

## PERSONALITY TRAITS AND PATERNAL PARENTING STYLE AS PREDICTIVE FACTORS OF CAREER CHOICE

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### ABSTRACT

*The paper describes the relationship of Big five personality factors and paternal parenting style to career preference of selected Filipino college freshmen. Two hundred college students (n=200) who were part of the larger population of individuals aged from 15 to 23 at two private collegiate institutions in Metro Manila were selected and asked to answer Big Five Inventory (BFI), Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ) and a demographic survey. The study employed a descriptive-predictive research design to measure the degree of correlation among the variables and to identify if what among these independent variables can predict career preference. After subjecting data into statistical analyses via SPSS 17.0 software, it was revealed that career preference is significantly associated with gender ( $\eta^2=.22$ ,  $p<.01$ ), neuroticism ( $r=-.17$ ,  $p<.05$ ) and authoritarian paternal parenting style ( $r=.23$ ,  $p<.05$ ). Neuroticism ( $\beta=-1.14$ ,  $t=-2.38$ ,  $p<.05$ ) and authoritarian paternal parenting style ( $\beta=.11$ ,  $t=3.19$ ,  $p<.01$ ) were found out to be predictive determinants of career choice. Implications of the findings to the population at hand were also discussed.*

**Keywords:** Big five personality factors, career choice, college student, paternal parenting style.

### INTRODUCTION

Due to the changing complexity of the global economy and occupational marketplace, career decision making is an essential matter to be investigated. Career is one of the most crucial facets in one's existential spheres. It encompasses set of life chores that an individual is deemed to carry out ranging from educational to vocational endeavors. Given that career progress has not been viewed as a single event, but rather a lifelong process that one undergoes from early childhood to adolescence and into adulthood, making career decisions is a difficult undertaking one can engage in (Savickas, 2002; Hartung, Porfeli, & Vondracek, 2005). Studies of career choice have typically focused on one or two variables to the relative neglect of others. For example, investigators have examined career choice in lieu of social-demographic background variables (Almquist & Angrist, 1971; Leong & Gupta, 2007; Fouad et al., 2008), social psychological variables (Goodale & Hall, 1976; Fouad et al., 2008) and personality variables (Tangri, 1972; Roberts & Robins, 2000; Zhao and Seibert, 2006; Onoyase & Onoyase, 2009; Hirschi et al., 2010).

As proven by numerous cross cultural validation studies, five factor models appeared to be the one of the most extensively used and dependable constructs in describing personality of individuals (McCrae & Allik, 2002; Bardi & Ryff, 2007). Its use even in non-Western cultures like Philippines makes it receptive to the contextual and environmental factors that represent one's individuality (Church & Katigbak, 1989; McCrae & Costa, 1997). Specifically, *Openness to Experience*, *Conscientiousness*, *Extraversion*, *Agreeableness* and *Neuroticism* are the personality domains that were stipulated in Costa and McCrae's model. In previous literature, conscientiousness is positively correlated with career decision (Lounsbury & Gibson, 2006; Lounsbury et al., 2005) and other pertinent outcome such as job (Judge, Heller & Mount, 2002; McCrae & Costa, 1991) and life satisfaction (De Neve & Cooper, 1998). Similarly, occupational behaviors and achievement was negatively associated with neuroticism (Judge et al., 1999; Boudreau et al., 2001; Lounsbury & Gibson, 2006), and positively correlated with extraversion (Judge et al., 2002; Boudreau et al, 2001; Lounsbury, et al., 2003).

In the Philippine context, recognition of the fathers' familial role is pretty much evident (Harper, 2006; Du-Lagrosa, 1986; Tan, 1989). It is frequent for fathers to make crucial decisions on situations where critical judgments are called for in a family like choosing the educational plan of children, selecting the educational institutions where the children will study and the likes which are commonly seen as well among Chinese families (Chen, Dong & Zhou, 1997). Given that, it is observable how influential fathers are in the capacities of their children to elicit wide array of behaviors, even in decisions that would involve children's occupational orientation. Since the students' contact with their fathers can be considered as a fundamental dimension in predicting behaviors of children, it is imperative to look at how the strategies they use in rearing their children, that is, their *parenting styles*, can affect not just the ability of their children to choose a course in college.

Parallel to such underpinnings, studies have consistently revealed the beneficial aftermaths of *authoritative* parenting on Caucasian children and adolescents, including greater academic, social, and psychological competence, self-esteem, and self-reliance, in comparison to parents who exhibit authoritarian or permissive parenting styles (Lamborn, Mounts, Steinberg, & Dornbusch, 1991; Carlson, Uppal, & Prosser, 2000; Furnham & Cheng, 2000). Likewise, Ang (2006) conducted a study with 548 Asian adolescents and found authoritative father encourage adolescents' self-reliance in coping, problem-solving and perseverance in academic challenges. In contrast, Chen and colleagues (1997) conducted a research with 304 second-grade Chinese students and 512 parents in Beijing, and discovered authoritarian parenting had positive relationship with students' aggressive behaviors and negative relationships with students' social competency and academic achievement. This appeared to be a remarkable concern at hand given that counselors and educational psychologists have identified the potential association between parent-student relationship and various outcome behaviors in life. However, career behaviors were not studied in lieu of paternal parenting style alone.

With the scarcity of literature that draws considerable link among personality traits, paternal parenting style and career choice, the present study was formulated as an effort to identify significant determinants of career choice. Since career choice is the initial step towards achieving long-term occupational progress, it is imperative to determine factors that are salient in the successful selection of a collegiate course that is congruent with one's predispositions, as supported by child rearing practices of fathers in the Philippines. This study would serve as a catalyst towards devising career counseling programs that are tailor-fit to the unique characteristics of Filipino clientele. Specifically, the researcher sought to answer the following questions: (1) what are the significant correlates of career choice; and (2) what are the predictive factors of career choice.

## METHOD

### Research Design

The study utilized a descriptive-predictive research design. Predictive designs are a form of correlational research that use calculated information about the relationships between variables to forecast future outcomes (Sheperis, Young & Daniels, 2010). In the current research, the Big five personality factors and paternal parenting style served as the predictors while career choice was the criterion.

### Participants

Two hundred college students (67 males, 133 females) aged 15-23 years ( $M = 17.25$ ,  $SD = 1.10$ ) from two private collegiate institutions in Metro Manila were randomly selected as partakers of the study. Majority of the respondents were taking up a dual degree course (21.5%) followed by International Studies (18%), Psychology (16%), Business Management (11%), Accountancy (6%), Organizational Communication (5.5%), Communication Arts (5%), Sports Management (4.5%), Political Science (4%), Literature (3.5%), Advertising (3%), Biology (1%), Engineering (.5%) and Nutrition (.5%).

### Research Instruments

The researcher used Big Five Inventory (BFI) Personality Test (John, Donahue, and Kentle, 1991). The 44-item BFI was developed to represent the prototype definitions developed through expert ratings and subsequent factor analytic verification in observer personality ratings. The BFI does not

use single adjectives as items because such items are answered less consistently than when they are accompanied by definitions or elaborations (Goldberg & Kilkowski, 1985). The current reliability of the instrument based on the analyses done in the data set is  $\alpha=.66$ .

The second psychometric tool that was employed by the researcher is the Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ) which measures the students' perceptions of the parenting styles used by both their mothers and fathers. The PAQ consists of 30 items per parent, and yields measures of authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive parenting styles. According to the developer of the PAQ (Buri, 1991), the test-retest reliability for the 3 different parenting style prototypes for both mothers and fathers ranges from .77 to .92. With its Cronbach's alpha value of .82 as divulged in the current study, it can be regarded as a highly reliable instrument.

Lastly, a self-report questionnaire about the demographic profile of the respondents which identified their age, sex and collegiate course, was made by the researcher. In the present study, career choice is equated with the course the respondents have selected prior to their entry in college.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based from descriptive statistical analysis (Table 1), it can be noticed that the respondents garnered the highest score on *Agreeableness* which means that most of them tend to value social adaptability, likability, friendly compliance, modesty and love (John & Srivastiva, 1999; Mc Crae & Costa, 1991). Similarly, they have manifested an elevated score in *Openness to Experience* which implies breadth, depth, originality, and complexity of an individual's mental and experiential life (Pervin & John, 1999; McCrae & Costa, 1997). Conversely, they got the lowest score in *Neuroticism* which talks about the respondents' vulnerability to experience negative emotions (McCrae & Costa, 1997).

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Big Five Inventory (BFI) among the Respondents**

	N	Mean	S.D.
Extraversion	200	3.22	.59
Agreeableness	200	3.63	.48
Conscientiousness	200	3.12	.55
Neuroticism	200	3.01	.54
Openness	200	3.56	.42

As shown in Table 2, *Authoritative* or *Flexible parenting style* seemed to be the most prevailing mode by which respondents' fathers are relating with them ( $M=35.69$ ,  $SD=6.60$ ). In contrast, a rigid and controlling parenting style was the least preferred approach in child rearing practices as perceived by the respondents ( $M=35.69$ ,  $SD=6.60$ ). Therefore, it can be surmised that most of the respondents recognized that their fathers utilize *flexible parenting style* which is characterized by a balance between the fathers' sense of strictness or stiffness and lenience and accommodation in terms of making decisions about the respondents.

**Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Paternal Authority Questionnaire (PAQ) among the Respondents**

	N	Mean	S.D.
Extraversion	200	31.34	6.19
Neuroticism	200	30.86	7.19
Openness	200	35.69	6.60

## Significant Correlates of Career Preference

### 1. Big five personality factors

As can be seen in Table 3, *Neuroticism* was the only Big five personality factor that is significantly associated with career choices of the respondents ( $\eta^2 = .17, p < .05$ ). It signifies that vulnerability to experience negative emotions such as depression, anxiety and the likes might be suggestive or indicative of one's capability to choose an occupational orientation. This finding appeared to be consistent with past literature which revealed negative correlation between neuroticism and career behaviors (Lounsbury & Gibson, 2006; Judge et al., 1999; Boudreau et al., 2001). Three percent (3%) of the variance in career choices can be explained by *Neuroticism*. Hence, inclination to negative emotional patterns might be a crucial point of consideration in the process of selecting collegiate courses.

### 2. Paternal parenting style

Based on correlational analyses (Table 3), *Authoritarian parenting style* was the strategy of child-rearing that is significantly related to the respondents' career choice ( $\eta^2 = .22, p < .05$ ). With the positive association that was drawn from such constructs, it can be deduced that the degree of strictness and stringency that the respondents' fathers employ would be evocative of better capability to choose a career path. As such, the more authoritarian the father is the greater chance that the child will elicit a definite career behavior. However, this finding was incongruent with the results of previous researches which zeroed in on the positive influence of authoritative or flexible parenting style (Lamborn et al., 1991; Carlson, Uppal, & Prosser, 2000; Furnham & Cheng, 2000; Ang, 2006; Chen et al., 1997). Therefore, it demarcated a major difference from past literature with regard to parenting style that is conducive for predicting various outcome behaviors. Yet, it fortifies the notion that Filipino fathers' role in the development of their children is very apparent (Harper, 2006; Du-Lagrosa, 1986; Tan, 1989).

**Table 3: Correlation of Gender, Big five personality factors and Paternal parenting style to Career choice in the full sample (n=200)**

	M	r/ $\eta^2$	r <sup>2</sup> / $\eta^2$	P
Gender		.22	.05	.10
Extraversion	3.22	.02	.0004	.76
Agreeableness	3.63	.10	.01	.16
Conscientiousness	3.12	.13	.017	.07
Neuroticism	3.01	-.17*	.03	.02
Openness	3.56	-.07	.005	.32
Permissive	31.34	.13	.017	.07
Authoritarian	30.86	.22**	.05	.00
Authoritative	35.69	-.02	.0004	.69

Note: \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$

### Predictive Factors of Career Choice

As revealed by Multinomial logistic regression analysis (Table 4), there is two significant determinants of respondents' career choices. Firstly, *Neuroticism* was found out to be a major predictor of career choice ( $B = -1.14, Wald's \chi^2 = 2.38, p < .01$ ) which further strengthened the previously delineated association between the two variables. It reiterates the role of vulnerability to negative emotions in choosing courses in college which is a crucial aspect in one's life. It also validates findings from previous literature which elucidated such variables (Lounsbury & Gibson, 2006;

Lounsbury et al., 2005). Secondly, *Authoritarian paternal parenting style* was identified to be another salient predictor of career choice ( $B=.11$ , Wald's  $\chi=3.67$ ,  $p<.01$ ). Given that, it can be inferred that fathers' degree of control and strictness would be paramount in the successful selection of a specific career path by adolescents. Although previous studies revealed that *authoritative parenting style* is prognostic of better outcome behavior such as increased self-efficacy, happiness etc. (Lamborn et al., 1991; Carlson, Uppal, & Prosser, 2000; Furnham & Cheng, 2000; Ang, 2006; Chen et al., 1997), it is not so surprising that *Authoritarian paternal parenting style* predicted career choices as the role of fathers in raising children cannot be discounted (Du-Lagrosa, 1986; Harper, 2006). Furthermore, the disciplinary lens of an authoritarian child-rearing practice might be a good point of consideration in explaining its associative and predictive worth towards a definite and sound occupational path.

**Table 4: Multinomial Logistic Regression Coefficient of Career Choices among the Respondents**

	B	SE $\beta$	Wald's $\chi$	P
1 (Constant)	5.64	1.86	0.65**	.03
Neuroticism	-1.14	-.16	2.38**	.01
Authoritarian	.11	.04	3.67**	.00

Notes: a. Cox and Snell R squared=0.38. Kendall's Tau-a=0.31. c-statistic=0.63

b. \* $p<.05$ , \*\* $p<.01$

## CONCLUSION

In a nutshell, the present paper revealed that *neuroticism* and *authoritarian paternal parenting style* were significant correlates of selected Filipino college freshmen's career choice. *Neuroticism* and *authoritarian paternal parenting style* were also found out to be predictive determinants of career choices. By employing a descriptive-predictive research design, the researcher was able to illustrate how one's occupational orientation can be predicted by distinct factors like gender, personality traits and paternal parenting style.

The findings will be of great significance to counseling psychologists in holistically understanding various factors which could possibly contribute to career decision making. For instance, since it was found out in the study that *Neuroticism* was a significant predictor of college adjustment, it is recommended for counseling psychologists and school counselors to evaluate emotional stability of individuals when choosing collegiate courses and other pertinent transitions. In view of the fact that *Authoritarian paternal parenting style* was identified as a predictive factor in career selection, it is imperative to uncover dimensions of the said fathers' child-rearing practice that are paramount in better inclination to children's career decisions. It is suggested as well for guidance counselors to devise counseling programs that will advocate collaboration with parents in guiding their respective children towards building a healthy career developmental path. Consequently, the possibility of increasing the number of college freshmen who will experience an enduring sense of subjective well-being and career satisfaction can be realized.

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