Understanding Relationships Among Holland’s Self-Directed Search, the Career Thoughts Inventory, and the Career Tension Scale

Tyler Finklea, MA and Julia Kronholz, M.Ed.
What we wanted to know

- Are there correlations between career tension, negative career thinking, and Holland’s sub-scale of Differentiation?

Why we wanted to know

- From teaching the undergraduate career development class, instructors noticed a trend in the students who ultimately did not do well in the course or were struggling.
What we looked at:

- Career Thoughts Inventory
  - Decision Making Confusion, Commitment Anxiety, External Conflict
- Self-Directed Search
  - Differentiation/Profile Elevation, Holland Types
Career Tension Scale?

- Career Tension is defined as “the emotions experienced when being called on to make a career decision and the resultant physical and emotional symptoms.”

- Career Tension Scale derived from the Job Tension Scale (House and Rizzo, 1972) to measure levels of career tension. Scale has seven items to which respondents indicate level of agreement/disagreement on a 7 point Likert-Scale. High scores indicate high levels of career tension.
Who We Looked At

- 101 undergraduate students enrolled in five sections of a Career Development course at Florida State University in the Spring 2012 semester
What We Found

- Decision-Making Confusion: 0.374
- External Conflict: 0.400
- Commitment Anxiety: 0.382
- Career Thoughts Inventory: 0.468

All significant at the .01 level
What’s the Story?

- Surprisingly, it doesn’t seem like profile elevation/differentiation is related to Commitment Anxiety or Career Tension.

- Data Entry stage – unable to run a reliability analysis, but the newness of the Career Tension Scale and the fact that it’s been used in so few studies may be problematic for the correlation study.

- Career Tension correlates with S type Holland Types ($r = .232$) and Commitment Anxiety correlates with I ($r = .206$) and A ($r = .228$) Holland Types all significant at the .05 level.
Implications

- Possibility that if CTI scores are high that Career Tension is also high
- S,I, and A people may be more likely to experience Career Tension and Commitment Anxiety in the career search and choice process
- By the time participants took the SDS and CTI, they have already had career interventions in the form of lectures and class activities
What’s Next?

- How do practitioners help clients with elevated Career Tension Scores? We know that Dysfunctional Career Thoughts can be helped by Cognitive Restructuring, but is the same true for Career Tension?

- Additional analysis of other secondary constructs of the SDS is warranted to look for correlations with things like Consistency and Congruence
Additional Resources

Florida State University’s Center for the Study of Technology in Counseling and Career Development:
http://www.career.fsu.edu/techcenter/

- A bibliography of Holland’s work and research related to Cognitive Information Processing
- Tyler Finklea – janetylerfinklea@gmail.com
- Julia Kronholz – jkronholz@fsu.edu