

Diversity Among Psychologists

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Abstract

This project simultaneously describes and differentiates personality characteristics for six different types of psychologists while also developing Holland codes that may provide guidance for students considering psychology to find their fit within the broader field.

Introduction

Since its inception, the field of psychology has grown to encompass a broad range of diversity in its specializations, yet very few researchers have studied the occupational diversity within psychology. The American Psychological Association (APA) has acknowledged the broad range of occupational differences by recognizing eleven specialties, six proficiencies, and thirty-three divisions within APA. Although psychology is the fourth most common undergraduate major in the United States, which conferred 85,614 bachelor degrees in the academic year 2004–2005 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2006), little information is available to assist those considering psychology as an occupation to learn which specialties best fit their interests.

The Strong Interest Inventory (SII) is the most frequently used assessment for career interests (Donnay, Morris, Schaubhut, & Thompson, 2004). Results from the assessment simply specify psychologist, not differentiating specialties. While the SII provides information which has helped individuals narrow career choices within the world of work, the purpose of this study is to help individuals and students narrow their choices within the field of psychology.

Method

Participants were randomly selected from APA membership within subfields considered to represent diverse areas among a large percentage of psychologists. The sample included male and female members from each of seven different major interest areas of psychology (Clinical, Counseling, Educational/Developmental, Experimental/Quantitative/Statistics, Industrial/Organizational, Cognitive, and Social/Personality). All participants have been working at least three years in their field, are practicing in a normal way, and are satisfied with their occupation.

APA emailed the sample of members asking that they complete the 2004 Strong Interest Inventory online. For tracking purposes, login information differed based on the APA subfield membership of each participant. All participants received a .pdf of their Strong Profile as compensation for their participation.

Strong Interest Inventory (SII, Strong, 2004). The Strong Interest Inventory is a 317-item inventory used to assess interests, both personal and work, of individuals. The SII has four components: six General Occupational Themes, thirty Basic Interest Scales, two hundred forty-four Occupational Scales, and five Personal Style Scales.

Results

General Occupational Theme Code & Basic Interest Scales

Clinical n = 59 GOT = Investigative Artistic Social	Social Sciences	M=60.20
	Counseling & Helping	M=60.01
	Writing & Mass Communication	M=57.22
	Research	M=56.60
	Medical Science	M=55.93
Counseling n = 104 GOT = Artistic Investigative Social	Counseling & Helping	M=59.41
	Social Sciences	M=59.17
	Writing & Mass Communication	M=57.56
	Research	M=55.95
	Performing Arts	M=55.80
Cognitive n = 44 GOT = Investigative Artistic Conventional	Research	M=66.61
	Mathematics	M=62.80
	Science	M=58.18
	Writing & Mass Communication	M=56.72
	Social Sciences	M=55.85
Developmental/ Educational n = 94 GOT = Investigative Social Artistic	Research	M=63.41
	Social Sciences	M=59.66
	Teaching & Education	M=59.10
	Writing & Mass Communication	M=57.74
	Mathematics	M=56.21
Experimental n = 86 GOT = Investigative Artistic Conventional	Research	M=68.16
	Mathematics	M=63.55
	Science	M=60.35
	Social Sciences	M=58.00
	Medical Science	M=57.03
Industrial/ Organizational n = 150 GOT = Investigative Artistic Social	Research	M=64.22
	Social Sciences	M=58.58
	Mathematics	M=58.29
	Human Resources & Training	M=58.29
	Writing & Mass Communication	M=56.29
Social/ Personality n = 119 GOT = Investigative Artistic Social	Research	M=64.70
	Social Sciences	M=59.54
	Mathematics	M=58.37
	Writing & Mass Communication	M=57.46
	Science	M=55.52

Occupational Scales for Psychologists

Category	Male		Female	
Clinical Male n = 29 Female n = 30	Psychologist	M=51.59	Psychologist	M=51.45
	University Professor	M=51.31	Social Worker	M=48.84
	Urban & Reg Planner	M=49.32	College Instructor	M=48.18
	Rehab Counselor	M=46.59	Translator	M=46.73
	Librarian	M=46.33	Rehab Counselor	M=45.89
Counseling Male n = 45 Female n = 59	College Instructor	M=52.30	College Instructor	M=51.26
	Psychologist	M=50.49	Social Worker	M=49.91
	Librarian	M=49.78	Rehab Counselor	M=48.86
	University Professor	M=49.28	Psychologist	M=46.14
	Urban & Reg Planner	M=48.95	Corporate Trainer	M=45.96
Cognitive Male n = 19 Female n = 25	University Professor	M=59.87	University Professor	M=53.13
	Psychologist	M=57.60	Psychologist	M=49.09
	Sociologist	M=50.79	Librarian	M=48.84
	Software Developer	M=49.74	Software Developer	M=48.56
	Geographer	M=49.25	Sociologist	M=48.20
Developmental/ Educational Male n = 42 Female n = 52	University Professor	M=53.84	Librarian	M=50.59
	Psychologist	M=52.22	Psychologist	M=49.59
	Urban & Reg Planner	M=50.48	Translator	M=47.31
	Librarian	M=48.38	College Instructor	M=47.15
	Geographer	M=47.89	University Professor	M=47.01
Experimental Male n = 51 Female n = 35	University Professor	M=54.63	Software Developer	M=49.52
	Psychologist	M=52.92	Comp. Systems Analyst	M=48.51
	Sociologist	M=48.58	University Professor	M=47.98
	Urban & Reg Planner	M=46.99	Librarian	M=46.45
	Marketing Manager	M=46.72	Tech Support Specialist	M=46.42
Industrial/ Organizational Male n = 57 Female n = 93	Marketing Manager	M=48.64	Librarian	M=48.14
	Corporate Trainer	M=48.00	Computer/IS Manager	M=46.76
	University Professor	M=47.97	Marketing Manager	M=46.61
	Psychologist	M=47.12	College Instructor	M=45.83
	Urban & Reg Planner	M=45.11	Top Executive	M=45.51
Social/ Personality Male n = 49 Female n = 70	Psychologist	M=54.73	University Professor	M=49.91
	University Professor	M=54.72	Psychologist	M=49.71
	Marketing Manager	M=51.51	Librarian	M=48.47
	Sociologist	M=50.94	College Instructor	M=47.70
	Librarian	M=49.19	Sociologist	M=46.79

Discussion

The current SII psychologist Occupational code is IA. With the preliminary data, the IA Occupational code seems to be accurate overall. However, there are differences in each category of psychologist in all areas of the Strong Interest Inventory, suggesting the need for differentiation when looking to compare interests to a specific psychologist group.

These are preliminary results and are based on voluntary participation on a self-report computer-based measure. If you would like to participate in this study, please contact Douglas Strohmer, Ph.D. at dstrohmr@memphis.edu.