

THE EFFECTS OF SELF-EFFICACY AND SELF-ESTEEM ON HOLLAND'S THEORY OF CONGRUENCE

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ABSTRACT

This paper will explore the effects of self-esteem and self-efficacy on Holland's theory of congruence. It will first discuss if those with high self-esteem move towards congruence between their personality types and their work environments while those with low self-esteem do not. The paper then investigates if those with high career self-efficacy move from incongruence to congruence by changing actual jobs while those with low self-efficacy change their attitudes and interests. The determinants of self-efficacy are considered moderating variables in this model.

INTRODUCTION

This paper will look at the reactions of employees to being incongruent with their environment. The effect of self-esteem and self-efficacy on these reactions will also be investigated. The congruence of an employee with their workplace will be based on Holland's [7] [8] theory of vocational satisfaction. It is important to examine employees who are incongruent with their work environment because of job satisfaction. Studies have shown that job satisfaction is positively related to congruence in the work environment [1].

Employees not in congruence with their work environment may either stay in incongruence or make a change towards congruence. Self-esteem may be the important factor here. Research does find that employees with higher self-esteem are most satisfied with their jobs [12]. It may be that people with high self-esteem move towards congruence and satisfaction with their job, while people with low self-esteem stay in incongruence and are dissatisfied with their job.

There are two ways employees may move towards congruence. People may change actual jobs or change their aspirations [4]. Self-efficacy may be the important factor here. The social learning theory literature on careers shows self-efficacy to have an important effect on individuals' career decisions. Self-efficacy refers to a person's beliefs about their personal capabilities. People with high self-efficacy may achieve congruence by changing their actual job. People with low self-efficacy may achieve congruence by changing their aspirations. The determinants of self-efficacy may moderate people's change to congruence. Those, whose self-efficacy is based on strong sources such as past performance, may be more inclined to change actual jobs.

HOLLAND'S THEORY

Holland [7] [8] categorized people and environments into six types. The types are; realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising, and conventional. Congruence would be when a person's

personality type matches their environment. Holland [7] [8] hypothesized that vocational satisfaction depends on the congruence of a person's personality type to their work environment [9]. He also hypothesized that people will be inclined to try and become congruent.

SELF-ESTEEM

Studies on self-esteem and job satisfaction show that self-esteem is positively correlated with overall, intrinsic, and extrinsic, job satisfaction [5]. Levels of self-esteem also influence individual's choices of occupation [13]. This influence may be evident when an employee is faced with incongruence. An employee in incongruence may either stay in incongruence or change their aspirations or actual job.

Proposition # 1 – Employees with high self-esteem, who are in jobs not congruent with their personalities, will move towards congruence.

Proposition # 2 – Employees with low self-esteem, who are in jobs not congruent with their personalities, will stay incongruent.

SELF-EFFICACY

Self-efficacy expectations are one's belief about one's ability to perform a given task [2]. These beliefs are believed to have an important impact on an individual and changes in their behavior [6]. Self-efficacy is believed to influence people's choice of occupations and work environments [11].

Career Self-Efficacy

Career self-efficacy is defined as "... a generic label encompassing judgments of personal efficacy in relation to the wide range of behavior involved in career choice and adjustment" [10]. Research on college students has supported that a student's self-efficacy is related to their career choice behavior, and their success and persistence in pursuing educational and career goals [3]. Lent, et al. [10] compared the self-efficacy model to Holland's congruence model. They found self-efficacy to be a better predictor than Holland's theory regarding a student's range of perceived career options. Instead of opposing these two models, this paper will try to incorporate them and investigate the effect of self-efficacy in Holland's congruence theory.

Employees with low career self-efficacy may tend to reduce incongruence by changing their aspirations and interests. They may do this because they do not feel they have the ability to perform jobs in environments that are congruent with their aspirations and interests. Employees with high career self-efficacy may tend to reduce incongruence by changing their actual jobs. They may do this because they feel they have the ability to do jobs in environments that are congruent with their personalities. However, this may be moderated by the source of their self-efficacy. The four determinants which affect self-efficacy are past performance experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion and emotional arousal [2]. A person with high career self-efficacy strongly influenced by past performance would be more inclined to achieve congruence by changing jobs than a person whose high career self-efficacy is based on verbal persuasion by others.

Proposition # 3 – Employees with high career self-efficacy will move towards congruence by changing their actual jobs.

Proposition # 3a – The above hypothesis will be moderated by the determinants of an employee's career self-efficacy.

Proposition # 4 – Employees with low career self-efficacy will move towards congruence by changing their aspirations and interests to match their present job.

DISCUSSION

Results of this model may have some important practical information. If subjects with low self-esteem initially do not do something about changing the incongruence of their work environment it may not be productive for the employee or company. Organizations and/or employees may need to help employees to stay in or choose occupations based on their personality types. This would provide more satisfied and productive employees. It is important to make sure employees are not staying in a job because of their low self-esteem. Also, if employees are low in self-efficacy about occupations that are congruent with their personality types they may need to take steps to increase their self-efficacy. It is important that self-efficacy is influenced by the strongest available determinants. Organizations could help their employees to experience success at different tasks or provide appropriate role models.

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