

CAREER-RELATED IDENTITY, WORK VALUES, ENGAGEMENT AND JOB CRAFTING

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1. CONCLUSIONS

Intrinsic work values, engagement to work and job crafting were significantly associated with a firm work identity (achieved/foreclosed work identity) on a time span up to five years. The results suggest a stability in how young adults relate to career plans and job characteristics, that is, identity achieved individuals are early on more self-determined and oriented towards working life than their more diffused peers.

2. INTRODUCTION

- Today new uncertainties in the labor market pose new challenges in terms of commitment to education and career paths. Knowing where you are heading—a sense of identity is associated with psychological well-being (Erikson, 1968) as well as internal locus of control and intrinsic motivation (Luyckx et al., 2009).
- Work values refer to preferred job characteristics and rewards (Johnson, 2001). A distinction is made between intrinsic (interest and learning opportunities) and extrinsic values (good salary and job security). Work values are relatively stable through young adulthood and are to some extent contingent on family SES.
- School/work engagement refers to the energy, dedication and absorption that is experienced in relation to studies/work (Salmela-Aro & Upadyaya, 2011).
- Job crafting refers to ways in which employees actively try to shape their physical, cognitive and social features of their jobs to better fit their personal interests and values (Slomp & Vella-Brodrick, 2013).
- We argue that achieving certainty in career plans today demands early on an active and engaged role (incl. intrinsic values) in one's relationship to working life. There are no previous studies exploring the hypothesized link between work values, engagement to studies/work, job crafting and work identity.

3. MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION

- Are work values, study/work engagement and job crafting related to different identity statuses?
- Hypotheses: Individuals within high commitment statuses (achievement/foreclosure), show stronger intrinsic work values, engagement, and job crafting than their more diffused peers. No differences were expected in extrinsic values. Provided that identity statuses have been shown to be rather stable, we assumed these links to exist already 3-5 years prior to measurement of work identity.



Figure 1. Z scores for the final cluster solution (N = 951).

3. METHODS

- A community sample of 858 Finnish young adults filled in self-report measures at four measurement points; T1 T2 T3 T4 (M_{age} 25.5, 60% women at T3).
- Measures: Identity at T3 (the Dimensions of Identity Development Scale; DIDS; short work version), job crafting at T4, School/work Engagement Inventory and work values at T1 T2 T3. In addition, we compared identity statuses on educational track and success in transition to working life.
- Analysis: Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and Cluster Analysis (CA) of the five identity dimensions of the DIDS, multiple ANOVAs between the identity clusters and work values as well as engagement to studies/work.

4. RESULTS

- The CFA confirmed the five factor structure of the DIDS with minor changes. CA suggested a five-cluster solution that matched previous studies.

Variables		Profiles					F-value	η^2
		Achievement	Foreclosure	Searching Moratorium	Carefree Diffusion	Troubled Diffusion		
Intrinsic work values	2008	6.41b (.51)	6.06b (.67)	6.09b (.65)	5.96 (.74)	6.05a (.83)	7.083***	.04
	2011	6.54b (.56)	6.24b (.64)	6.15bc (.72)	6.08bc (.81)	6.00a (.84)	10.031***	.06
	2013	6.49c (.63)	6.18b (.70)	6.24b (.68)	5.95a (.80)	5.85a (.93)	16.254***	.08
Extrinsic work values	2008	4.93 (1.05)	4.92 (1.01)	5.03 (1.07)	4.94 (.91)	4.73 (1.00)	1.509	.00
	2011	4.92 (1.20)	4.87 (1.10)	5.09 (1.09)	4.90 (.99)	4.80 (.99)	1.563	.00
	2013	5.07 (1.34)	4.95 (1.12)	5.32b (1.09)	4.88 (1.09)	4.79a (1.16)	2.989*	.03
Engagement to studies/work	2008	4.44b (1.03)	4.50b (1.03)	4.37b (1.07)	4.37b (.99)	3.96a (1.14)	4.52***	.04
	2011	4.53bc (1.13)	4.67c (.91)	4.49bc (1.12)	4.27b (1.11)	3.88a (1.30)	10.072***	.06
	2013	5.17d (.77)	4.80c (.97)	4.73c (.99)	4.25b (1.14)	3.82a (1.23)	35.363***	.18
Job crafting	2017	5.40 (1.21)	5.13 (1.07)	5.18 (1.15)	4.90 (1.22)	4.92 (1.29)	4.117**	.02

Note. A cluster mean is significantly different from another mean within the same row if they have different superscripts. A mean without a superscript is not significantly different from any other mean. Standard deviations are in parentheses.
*** = $p \leq .001$; ** = $p \leq .01$; * = $p \leq .05$

- As expected, individuals with a firm work identity (achievement/foreclosure) showed stronger intrinsic work values and engagement than their more diffused peers at T1-T3. Unexpectedly, however, they also showed stronger extrinsic work values at T3.
- Also as expected, a strong work identity was positively correlated with job crafting.
- Finally, individuals with stable career commitments were significantly more often in education-related work than others. In contrast, more diffused individuals were more often unemployed or in work not relevant to their education. No differences between the statuses were found regarding educational track.

DISCUSSION

- The results show that young adults' with a firm work identity at age 25 are already several years before more intrinsically oriented and engaged towards working than their more diffused peers. They also play a more active role in shaping their job features.
- Our results do not, however, address causality between the variables. We do suspect a reciprocal relationship since values also reflect re-adjustment to available opportunities. Observed differences may therefore be explained as well by the differing positions and achievements in working life. That is, diffused individuals are expected to show lower intrinsic values because they are more often unemployed or working in jobs non-relevant to their education.
- All in all, findings support a view that educational track, work values and attainment are bound up with socialisation, family SES and early internalized perceptions of autonomy and available options.

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