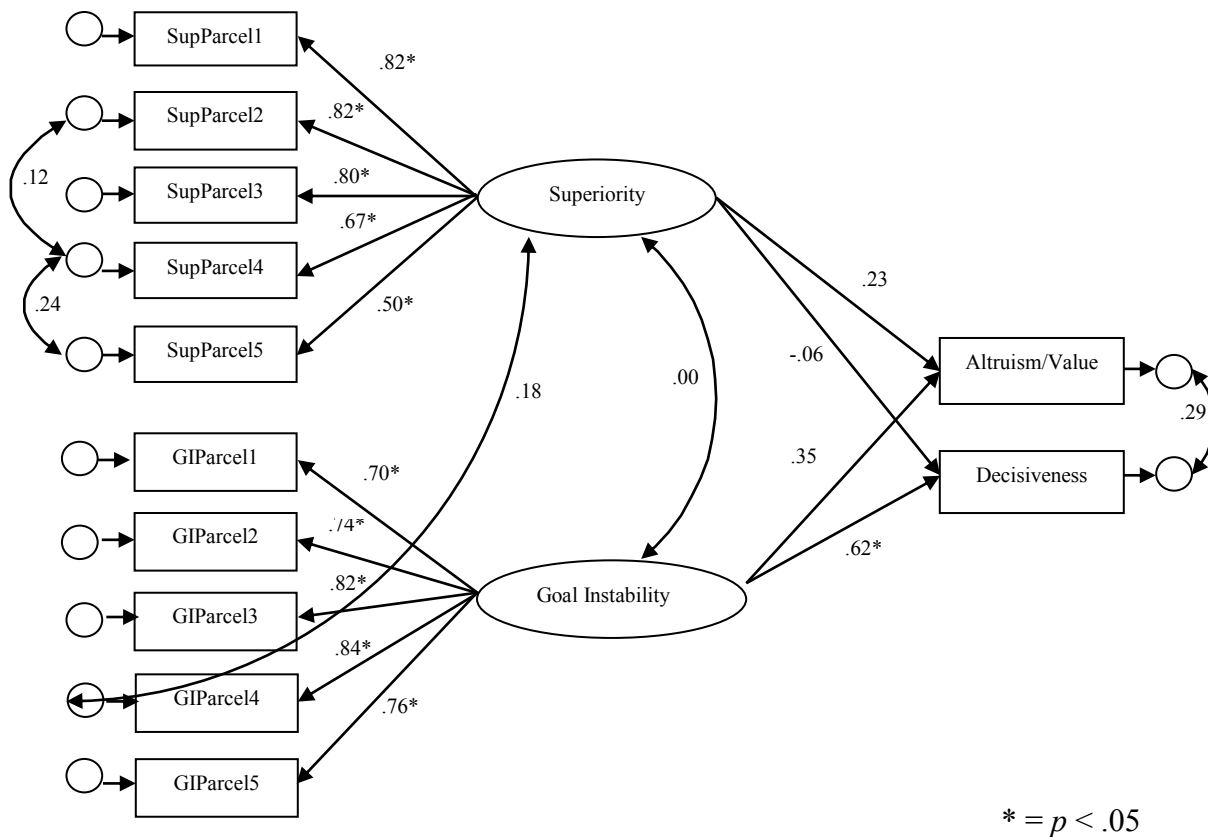


Figure 10. Model evaluation: Youngest children.

There were a number of noticeable differences between the birth-order groups on the unconstrained initial model. First, the parameter estimates between superiority and altruistic career values are different among the three groups. For oldest/only children, the path was .17, the path for middle children was .50, and the path for youngest children was .23. This indicated that middle children who exhibit more superiority also exhibit more altruistic career values as compared to oldest/only and youngest children. Figures 8-10 show a difference in the path from goal instability to altruism career values. Oldest/only children had a path of .08, middle children had a path of .20, and youngest had a path of

.35. In contrast, this finding indicated that youngest children who exhibit more goal instability also exhibit more altruistic career values as compared to oldest/only and middle children. There were also two error co-variances that were notable. Between superiority parcel 2 and superiority parcel 4 was .28 for oldest/only children, .11 for middle children, and .12 for youngest children. This indicated that the correlation between the two parcels is stronger for oldest/only children than for other children. Therefore, the relationship between the two item parcels is stronger than what can be accounted for by just the common superiority factor. Additionally, there was an error covariance between altruism career value and decisiveness, which, for oldest/only children was .43, for middle children .04, and for youngest children .29. This indicated that for oldest/only and youngest children, this item parcel has more error variance than for middle children. These differences overall are smaller than the difference in parameter estimates between gender groups, which is also reflected in the better fit statistics in Table 6. However, the reader must also remember that the group sizes for these three groups are somewhat small and that parameter estimates may be unstable. Only the findings discussed above, which are practically significant, will be addressed further in the discussion section.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Overview of the Results

The following will discuss the major findings of this study. The variables that were removed from the final analysis will be reviewed, and finally, the results, according to the original research questions and hypotheses, will be addressed.

The major findings of the current study were that superiority (a measure of grandiosity) predicts altruistic career values and career decisiveness. Superiority is a slightly better predictor of altruistic career values than decisiveness. Additionally, goal instability (idealizing) predicts altruistic career values and career decisiveness. Goal instability had a predictive value that was nearly three times stronger for decisiveness.

The Pseudoautonomy Scale was excluded from the final model due to very low reliability with these data ($\alpha = .499$). Additionally, the instrument's eight items did not appear to produce sufficiently reliable data for this sample. This was disappointing, because the instrument has been useful in previous studies (Lapan & Patton, 1986). However, it was important to remember that reliability is a property of the data and not of the test itself (Thompson & Vacha-Haase, 2000). Therefore, the fact that the instrument has generated highly reliable scores in previous studies is interesting, but in this case, these data were not reliable and therefore were not used. Because classical test theory dictates that data must be reliable before there can be a valid use or interpretation for the data, any use of unreliable data in this study would have produced invalid results (Crocker & Algina, 2007).

An initial SEM analysis was performed. According to theory, the results indicated that career planning showed an unfeasible negative relationship with the vocational/career development process. In other words, the relationship between career planning and the vocational/career development process was highly inconsistent with prevalent theory about these variables. Previous researchers (e.g., Gould, 1979; Gray, Gault, Meyers, & Walther, 1990; Pazy, 1988) have found these two variables to be positively related both theoretically and empirically. Therefore, the negative relationship that was found with this model was cause for concern. For this reason, career planning was removed from further analysis. In addition, because there was not a statistically significant relationship between peer-group dependence and the vocational/career development process ($p = .626$), the peer-group dependence latent factor and all of its indicator variables were eliminated from the model for the sake of parsimony.

After modification indices were evaluated to guide the assessment of model fit, the manifest variable “prestige career values” was eliminated, leaving two observed variables. Thus, the vocational/career development process latent variable was removed and the direct impact of superiority and goal instability on altruistic career values and decisiveness was modeled (Figure 5). Because of removal of the career development process latent variable, the rest of this chapter will refer to the observed dependent variables, which are altruistic career values and decisiveness. It is also important to note that as suggested by the work of Kohut (1971), Lapan and Patton (1986), and Robbins and Patton (1985) grandiosity and idealizing, although both representations of narcissism, are perfectly uncorrelated.

Multi-group analysis found that the data met the requirements of strict invariance, which are equal factor structure, factor loadings, factor co-variances, factor paths, and residual error variances among birth-order groups (Sun, 2005). The evidence for strict invariance across birth-order groups is even stronger than the evidence for invariance across genders. Even the strictest model tested in multi-group analysis (measurement residuals, Table 6) shows excellent fit statistics (CFI = .972, RMSEA = .026). Therefore, the relationships among superiority, goal instability, altruistic career values, and decisiveness are the same for people, regardless of their ordinal position in the family.

Similarly, the multi-group analysis found that the data met the requirements of strict invariance among genders. It was determined that strict invariance in the model existed across genders. In other words, the factor structure, factor loadings, intercepts, and error terms were approximately equal for both genders. Therefore, gender was not considered to be a moderator variable in examining the relationship between goal instability and superiority.

Analyzing Research Questions and Hypotheses

Research Question 1: Is the proposed model empirically supported?

The two poles of narcissism, grandiosity and idealizing, influence the vocational/career development process. Each of the main constructs, Grandiosity, Idealizing, and Vocational/Career Development Process, were measured by several variables. Grandiosity was measured by superiority and pseudoautonomy; Idealizing was measured by goal instability and peer group dependence; and Vocational/Career Development Process was measured by values, decisiveness, and planning.

Previous research suggests that the development of career values should coincide with development of the self (i.e., development of a more narcissistic self would correspond with the development of more narcissistic career values) (Johnson, 2002; Katz, 1993; Lee, 1984; Ovadia, 2001; Thomas & Shields, 1987). The current analysis indicated that superiority predicts altruistic career values and career decisiveness. Furthermore, superiority has a slightly stronger predictive value on altruistic career values than decisiveness. Superiority was found to have a negative predictive value on decisiveness, indicating that, as an individual becomes more self-absorbed, arrogant, and considers himself/herself greater than others, he/she would become less decisive regarding a vocation and also experience a decreased sense of self-efficacy in the process. This does not appear to follow theory, but could possibly be explained by the relationship between goal instability parcel 4 and superiority. Kohut (1971) described the two poles of the self as follows: idealizing measured by goal instability and grandiosity measured by superiority. This theory described the idealizing pole with mainly covert forms of narcissism, such as a sense of depletion, defensive attachment to others, and a sense of self based on external forces. On the other hand, grandiosity is typically described with overt forms of narcissism, such as exhibitionism and arrogance. In other words, idealizing might be characterized as a self-conscious absorption with the self, while superiority could be characterized as an absorption with self based on an elite attitude. However, Lapan and Patton (1986) identified a significant aspect of the grandiose narcissist, in which the individual, while feeling superior to others, was also hypersensitive to outside criticism, leading to a pseudo-independence from others. This could help to explain why part of the assessment of goal instability (covert narcissism)

also assessed a piece of superiority (overt narcissism). In turn, this may lead to a better understanding of the finding that, as superiority increases, decisiveness and self-efficacy decrease. Simply explained, an individual who is outwardly self-absorbed and arrogant may also be experiencing an inward hypersensitivity and self-doubt (as seen in vocational indecisiveness and low self-efficacy). Put another way, hypersensitivity or hyper-vigilance is often viewed clinically as the individual's experience of herself as the "center of the world" and therefore the presumed focal point of all comments or occurrences.

Additionally, as seen through results that indicate superiority is a predictor of altruistic career values, a narcissistic individual who seems to be preoccupied with his own importance and superiority could represent an internal drive to please others and reduce expected critical responses by others: this could lead to career values that have the appearance of altruism.

The results also indicated that goal instability predicts altruistic career values and career decisiveness. Kohut (1977) stated that the idealizing pole of narcissism involved the admiration and idealization of others and a preoccupation of the self through the eyes of others. Robbins and Patton (1985) theorized that goal instability was a part of idealizing. According to these results, as an individual's sense of depletion increases and the absence of goals increases, the individual will also exhibit more altruistic career values. These results were very different from what was found in the previous literature (Johnson, 2002; Katz, 1993; Lee, 1984; Ovadia; 2001; Thomas & Sheilds, 1987) and different from what was hypothesized in this study. As discussed previously, the idealizing pole of narcissism is often seen through covert forms of narcissism in which the individual is preoccupied with himself/herself. However, this preoccupation is based

on the interactions and opinions of those around the individual. In other words, the narcissist is focused on himself/herself but, as the sense of self becomes exhausted and goals decrease (reduction of internal focus), he looks to outside resources. This might appear as though he was focusing on others and their well-being for altruistic reasons, rather than for narcissistic reasons. This apparent altruistic focus is actually self-serving and masks narcissistic personality traits. This interpretation appears to be supported by Seelif and Rosolf's (2001) research that posits that altruism is the nonconflictual pleasure in fostering the success and/or welfare of another. In other words, the selfless values and decisions may also have narcissistic underpinnings. This analysis also indicated that goal instability is a very strong predictor of career decisiveness. This finding suggested that, as a person's goals become less stable, the individual also becomes more decisive. Perhaps this finding, although it does not appear to correspond with previous literature, can be simply explained as follows: as individuals who feel increasingly absent of goals and depleted, become, in a sense, desperate to make decisions and are seemingly more confident in doing so because of their increased need. On the other hand, they may feel less pressured in the process, because, as there were few expectations set, they are not pressured to meet high, or any, expectations. Thus, with the pressure off, these individuals can make decisions more freely and with ease.

Research Question 2: Does birth order influence the relationship between narcissism and the career development process?

Supplemental Hypothesis 1: Grandiosity will be a stronger predictor of the vocational/career development process for oldest/only children than for other birth-order groups.

Previous research (Adams, 1972; Belmont, 1977; Belmont, Wittes, & Stein, 1977; Clark & Rice, 1982; Schubert, Wagner, & Schubert, 1977; Terry, 1989; Rodgers et al., 2000) and theorists (Kohut, 1971) suggest that birth order influences an individual's psychological development of the self. Furthermore, Curtis and Cowell's (1993) research specifically suggests that the ordinal placement of an individual in the family would have an impact on the development or lack of development of narcissism. The results of this study did not support previous research and theory. The results indicated that the birth order is not a moderator variable in the relationship between narcissism and altruistic career values or decisiveness. However, upon closer visual examination, the parameter estimates between superiority and altruism career values are different among the three groups. The difference continued to disprove the above hypothesis, since it indicated that superiority among middle children was the greatest predictor of altruism. In fact, superiority among oldest/only born children was the worst predictor of the three groups of altruism.

Supplemental Hypothesis 2: Idealizing will be a stronger predictor of the vocational/career development process for oldest/only children than for other birth-order groups.

Contrary to what previous research and theory suggests regarding birth-order narcissism (Adams, 1972; Belmont, 1977; Belmont, Wittes, & Stein, 1977; Clark & Rice, 1982; Curtis & Cowell, 1993; Kohut, 1971; Schubert, Wagner, & Schubert, 1977; Terry, 1989; Rodgers et al., 2000), the results from this study indicated that birth order was not a moderating variable between narcissism and the vocational/career development process. Although an initial review indicated that the relationship between narcissism and the

vocational/career development process was different for the varying birth-order groups, statistical tests of invariance did not find evidence to support these differences. These findings did not support supplemental hypothesis 2, but rather indicated the opposite: goal instability in youngest children has the greatest predictive value of altruistic career values. Perhaps as the youngest child, the individual is more likely to place her admiration and idealization onto her older siblings. Through this experience, the individual becomes more dependent on others, takes less responsibility for herself (exhibited through a lack of goal setting), and is encouraged to engage in self-preoccupation through doting siblings and parents.

Research Question 3: Does gender influence the relationship between narcissism and the vocational/career development process?

Supplemental Hypothesis 3: Idealizing will be a stronger predictor of the vocational/career development process for women than for men.

Although a variety of literature suggests the relevance of gender in the development of the self and narcissism (Buss & Chiodo, 1991; DSM-IV, 1994; Freud, 1957; Richman & Flaherty, 1988; Watson & Biderman, 1994), and specifically that narcissism is not gender neutral (Philipson, 1985), the results from this study indicated that narcissism functioned similarly by demonstrating strict invariance for both genders. However, upon a visual examination of the parameter estimates, there were two parameter estimates differences that were potentially noteworthy. First, there was a large difference in the path from goal instability to altruistic career values, which was far greater for men. This finding indicated that the relationship between the increase in the individual's sense of depletion and the increase in the absence of goals and more

altruistic career values is stronger for men than women. This investigator theorized from this study that this may be due to the individual's need to distract herself (and others) from her/their own sense of disappointment and depletion by creating a façade, suggesting a vocational focus that is altruistic in nature. This may be especially accurate for males. Males, more than females, may feel more pressure from society to be successful (or goal oriented), capable, and confident. When faced with failure, males may be more likely to feel depleted for not having filled the expected gender role.

Another path that was noticeably different for the genders was the path from goal instability to decisiveness. This finding suggested that, as a person's goals become less stable, they also become more decisive. This path was slightly stronger for women than men and may be explained by societal gender expectations. Society appears to place high expectations on men to be successful in careers, but less is expected of women in the career world (presently). Following this logic, women may feel less pressure in the process because, as there were few career expectations set, women feel that they are not pressured to meet high, or any expectations. Thus, women may be able to make career decisions more freely or with ease.

Although these findings about gender differences based on visual inspection are interesting, they are of questionable usefulness. First, the statistical tests of invariance between the genders indicated that the requirements of strict invariance (Sun, 2005) were met, indicating that the differences between the genders' models were not practically or clinically significant. Second, some of the paths among constructs were still of a small magnitude (e.g., the path between goal instability and altruistic career values) and other, uninvestigated variables could likely be more important than the independent variables in

this study. For these reasons, it is not appropriate to conclude absolutely that gender functions as an important moderator for these variables, despite the visual differences in the magnitude of the paths in the models in Figures 6 and 7 until further research is conducted.

Supplemental Hypothesis 4: Grandiosity will be a stronger predictor of the vocational/career development process for men than for women.

As reviewed above, although the literature appears to suggest otherwise (Buss & Chiodo, 1991; DSM-IV, 1994; Freud, 1957; Philipson, 1985; Richman & Flaherty, 1988; Watson & Biderman, 1994), the results from this study indicated the model functioned similarly for both genders.

Limitations

There were a number of limitations to this study that should be discussed. This study and its analysis revealed a number of problems with the instruments that were used. The Pseudoautonomy Scale proved to have very low reliability and was excluded from any further analysis. This may be explained with the previously discussed difference in the samples. The Pseudoautonomy Scale was originally developed and tested using a younger sample than that of the college-age students in this study (although the same is true regarding the Peer-Group Dependence Scale in which the same problem with reliability was not seen). Additionally, this instrument was also originally developed and tested using a sample that consisted of half clinical participants (psychiatric inpatient) and half general (psychologically normal) participants. The current study utilized a sample of only general participants. This variation could have helped to explain the differences in reliability estimates. Career planning was also removed from further analysis, because of

the previously mentioned negative relationship with the vocational/career development process that contradicted theory. This result indicated that the variable was either not measuring career planning or that the instrument was not working well in tandem with the other vocational/career development process instruments (Occupational Values Scale and Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy—Short Form Instrument).

Additionally, the Peer-Group Dependence Scale, the Superiority Scale, and the Goal Instability Scale exhibited a number of weak factor loadings. Fortunately, each scale also proved to have a number of strong factor loadings, which led to the decision to use item parceling to improve each scale's reliability scores.

One other limitation of this study would be the small group sizes in the multi-group analysis. According to Kline's (2005, p. 178) group sizes, there should be at least 10 people in a group for each estimated parameter. However, in this multi-group analysis, the ratio of group members to parameters ranged between 4:1 and 13:1. Therefore, parameter estimates for individual groups and fit statistics for single group and multi-group analyses may be unstable.

Directions for Further Research

As previously discussed, some of the instruments used in this study did not perform as expected. For example, the Pseudoautonomy Scale did not work well with the current sample and exhibited very low reliability. To address this issue and confirm the hypothesized difference between the sample at hand and the instrument's development sample, a follow-up study could utilize a sample that would more closely mirror the original sample that the instrument was tested on (i.e., 50% clinical and 50% general). If the suggested change in the sample significantly improved the reliability of the

instrument, the Pseudoautonomy Scale and its resulting data would be an important addition to understanding narcissism from a multidimensional perspective, as Kohut (1971) suggested. Additionally, the Career Planning Scale provided unreliable results as an instrument to assist in the evaluation of the career development process. Substituting another instrument to measure career planning could provide insight into the reason the current instrument did not provide usable results, and it might also allow the researcher to include the planning process in the evaluation of the career development process as the literature encouraged (Robbins & Patton, 1985).

Another suggestion for further research is to include a more standard measurement of narcissism, along with the instruments that measure narcissism as Kohut theorized. The addition of an instrument, such as the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI) (Raskin & Hall, 1979), could provide an interesting comparison of Kohut's theory of narcissism with a better-known, more commonly understood version of the construct. Additionally, the use of this more popular and mainstream instrument might help to make this study and Kohut's Self Psychology better known, understood, and researched.

Clearly, the concept of the development of the self and narcissism in the occupational world merits further exploration. Bergman, Westerman, and Daly (2010) suggest that there is a rise in narcissism in Western society in general, but more specifically, there is also a rise in certain fields, such as business. The authors encourage educators to recognize narcissism and attempt to foster less narcissistic professionals. Bergman, Westerman, and Daly's article may provide an important extension of the current study—narcissistic traits can create work environments that are characterized by aggression, risky decision making, distorted judgments of one's abilities, and create toxic

and unproductive work environments (Bergman, Westerman, & Daly, 2010). Possibly, the defining importance of Heinz Kohut's comprehensive view of narcissism, which includes both adaptive and maladaptive components, is that, unlike the more commonly discussed pathological theories of narcissism, his approach allows an essential recognition and understanding of the different narcissistic tendencies that many individuals in the general population possess. Recreating the current study with an additional focus on the participant's chosen major of study (ex., business majors v. psychology or education majors), might help educators understand how narcissism differs in students with differing academic majors. Comparing a group/major that has been traditionally or stereotypically more focused on prestigious career values (business students) with a group/major that has been traditionally or stereotypically more focused on altruistic career values (psychology or education students) could have the potential to provide insight into educators wanting to better understand and help their students.

Implications

The current study provided support for the hypothesis that superiority and goal instability had predictive value in altruistic career values and decisiveness. These relationships may be important for career counselors and other related professionals. These findings may encourage counselors to assess and understand a client's narcissistic tendencies and individual representations when assisting in the career development process. For example, if a client exhibits a self-absorbed, arrogant, or superior interpersonal presence, the counselor should be cognizant of the potential for the client to also be less decisive and confident in the career development process. This connection

may be counterintuitive to many counselors. Without the counselor's awareness, the client may just appear to be resistant, rather than unsure and indecisive.

A client's values regarding career options, along with his/her associated self-efficacy and ability to make important decisions, appear to be factors to consider when counseling an individual through vocational/career development. For example, a client may appear to lack direction and confidence in his career development. These characteristics may not appear to be narcissistic, but the client's underlying intense focus on himself/herself is, in fact, narcissism. This tendency will likely lead to the client experiencing a depleted sense of self and result in the client turning his focus outward. To many, this would appear as if the client possesses altruistic values. But, to an astute counselor, it is important to recognize the apparent altruism is, in fact, self-serving and a mask for narcissism. If the career counselor is able to recognize this incongruence, he will be better able to appropriately guide the client towards a career that suits her needs and not result in a career that requires the individual's capacity to be truly be altruistic.

Conclusion

This study provided insight into the relationship between narcissism and the vocational/career development processes. Kohut (1966) suggested that narcissism could be viewed in terms of two poles: grandiosity and idealizing. Researchers who followed Kohut suggested that these two poles were represented by a sense of superiority and goal instability (respectively) (Robbins & Patton, 1985). Furthermore, supported by Donald Super's (1957) work, Robbins and Patton (1985) posit that Kohut's theory of self-development and narcissism may connect with career development. The current study showed that superiority (grandiosity) and goal instability (idealizing) predicted altruistic

career values and career decisiveness. Moreover, goal instability had the greatest predictive power on decisiveness.

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APPENDIX A

Goal Instability Scale

Below are statements that you may agree or disagree with. Using the scale of 1 to 6 below, indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement by placing the appropriate number on the line following that statement. Please respond to all statements as honestly as possible.

1 – strongly agree

2 – agree

3 – slightly agree

4 – slightly disagree

5 – disagree

6 – strongly disagree

1. It's easier for me to start than to finish projects.

1 2 3 4 5 6

2. I wonder where my life is headed.

1 2 3 4 5 6

3. I don't seem to make decisions by myself.

1 2 3 4 5 6

4. I don't mean to have the drive to get my work done.

1 2 3 4 5 6

5. I lose my sense of direction.

1 2 3 4 5 6

6. I have more ideas than energy.

1 2 3 4 5 6

7. I don't seem to get going on anything important.

1 2 3 4 5 6

8. After a while, I lose sight of my goals.

1 2 3 4 5 6

9. I have confusion about who I am.

1 2 3 4 5 6

10. It's hard to find a reason for working.

1 2 3 4 5 6

APPENDIX B

Superiority Scale

Below are statements that you may agree or disagree with. Using the scale of 1 to 6 below, indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement by placing the appropriate number on the line following that statement. Please respond to all statements as honestly as possible.

1 – strongly agree

2 – agree

3 – slightly agree

4 – slightly disagree

5 – disagree

6 – strongly disagree

1. My friends follow my lead.

1 2 3 4 5 6

2. I deserve favors from others.

1 2 3 4 5 6

3. I'm witty and charming with others.

1 2 3 4 5 6

4. My looks are one of the things that attract others to me.

1 2 3 4 5 6

5. I could show up my friends if I wanted to.

1 2 3 4 5 6

6. Running the show means a lot to me.

1 2 3 4 5 6

7. Being admired by others helps me feel fantastic.

1 2 3 4 5 6

8. Achieving out of the ordinary accomplishments would make me feel complete.

1 2 3 4 5 6

9. I catch myself wanting to be a hero.

1 2 3 4 5 6

10. I know that I have more natural talents than most.

1 2 3 4 5 6

APPENDIX C

Pseudoautonomy Scale

- 1.a. I don't have to cheat to get what I want.
- b. Many times, I have to cheat to get what I want.*
- 2.a. I do what I want.*
- b. Most always, I follow the law.
- 3.a. I don't have to use my anger to get what I want.
- b. I use my anger to get what I want.*
- 4.a. Sometimes, I ask advice from other people.
- b. I run my own life.*
- 5.a. I am usually careful about what I do.
- b. Many times, I do things on a dare.*
- 6.a. I get respect by being tough.*
- b. People seem to like me.
- 7.a. Many times, I like adults to offer me help.
- b. Adults stick their noses into what is my business.*
- 8.a. I can depend on others to treat me fairly.
- b. Many times I have to take what I need.*

APPENDIX D

Peer-Group Dependence Scale

1. a. I can still feel good about myself if important friends get angry with me.
b. I feel good about myself when I please friends whom I look up to.*
2. a. I tend to believe what others say about me.*
b. I can accept or reject what others say about me.
3. a. When friends cut me down, I try to be more like what they want.*
b. When friends cut me down, I'm not too hard on myself.
4. a. I believe that people I look up to will not let me down.
b. I am worried that people I look up to might push me away.*
5. a. Others' thoughts about me can easily become my thoughts about myself.*
b. Others' thought about me can't easily become my thoughts about myself.
6. a. Other people's judgments about me usually influence the way I feel about myself.*
b. Other people's judgments about me aren't as important as my own.
7. a. I feel really crummy when I am away from good friends.*
b. I can pretty easily make new friends when I lose old ones.
8. a. I seem to attach myself to stronger people.*
b. Some people look to me for help.

APPENDIX E

Career Planning Scale

Below are statements that you may agree or disagree with. Using the scale of 1 to 6 below, indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement by placing the appropriate number on the line following that statement. Please respond to all statements as honestly as possible.

1 – strongly agree

2 – agree

3 – slightly agree

4 – slightly disagree

5 – disagree

6 – strongly disagree

1. I have not really decided what my career objectives should be yet (reverse).

1 2 3 4 5 6

2. I have a plan for my career.

1 2 3 4 5 6

3. I have a strategy for achieving my career goals.

1 2 3 4 5 6

4. I know what I need to do to reach my career goals.

1 2 3 4 5 6

5. My career objectives are not clear (reverse).

1 2 3 4 5 6

6. I change my career objectives frequently (reverse).

1 2 3 4 5 6

APPENDIX F

Occupational Values Scale

1 – Not at all
2 – Not much

3 – Some
4 – Very much

I would like a job that:

1. Gives me the opportunity to have control over an organization or group.
1 2 3 4
2. Gives me the opportunity to help other people.
1 2 3 4
3. Allows me to take time off when I become a parent.
1 2 3 4
4. Allows me to earn enough to buy a large house.
1 2 3 4
5. Gives me the opportunity to make important decisions.
1 2 3 4
6. Allows me to easily manage both a career and a family.
1 2 3 4
7. Allows me to earn a great deal of money.
1 2 3 4
8. Aids the needy.
1 2 3 4
9. Gives me plenty of time to spend with my family.
1 2 3 4
10. Gives me the opportunity to be in a high-responsibility job.
1 2 3 4
11. Contributes to the well-being of others.
1 2 3 4
12. Gives me the chance to earn big raises.
1 2 3 4
13. Allows me to be helpful to others.
1 2 3 4
14. Allows me to be in a position of power.
1 2 3 4
15. Allows me to work part-time (when my children are young).
1 2 3 4
16. Provides me with the opportunity to have a high income.
1 2 3 4

APPENDIX G

Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy—Short Form Scale

Directions: For each statement below, please read carefully and indicate how much confidence you have that you could accomplish each of the tasks by making an X over the number that represents your answer.

Example: How much confidence do you have that you could: Summarize the skills you have developed in the jobs you have held? If your response was “Moderate Confidence,” you would put X on number 3.

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 – No confidence | 4 – Much confidence |
| 2 – Little confidence | 5 – Complete confidence |
| 3 – Moderate confidence | |

- | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Find information in the library about the occupation you are interested in. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. Select a major from a list of potential majors you are considering. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. Make a plan of your goals for the next five years. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. Determine steps to take to be “successful” in your career. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. Accurately assess your abilities. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. Select one occupation from a list of potential occupations you are considering. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. Determine steps to take to successfully complete your chosen major. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. Persistently work at your major or career goals even when you get frustrated. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. Determine what your ideal job would be. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. Find out the employment trends for an occupation over the next ten years. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11. Choose a career that fits your preferred lifestyle. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. Prepare a good resume. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13. Change majors if you did not like your first. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14. Decide what you value most in an occupation. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15. Find out about the average yearly earnings of people in an occupation. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

16. Make a career decision and then not worry about whether it was right or wrong.
1 2 3 4 5
17. Change occupations if you are not satisfied with the one you enter.
1 2 3 4 5
18. Figure out what you are and are not ready to sacrifice to achieve your career goals.
1 2 3 4 5
19. Talk with a person already employed in the field you are interested in.
1 2 3 4 5
20. Choose a major or career that will fit your interests.
1 2 3 4 5
21. Identify employers, firms, and institutions relevant to your career possibilities.
1 2 3 4 5
22. Define the type of lifestyles you would like to have.
1 2 3 4 5
23. Find information about graduate or professional schools.
1 2 3 4 5
24. Successfully manage the job interview process.
1 2 3 4 5
25. Identify some reasonable majors or career alternatives if you are unable to get your first choices.
1 2 3 4 5

APPENDIX H

Email Correspondence

Subject: Influential factors in choosing a career

Text:

My name is Clare Duffy and I am a doctoral student from the Counseling Psychology program at Texas A&M University. I am currently doing research on family and individual factors that influence career development and career choice for my dissertation and I hope that you can help. It will only take a little bit of your time (approximately 15 minutes). Please go to http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=OPFWmp5s0Ho5KcKa4n5_2bYA_3d_3d to complete a survey.

The survey is completely anonymous. You will notice that there is no place to put your name. Please take your time reading and answering each of the questions. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at claremarie1010@live.com or you can call me anonymously at 979-845-5148. If for any reason you do not wish to participate in this research, choosing to not participate will not influence your standing in any of your classes. Thank you so much for taking the time to complete my survey, and again, if you have any questions, please let me know.

Participants are also offered the opportunity to be included in a drawing to win one of six \$25 gift certificates to Amazon.com. Upon completion of the survey, there will be instructions to enter the drawing.

Best,
Clare Duffy

Doctoral Student, Counseling Psychology
Graduate Assistant, TAMU Career Center

APPENDIX I

Means, Standard Deviation, and Correlations

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1 SupPar1	6.60	1.87												
2 SupPar2	7.65	2.20	.61*											
3 SupPar3	6.81	1.92	.70*	.62*										
4 SupPar4	6.30	2.08	.51*	.57*	.53*									
5 SupPar5	6.61	2.36	.48*	.48*	.49*	.65*								
6 GoalPar1	8.31	2.15	.09	.13	.08	.20*	.18							
7 GoalPar2	7.98	2.19	.01	.17*	.06	.11	.12	.52*						
8 GoalPar3	7.11	2.34	-.04	.07	-.01	.08	.10	.54*	.62*					
9 GoalPar4	8.45	2.26	-.60	-.04	-.10	.01	.04	.55*	.56*	.63*				
10 GoalPar5	9.27	2.39	.03	.13	.04	.11	.15*	.53*	.55*	.60*	.62*			
11 Altruism	0	1.00	.23*	.20*	.19*	.13	.13	.18*	.21	.15*	.08	.14*		
12 Decisiveness	93.01	15.91	-.03	-.01*	-.08	-.06	-.02	.36*	.46*	.50*	.49*	.46*	.33*	

* $p < .01$

APPENDIX J

Means, SD, Skewness, and Kurtosis

	M	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
SupPar1	6.60	1.87	.110	-.154
SupPar2	7.65	2.20	-.082	-.517
SupPar3	6.81	1.92	-.077	-.202
SupPar4	6.30	2.08	.329	-.204
SupPar5	6.61	2.36	.303	-.378
GoalPar1	8.31	2.15	-.569	-.004
GoalPar2	7.98	2.19	-.418	-.061
GoalPar3	7.11	2.34	.115	-.420
GoalPar4	8.45	2.26	-.562	-.257
GoalPar5	9.27	2.39	-.913	.274
PeerPar1	.78	.72	.363	-1.025
PeerPar2	.87	.75	.213	-1.199
PeerPar3	.89	.73	.170	-1.087
PeerPar4	.55	.69	.884	-.460
Prestige	0	1.00	-1.639	2.869
Altruism	0	1.00	-.626	.033
Planning	13.62	5.96	.531	-.387
Decisiveness	93.01	15.91	-.308	.030

VITA

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