



## Interest congruence and performance: Revisiting recent meta-analytic findings☆



Christopher D. Nye<sup>a,\*</sup>, Rong Su<sup>b</sup>, James Rounds<sup>c</sup>, Fritz Drasgow<sup>d</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Department of Psychology, Michigan State University, 316 Physics Rd., East Lansing, MI 48824, United States

<sup>b</sup> Department of Psychological Sciences, Purdue University, 703 Third Street, West Lafayette, IN 47907, United States

<sup>c</sup> Department of Psychology, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 603 E. Daniel St., Champaign, IL 61820, United States

<sup>d</sup> Department of Psychology, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 603 E. Daniel St., Champaign, IL 61820, United States

### ARTICLE INFO

#### Article history:

Received 21 July 2016

Received in revised form 10 November 2016

Accepted 12 November 2016

Available online 14 November 2016

### ABSTRACT

Recently, there has been a growing interest in the study and use of vocational interests for predicting workplace behavior. The renewed attention to this topic is at least partially due to two recent meta-analyses (Nye, Su, Rounds, & Drasgow, 2012; Van Iddekinge, Roth, Putka, & Lanivich, 2011a) demonstrating the validity of interests for predicting job performance. Both studies came to the conclusion that interests predict performance but their results differed with respect to the validity of interest congruence. Although the congruence (or match) between an individual's interests and his or her work is particularly important for theories of vocational interest, there is some debate in the literature about the validity and utility of interest congruence for predicting work outcomes and the varying results reported in the two recent meta-analyses do little to resolve this issue. Therefore, the goal of the present study was to address these differences and the broader debate about interest congruence by conducting a more comprehensive meta-analysis of the validity of interest congruence for predicting job performance. An analysis of 92 studies and 1858 correlations suggested that interest congruence is a stronger predictor of performance outcomes than interest scores alone, with baseline correlations of 0.32 and 0.16, respectively. These results are discussed in the context of the broader person-environment fit literature and the implications for the interest literature and personnel selection research are discussed.

© 2016 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

### 1. Introduction

Vocational psychology has largely ignored the study of work performance and organizational researchers have largely ignored the study of vocational interests. Recently, however, there has been a convergence of these two traditions in the study of vocational interests and job performance by both organizations and vocational researchers (e.g., Ingerick & Rumsey, 2014; Rounds, 2013). For example, the U.S. Army has recently been exploring the use of interest assessments for Soldier selection and has even approved an initial operational evaluation of a new interest measure (Knapp & LaPort, 2013). Part of the reason for this convergence has been research demonstrating the validity of vocational interest measures for predicting work outcomes. Two independently published meta-analyses by Nye et al. (2012) and Van Iddekinge, Roth, Putka and Lanivich (2011) came to similar conclusions regarding the validity of interests for predicting job performance. Both studies indicated that interests are important

☆ An earlier version of this paper was presented at the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology annual conference, Honolulu, Hawaii, May 2014.

\* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: [nyechris@msu.edu](mailto:nyechris@msu.edu) (C.D. Nye), [rsu@purdue.edu](mailto:rsu@purdue.edu) (R. Su), [jrounds@illinois.edu](mailto:jrounds@illinois.edu) (J. Rounds), [fdrasgow@illinois.edu](mailto:fdrasgow@illinois.edu) (F. Drasgow).

predictors of performance on the job and that the study of interests in relation to performance is a worthwhile avenue for future exploration. The overall corrected correlation between interests and job performance was 0.20 in the study by Nye et al. (2012) and 0.14 in the meta-analysis conducted by Van Iddekinge and colleagues. The findings in these two meta-analyses were significant, not only because they provided evidence for the utility of interest assessment in personnel selection settings, but also because they highlighted potential mechanisms, such as motivation and person-environment fit, for the relationship between interests and performance.

## 2. Conflicting meta-analytic findings

Although both studies came to similar conclusions, there were key differences in their findings. The most important difference was in the size of the relationship between interest congruence and performance. In Nye et al.'s (2012) meta-analysis, congruence indices were more highly correlated with performance than in Van Iddekinge et al.'s (2011) study. Van Iddekinge et al. (2011) found a relatively small correlation for congruence indices (corrected correlation was 0.15) while Nye et al. (2012) found a substantial relationship between congruence indices and performance (corrected correlation was 0.36). In fact, Nye et al. showed that congruence was a better predictor of performance than interest scores alone. This difference is particularly important given the emphasis on person-environment fit in both the interest literature and in psychology more broadly (Su, Murdock, & Rounds, 2014).

A central thesis in P-E fit theories is that comparisons between an assessment of the individual and an assessment of his or her environment can predict positive outcomes. A key element in the interpretation of interests within a motivational framework is that an individual will be more motivated to perform well when he or she fits with the environment. Holland's (1997) theory is probably the most representative P-E fit theory in vocational psychology, if not the larger field of psychology. Holland (1997) proposed that the congruence between individuals and their environments would be particularly important for predicting work outcomes. Therefore, we would expect that information about the match between an individual's interests and his or her work tasks would be critical for understanding his or her behavior in the workplace. Van Iddekinge et al.'s (2011) findings seem to call this emphasis on interest congruence into question while the findings reported by Nye et al. (2012) provide strong support for it.

In fact, the controversy over the predictive validity of interest congruence has been ongoing since Holland (1959) first proposed his theory of vocational choice and has yet to be addressed sufficiently in the literature. In his last evaluation of this theory, Holland (1996) stated that, "Despite the usefulness of the congruency hypothesis, there are some empirical anomalies that require resolution. The most striking anomaly is the general inefficiency of the congruency hypothesis" (p. 401). Tinsley (2000) also noted that the interest congruence relationships are generally weaker than those found for other individual differences in the P-E fit literature (c.f., Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005). These concerns raise questions about the conceptualization and operationalization of interest congruence in Holland's theory. As a result, there is a critical need to address the inconsistent findings in this literature and to advance the theory and measurement of interest congruence.

Given the differences in recent meta-analytic findings and the debate about the utility of interest congruence, the goal of the present study was to resolve these differences by conducting an updated meta-analysis on the relationship between interest congruence and job performance. One potential explanation for the discrepancies between the two previous meta-analyses is the lack of overlap in the studies that were included. Specifically, both meta-analyses included studies that were not analyzed in the other. This included 43 studies that were not analyzed by Nye et al. (2012) and 17 studies that were not analyzed by Van Iddekinge et al. (2011).<sup>1</sup> In contrast to recent claims that these differences were due to the limitations of the theoretical perspective or exclusion criteria used specifically by Nye et al. (see Ones, Viswesvaran & Schmidt, *in press*), it appears that both original meta-analyses excluded certain types of studies that may have impacted results. Of the articles not included by Nye et al., 30 were unpublished works. This included 15 military technical reports or chapters and 15 theses. Nearly all of the studies not analyzed by Van Iddekinge et al. ( $k = 16$ ) were based on published works (one dissertation was excluded) and at least 13 of these studies included information about congruence indices. Moreover, the methodology differed across these studies making direct comparisons difficult to interpret and confounding substantive differences with methodological ones. To help reconcile these issues, we conducted an updated meta-analysis to resolve the discrepancies between these findings by creating a more comprehensive database of studies that includes all of the articles analyzed in these previous meta-analyses as well as a few additional articles published since the original analyses were conducted. Below, we first provide a brief review of Holland's person-environment (P-E) fit theory and then report the results of our updated meta-analysis.

## 3. Holland's (1997) person-environment fit theory

Holland (1959, 1997) proposed that individuals who are interested in the work that they do will be more satisfied, successful, and will persist longer on the job than those who are not interested in their work. P-E fit has generally been operationalized using congruence indices. Although a number of different congruence indices are available, the indices that are commonly used generally quantify fit as the differences between the individual and occupational interest profiles in relation to Holland's hexagonal

<sup>1</sup> The original study conducted by Nye et al. also included a separate set of analyses on the relationship between interests and academic performance. The studies using academic samples were not considered here when examining the overlap between the previous meta-analyses. Only papers using employed samples were used to examine the extent of the overlap.

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/5035176>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/5035176>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)