

Measurement of Career Behavior in Young Men

Elizabeth Hoppin Gotkin

Horace Mann-Lincoln Institute of School Experimentation  
Teachers College, Columbia University

U.S. Office of Education  
Cooperative Research Project No. 1393

American Psychological Association  
Philadelphia, August 30, 1963

## Definitions

The behaviors and definitions below, used in the preliminary report entitled "Measures of Career Behavior in Young Men" are based on descriptions in "The Definition and Measurement of Career Behavior: A First Formulation", a paper read by D.E. Super at the APGA convention in 1962, and published in *Personnel Guid. J.*, 1963, 41, 775-780.

- (1) **Floundering:** movement to a position which is not the logical next step for the one being vacated. Floundering may also be defined psychologically as movement to a job for which one lacks the psychological requirements or for which one is no better suited than for the vacated, and at least somewhat unsuitable, job.
- (2) **Trial:** movement from one related job to another, the next job having some characteristics of the preceding job but lacking others. Trial may be characterized by a zeroing in on a field or specialty. Trial should, in due course, lead to establishment, and when it fails to do so it takes on some of the characteristics of floundering. Trial may also be defined as movement into a job for which one has some of the desirable psychological characteristics, to a greater degree than was true of the vacated job.
- (3) **Instrumentation:** behavior which enables the individual to prepare for or enter a regular adult occupation in which he can achieve a degree of self-fulfillment. It differs from floundering and stagnation in that it is goal-directed, from trial in that it does not imply questioning of the goal.

Definitions (continued)

- (4) Establishment: achievement of stability in an occupation in which one can function as a normal adult, and which does not involve stagnation. Establishment may be psychologically defined as stabilization in an occupation for which one has the requisite abilities and interests, as shown by tests and inventories.
- (5) Stagnation: remaining on a job or in an occupation longer than is good for the individual concerned. It is not just remaining static, it is, instead, remaining in a deteriorating situation. Stagnation involves staying in a job or occupation for which one is not suited by abilities and interests, a job which will therefore not permit the individual to establish and support a family or to take a normal adult place in society.

**Table 1**  
**Means, Standard Deviations and Ranges of Subjects' Average-Score Per Move**  
**on Career Development Scales and Scores on Other Career Behaviors**  
*(N = 76)*

Variable	Mean	Standard Dev.	Range
Scale I* Change in Equity	1.12	.77	-.17 to +2.5
Scale II Realism of Reasons for Move	2.88	1.62	-.33 to +5
Scale IIIA. Improvement in Use of Abilities	.46	3.00	-4.5 to +11
Scale IIIB. Improvement on Goodness of Fit to Interests	.02	.48	-1 to +2
Scale IV Progress Toward Goal	.32	.51	-1 to +1
Scale VA. Improvement on Occupational Level	.11	.61	-1.2 to +2
Scale VB. Improvement in Educational Level	.19	.33	0 to +1
No. of Times Unemployed	.70	1.28	0 to 7
No. of Months Unemployed	1.80	3.74	0 to 17
No. of Months Self-Supporting	36.56	13.50	0 to 48
No. of Jobs Held	3.31	1.31	2 to 7

\* On Scales I through VB, scores range from 0 ("no") upward ("much").

Table 2  
Intercorrelations of Presumed Measures of Career Behavior

	I	II	IIIA	IIIB	IV	VA	VB	No. Times Unemployed	No. Months Unemployed	No. Months Self-Supporting	No. of Jobs Held
Scale I Change in Equity	--	.50**	.01	.19	.12	.24*	.41**	-.28**	-.19	.06	-.50**
Scale II Realism of Reasons of Move	.50**	--	.12	.18	.36**	.18	.61**	-.14	-.13	-.04	-.41**
Scale IIIA Improvement in Use of Abilities	.01	.19	--	.12	.17	.07	-.07	-.10	-.14	-.02	-.08
Scale IIIB Improvement in Goodness of Fit to Interests	.18	.18	.16	--	.35**	.11	.00	-.03	-.03	.36**	.08
Scale IV Progress Toward Goal	.12	.36**	.17	.35**	--	.21*	.17	.01	.05	.11	-.16
Scale VA Improvement in Occupational Level	.24*	.18	.07	.11	.21*	--	.05	-.27*	-.22*	-.13	-.13
Scale VB Improvement in Educational Level	.41**	.61**	-.07	.00	.17	.05	--	.05	.03	.04	-.19
No of Times Unemployed	-.28**	-.14	-.10	-.03	.01	-.27*	.05	--	.88**	-.07	.13
No. of Months Unemployed	-.19	-.13	-.14	-.03	.05	-.22*	.03	.88**	--	-.13	.09
No. of Months Self-Supporting	.06	-.04	-.02	.36**	.11	-.13	.04	-.07	-.13	--	.05
No of Jobs Held	-.50**	-.41**	-.08	.08	-.16	-.13	-.19	.13	.09	.05	--

\* p=.05 or better  
 \*\* p=.01 or better  
 Note: A correlation coefficient of .203 is significant at the .05 level, and of .284 at the .01 level, one-tailed test.