PERSONALITY, CREATIVE INCLINATIONS AND ALTERNATIVE SELVES INFLUENCING CAREER CHOICES

Co-Authors: Sana Shah, Mihaela Stan
Country: London, UK
University College London (Management Science and Innovation)
Email: sana.shah.11@ucl.ac.uk, m.stan@ucl.ac.uk
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ABSTRACT
This paper focuses on self-selection into career paths by newly graduating students and contributes to understanding early career choices in light of individuals’ identity and fundamental traits. This study looks into the existence of an alternative self amongst respondents in order to see whether an alternative self impacts an individual’s career path. Respondents were asked to describe their alternative self (if they believed they had one) and rate its importance. The study will also look at the relationship between personality traits measured through the five-factor model (FFM), and how personality traits correlate with measures relating to chosen specific career paths. Additionally, respondents’ creative inclinations are taken into account in explaining career choices. With the responses collected via a survey, we have data on 81 respondents of which 63% are female and 64% are graduating with a degree in Management. The respondents come from two consecutive cohorts that had taken an introductory course in Organizational Behavior at a London university during their first year. With their personality data collected at entry into their undergraduate studies, and outcome data on their job market performance and choices being collected upon completion of their degree, this study moves beyond correlation evidence towards causal inferences about the impact of stable individual traits on career choices.

PURPOSE
The purpose of this research is to identify how personality, the existence of alternative selves and creative inclinations influence career preferences. Our target audience is students completing their final year of their undergraduate degree, or in a fourth year (masters degree) all of who have studied Communications and Behavior in Organizations (as we have collected personality results from this class).
Personality, Creative Inclinations and Alternative Selves influencing Career Choices

Personality and Costa and McCrae’s Five-Factor Model

Personality is a set group of characteristics an individual possesses influencing their motivations, goals, their social interpretations, behaviors in different situations and inner nature. After years of research, Costa and McCrae categorized all different characteristics into 5 main personality traits known as the Five Factor Model (FFM). The 5 personality traits are as follows: neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, conscientiousness and agreeableness.

Neuroticism is directly linked with an individual’s levels of anxiety, nervousness, tension and to some extent, sadness (Anon, 2000). Individuals with high levels of neuroticism do not always deal well in stressful situations and the decisions made can sometimes end up being irrational as they make decisions at ‘emotionally un-stable’ states whereas those with low levels of neuroticism handle stressful situations better.

Agreeableness directly links to an individual’s compromising levels, understanding, trust and modesty in a social setting. Those with high agreeableness levels are generally less authoritative and can help them get along with others more than with those having a low agreeableness level; who can then act more authoritative and less understanding. However, low agreeableness levels help make decisions faster than with someone who accepts a variety of different opinions and suggestions in a commercial setting and can therefore make decisions quicker.

Openness to experience is associated with an individual’s receptiveness to…new and challenging facets of cultural life, as well as personal thoughts and emotions (Hogan, 2012). Their receptiveness to new events also encourages and develops an open mind for creativity and imagination. Additionally, curiosity levels are higher when openness to experience is high in an individual. On the contrary, lower levels of openness can often times encourage someone to be more practical and traditional with stronger values which in turn high integrity and are then more immediate with their action-oriented nature rather than having a selection of options to choose from.

Extraversion relates to the energy levels released by individuals in different social situations and when experiencing high extraversion levels, individuals represent characteristics such as sociable, assertive, and a positive vibe (Anon, 2000). They are generally less stressful in social situations whereas those
With lower extraversion levels are often times more reserved and quiet, and as a result, they are more thoughtful. Although they may not have a wide social network, the relationships they do maintain are deeper.

Conscientiousness relates to an individual’s motivation and behavior to facilitate and complete ‘task and goal-directed behavior’. Different conscientiousness levels determine whether individuals think before taking action, follow rules and norms and their planning, organizing and prioritizing tasks (Anon, 2000). Higher levels of conscientiousness are strongly related to individuals who are hard-working, and reliable as they follow set rules and attempt to complete work and achieve goals to their best ability. They are therefore more detail-driven and focused to achieve well. Lower levels of conscientiousness are those individuals who are laid-back and do not feel the need to always follow rules and norms. They are therefore more adaptable to change and can also find different ways of completing tasks to challenge the status quo.

**Alternative Selves**

In addition to personality factors in individuals, this research paper will also look at the affects of an existing alternative self and it’s influence on an individual’s personality and career choice.

The alternative self is best defined as an imaginary version of our self and a version of our self which was never real and will perhaps never be real (Obodaru, 2012). They consist of ‘self-representations’ which are ‘attributes the person sees as…self definitions and self comparisons’.

Self-definitions are the characteristics and roles an individual currently posses including their ‘personal characteristics, occupational roles, personal roles, activities, habits, and demographic characteristics’ (Higgins, 1987).

Self-comparisons on the other hand describe qualities that the individual cannot identify with currently differentiating themselves from their self-definition. There are four self-comparisons an individual can have.

Different self-comparisons include: past selves, possible selves, ideal selves and ought selves. Past selves are an individual’s self-definition of the past (Albert, 1977), Possible selves is a possible future self-definition (Markus & Nurius, 1986), ideal self is an individual’s ideal self-definition; who they hope to be (Higgins, 1987) and ought selves is an individual’s believe of what their self-definition should be (Higgins, 1996). Despite their being various self-comparisons, this research focuses on an individual’s past self and the impact of a turning point they have had.
In this research paper, these aspects of an alternative self are significant to identify in individuals as they consequently affect their current occupational choice and future career path as a result.

Obodaru best describes alternative-selves as being ‘real in their consequences’ which implies that depending on the extent to which individuals attach meaning to their alternative self and the degree to which their consequent life decisions are made. There are two outcomes of an alternative self. An individual can have a better alternative self, meaning that their current condition is worse off than what their life could have been, or a worse alternative self meaning that their current condition is better off than what their consequential condition could have been. For instance, studies show that those who wished to have pursued an alternative occupation do not engage with their current work and are also therefore, unhappy in life.

Alternative selves develop as a result of turning points in one’s life. Firstly, individuals ‘undo the past’ by reflecting on critical turning points which occurred in their life. After this, they reflect on the turning points and generate ideas of how their current situation would be depending on different outcomes of those turning points. For instance, if an individual reflects on their interview for a particular job and believes that if they failed the interview, their life and their profession would be very different to what it is now. The interview in this scenario is the turning point, and the success of the interview is the outcome they currently have and their alternative self is defined by if they failed the interview. To some, passing a job interview can be a significant moment in their life depending on the degree to which they place importance on having a career. If important, their alternative self plays a major role in their life. Therefore, alternative selves influence an individual’s attitudes and behaviors in organizations.

Obodaru identifies the main goals people want to attain in their career as: ‘wealth, social status, meaning and purpose and satisfactory work-life balance’ (Obodaru, 2012). In this paper, I want to identify whether in addition to one’s personality the alternative self affects the individuals’ career/occupational choice, and the importance played by these factors in their occupational position. Additionally, I also want to identify whether there is a relationship between a negative / positive alternative self against the importance of ‘fun’ and ‘money’ in their occupation.

**Personality & Alternative Selves**

Rasmussen and Berntsen (2010) suggest that ‘Openness to experience is the one that is most associated with having a rich inner mental life…people who are rated high on openness may therefore subjectively experience their memories with a stronger sense of sensory reliving, vividness and emotion.’ Individuals rated high in openness often explore their own experiences in depth and use their ‘memories more in everyday life than people who are less so’. This encourages individuals to
reflect on their critical turning points and define themselves of who they are and who they could have been. Additionally, researchers suggest that openness directly correlates with the ‘directive function of autobiographical memories’ simply because there is a relationship between openness, academic achievement and creativity which therefore implies that open people not only reflect on their past experiences and alternative selves from their reflections of major turning points in their life, but are more likely to act on them and use it as a guidance to make future decisions and problem solving. Open people ‘reflect more upon their memories for self-redefining purposes’. Individuals scoring higher levels of openness to experience therefore find that their past experiences as well as their alternative selves play a stronger meaning to their life than those who are less open.

Individuals who are more open to experiences are more flexible to different career paths and can therefore have interests in various streams. Their sense of adventure increases their motivation to search for jobs and as a result, can perhaps be more employable than those who are less open.

Neuroticism does not directly affect the existence of an alternative self, however, researchers suggest that those who score high on neuroticism often times reflect on negative experiences faced in their past and can therefore change their personality and future decisions as a result.

Researchers suggest that personality traits such as agreeableness, conscientiousness and extraversion are not highly correlated with the existence of an alternative self, reflections of the past and the impact it has on an individual’s life.

**Creative Individuals in Organizations**

Creativity is best defined as a combination of novel and useful ideas presented in order to improve current products/processes or introduce new products/processes. (Rego et al, 2012). Many employers now believe that higher levels of creativity have a positive relationship with innovation, organizational performance and survival for both, a company and the individual (Reiter-Palmon Ellies, 2004; Shalley & Gilson, 2004). Additionally, employees with creative inclinations may behave differently than those without.

Researchers suggest that there is a strong correlation between positive affect and higher creative levels implying that those who are satisfied with their current conditions and represent high creativity levels are not only successful in securing a job but can also perform well in them, consequently in some circumstances (in this context) having employers offer students a permanent role following the completion of their degree.
Rego et al. (2012) suggest that the ‘employees’ creativity is important for fostering innovation and for improving customer satisfaction and organizational competitiveness. By being creative, these employees are more able to improvise in meeting customers’ complaints and needs, to propose new products, services and merchandizing techniques, to help their managers develop new and more effective marketing strategies, and to help colleagues deal with problematic customers or customers who present important business opportunities’. These qualities both imply the need for creativity in individuals as well as a strong degree of extraversion & openness as a personality trait. Spontaneity, confidence and the ability to freely communicate with individuals in a professional level is important in order to ensure satisfaction from all stakeholders of the company. This therefore can suggest that higher extraversion and openness levels along with higher creative levels increase employability in individuals. This also suggests that those with these characteristics look for more customer-facing roles involved in their career paths (such as consulting and retail).

In this research paper, I would like to identify relationships with creativity levels and number of internships as well as the impact of creativity scores and the existence of a positive/negative alternative self. Along with this, I will look for the relationship between openness, extraversion, creative levels and the chosen career paths selected by students.

Openness to Experience has a strong positive relationship with artistic and investigative career paths. Open people often times are more artistically inclined simply because there is a strong correlation between creativity and higher openness. They are individuals who are generally more innovative and can also represent entrepreneurial characteristics. Similar to extroverts with social interests, open individuals are intrinsically rewarded and want to enjoy their job. Studies have shown that there is a negative relationship between openness to experience and salary levels (Hartman, 2006).

**Personality, Career Choices and Alternative Selves**

From all personality traits identified from the FFM, literature suggests that openness and extraversion are both significantly correlated with career decidedness and comfort in their work. Students with high levels of openness to experience often times are ‘more prone to explore career alternatives and career input from teachers, counselors, parents and other sources of information’. Similarly, ‘extraverts demonstrate heightened motivation and achievement in various aspects of career behavior [including] higher frequency and quality of job search activities…more assertive job search strategies and greater job search self efficacy’ (Hartman, 2006, pg 34)

Al-Kabani, Salleh, and Mastor (2011) state that ‘neuroticism is probably related to lack of information’. Neurotic people are known to have negative affects and Meldahl and Muchinsky (1997) identified that neurotic individuals lack knowledge in the available career choices, the training options and academic fields.
By looking at personality traits in correlation with career preferences, we can look at Holland’s (1995) theory of six interest traits, which include: enterprising, social, artistic, investigative, conventional and realistic interests. There are some strong relationships between these interests and different personality traits in the FFM.

Holland’s theory suggests that extroverts are inclined towards enterprising and social interests. Their career preferences include business law, politics, police work and management. Extroverts specifically with enterprising interests often represent assertive characteristics and are frequently extrinsically motivated (such as through financial rewards), whereas those who are more social prefer intrinsic rewards, mainly being job satisfaction. (Hartman, 2006)

Conscientious individuals are more likely to find conventional interests and are satisfied with being self-employed however; they are proactive to search for work when they are unemployed. When employed, conscientious people perform well with job-related training and also represent ‘superior academic performance’.

Agreeable individuals enjoy helping and nurturing people and are therefore represent more social career paths. Studies have also shown that agreeable people are less inclined to go into sales as a profession. (Hartman, 2006).

In this research paper, I hope to explore relationships between different personality traits and desired career paths as well as the effort or different sources/number of sources of information students use in order to search for jobs.

**The ASA Framework**

A useful theory for this study is Ben Schneider’s attraction-selection-attrition (ASA) model, which uses a framework which allows one to understand organizational behavior which involves a mix of ‘individual and organizational theories’ (Schneider et al, 1995) This model emphasizes the idea that certain types of people self-select in certain types of organizations because they are attracted to a working environment which shares similar goals, values and interests. ASA says that ‘it is the people in the group that define the culture, not just the environment, structure, or rule of the game’ (Madigan, 2010). Although this model refers to three sub-processes— the attraction, selection and attrition of a certain type of employee (see Figure 1)—only the “attraction” component is relevant to this study. Attraction refers to the new individuals who are attracted to a group of people/organization who are believed to share the same values, goals and interests. Selection refers to the selection-methods where the gatekeepers select those who they believe to be most similar to them and finally, attrition: refers,
those individuals who feel they do not fit in after being selected and find a better opportunity (attraction) and leave.

(Madigan, 2010).

The situational perspective - ASA focuses on personalities within the company, explaining that organizational behavior primarily depends on situational conditions such as: leadership, job design, groups or teams, and the external environment. In addition, the way these situational attributes manifest themselves depends upon the people and mixture of personalities within the organization (depending on those who enter the company and retain). Differences in strategy within organizations also heavily depend on the mix of individual differences. Many founders of organizations choose to compete by price, and others on quality. This is one example of a factor that will change attitudes of attraction to an organization.

An example of the importance of strategy of an organization to attract potential employers is the company IDEO; an award-winning design and innovation consultancy. IDEO ‘takes a human-centered, design-based approach to help organizations in the public and private sectors innovate and grow’ (Ideo, 2013). This company designs products and introduces innovative services that help facilitate the internal systems of many organizations. The company is inspiring to study because of their corporate culture. There are no ‘titles’, no hierarchy, and the workplace itself is extremely innovative in the sense that employees are allowed to use up all their space to create designs. For example, model airplanes and bicycles are hanging from the ceilings. Individual’s ideas are posted around the office to encourage creativity. Their lack of formal structure, rules and freedom to brainstorm perhaps encourages more creatively inclined, open-minded students to work; those who prefer no structure, who do not look for promotions and pay in their work but much prefer a ‘fun’ workplace would be attracted to this company. On the other hand, those who look for a formalized working environment, structure and hierarchy are less inclined to work here and if they were to start working here, would attain from the company soon enough. IDEO’s strategy is one with a free work environment and this strategy would only be appealing to a specific audience of students. If we look at another company strategy, one such as a bank, there is a formalized structure and a definite hierarchy. Some fields within banking such as mergers and acquisitions is a fast-pace environment; almost
completely opposite to an artistic company and this environment is perhaps only attractive to students who like a dynamic environment with quick problem solving. Also, banking involves large sums of money and does have a clear hierarchy (depending on skill and experience). This field therefore attracts students more inclined to make a lot of money and enjoy a banking environment. These examples show how differences in corporate strategies attract different individuals to the workplace.

The ASA model therefore strongly suggests in this context, that when graduates are looking to enter specific career streams, the way they identify themselves and their personality has a strong relationship to the career path they wish to pursue and their performance within the company (such as if they were offered a graduate position after completing a summer internship) depends on their personality - fit amongst other colleagues in the organization. Graduates will look at a company’s strategy and core values, and match this with their personal values and their preference for a way of working and accordingly decide whether any given company is suitable for them.

**METHODOLOGY**

The main question in hand is the significance of personality, creative inclinations and the presence of an alternative self for the chosen career paths of individuals.

**Sampling**

A selected number of students were used for primary research collection. The main sampling population here was students undertaking their final year undergraduate degree and those continuing onto a four-year course most of which are on the Information Management for Business program at University College London (UCL). Primary reasons for this is because of the previous data collected on personality of students (for a different research project). This will help make a stronger relation between personality and their career choices. Additionally, as this information is previously collected, the questionnaire will have no impact upon the responses of personality (as students are unaware that their personality data will be used in conjunction with their career preferences) and it is not feasible to collect information from a large population as interpretations of the questionnaire may vary and personality data is collected based on a common understanding of the different personality traits delivered during the Communications and Behavior in Organizations module in the first year of the IMB program.

When thinking about an existent alternative self, individuals would either reflect on they’re past and explain a significant turning point in their life, which could have been dramatically different if they did not experience this turning point. Similarly, they can vision their possible, ideal and ought selves and discuss whether they would meet these different ‘selves’ if they were in a different position. When
collecting data from the individuals, as most were university students, they often referred to career paths, different universities and different degrees as their alternative selves.

Theories suggest that when individuals identify their alternative selves as one which could have been better (for instance, they hoped for a better job) which shows dissatisfaction for the present, their motivation to work decreases immensely and are not engaged with the work they do. (Wrzesniewski, Tosti-Kharas, & Landman, 2011). Additionally, today’s world offers access to unlimited amounts of information and there are more job opportunities available; ‘careers today are described as ‘boundary less’, intelligent’ and ‘post corporate’. With the help of the Internet, access to vast amounts of information generally make individuals think more about ‘what could have been’ (Obodaru, 2012).

This study is applicable to a population after a good understanding of determining one’s personality and getting qualitative and quantitative data from students about their career preferences and alternative selves.

Sample Demographics

After discussing with my supervisor, a sample size of 80 was chosen. All 80 individuals have either taught, studied or are currently studying at University College London and have previously taken a personality test as part of a module within the degree. A large proportion of individuals are either currently doing Information Management for Business (BSc) as a degree or have already graduated with this degree (at BSc or MS&I).

Firstly, over 200 online surveys were sent around via email and through Facebook for students to complete, and from this, approximately 60 students fully answered and therefore, their results were collected. After this, 30 hard copies of the survey were handed out during a lecture and from this 20 were fully complete and recorded. As shown in Figure 1.1, 51 of the respondents were female and 30 were male giving us figures of 63% of respondents were female and 37% were male. Additionally, as shown in Figure 1.2, 67% of respondents study an engineering-related degree, namely Information Management for Business whilst others study alternate degrees. This study focuses on students undertaking an engineering-related degree as a result of UCL’s career service facilities tailored specifically for this course. Also, for all the data collected by respondents, we have previous information about their personality scores and can as a result, compare different personalities with career preferences and existence of alternative selves. With the exception of two respondents (who are aged 40+ and are already in a secure profession), respondents are between 18 and 22 years of age. At this age, students are in the process of figuring out what career professions they want to pursue and which fields they want to go into. Some students chose to study a masters or an MS&I (Management Science & Innovation) degree after completing a bachelor’s degree to figure out what profession they want to go into. Some students on the other hand, have already graduated and secured jobs, other
students are still completing their final year of their undergraduate degree but have secured jobs from successful placements/internships whilst the rest are currently under the process of applying for jobs and/or further studies.

Furthermore, our sample has taken into account the ethnic diversity of respondents. Figure 1.3 represents the ethnic diversity, where approximately 40% of our respondents are Caucasian, followed by approximately 25% of them being Asian (excluding Indian), 15% of them being Indian, 13% being Middle-Eastern, 6% being Black and the rest having other ethnicities. The variety of ethnicities therefore suggests that this research has a diverse sample. In order to collect information, I conducted a questionnaire.

**Questionnaire**

The purpose of this research is to identify how personality traits, existence of alternative selves and creativity link to career preferences. This research will also identify whether personality traits affect different priorities individuals have with their career preferences (such as the importance of money when choosing a career or the importance of job satisfaction). In order to distribute this questionnaire, with help of Google Docs, a questionnaire was submitted via email across third and fourth years at UCL who have undertaken Communications and Behavior in Organizations previously. This was so that their responses from the questionnaire can be compared with the personality tests taken when they took this module. The vast amount of previous information required (personality tests) in addition to the specific audience of third and fourth year students narrowed our target audience and we (my supervisor and I) agreed to aim for over 60 respondents from a pool of approximately 200. Although a small sample, this was feasible and enough to determine how different personality traits can affect different career preferences. This study focuses on the employability and career preferences for a target audience and therefore justifies why the sample size is of this size.

Initially, a first questionnaire was created and tested using a few students from the target audience. After discussing their feedback about the survey and communicating with my supervisor, we organized the questionnaire to make it more understandable and quick for students to respond to. We therefore incorporated many multiple choice questions rather than having the students write up answers and used 7-point Likert scales to measure the degree and intensity of certain attitudes and opinions students have.

After a final questionnaire was created, distributing the survey online was done for several reasons. Firstly, through the use of email and social networks, it is reachable to many individuals in short periods of time. The increasing use of the Internet increases chances for respondents to complete the questionnaire. Additionally, distributing a hard-copy or conducting allows for misinterpretation when making notes from face-to-face interviews. Although misinterpretations do occur for qualitative data
online, having a respondent explain himself or herself using words makes it more comprehensible for
us. Submitting hard copies can also discourage students from completing all questions in the survey.
The use of an online questionnaire ensures that respondents complete all questions on the survey
before they can submit it as apposed to leaving questions out when done on hard copies / interviews.

The questionnaire consists of 20 questions, with 16 of them being closed multiple choice questions, 2
being closed answers (an integer), 1 being an open answer and 1 simply for filling out their name. Confidentially was promised at the very beginning of the survey to ensure that all information remains enclosed. Many questions were multiple choice with regards to career preferences and employability status. Furthermore, a 7-point Likert scale was used to measure intensity of attitudes and opinions. 7-Point likert scale as apposed to 3 or 5 was used to give respondents a larger degree of choice. Using quantitative methods to measure different attitudes helps the researcher analyze and measure different correlations in the dataset. Overall, the questionnaire submitted hoped to answer the following questions:

1. Do students have an alternative self, and does it play an important role in their life
2. What factors do students consider when choosing a career path (importance of money vs. fun?)
3. What personality traits link to which career preferences?
4. What personality traits link to the existence of alternative selves?
5. What personality traits influence a student’s motivation to look for jobs?

**Limitations and Assumptions**

Despite the ambitious goal of this study, there are still some existing limitations and assumptions. Our assumptions and limitations may influence our results for bias. Our main assumption for this research paper is that personality traits over the last two/three years for students remained constant. Furthermore, despite stating confidentiality, students were forced to provide their name and may therefore not trust the researchers and therefore provide alternative stories/vague stories in their responses. We assume that all respondents trust the confidentiality agreement and have therefore, answered the questionnaire honestly, although this will allow for some bias.

33% of our respondents were not engineering students and therefore, were unable to answer IMB-related questions. This leaves out insight on the IMB program and their help towards career paths. Additionally, UCL has a career service specifically designed for students in the IMB program and those who do not study this degree do not have access to this service. In this research, we assume that all students have equal access to all career service facilities, however, this research does not take into account that IMB have guidance counselors specifically tailored to them and can therefore, act as an advantage for IMB students over non-Engineering students.
A final limitation in this research is that many students entered university after having experience in the professional world. Therefore, their experience has perhaps tailored their personality as opposed to students coming into university directly after completing their secondary education (school). Additionally, their previous experience also plays a role in their career preference, something this research has not specifically identified (simply, the experience the students have had over the past three years at UCL). However, having most students within the age range of 18-22; much too young to have a lot of experience suggests that this limitation will not greatly alter the results of this research.

Misunderstanding as to the definition of an ‘alternative self’.

**Validity and Reliability**

Despite having a broad range of questions, open and closed, qualitative and quantitative, there are validity and reliability issues.

Firstly, a validity issue is that despite creating the questionnaire as clear as possible, individuals may have misinterpreted the questionnaire therefore resulting in alternate results. For instance, for the question regarding ‘alternative selves’, one may misinterpret the meaning of this term. Some may understand it as being a small event changing their eventual outcome (for instance, if I woke up on time I would have reached university on time; however my alarm clock was turned off, I woke up and therefore arrived late to university); others may understand it as being a turning point in their life (which was the intentional interpretation). Another validity issue is that participants may lie; this is uncontrollable but can significantly alter the results mainly because this survey required names, participants may not trust the researchers. Finally, many quantitative questions had a 7-point likert scale. Although unlikely since both extremes were defined, participants may misinterpret the intensity of the values in between, which again could alter the results. Additionally, using an odd-likert scale forces participants to agree with one side (beneficial for researchers) however, this could encourage participants to portray themselves as more ‘positive’ when in fact, if an even-numbered likert scale was created, they would simply chose the middle value (a neutral opinion).

The main reliability issue in this questionnaire is that there was no test-retest. We, as researchers are simply accepting the responses for a questionnaire completed only once by participants. However, factors such as the environment and mood in which participants completed the questionnaire was not controlled. Therefore, respondents who were perhaps rather happy may have responded to questions more optimistically, and similarly, respondents being more anxious or upset may have responded to the questions more pessimistically. It was not feasible to do a re-test due to time restrictions, had there been more time, the test would be re-distributed to respondents who completed the survey first time round.
References


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## FINDINGS

### Table 1. Descriptive statistics of selected variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Numbered Variable</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Obs</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Frequency students think about an alternative self</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>3.550</td>
<td>1.622</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Importance of Alternative Selves</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>2.815</td>
<td>1.718</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Number of Internships in total</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>1.570</td>
<td>1.206</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Number of part-time internships</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>0.405</td>
<td>0.689</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Did previous employers offer a job after internships?</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>0.363</td>
<td>0.484</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>How helpful was your personal network?</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>4.544</td>
<td>1.655</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>How helpful was your own search?</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>5.304</td>
<td>1.712</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Importance of working in a big organisation</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>5.208</td>
<td>1.696</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Importance of working in a start-up</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>3.744</td>
<td>1.481</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Importance of being self-employed</td>
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<td>4.833</td>
<td>1.970</td>
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<td>1.674</td>
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<td>Importance of your work being enjoyable or money-oriented?</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>5.141</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Openness to Experience</td>
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<td>3.664</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
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<td>77</td>
<td>3.413</td>
<td>0.754</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
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<td>77</td>
<td>3.434</td>
<td>0.714</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Agreeableness</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>3.834</td>
<td>0.567</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Neuroticism</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>2.952</td>
<td>0.873</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Average score for creative inclinations</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>2.349</td>
<td>1.312</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>4.67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 2. Correlations among selected variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>12</th>
<th>13</th>
<th>14</th>
<th>15</th>
<th>16</th>
<th>17</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Think about an alternative self</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of alternative self</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of internships</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>No. Part-time internships</td>
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<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
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</tr>
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<td>1.00</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>0.68</td>
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<td>0.68</td>
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<td>0.68</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal network</td>
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<td>0.68</td>
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<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
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<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Own search</td>
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<td>0.18</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>0.18</td>
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<td>0.18</td>
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<td>0.18</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Openness to Experience</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.04</td>
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<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Notes:

1. Variables defined in Table 1 are the same variables in Table 2; only shortened. Please refer to variables in Table 1 should you not understand their meaning in Table 2.
Table 3. Multiple regressions for selected dependent variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number of internships</th>
<th>IT as first or second career option</th>
<th>Extent of using career services</th>
<th>Willingness to work for a start-up</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0.502</td>
<td>0.528</td>
<td>0.011</td>
<td>-0.044</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.382)</td>
<td>(0.764)</td>
<td>(0.582)</td>
<td>(0.441)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>thinkaltself</td>
<td>-0.061</td>
<td>0.029</td>
<td>-0.051</td>
<td>-0.072</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.106)</td>
<td>(0.194)</td>
<td>(0.161)</td>
<td>(0.122)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o</td>
<td>-0.260</td>
<td>-1.012</td>
<td>0.110</td>
<td>0.99**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.391)</td>
<td>(0.761)</td>
<td>(0.595)</td>
<td>(0.451)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>-0.159</td>
<td>0.731</td>
<td>-0.086</td>
<td>-0.662*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.309)</td>
<td>(0.601)</td>
<td>(0.470)</td>
<td>(0.356)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e</td>
<td>-0.180</td>
<td>0.615</td>
<td>0.414</td>
<td>-0.010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.300)</td>
<td>(0.566)</td>
<td>(0.457)</td>
<td>(0.346)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>-0.519*</td>
<td>0.069</td>
<td>0.604</td>
<td>0.279</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.303)</td>
<td>(0.603)</td>
<td>(0.352)</td>
<td>(0.349)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>-0.407*</td>
<td>0.486</td>
<td>0.531*</td>
<td>0.303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.231)</td>
<td>(0.448)</td>
<td>(0.461)</td>
<td>(0.266)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average score of creativity</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>0.850***</td>
<td>0.054</td>
<td>-0.138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.142)</td>
<td>(0.297)</td>
<td>(0.216)</td>
<td>(0.163)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>6.634***</td>
<td>-6.181</td>
<td>-1.641</td>
<td>1.166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-2.046</td>
<td>(3.943)</td>
<td>(3.112)</td>
<td>(2.357)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of observations</td>
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<td>63</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>61</td>
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<td>Model specification</td>
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<td>Logit</td>
<td>OLS</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: Standard errors are in parentheses. Two-tailed tests: *** significant at 1%; ** significant at 5%; * significant at 10%.
CONCLUSION

In conclusion, our research has a good spread of males vs. females as well as diversity in ethnicity. We have sufficient data collected to see if there are any relationships between gender, age, ethnicity, degree-related studies with personality, the existence of an alternative self, creative inclinations and career preferences. Although this study is focused on students at UCL in their final years, the findings can be applied to a general population of graduates/new professionals entering the professional world as personality plays an important role in defining our future career aspirations. Based on the literature review, from our findings, I will look for relationships between openness, extraversion and creative inclinations and as career preferences. Additionally, I will observe whether an existing alternative self has an impact on the number of internships (part-time or full-time) students have had over the last three or four years.

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• Arménio Rego , Filipa Sousa , Carla Marques & Miguel Pina e Cunha (2012): Optimism predicting employees’ creativity: The mediating role of positive affect and the positivity ratio, European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology, 21:2, 244-270