Vocational Choice and Work Preference Ratings:
The Identification of Markers Associated With Career Interest

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A student t test was used to compare those who *disagreed* with those who *agreed* that they were interested in specific career fields with their mean scores on 17 work preference indicators. The findings include those work preference measures that are significantly associated with each career field. As a precautionary measure, the Bonferroni correction was employed to guard against type I errors. Thus, two thresholds are presented (difference and possible difference) to identify associations where the difference is less than .0031 (Bonferonni correction) and where the difference is less than .05 and greater than .003. In the table below, a "+" indicates stronger ratings in the work preference factor, a "=" signifies lower ratings. Thus, those who agreed that they were interested in clerical/office support type careers, tended to rate work independence (INDE) lower than did most others.

Vocational Career Interest and S
Strength of Work Preference Indicators

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Vocational Career Field	Work Preference Indicator	
	Difference (P=<.0031)	**Possible Difference*** (P>.003<.05)

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Clerical/Office Support

	Difference	Possible Difference
	- Work independently (INDE)	- Take control (LEAD)
	+ Be likable (LKBL)	+ Aural learning (AURL)
	+ Organized at work (TIMM)	
	+ Work with facts (FACT)	
	+ Visual learning (WRIT)	
	+ Work with data (DATA)	
	+ Task specificity (TASC)	
	- Work with ideas (IDEA)	

Remarks: Does not like to work independently (on one's own). Seeks to get along well with others and be pleasant and likable. Prefers an organized work environment. Likes working with factual information and data more than with concepts, theories and ideas. Prefers to be given specific information pertaining to tasks assigned. May not seek to take control of others or lead them. May prefer opportunities at work to learn through open discussions and other forms of verbal exchange.

Typical occupations: Office manager, secretary, administrative assistant, medical records, medical office administration, office support jobs, travel agent, dental assistant, diagnostic technician, manuscript editor.

Complementary work assignments: Office records, travel reports, file management, editing, records management; keeping track of office details, making sure reports are complete and on time, assure things are done according to office policies and procedures, neat and clean indoor work.

Budget and Finance

	Difference	Possible Difference
`	+ Work with data (DATA)	+ Career ladder (CLAD)
	+ Take control (LEAD)	- Aural learning (AURL)
	+ Organized at work (TIMM)	
	+ Visual learning (WRIT)	

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+ Work with things (MECH)
- Job satisfaction (JSAT)

Remarks: Very high in preferring to work with data (numbers). Seeks to control others and take the lead. Prefers an organized, planful work schedule. Prefers to learn visually. Likes working with things/repairing things. Is lower than others in seeking job satisfaction through one's work. Desires a clear career ladder with job progression opportunities. Is less likely to like to learn through open discussion and other forms of verbal communications.

Typical occupations: Accountant, accounting clerk, banking, budget analyst, financial operations, loan management, financial records management.

Complementary work assignments: Financial records, data analysis, treasurer of a committee, budget auditor, reconciliatory of financial reports, tax analyst.

Information Technology (Computers, etc)

+ Work with things (MECH)	+ Work in teams (TEAM)
+ Work with data (DATA)	- Task specificity (TASC)
+ Work with ideas (IDEA)	- Job satisfaction (JSAT)
+ Flexible work schedule (FLEX)	
+ Visual learning (WRIT)	
+ Work with facts (FACT)	

Remarks: Likes to work with mechanical things and repair things more than most others. Prefers to work with data and numbers as well as with factual information and ideas/concepts. Tends to be a visual learner—manuals, books, documents and the like. May also have an affinity toward working with others in teams. Tends to have lower interests than most others in receiving task specific instructions pertaining to work assignments and is not as highly motivated toward job satisfaction at work.

Typical occupations: Computer science, computer software developer, software programmer, software design, information technology specialist

Complementary work assignments: Web site developer, computer programming, spreadsheet development, create computer information systems, use computer programs, fix computer problems, work with computer technology, e-business designer.

Science/Engineering/Research

+ Work with things (MECH)	- Aural learning (AURL)
+ Work with data (DATA)	
+ Work with ideas (IDEA)	
- Task specificity (TASC)	
- Career ladder (CLAD)	
+ Visual learning (WRIT)	
+ Flexible work schedule (FLEX)	
- Job satisfaction (JSAT)	

Remarks: Likes to work with mechanical things and repair things more than most others. Likes to work with data and numbers, and ideas, concepts and theories. Is lower than others in seeking task specific instructions in order to do their work. Is less likely than others to be focused on moving up the organization via a clear career ladder. Prefers to learn visually via books, documents and the like. Prefers a flexible work schedule. Is less likely to seek job satisfaction through work. Is less likely than most others to seek to learn via open discussions with others.

Typical occupations: Mechanical engineer, welding engineer, physical scientist, research analyst, construction/structural engineer, medical device developer, electrical engineer, industrial engineer, occupational and safety engineer, materials analyst, microbiologist, chemist.

Complementary work assignments: Product development, product testing, mechanical testing and research, scientific investigation, prosthetic testing and medical device development.

Production/Assembly/Construction Trades

+ Work with things (MECH)	- Job satisfaction (JSAT)
+ Flexible work schedule (FLEX)	+ Work in teams (TEAM)
- Career ladder (CLAD)	
+ Visual learning (WRIT)	
+ Work with data (DATA)	
+ Work with ideas (IDEA)	
+ Take control (LEAD)	

Remarks: Likes to work with mechanical things and repair things more than those in most other career groups. Prefers working with a flexible schedule. Is not as likely to seek upward mobility via a clearly defined career ladder at the work place. Tends to prefer to learn visually. Prefers working with data and ideas. Tends to seek to control others and lead others more than most. May prefer working in teams. Is less likely to seek job satisfaction through work.

Typical occupations: Construction worker, welder, carpenter, sheet metal worker, mechanic, production and assembly worker, auto repair specialist, air conditioning/refrigeration/appliance technician..

Complementary work assignments: Fix things, put things together, build things, trouble shoot things that break down, assure things are built per blue prints, specifications, or other instructions.

Maintenance/Repair

+ Work with things (MECH)	+ Visual learning (WRIT)
- Career ladder (CLAD)	+ Work with data (DATA)
+ Flexible work schedule (FLEX)	+ Work independently (INDE)
- Task specificity (TASC)	
- Job satisfaction (JSAT)	
- Job performance (JOBP)	

Remarks: Very high interest in working with and repairing things. Tends not to be interested in a career ladder and upward mobility in the organization. Is more likely to prefer to experience flexible/more spontaneous working conditions. Less likely to seek satisfaction through one's work and to focus on getting results on the job. Tends to be a visual learner. May be more prone to working with data. May desire work independence.

Typical occupations: Auto mechanic, office maintenance, janitorial services, general assembly or construction worker, utilities/public works technician.

Complementary work assignments: Help build things, fix things, assemble things, bus tables.

Sales/Marketing/Public Relations

+ Work with ideas (IDEA)	+ Job performance (JOBP)
+ Take control (LEAD)	+ Organized at work (TIMM)
+ Visual learning (WRIT)	
+ Career ladder (CLAD)	
+ Be likable (LKBL)	
+ Flexible work schedule (FLEX)	

Remarks: Likes working with ideas and concepts. Prefers to take the lead and control others. Prefers to learn via open discussions and other forms of verbal forums. Is more interested in having a clear career ladder to move up the organization. Seeks to be likable with others. Prefers a flexible work schedule, yet may also work in an organized manner when needed. May be more focused on getting results than most others.

Typical occupations: Sales person, public relations officer, real estate sales, sales manager, campaign manager, advertising specialist, marketing research specialist, radio/television announcer, lobbyist.

Complementary work assignments: Make presentations, create marketing strategies, develop image improvement strategies, persuade others.

Retail/Customer Service

+ Be likable (LKBL)	+ Work with facts (FACT)
+ Help others (HELP)	
+ Flexible work schedule (FLEX)	
+ Aural learning (AURL)	
+ Work with ideas (IDEA)	

Remarks: Strives to be likable—alert to how others perceive them. Is helpful—strives to care for others. Prefers a flexible work schedule. Prefers to learn via open discussions and other forms of verbal intercourse. Tends to like to work with concepts and ideas. May like to work with factual information more than most others.

Typical occupations: Customer service representative, retail sales representative, pharmaceutical sales, community service representative, flight attendant, product representative, sales clerk.

Complementary work assignments: Team representative, customer complaint handler, company representative to meet with customers to resolve problems, product demonstrator.

Human Resources/Education/Training

+ Help others (HELP)	+ Work with facts (FACT)
+ Work with ideas (IDEA)	+ Be likable (LKBL)
+ Work in teams (TEAM)	+ Task specificity (TASC)
+ Visual learning (WRIT)	
+ Aural learning (AURL)	
+ Work with data (DATA)	
+ Organized at work (TIMM)	

Remarks: Seeks to be helpful. Likes working with ideas and concepts and working with others in teams. Tends to prefer both visually through documents and the like, as well as aurally through open discussions with others. Prefers to work with data and numbers more than most others. Prefers an organized, planful work environment. May like to work with factual information. Seeks to get along with others and be likable. May prefer specific detailed information when undertaking assignments or when given directions.

Typical occupations: Teacher, educator, human resources manager, personnel analyst, training and development consultant, employee development specialist, recruitment specialist, travel counselor, speech therapist, early childhood development specialist, medical rehabilitation specialist, fitness trainer.

Complementary work assignments: Mentor, team coach, inservice training, team developer, team facilitator, service improvement planner.

Political/Legal

+ Work with ideas (IDEA)	+ Visual learning (WRIT)
+ Take control (LEAD)	+ Work with facts (FACT)
+ Work independently (INDE)	+ Work in teams (TEAM)
+ Work with data (DATA)	+ Aural learning (AURL)
+ Flexible work schedule (FLEX)	
+ Career ladder (CLAD)	

Remarks: Strong in working with concepts, theories and ideas. Prefers to lead others or control others. Likes to work independently. Is more likely to prefer working with data and numbers than most others. Tends to be more tolerable of flexible and spontaneous work schedules and work situations than most others. Seeks a clear career ladder for purposes of upward mobility. May prefer to learn visually through books, documents, internet, and the like, as well as work with factual information. May prefer to work with others in teams and learn aurally through discussions with others, as well.

Typical occupations: Lawyer, political scientist, public administrator, politician, politician staff representative, lobbyist, newspaper reporter, news representative, paralegal, legal assistant.

Complementary work assignments: Develop campaign strategies, write press releases, develop policies and procedures, analyze policy issues, prepare legal briefs.

Hospitality/Entertainment

+ Be likable (LKBL)	+ Task specificity (TASC)
+ Aural learning (AURL)	- Work with data (DATA)
+ Career ladder (CLAD)	+ Work in teams (TEAM)
+ Take control (LEAD)	+ Flexible work schedule (FLEX)
+ Work with ideas (IDEA)	

Remarks: Seeks to be likable for others. Prefers to learn aurally via open discussions, question and answer and the like. Prefers a clear career ladder to know how to move up in the organization. Tends to control and lead others—will likely take the lead. Works with ideas and concepts. Desires clear task specific instructions when given work assignments. Is not likely to value working with data. Prefers to work with others in teams and may prefer to work with a higher degree of flexibility (i.e., less predictability; more spontaneity) in terms of the work environment.

Typical occupations: Hotel manager, restaurant manager, travel host, waiter or waitress, bartender, restaurant host or hostess, caterer, theme park employee, actor, entertainer.

Complementary work assignments: Host or hostess, special event leader, catering helper, create people friendly events, performer, social events coordinator.

Social/Health Services

+ Help others (HELP)   + Aural learning (AURL)
+ Be likable (LKBL)   + Career ladder (CLAD)
+ Work in teams (TEAM)
+ Task specificity (TASC)
+ Organized at work (TIMM)
+ Visual learning (VISL)

Remarks: Seeks to be helpful and nurturing to others. High motivation to be liked by others. Interested in working in teams. Desires task specific information when assigned work. Values an organized and planful work schedule. Learns both visually and aurally; reading and open discussions. May be more likely to prefer a clearly spelled our career ladder in order to know what to do to move up in the organization.

Typical occupations: Nurse, social worker, psychologist, counselor, social studies teacher, athletic coach, patient advocate, hospital worker, patient relations representative, medical assistant, massage therapist.

Complementary work assignments: Help others, support the development of others, serve others.

Public Service

+ Help others (HELP)   + Work with facts (FACT)
+ Work in teams (TEAM)   + Aural learning (AURL)
+ Work with ideas (IDEA)
+ Visual learning (WRIT)
+ Organized at work (TIMM)
+ Work with things (MECH)

Remarks: Highly interested in helping others (caretaking) and working in teams. Prefers to work with concepts, theories and ideas. Is especially strong in preference to learn through visual means, but may also have high preference for learning via open discussions and other forms of aural communication. Prefers an organized work schedule. Appears to have high mechanical interests as well as may be especially alert to factual information.

Typical occupations: Police community relations officer, public administration, social service worker, fire and safety worker, clergy, community development specialist, community emergency relief specialist, community relations specialist, fund raiser.

Complementary work assignments: Company representative in community organizations and projects, community service activities, volunteer service.

Homemaking

+ Be likable (LKBL)   + Organized at work (TIMM)
+ Help others (HELP)   + Task specificity (TASC)
                                        + Work with facts (FACT)
                                        + Aural learning (AURL)
                                        + Flexible work schedule (FLEX)
                                        + Work in teams (TEAM)

Remarks: The most critical preferences of those who find homemaking appealing is their stronger preferences to be likable and helpful (nurturing) to others. They may also find both an organized

and flexible work schedule appealing. The may prefer to seek more specific information when being given work (home) related instructions. They may also prefer to learn through verbal means via discussions, phone conversations and the like. They also may tend to like to work in teams.

Typical occupations: Home based sales or accounts manager, part time work, home care, volunteer worker, home school teacher, co-manager of business with spouse.

Complementary work assignments: Home instruction, neighborhood improvement, community or religious volunteer, teaching assistant, child care.

Creative Arts/Music

+ Work with ideas (IDEA)   + Aural learning (AURL)
+ Flexible work schedule (FLEX)
+ Be likable (LKBL)
+ Work with things (MECH)

Remarks: They like to work with ideas and concepts—central to creative work. They prefer to work in more flexible, spontaneous work environments. The desire to be liked by others—to get along with others. They are also higher in their interest in working with things (working with their hands). They may also tend to learn via open conversations and other forms of aural communication.

Typical occupations: Fashion design, architecture, artist, musician, media development, dancer, composer, author, creative writer, fabric developer, interior decorator, landscape design, web site design.

Complementary work assignments: Creative work, new approaches, innovation.

Management

+ Control others (LEAD)   + Work in teams (TEAM)
+ Work with data (DATA)
+ Work with ideas (IDEA)
+ Career ladder (CLAD)
+ Job performance (JOBP)

Remarks: They tend to be especially high in their interest in taking the lead and controlling others and in working with data. They are more likely to prefer to work with concepts, theories and ideas. They are focused on getting results through job performance and in having a clear career ladder made known to them so they can advance their careers in the organization. They may also have a higher preference for working with others in teams.

Typical occupations: Business administrator, military commander, auditor, chief operating officer, loan manager, project manager, business manager.

Complementary work assignments: Manage an organization, manage people, manage voluntary organization.

Nature/Outdoor Work

+ Work with things (MECH)   + Work independently (INDE)
+ Flexible work schedule (FLEX)   + Help others (HELP)
- Career ladder (CLAD)   + Work with data (DATA)

+ Work with ideas (IDEA)
+ Work in teams (TEAM)

Remarks: Like to work with things (equipment) and repair them. Prefer more flexible work schedule. Do not seek upward mobility via a clear career ladder. Like working with concepts and ideas. Prefer to work in teams. May also value opportunity to work independently. May have higher preference to be helpful to others and to work with data.

Typical occupations: Landscaper, farmer, forest ranger, fish and wildlife worker, truck driver, airlines baggage handler, golf and tennis pro, life guard, boat captain, professional soldier, firefighter, pick up and delivery worker, road construction, roofing, commercial fishing.

Complementary work assignments: Work outdoors, fix things, move things, build things, do things outdoors.

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* Factors listed in this column were found to be statistically significant (P<.05) without the Bonferroni correction. The Bonferonni correction establishes a cutoff of P<.0031 to avoid a Type I error where the null hypothesis may be rejected when it is indeed correct. In research like that conducted here, the application of the Bonferonni correction may not be appropriate as it may increase the chance of Type II errors where the null hypothesis is accepted when it, indeed, if false. Thus, all relationships where P>.003 and <.05 have been included in this column, as they may provide added understanding of the measures associated with each career field studied. The findings are based on the responses of a sample of 1729 adult subjects to statements in which the respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they disagreed or agreed about their interest in working in specific career fields using a Likert-type scale (1=strongly disagree and 5=strongly agree).