

## INDICES OF VOCATIONAL MATURITY

As you have seen, vocational maturity is one of the key concepts in the Career Pattern Study. Our study has not been in progress long enough for us to be able to say what constitutes vocational maturity in adults, but we do have data on what constitutes vocational maturity in young adolescents. The purpose of <sup>this</sup> my paper is to describe the various indices of maturity which we developed and tried out on a group of ninth graders in Middletown, New York.

Presumed Indices of Vocational Maturity. Having compiled a list of the characteristics and behaviors which might be indicative of vocational maturity in Grade 9 and agreed on ways of measuring them, we classified them according to type. We found that our 19 hypothetical indices of vocational maturity fell into five categories or dimensions. They are shown in Table \_\_\_\_\_

Derivation of the Measures. The methods used in computing these indices were of two kinds : those involving the use of standard measures and those involving content analysis of interview material. Interest Maturity and Patterning of Work Values are examples of indices derived from standard measures, the former being derived from the I-M score of the Strong and the latter from the number of significantly high or low scores on a specially constructed inventory of Work Values.

The indices derived from standard measures are indicated in Table \_\_\_\_\_ by a single asterisk, those derived from interview data by a double asterisk.

Deriving an Interview-Based Index. The method used in developing an interview-derived index was to define it and then describe the kinds of behaviors which would exemplify it. Then the interview protocols were checked to be sure that appropriate data would be available in the interviews. Scales were developed for scoring interview excerpts which contained pertinent material, and their reliability determined. Final modifications in the index and in the scoring manual were made in the light of the reliability study and the scoring made final.

Analysis of the Data. After the data had been processed, the various presumed indices of vocational maturity were related to each other to test their construct validity or, to put it ~~more~~ in another way, their conceptual adequacy.

I obviously do not have the time to present all the correlational data which our analysis yielded. I shall therefore confine myself to two of the Dimensions listed in Table \_\_\_\_\_ : Orientation to Choice and Wisdom of Vocational Preference. However, in my concluding statement I shall attempt to summarize our main findings drawing on all the data.

#### ORIENTATION TO CHOICE

Would you turn to Table \_\_\_\_\_? It shows the correlations between the indices of Dimension I (Orientation to Choice) and the indices of the other dimensions. These other dimensions and indices are listed on the left-hand side of the page. Listed across the top are the various elements and components of Dimension I. As you can see, Orientation to Choice comprises two indices : Concern with Choice (extreme left hand column) and Use of Resources (extreme right hand column). CONCERN WITH CHOICE is further subdivided into: Awareness of the Need for Choice, Awareness of the Factors in Choice and Awareness of Contingency Factors.

Let me take just a few minutes to explain what these three components involve, since this will help to make the headings across the top of the table more intelligible.

Awareness of the Need for Choice can express itself, we believe, in three ways:

- 1) in concern with immediate choices (For example: "Next term I will have to choose between Shop and AG")
- 2) in concern with intermediate choices (For example: "I don't know yet whether I'll go to a 2 year college or a 4 year college")
- 3) in concern with ultimate choices (For example: "After I finish my electrical engineering course, I can go into electronics or the light and power field").

Awareness of Contingency Factors (component IA3) refers to the boy's awareness of the various factors that might operate to upset his vocational and educational plans, and the extent to which he has made provision for this possibility in his plans. The contingency factors which we thought important include: the withdrawal of parental support for his plans, lack of financial means, military service, and such special factors as business cycles, condition of the labor market etc.

Awareness of Factors in Vocational Choice refers to the boy's awareness of the factors to be considered in making a vocational choice. - factors relating to his own make-up, cost and availability of training and the job itself.

If you will look at the top of Table '\_\_\_\_' you will see that we have now explained all the headings except one: Use of Resources. As its title implies, this dimension has to do with the kinds of resources which the pupil has utilized in gathering information and in arriving at decisions and plans: such as consultation with informed persons, printed material, participation in related courses, clubs and part-time jobs.

With this as background let us look a little more closely at Table \_\_\_\_ The table makes it clear that Index IA, Concern with Choice, is internally consistent. As you will see from the box which has been drawn around the first row of figures in the table, correlations between subscores and total score for the index range from .36 to .72.

The correlation ~~is~~ of .23 between IA and IB (extreme left hand column) suggests that while these two indices are related, the relationship is small enough to make one question whether IA and IB belong in the same dimension. It does suggest though, that boys who are concerned with choice and more likely to make use of opportunities for occupational orientation.

Let us look now at the correlations between Dimension I and Dimension II. Six of the correlations between <sup>A</sup>IA and IIA are significant, suggesting that boys who are aware of the need to make choices, of the factors to consider in making a choice,

and of the continued need for parental psychological support, are likely to have information concerning the occupations they prefer. They are also more likely to have planned for their education and occupation, as shown by the correlations with Index IIB.

Index IA is related to only one other index, namely IVF, Acceptance of Responsibility for Choice, with which it correlates .56. The other ~~dimension~~ component of Dimension I, namely IB- Use of Resources, has a smaller but still significant correlation with IVF, Acceptance of Responsibility. Those who are best oriented to vocational choice are those who most fully accept the responsibility for making choices and plans relating to these choices.

To summarize, the indices of Dimension I show relationships with the three indices of Dimension II and with one of the indices of Dimension IV, but not with any of the indices of Dimensions III, V and VI. As will be indicated later, there is good reason to question the adequacy of Dimensions III, V and VI <sup>as</sup> ~~and~~ measures of vocational maturity.

#### WISDOM OF PREFERENCE

Let us turn now to a somewhat different set of indices: those comprising Dimension VI, Wisdom of Vocational Preference. Unlike the indices just considered, those of Dimension VI were not ~~derived~~ derived by content analysis methods and did not involve the development of special scales. As you will see by looking at the last section of Table \_\_\_\_\_, they could be computed by relating various objectively determined items to each other. For example, Agreement between Interests and Preference, could be determined by relating the boy's measured interests to those of men in his preferred occupation. Agreement between Level of Interest and Preference could be determined by relating the boys Occupational Level Score on the Strong to that of men in his preferred occupation.

the coefficients suggests that this index does not belong to the same cluster as the others.

These five indices seem to measure two dimensions of vocational maturity in the 9th grade: 1) Orientation to Choice and 2) Use of Resources.

The other fourteen indices which it was thought might serve as measures of vocational maturity in Grade 9 were found to fit into, or yield, virtually no clusters. They are unrelated to each other and to the five promising indices. In other words, they would seem to lack construct validity. This is not to say that they may not prove to be good measures of vocational maturity at some other age level. What can be questioned is their adequacy at the 9th grade level.

#### What Constitutes Vocational Maturity in Grade 9?

Our data suggest that the vocationally mature boy is, first of all, one who knows about, and is giving attention to, decisions and choices that he must make -- both those that need to be made now and those that will have to be made later.

He recognizes that ultimately the responsibility for making these choices is his, although he realizes the value of consulting with persons who are more experienced and more knowledgeable than he. He is aware of the factors that need to be considered in choosing a career. He is also aware of the eventualities that might cause his plans to go awry and has made provision for this possibility in his plans. He has information about the occupation which he is considering, and also plans for preparing for and entering the occupation.

One might summarize the foregoing by saying that his behavior and thinking is choice-oriented. However, in addition to being choice-oriented, the vocationally mature 9th grader knows about and makes use of the resources in his environment for becoming oriented to occupations. He discusses his plans with persons who can help him evaluate his plans (such as a counselor) or who can give him first hand information (such as

Dimension VI is entitled Wisdom of Preference, its five indices having been chosen to represent certain commonly accepted constituents of a wise vocational choice. The table reports the correlations between these five indices and the other presumed indices of vocational maturity.

A quick glance at the table will show that the intercorrelations of the five indices of Dimension VI are virtually nil. The only clearly significant coefficient (that between VIB and VIC) is probably an artifact arising from the fact that the fantasy preferences of many of the boys did not differ from their regular preferences. Three other coefficients (.17, .17 and -.19) are only barely significant.

One cannot therefore claim any satisfactory degree of internal consistency for Dimension VI.

The table also shows a lack of relationship between the five wisdom indices and the other maturity indices. One is justified in questioning the adequacy of these indices as measures of vocational maturity at the ninth grade level. While realistic preferences may prove to be an appropriate index of maturity at some other age level, it does not appear to be so at the 9th grade level.

#### CONCLUSIONS

In illustrating the procedure used in analyzing our data, I have confined my discussion to two dimensions of vocational maturity: 1) Orientation to Choice and 2) Wisdom of Vocational Preference. The indices of the other four dimensions were analyzed in the same way. Let me summarize our main findings and conclusions.

Out of a total of 19 indices which were developed and tried out, only 5 proved to be internally consistent and positively interrelated. They are shown in Table \_\_\_\_\_. You will see that there are four indices which appear to form a definite cluster. The fifth (Index IB, Use of Resources) would appear to warrant a separate category. Though three of its correlations with the other indices are significant, the size of

a person who is engaged in the proposed occupation or course of study). He finds opportunities to become acquainted with the occupation in which he is interested through movies, books, pamphlets and observation, and by participating in related activities such as school courses, clubs and part-time jobs.

Vocational Maturity in the 9th grade consists then of 1) orientation to vocational choice and 2) the use of resources in becoming oriented to occupations.

TABLES REQUIRED FOR MY PRESENTATION

1. see attached sheet *Table I*

*Table II* 2. Table III-III (Correlations of the Indices of Dimension I with the remaining Indices)

*Table III* 3. Table III-VIII (Correlations of the Indices of Dimension VI with the Remaining Indices)

*Table IV* 4. Table III-X (The Adequate Measures of Vocational Maturity in Grade Nine)

*Table V* 5. Table III-XI (The Inadequate Measures of Vocational Maturity)

Dear Phoebe,

As you will see I finally decided on a panoramic approach. This, as I figured it, was the only way to stay intelligible. Unfortunately I wasn't able to fit in any of the material for Ch. 6. A pity, because it's good. However, 15 minutes is 15 minutes!

If you have any suggestions for improving my paper, do let me know. Sorry to have held you up like this. See you in St. Louis.

Warm regards

Jean

Table

11/11/11

Dimensions and Indices of Vocational Maturity

- Dimension I. <sup>r</sup>Orientation to Vocational Choice
- \*\* Concern with Choice
  - \*\* Use of Resources in Orientation
- Dimension II Information and Planning in connection with <sup>school</sup> Preferred Occupation
- \*\* Specificity of Information
  - \*\* Specificity of Planning
- Dimension III Consistency of Vocational Preferences<sup>s</sup>
- \* Within Fields
  - \* Within Levels
  - \* Within Fields and Levels
- Dimension IV Crystallization of Traits
- \* Patterning of Measured Interests
  - \* Interest Maturity
  - \* Patterning of Work Values
  - \*\* Vocational Independence
  - \*\* Liking for Work
  - \*\* Extent of Discussion of Rewards of Work
  - \*\* Acceptance of Responsibility for Choice and Plans
- Dimension V Wisdom of Vocational Preferences
- \* Relationship between Abilities and Preferences
  - \* Relationship between Measured Interests and Preferences
  - \* Relationship between Measured Interests and Fantasy Preferences
  - \* Relationship between Occupational Level of Measured Interests and Level of Preference
  - \* Socioeconomic Accessibility of Preferred Occupation

\* derived from standard measures

\*\* derived by content analysis from interview data

please refer to...