



The stability of aspect-based career preferences and of the recommended list of occupations derived from them[☆]



Itamar Gati^{*}, Tony Gutentag¹

Dept. of Psychology, The Hebrew University, Jerusalem 91905, Israel

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 24 August 2014

Available online 6 December 2014

Keywords:

Career decision making

Reliability

Stability

Career-related preferences

Career counseling

Prescreening

ABSTRACT

Career-related preferences (e.g., team work, independence, length of training, income), which are an elaboration and extension of vocational interests, are one of the cornerstones that guide individuals to promising occupations recommended for further exploration. These preferences are informative and can serve individuals and their career counselors only if they are reliable and stable. Study 1 tested the two-week reliability of 31 career-related preferences of 213 freshman students and the two-year stability of the preferences of 132 of these students. Both the within-aspect preferred levels (e.g., *only indoors* most preferred, but *mostly indoors* also acceptable) and the importance of the aspects were elicited. The median *within-participant* two-week reliability was .85 for preferred levels and .64 for aspect importance; the median two-year stabilities were .75 and .51, respectively. In Study 2, the preferences elicited in Study 1 were used to derive a list of recommended occupations compatible with each participant's preferences at Time 1, Time 2 (2 weeks later), and Time 3 (2 years later), using a compensatory-model-based fit index. The percentage of identical occupations in the lists of the top ten recommended occupations was quite high – 62% for Time 1 and Time 2, and 54% for Time 1 and Time 3. The theoretical and practical implications of the reliability and stability of recommendations based on aspect-based career preferences are discussed.

© 2014 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

The Person–Environment (P–E) fit approach has dominated vocational psychology for over fifty years (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984; Holland, 1997). This approach focuses on the assessment of the congruence between individuals' vocational interests and their vocational environment (Holland, 1997), where a better Person–Environment fit yields better outcomes for both the individual (e.g., satisfaction, well-being) and the environment (e.g., success, performance). Career-related preferences (Gati, 1998), an elaboration and extension of vocational interests, are one of the cornerstones that guide individuals' career choices. Career-related preferences, like interests, can serve clients and their counselors as road signs to identify occupational alternatives worth further attention only if the preferences are reliable and stable.

The present research focused on the first – *prescreening* – stage of the career decision-making process, testing the reliability and stability of the input (i.e., the individuals' attribute-based career preferences) and the output (i.e., the list of occupations

[☆] We thank Adi Amit, Lisa Asulin-Peretz, Reuma Gadassi, Naomi Goldblum, Valentina Izrailevitch, Nimrod Levin, Yulia Lipshitz-Braziler, Maya Perez, Dana Vertsberger, and Tirza Wilner for their comments on previous versions of this paper. Part of the present research was presented as a poster at the 120th APA Convention in Orlando, Florida. This research was supported in part by the Samuel and Esther Melton Chair of the first author.

^{*} Corresponding author. Fax: +972 2 5882084.

E-mail addresses: itamar.gati@huji.ac.il (I. Gati), tonygute@gmail.com (T. Gutentag).

¹ Fax: +972 2 5882084.

recommended for further, in depth exploration). Specifically, in Study 1 we tested the two-week reliability and the two-year stability of individuals' career preferences, and in Study 2 we tested the consequences of these preferences for the reliability and stability of the list of occupational options compatible with the individual's preferences that can be recommended for further exploration.

1.1. Career-related aspects

The vocational interest approach (e.g., Holland, 1997) and the aspect-based approach (Gati, 1998) both aim at characterizing an individual's preferences and the world of work using the same set of criteria, but the two approaches use different sets of criteria. Traditionally, vocational interests have been used to help individuals locate suitable occupational alternatives that deserve in-depth exploration. Research has revealed, however, that there are additional factors to consider in locating suitable occupational alternatives, such as work or career-related aspects (Pryor, 1981). Career-related aspects are the factors considered during career decision making, including all the relevant variables involving the individual's preferences and abilities and distinguishing among career options (Gati, 1998; Gati, Shenhav, & Givon, 1993). Aspects include vocational interests, needs, work values, abilities, work roles, work styles, personality traits, and so forth. Thus, teamwork, using analytical ability, work environment (indoors vs. outdoors), helping people, income, independence, hand dexterity, flexibility of working hours, and length of training are all examples of aspects. The set of 31 aspects used in the present research is presented in the Method section of Study 1.

Not only are aspects broader than vocational interests, but research has demonstrated that people tend to consider occupations in terms of career aspects other than vocational interests (Gati, 1998). Furthermore, the association between Person–Environment fit and job satisfaction was found to be greater when aspects were considered instead of interests (Gati, Garty, & Fassa, 1996). Preferences elicited in terms of aspects successfully predicted occupational-choice satisfaction six years later (Gati, Gadassi, & Shemesh, 2006). Indeed, many career guidance and planning systems, used by millions of deliberating individuals each year worldwide, rely on a wide range of aspects in the search for career alternatives compatible with the individual's preferences (e.g., CHOICES [Careerware, 1996], DISCOVER (CD-I) [Computer software], 1997, MBCD [Gati, 1996]).

1.1.1. The three facets of aspect-based career preferences

Aspect-based career preferences involve the relative attractiveness of the within-aspect variations. These variations can be represented by a number of distinct qualitative or quantitative levels (Gati, 1998); for practical purposes, five levels are often used. For example, the levels for the aspect “personal responsibility” range from “very high” to “very low” (as in a typical Likert scale), while for “work environment” the levels are: *only indoors*, *mostly indoors*, *about equal indoors and outdoors*, *mostly outdoors*, and *only outdoors*. It is assumed that different levels of the same aspect elicit different affective reactions towards them, which result in favoring one level over the others (Gati et al., 1993).

There are three facets of preferences for each aspect (Gati, 1998; Gati et al., 1993). (a) The *optimal level* is the individual's most preferred level for a given aspect (e.g., *mostly indoors* for *work environment*). (b) The *acceptable range* includes additional levels that are less desirable than the optimal level, but are still considered acceptable (e.g., *only indoors* and *about equally indoors and outdoors*); regarding these additional levels as acceptable reflect the individual's willingness to compromise. (c) *Importance* involves the individual's sensitivity to the variance in the perceived utility of the aspect levels; for each individual, some aspects are more important than others (e.g., *work environment* may be more important than *length of training*). The first and second facets (the optimal level and the additional acceptable levels) distinguish among the various levels *within* the same aspect, whereas the third facet (aspect importance) makes it possible to distinguish *between* the aspects themselves.

Both the vocational interests and the aspect-based approaches assume that the individual's career preferences are fairly stable over time. The stability of an individual's preferences is of theoretical and practical importance in many domains, including political attitudes (Ansolabehere, Rodden, Snyder, et al., 2008), mate selection (Boake, 1989), and consumer behavior (DeShazo & Fermo, 2002). The degree to which a behavior is consistent across time is important for assessment and intervention. If deliberating individuals do not have reliable and stable preferences, helping them choose a major or an occupation can be problematic, since the set of occupations that best fit an individual's preferences and are recommended for further exploration may vary from time to time.

1.2. The PIC model

PIC is a three-stage model aimed at facilitating career decision making process: prescreening, in-depth exploration, and choice (Gati & Asher, 2001). When the number of potential options (e.g., majors, jobs) is large, an in-depth exploration of all possible alternatives is unfeasible due to cognitive and practical constraints (e.g., time, effort). The goal of the *prescreening* stage is to locate a small set of promising alternatives that can be recommended for future *in-depth exploration*. This can be achieved using vocational interest inventories (e.g., the VPI, SDS; Holland, 1997) or career-aspect-based preferences (Gati, 1998). The next step, the *in-depth exploration* stage, involves the collection of information about those alternatives that seem promising, to verify that they indeed suit the individual and are likely to be actualized. Finally, in the *choice* stage, the most suitable alternative is selected based on a comparison and evaluation of the alternatives on the short list.

The quality of the final decision made at the *choice* stage depends on the quality of the recommended list of options at the end of the *prescreening* stage (Gati & Asher, 2001; Gati & Ram, 2000). If the individual's preferences fluctuate from time to time, they cannot serve as guideposts for locating promising career options worth further, in-depth exploration. Moreover, the reliability and stability of a client's career-related preferences within or between counseling sessions are probably among the more important indicators of the client's readiness to engage in making a career decision.

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/886778>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/886778>

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