Psychometrically Analyzing The Career Choices of Business Majors

Surayya Alita Walters

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Abstract
This paper discusses a research study conducted to discover if there was a sociological or psychometric difference between undergraduate business majors who opted for the conventional post-undergraduate career paths versus those who did not. To determine this, a qualtrics survey was conducted with various psychometric predictors that covered values, personality, and career interests. This survey was followed by a series of semi-structured interviews, to discover if there were any sociological factors that influenced their career choice. The study found that there were statistically significant relationships between the choice of a nontraditional or traditional career and the Five Factor Model (FFM) Openness and Neuroticism; Schwartz’s PVQ openness to change (specifically self-direction) and hedonism, and the passion-purpose-decisions scale, which is a blend of the calling scale and the scale for measuring entrepreneurial passion.

Keywords
career choice, organizational behavior, prestige, psychometric

Disciplines
Organizational Behavior and Theory
Surayya Walters

Psychometrically Analyzing The Career Choices of Business Majors

Organizational Behavior

December 22, 2021

An Undergraduate Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the WHARTON RESEARCH SCHOLARS

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THANKS

I’d like to say a special thank you to everyone who has participated in this research process. As of now, I’m still searching for my path, my thing, and my place in the job/career ecosystem. I am especially grateful for the students who participated in the interview process. You all inspired me with your passion and your desire to make an impact wherever you are. Thanks to my advising team - your insights were so valuable and forced me to challenge myself and to reconsider my assumptions. My last thanks is to my family and friends - you all are the greatest, thank you for believing in me even when I struggled to believe in myself. I am very grateful for your love and support.

~Surayya
Abstract:

This paper discusses a research study conducted to discover if there was a sociological or psychometric difference between undergraduate business majors who opted for the conventional post- undergraduate career paths versus those who did not. To determine this, a qualtrics survey was conducted with various psychometric predictors that covered values, personality, and career interests. This survey was followed by a series of semi structured interviews, to discover if there were any sociological factors that influenced their career choice. The study found that there were statistically significant relationships between the choice of a nontraditional or traditional career and the Five Factor Model (FFM) Openness and Neuroticism; Schwartz’s PVQ openness to change (specifically self-direction) and hedonism, and the passion-purpose-decisions scale, which is a blend of the calling scale and the scale for measuring entrepreneurial passion.

Key Words: career choice, organizational behavior, prestige, psychometric
EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Abstract:
Statistically significant relationships were found with Five Factor Model (FFM) Openness and Neuroticism; Schwartz’s PVQ openness to change (specifically self-direction) and Hedonism, and the passion-purpose-decisions scale, which is a blend of the calling scale and the scale for measuring entrepreneurial passion.

Background:
Career funneling is a common effect in the Ivy League construct, especially that pertaining to business (Binder et. al 2016). Blending organizational behavior and educational sociology, I seek to understand if there is a relationship.

Problem:
The career funneling phenomenon introduces questions involving what differentiates those who align with the environment’s expectations from those who don’t. I seek to investigate whether there is a clear difference between students of both groups.

Purpose:
The purpose is to determine whether there is a psychometrically validated difference between the students who pursue traditional careers versus those who pursue nontraditional careers after business school.

Method:
Students were invited to take a survey or participate in a semi-structured interview. The survey was administered through Qualtrics, the duration of the survey was 15 minutes. N=212 students
and alumni were surveyed. N=25 respondents (both the students and alumni) were interviewed. Interviews consisted of semi-structured questions and lasted an average of 45 minutes. Survey data was analyzed using SPSS, the statistical package for the social sciences. Qualitative data was analyzed using NVivo.

**Results:**
Overall, compared to their traditionally minded peers, those who pursue a nontraditional career path are more open but more neurotic. Those students who are pursuing a more traditional path have more self-directed values, come from higher income backgrounds and are less passionate. I propose the creation of three distinct career orientations for students who have an interest in the business sector. One is *preparation first*, defined by a desire to choose a job for its optionality and preparation value; *balance first* - a desire to balance the lure of a prestigious career with a niche or core interest, and *interest first* or the desire to consider your interests and “passions” first when considering a career.
INTRODUCTION
With the growth of career planning books such as “What color is your parachute?” and “Do what you are: discover the perfect career for you through the secrets of personality type,” it is evident that individuals are hardwired to seek careers for a variety of reasons, including personality or even values. From a research-based perspective, both the person-organization and person-job fit theories still hold (Kristoff, 1996). Individuals or agents are motivated to work in organizations and occupations that suit them on a variety of characteristics - including personality and values. The question is: Does this theory still hold for college students? Does it hold for undergraduates who are studying business?

It is well established that undergraduates studying business do so for the job flexibility and the ability to receive transferable skills that can apply to a variety of careers. However, in the Ivy League context, the majority of students seem to gravitate towards a very set amount of careers, mainly those in the financial services sector and consulting (Binder et. al, 2016). When benchmarking with similar institutions, such as Cornell’s Dyson School or School of Industrial and Labor Relations (Dyson, 2021; ILR; 2021), we see that Wharton leads the way, with over 80% of their recent graduating class of 2020 entering into the financial services of management consulting field (Penn Career Services, 2020).

With the popularity of these careers, it is interesting to study each segment - those who are interested in financial services, those interested in consulting, and those interested in other industries such as technology or retail. Questions such as: what is the difference between the students who pursue finance versus consulting? Or the difference between those who pursue consulting versus retail? These are the questions that have fascinated me. This study ties those questions together - while exploring how Wharton or business schools, as an organization, also
hold influence over the career choices students make. Through the survey, the semi-structured interviews and rigorous data analysis, we come a bit closer to developing an understanding of the many factors that influence career choices. There are distinct differences in how we react to our environment and in how we view careers, which influences the decisions we make.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The prevailing theory of person-organization fit states that “the organization and the person share similar characteristics,” (Kristoff, 1996). Individuals are motivated to fulfill the needs of each other, which is referred to as complementary congruence. Furthermore, P-O fit and P-J fit have both been linked to predicting turnover and job satisfaction (Arthur, 2006). It is worth noting that we choose our occupations and organizations with much consideration. The career choice literature is broad and spans aspects such as one’s gender, personality, values, and interests, and how each overlaps or combines to result in a specific career outcome. Research has indicated that most people view their work as a job (solely for the financial reward), career (a means of establishing oneself) or a calling (focus on enjoyment or them fulfilling socially useful work), (Wrześniewski, 1997; Not Available). To complete this review, I perused articles covering the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, Career Development Quarterly, The Journal of Vocational Behavior and the Journal of Education in Business. While the literature for this field spans many different topics, there is no project that simultaneously combines all factors into a greater whole. The state of the field depends on innovative ways of exploring the career funnelling phenomena.

GENDER

The literature covering the impact of gender on career choice is very broad, and covers careers within a variety of disciplines. Regarding gender, the research is often focused on the
experience of women, especially in their desire to pursue careers in fields that are very male dominated (A Campbell, 2020). Research shows that women are significantly more influenced by other people than men (Mishkin, 2016), and that this influence may cause women to shy away from more prestigious or STEM-heavy career paths (Woods & Hamson, 2002). This may be due to stark differences in competitiveness amongst the sexes (Buser, 2014) or even a firm difference in interests due to the impact of socialization (Rosenbloom, 2008). For the young or college aged women, having a mentor in a particular career path or encountering other women in that career path has proven to have beneficial effects and increase their career participation (Neuymayer, 2002; Olsson 2015). Exposure to counter-stereotypical role models, and parental support for a male-dominated career (Olsson 2015, Terri 2015); are sociological effects on a woman’s desire to pursue a certain path or career. Regarding calling, women showed a higher presence of calling and searching for meaning in calling (Dumulescu, 2015). This indicates that a woman might be more inclined to desire a career that is personally meaningful (Daniela Dumulescu, 2015). For women, their openness/intellect on the five factor model of personality determined whether or not they were more likely to pursue counterstereotypical careers (Woods and Hampson, 2010).

PERSONALITY

Personality effects tie directly into the second premise of P-O or person-organization fit, which explicitly states that “the organization and the individual share similar characteristics” (Kristoff, 1996). There is also substantial evidence that our personality shapes our vocational experiences, which indicates that work is indeed a source of identity (Willie & DeFruyt, 2014). Within personality based literature, the NEO-FFI or five factor model of personality has gained significant consideration. In the article: “Personality and Vocational Behavior: A Selective Review of Literature,” (1997), the aspects of neuroticism, extraversion, and conscientiousness
emerged most frequently (Tokar, 1997). Other researchers found that only FFM openness and the conscientiousness and no other Big Five factors were associated with occupational environments (Woods & Hampson, 2010).

There are results linking personality to career success outcomes. Starting with education, students who are highly conscientious tend to make higher grades, which leads to positive labor market outcomes (Poropat, 2009). Extraversion relates positively to salary level, promotions and career or job satisfaction, while neuroticism relates negatively to career satisfaction (Seibert, 2001). There is research segmenting these five factor traits into success for different careers. Research shows that conscientiousness, agreeableness, and neuroticism is positively correlated with jobs that involve interpersonal interactions; and that agreeableness and emotional stability predict a high performance in jobs that involve teamwork (Mount, 1998). Those who score high on those dimensions might be attracted to more people oriented professions. The Five Factor Model has also been tied to career information seeking behaviors and behavior during the career search process, another measure of career success. Neuroticism and conscientiousness encourage the individual to seek career commitment (Jin, 2009; Reed 2004). Specifically, conscientiousness and extraversion, along with low neuroticism promote career information seeking (Reed 2004), while openness and neuroticism encourage the individual to be self-explorative in their career search process (Reed, 2004).

An interesting portion of the literature discussed how personality factors directly impact one’s career choice. In the field of entrepreneurship, entrepreneurs were shown to have a more proactive personality (Becherer, 1996), and that they differed from managers on the various Five Factor Model personality dimensions (Brandstatter). When they compared them with managers, researchers found that entrepreneurs are slightly more conscientious, more extroverted and less
neurotic and agreeable (Brandstatter). Other researchers discovered that higher openness to experience also predicts a tendency to become an entrepreneur (Zhao and Seibert; Gorgievski, 2018). Furthermore, extroversion and low neuroticism were predictive of women’s tendency to become entrepreneurs (Zhang, 2009).

The role of personality proved to be the differentiating factors between career choice in a variety of fields, including medicine, music, and education (Mullola; Caroll; Vust; Kwon). In the medical field, personality was tied to the speciality choice of medical students (Kwon, 2016). One’s FFM personality has also been linked to the choice to become a generalist or specialist clinician (Caroll, 1984) or pursue a basic medical science career or surgery oriented specialty (Nawiseh, 2020) and those choosing between an educational or a vocational career preparation track (Usleep, 2020).

**VOCATIONAL INTERESTS**

There is significant research in personality, but results indicated that one’s “vocational interests were better predictors of both their perceived person-job and person-vocation fit than personality (Erkhart, 2007).” While research has validated the link between the RIASEC survey inventory (Barrick, 2003; DeFruyt, 1997), with links between the Extraversion and Openness to Experience dimensions of the Five Factor Model (Barrick; 2003), there is unique variance among them (DeFruyt , 1997). RIASEC has explained students choosing to study either educational or vocational psychology and clinical psychology or organizational psychology. For the students choosing clinical psychology, they scored higher on the social dimension than students choosing organizational psychology, who scored higher on the enterprising dimension.
VALUES

The role of values in career choice is not as clear, but is still very relevant to the subject matter. In India, business students were discovered to obtain the values of “skills, competence, and abilities,” when solidifying their desire to pursue a managerial career and receive an MBA (Agarwala). However, studies have discussed parental expectations and their overt influence on values, and in turn, career choice (Agarawal, 2008; and Journal of Research in Ed.). There are studies on work values, using the work values inventory (WVI) to explore the personal values of MBA students (Vigoda-Gadot; 2008). The students who pursued the extrinsic rewards showed a higher consideration for economic returns, while students who pursued intrinsic values learned towards careers involving management and creativity. Those with altruistic values pursue careers that allow them to help others (Ben-Shem;Vigoda-Gadot 2008) and utilize altruism. Altruistic values are in fact linked to a protean career - a career that is characterized by self direction and intrinsic values in the pursuit of success (Vigona-Gadot 2008; Douglas 2007). The students with lower self-enhancement values (those that govern the innate need for power and achievement) in Schwart’s PVQ were less likely to pursue entrepreneurship (Gorgiveski). These full studies prove the impact and importance of values when it comes time to make or solidify a career decision.

OTHER PREDICTORS: GRIT, CONTINGENCIES OF SELF WORTH, ETC.

There is virtually no research on the impact of the exploratory predictors in the study: grit, contingencies of self worth, self monitoring and maximizing satisfaction on one’s career choice. Grit, defined as the passion and perseverance for long term goals (Duckworth, 2007) is linked to career success outcomes such as income and job satisfaction (Danner, 2020) and even the full ability to set difficult goals and achieve them (Ting, 2020). However, Grit is a common
theme in many careers, including entrepreneurship (Salisu, 2020) and medicine (Medani; Seguin 2019). In spite of Grit’s positive effects, studies do show that conscientiousness contributes more to success than grit (Zisman, 2021); in spite of the fact that grit and conscientiousness are in fact correlated (Duckworth, 2007).

Contingencies of self worth is not broadly used to understand career choice, but it has been used to uncover academic success (Crocker, 2007), and reaction to failure and rejection (Crocker, Summer 2002), among other factors. Researchers established that “affect and self esteem are more strongly related when the events are relevant to one’s contingencies of self worth,” (Crocker, 2007), and the impact of low or higher self esteem can impact your behavior within a certain or particular contingency (Crocker 2007; Summer 2002). For example, a self worth rooted in appearance and approval was associated with greater body surveillance and a reduced appearance satisfaction (Overstreet, 2012). In college, contingencies assessed prior to freshman year influenced how students spent their time in college (Crocker, 2003). We can use this information to analogously develop relationships between contingencies of self worth and one’s career choice. In college, contingencies assessed prior to freshman year influenced how students spent their time in college (Crocker, 2003).

Some other related effects involve self monitoring and maximizing satisfaction. The self monitoring construct was established as a proponent of career success (Lau, etc.) The high self monitors are more likely to utilize mentorship relationships (Dougherty, etc.) and are more likely to be promoted or have jobs on the higher side of their organization’s hierarchy (Kiduff, 1994, influence of social network). For maximizing-satisficing, the majority of research has centered on the experience of maximizers. Maximizers experience more decision making time pressure (Chowhury, Misuraca) and are likely to maximize negative outcomes, contributing to lower life
satisfaction (Polman, etc.). They are also more sensitive to upward social comparison (Schwartz, 2002); and are focused on relative instead of absolute outcomes (Weaver, 2009). This gives their maximizing tendencies a particularly social focus.

**THE IVY LEAGUE AND CAREER FUNNELLING**

Since Wharton is a subset of The University of Pennsylvania, an Ivy League School, it is very important to read the literature on The Ivy League and the career funneling phenomena that has taken place over the course of decades, from the 1960s. (Binder et. al). In the article, “Career Funnelling: How Elite Students Learn to Define and Desire “Prestigious Jobs’’”, Binder et. al discuss how elite institutions often lead to elite careers. Furthermore, Binder et. al released their study in the *Sociology of Education* in August 2016, indicating that this is a relatively new area of research. This phenomenon has lasted for years (since 1960s), but we finally have the novel scholarly language to describe its effects and impacts, which sets the stage for further research in this area. Books such as *Excellent Sheep* and *Smart People Should Build Things*, and discuss this phenomenon later.

The article discusses how ivy league and elite university students tend to be drawn to prestigious careers, those in finance and management consulting, and increasingly, tech (Binder et.al). This complements prior research which states that the wealthier students tend to choose careers with higher idiosyncratic risk than the mainstream, preferably in business (Saks, 2005) and are also motivated by class status when choosing to pursue a career in business, more so than the career itself (Schleef, 2000). Many of the top employers recruit almost exclusively from the top schools or institutions (Rivera, 2012; Rivera 2011); which further incentivizes elite students to join them. Furthermore, Gen Z is the generation with the greatest overall economic well being; which further intensifies this effect (Scroth, 2019). Overall, the hope for upward class mobility or
maintenance of their current socioeconomic status drives students to pursue a business career (Lee, 1996). While these factors are not directly related to organizational behavior, they provide us with the right context and backdrop to explore the psychometric properties further.

**SCHOLARLY CONTRIBUTION**

This paper intends to build on the work of Binder et. al and the organizational behavior and vocational behavior scholars that have linked career outcomes to factors such as one’s job orientation, personality, or values. It is a unique addition to the literature, operating at the vast intersection of higher education and organizational behavior. Essentially, this thesis is blending the sociological factors (organization, gender, etc.) with the psychological and/or dispositional factors, to create a holistic image of the career choice process. This has the potential to be a key scholarly contribution with an exciting potential for impact.

**HYPOTHESES**

Hypotheses were formulated based on the review of the literature. A “traditional” choice in the context of the Wharton undergraduate environment is to pursue a career in consulting, or finance. A nontraditional career is in a less populated field; such as technology or media or retail.

- **Interests: RIASEC**
  - *High Enterprising* and *Higher Realistic* or *Conventional* associated with a mainstream post-Wharton career.
    - The literature discusses that students who are highly enterprising students chose an organizational psychological track, and that enterprising is linked towards wanting a business career.

- **Values: Schwartz’s PVQ**
Higher self-enhancement (hedonism or power) or Higher conservation (security or tradition) positively associated with mainstream post-Wharton career

Higher openness to change (stimulation or self-direction) positively associated with the non mainstream post-Wharton career

- **Personality: FFM**

  - Higher Conscientiousness positively associated with the mainstream post-Wharton career
  
  - Higher Openness positively associated with the non-mainstream post-Wharton career

- **Self-Esteem: Contingencies of Self-Worth**

  - Competence, Competition, or Approval associated with the more mainstream post-Wharton path

- **Motivation: Grit and Maximizer-Satisficer**

  - Maximizers will want higher status or mainstream post-Wharton careers.

  - Satisficers will be less prestige-driven.

  - Grit score will positively correlate with a desire for a more prestigious career.

- **Passion, Purpose Decisions Scale**

  - Students with nontraditional paths or interests will score higher

- **Demographics**

  - Race will not be a statistically significant predictor
  
  - Gender will be a statistically significant predictor

    - Women will be more likely to pursue a nontraditional career

  - Household Income will be statistically significant predictor
METHODOLOGY
Survey

Subjects entered the recruitment process through the survey. The survey contained ten (eleven) scales, each measuring a dimension of personality, values, or interests. Each domain was a part of the survey’s development. The survey was administered over qualtrics and was approximately fifteen minutes.

Recruitment

Consistent with IRB standards, subjects were recruited in a variety of ways. On the student side, subjects were recruited primarily through email listservs, or clubs or student organizations, and social media posts. There were two phases of recruitment. First: the initial recruitment phase where they received the initial email inviting them to partake in the study. Second: where there was a specific incentive for them to participate in enrolling other subjects (snowball sampling method). To avoid selection bias, all respondents were affiliated with the Wharton School, either as alumni or current students.

For undergraduate subjects, I located them through clubs, listservs, and social media pages. This provided me with access to a wide variety of students. The majority of clubs at the Wharton School are professionally focused, which helped me to gain a representative sample across students of different professional aspirations and paths. I contacted each club president and asked them to forward the information to their members. These clubs span areas such as actuarial science, retail, microfinance, investment and trading, marketing, and entertainment. For alumni, I used channels on Slack, listservs, and LinkedIn and Facebook groups. Alumni tend to congregate online and connect through LinkedIn, and I capitalized on that norm.
However, a major limitation of my study involved scheduling interviews with the alumni. While I anticipated that I would have a minimum of five alumni interviews, I could feasibly only interview two. This provided me with limited data from a qualitative standpoint. Issues with the interview scheduling got the best of me. In the future, I hope to expand my full interview pool to include a sufficient number of alumni, if I choose to continue my career choice research theme into graduate school or study. However, there are many issues and bottlenecks involved with accessing alumni and their data.

**IRB Approval**

Prior to commencing my research, I received IRB approval. I was exempt from further review due to my efforts. I was approved by the Institutional Review Board of The University of Pennsylvania in August 2021. To gain IRB approval, I submitted all my documents for review, including a copy of the survey, recruitment flyers and graphics, interview guide, consent form, and CITI training certification record. If you’d like to view any of these documents, please contact me at (914)-246-1121 or surayyaw@wharton.upenn.edu.

**Incentive**

Subjectives received an incentive for their participation. The first 100 students to fill out the survey received a $5 Gift Card for their participation. The ten individuals who were chosen for interviews (5 students, 5 alumni) also received $10 for their participation. However, there was a third incentive that supported the Snowball effect. Students were asked to refer other students to the study for a $5 Amazon Gift Card.

**Interview**

Interviews were conducted over Zoom, for thirty minutes. Respondents were asked a series of semi structured questions. They were instructed to use a pseudonym in their interactions
with the principal investigator. I completed 27 interviews in total, 25 Wharton students and 2 Wharton alumni.

**Quantitative & Qualitative Analysis**

Data was analyzed using SPSS, the statistical software package for the social sciences. I ran a binomial logistic regression to determine the relationship of the variable to the dependent variable, which was a decision to pursue a traditional or nontraditional career path. The variable Traditional was the reference category. Qualitative data was analyzed using Nvivo, to identify key themes and pick out quotes for special emphasis.

**RESULTS**
## Five Factor Model of Personality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>$\chi^2$</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>OR</th>
<th>95% CI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Intercept)</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.987</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FFMExtScore</td>
<td>-0.27</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>6.47</td>
<td>0.011</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>[0.62, 0.94]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FFMOpenScore</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>0.028</td>
<td>1.64</td>
<td>[1.05, 2.54]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FFMConscientiousnessScore</td>
<td>-0.24</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>0.212</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>[0.54, 1.15]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FFMAggreablenessScore</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>0.668</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>[0.68, 1.28]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FFMNeuroticismScore</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>7.29</td>
<td>0.007</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>[1.13, 2.14]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. $\chi^2(5) = 18.97, p = .002, McFadden R^2 = 0.11.*
The presence of the five factor model of personality was statistically significant. The presence of extraversion, openness, and neuroticism had statistically significant results. An increase in extraversion was linked to a 27% decrease in the decision to pursue a nontraditional career. This indicates that the students pursuing traditional paths may be more extroverted than their counterparts. An increase in openness to experience made a student 49% more likely to pursue a nontraditional career path. An increase in Neuroticism made students 44% more likely to pursue a nontraditional career. This indicates that students who desire a nontraditional career path are higher in openness and neuroticism, which may indicate that they are more creative.

**Grit Score**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>$\chi^2$</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>OR</th>
<th>95% CI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Intercept)</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GritScore</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>1.64</td>
<td>0.201</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>[0.89, 1.02]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. $\chi^2(1) = 1.65$, $p = .199$, McFadden $R^2 = 0.01$.

Grit score was not statistically significant. There was no clear relationship between Grit, specifically Grit-S (the perseverance subset) and the decision to pursue a career in a traditional or a nontraditional industry. This rejects the hypothesis that higher grit was associated with a more traditional career choice.

**Contingencies of Self Worth**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>$\chi^2$</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>OR</th>
<th>95% CI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Intercept)</td>
<td>1.68</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>0.495</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSWAAppearanceScore</td>
<td>-0.12</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>0.292</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>[0.70, 1.11]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. $\chi^2(1) = 1.11$, $p = .292$.
The contingencies of self worth were not statistically significant. Subjects were surveyed to determine their level of self worth contingency in any of the following domains: appearance, competition, academics, virtue, and approval. There is no relationship between the decision to pursue a career in a traditional industry and any of the contingencies of self worth listed above. This rejects the hypothesis that any of the contingencies of self worth had an influence on a student’s career choice.

**Self Monitoring**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>χ²</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>OR</th>
<th>95% CI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Intercept)</td>
<td>2.38</td>
<td>7.35</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.746</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LowSelfMonitorScore</td>
<td>-0.33</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>0.346</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>[0.36, 1.43]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HighSelfMonitorScore</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>0.598</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>[0.65, 2.12]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. χ²(2) = 0.99, p = .611, McFadden R² = 0.05.*

The self monitoring scale was not statistically significant. This indicates that there is no relationship between being a high and a low self monitor, and pursuing a traditional or a non traditional career. This rejects the hypothesis that high self monitors will want more traditional careers.
RIASEC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>χ²</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>OR</th>
<th>95% CI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Intercept)</td>
<td>-0.27</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HollandRealisticScore</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.892</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>[0.72, 1.33]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HollandEnterprisingScore</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.839</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>[0.83, 1.16]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HollandArtisticScore</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.694</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>[0.83, 1.21]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HollandInvestigativeScore</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>1.69</td>
<td>0.193</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>[0.96, 1.23]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HollandSocialScore</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.886</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>[0.82, 1.19]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HollandConventionalScore</td>
<td>-0.12</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>[0.67, 1.18]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. χ²(6) = 3.64, p = .726, McFadden R² = 0.02.

The RIASEC/Holland Code relationship was not statistically significant. This indicates that students pursue careers irrespective of their dominant RIASEC dimensions.

Schwartz’s Personal Values Questionnaire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>χ²</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>OR</th>
<th>95% CI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Intercept)</td>
<td>5.33</td>
<td>2.32</td>
<td>5.27</td>
<td>0.022</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PVQConservationScore</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.883</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>[0.88, 1.16]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PVQOpennessstoChangeScore</td>
<td>-0.22</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>4.95</td>
<td>0.026</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>[0.66, 0.97]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PVQHedonismScore</td>
<td>-0.54</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>4.67</td>
<td>0.031</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>[0.36, 0.95]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PVQSelfEnhancementScore</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.844</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>[0.84,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Schwartz’s Personal Values Questionnaire (PVQ) was found to be statistically significant. A 1 point increase in openness to change leads to a twenty-two--22% decrease in observing the Non Traditional category. This indicates that students who pursue traditional post-grad careers are 22% higher on openness to change. Hedonism was also statistically significant, each 1 point increase in hedonism decreased the chance of observing the Non Traditional category by 54%. This indicates that students who pursue a traditional path might be more hedonistic, they have a higher need for enjoying the finer things in life (Schwartz, 2012).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>χ²</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>OR</th>
<th>95% CI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Intercept)</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>5.46</td>
<td>0.019</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>PVQSelfDirectionScore</td>
<td>-0.41</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>8.84</td>
<td>0.003</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>[0.51, 0.87]</td>
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<tr>
<td>PVQStimulationScore</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.863</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>[0.81, 1.19]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When looking at the subcategories of PVQ’s openness to change, we discover that the self direction score is statistically significant. A 1 pt increase in self direction on the PVQ decreases the chance of observing the Non Traditional category by 41%. This indicates that students who pursue a traditional career might have a higher need for autonomy and be more autonomous when selecting their goals.
### Passion-Purpose-Decisions Scale (PPDS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>χ²</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>OR</th>
<th>95% CI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Intercept)</td>
<td>-2.85</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>9.67</td>
<td>0.002</td>
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<tr>
<td>PPDSScore</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>8.59</td>
<td>0.003</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>[1.09, 1.54]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. χ²(1) = 10.25, p = .001, McFadden R² = 0.07.

There was a statistically significant relationship with the student or alumni’s desire to pursue a nontraditional career and their score on the passion purpose decision scales. This scale represents the level of identification one experiences with their work, and was sampled from the career-job-calling orientation scale and the measuring entrepreneurial passion scales developed by sampling from the questionnaires validated by Wrzesniewski in 1997 & Cardon in 2013.

### Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>χ²</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>OR</th>
<th>95% CI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Intercept)</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>4.23</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HouseholdIncome</td>
<td>-0.32</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>7.65</td>
<td>0.006</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>[0.58, 0.91]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There was no significant relationship between any of the demographic variables of race, gender, or parents' education, and the desire to pursue a traditional or a nontraditional career path. However, household income was statistically significant. A one (1) pt. increase in income, which is equivalent to an increase in social class/tax bracket, decreases the chance of pursuing a nontraditional career path by 32%. This indicates that students from wealthier backgrounds are more likely to pursue traditional careers.

### SUMMATION

Overall, there were statistically significant relationships found with the predictors of Five Factor Personality, Schwartz’s Personal Values Questionnaire, the Passion Purpose Decisions
Scale (PPDS) and Household Income. This sets a perfect foundation for us to delve deeper into this during our semi-structured interviews.

**Qualitative Analysis: Business School - Setting the Stage**

Interviewees discussed (at length) how business school encouraged them to consider new career opportunities and opened them up to different paths. This is a sign that their education was or is effective, as it introduced students to possible futures they hadn’t envisioned before. Many Wharton students expressed interest in careers in law, politics, medicine, or engineering prior to coming to business school; which shows that there is often a predominant interest that occurs within childhood (high school), prior to coming into business school. This makes sense given that the path of business education is often very broad and is applicable to many different paths and industries. This also can be further contextualized when we consider that the majority of students pursue a business degree through graduate school through an MBA, which makes Wharton a unique opportunity for students to study business in an undergraduate context.

The career process can be contextualized through a variety of steps. The first step is the encounter. Many students openly spoke about not knowing about either investment banking or management consulting prior to attending the Wharton School. This reveals that these careers are often encountered through the environment. The companies often come to campus and they hold events, as early as sophomore year. Students discussed the pivotal role of upperclassmen mentors in clubs and through classes, who encouraged them to pursue these opportunities. A student said “I knew nothing about consulting, until an upperclassmen mentor told me,” (Sally, 2021) and another said that, “these companies come on campus, often as early as sophomore year,” (Nancy, 2021).
The research establishes that a very particular type of student tends to be attracted to business school: these students tend to be highly ambitious and driven to obtain leadership roles and public recognition. This can partly explain why the majority of students tend to be drawn to the most prestigious careers. The ivy league context does impact the sample, as these students have become used to being amongst an elite, and see a prestigious career as a logical next step. Also, careers in business are often viewed as more prestigious (Binder, 2016), which makes the sensitivity prestige a bit greater. This sensitivity to prestige often impacts peer relationships, students are looking to be seen as important in the eyes of their peers.

Regarding careers, the majority of students referenced investment banking as being the most prestigious yet the most unethical. Even when interviewing students who are pursuing management consulting, which is prestigious in its own right, they referred to the fact that they are not doing investment banking. Those who are working in finance, expressed a deep sense of inferiority towards IB. They often tried for these roles and didn’t make it. There are reasons why students view IB as the most prestigious career choice. Investment banking is known for long and arduous working hours, and an intense recruiting process that starts very early. Students said that “you have to start early,” and that “you have to fake an interest in it because the work is very confusing” (Franz, 2021; Alissa 2021). For the students who are doing investment banking, they openly expressed the vast “instant respect” they received from making it through the process. It’s safe to say that for most Wharton students, the more difficult a particular career path is, the more prestigious.

**Qualitative Analysis: The Three Student Career Orientations**

I completed twenty five qualitative interviews, across different career choices and class years. I also had the privilege to interview two Wharton alumni. My interview pool skewed
female (85%), but there were trends in the data that helped me to develop a theory of three student career orientations. These exemplify how students view the career choice process, the factors that they view, and how they ultimately come to a decision. This allowed me to go a bit deeper than the “traditional;” vs. “non-traditional” dichotomy; and develop more nuance in my understanding. With this analysis, I found three major types within the career choice process. Using aggregated qualitative data and their quotes, I am able to identify these three main types and discuss how they differentiate from each other.

The three career orientations are as follows:

1. **Preparation First**
   
   a. These students primarily view their career choice as solid preparation for the next phase of their career. They talk about obtaining skills, learning to handle pressure and work within a fast-paced environment, gaining a strong network, and pursuing novel exit opportunities. They tend to reference the brand name of the company they will be working for. Many also reference the pursuit of financial freedom, traveling the world, or retiring early. They mainly see their career choice as solid preparation for early retirement or a successful career in other fields of business. On average, their time horizon for their first role is much shorter, 2.5 years, on average.

2. **Balance First**
   
   a. These are the students that want to blend their core interest with an area of business that is still seen as prestigious and will lead to
other opportunities. Examples include public sector consulting, marketing boutique consulting. They also have a fascination with a particular industry, and want to immerse themselves in it, with a more conventional role. Examples include being a market research analyst or a government relations consultant. I refer to this as “balance first” because they exhibited the desire to balance their interests with a path that is popular or respected in the Wharton undergraduate population.

3. **Interest-First**

   a. These are the students who admitted to a predominant interest over business motivating their career choice. They often speak of creativity and wanting to help others, to make an impact in a very idealistic sense. Many referenced “passion” as the rationale for their pursuit of a more unconventional path. Examples include: graphic designer, human resources, retail, etc. Their interests come at the expense of a higher starting salary, but they are willing to make that trade off.

   With this research, I present to you three career orientations of undergraduates studying business: *preparation first, balance first, interest first*. Next, we will take a deep dive into what makes each career orientation distinct from the others.

   **Preparation First**

   “*I wanted to pursue something that left a lot of doors open*” - Sarah, senior studying FNCE and OIDD
Students with a preparation first orientation often view their career choice as a stepping stone to something else. They reference “exit opportunities.” Many show a desire to compete with their peers, and to work for a company with a strong brand name. Quantitatively, these students tend to come from higher income families, which rejects one of my hypotheses. They are defined by a desire to succeed and having many options available to them. This was evident in the fact that many did not have clear long term career goals, and saw investment banking or consulting as a way of providing them with the maximum optionality.

**PERSONALITY**

When asked to describe their personality, many of these students referenced being Type A and enjoying fast-paced work. They expressed a desire to obtain skills, and showed a great appetite for learning and progressing. They often expressed the desire to be social, and to work in teams. These careers tend to be very socially-oriented, you are working with clients and have to work in teams for long periods of time. They referenced the overall team dynamic as having a particular influence on their desire to accept a return offer. For example, one student talked about liking a major consulting firm due to their “culture where everyone is sociable and talks as much as her,” (Emma, 2021). This shows that there isn’t just a desire to find an industry that fits them, but a company within that industry which suits their personality or desire for learning.

For the students who pursued consulting, they often talked about solving problems and wanting to help other people by solving problems. They referenced themselves as “qualitative” and not “quantitative” which influenced their desire to pursue this path. They see working with companies and clients as a form of service. Their service orientation is narrower than those of other career orientations, but they still connect to that career path in a very service oriented way. They want to help companies to help people, who will eventually help consumers and the world.
However, they remain primarily motivated by the careers they see others pursuing; in the hopes that the expected path can lead to expected success.

VALUES

The majority of these students did not express anything indicating that their career choice aligned with their values. Some even bluntly said that their career choice does not directly align with their values, however; they did seem unaffected by this. They referenced capitalism and this just being how the world works. Many expressed values that are paramount to being Gen Z, such as sustainability, diversity & inclusion, etc. but they openly admitted that these values are just not always exhibited in their career path. They don’t seem to mind this; as they mainly see their path or chosen careers as a stepping stone and not a permanent arrangement. Will, a recent graduate working for a major consulting firm, said that “consulting isn’t an actual career, just a job that you go through after college, a right of passage,” (Will, 2021). This indicates that values do not explicitly tie into their career choice, some may not even see their role as a lasting profession but a transient experience.

Psychometrically, this group scored higher in self direction (openness to change) and hedonism. Many of them expressed a desire to switch roles and functions, which may represent their need to be self-directed in how they manage the difficulties of their career choice. For their hedonism score, Schwartz defines hedonism as “pleasure or sensuous gratification for oneself.” However, hedonism also overlaps with self-enhancement and openness to chance in the theory as well. I propose that their hedonism is not in the traditional sense - moreso a desire for a well lived life for themselves and those closest to them. Many students in this group referenced a strong desire to give back to parents, pay off debt, retire early and then travel the world. This represents the lifestyle they are motivated to have and want to achieve.
INTERESTS

Many of these students had very linear interests. If they pursued investment banking, then the next step was private equity. If they wanted to pursue consulting, the next step was an MBA or law school or a strategy/ops role. They exhibit a desire to stay aligned with the expected and recommended path. One of the alumni I interviewed discussed their HBS 2+2 (deferred MBA) offer that was in their “back pocket.” Clearly this is a high-achieving group that is determined to make their future as successful as possible. They are heavily inclined towards viewing the older students and other alumni as mentors, and they want to follow in their footsteps. They see these paths as preparation for other careers in business or in other high status sectors, such as law or government. On the psychometric side, these preparation-first students scored lower on the passion-purpose-decisions-scale, which indicates that passion isn’t their priority, the practical steps they need to take to actualize a long standing career are more important.

GOALS & DEMOGRAPHICS

Their goals often included learning, finding what they are truly passionate about, and then financial security. They view these careers as an excellent opportunity to develop a wide network, to cultivate a strong work ethic and learn to “work under pressure”, and to provide them with the exit opportunities that can catapult them into the next chapter of their business careers. Surprisingly this group tends to skew higher income. This aligns with Binder et. al’s discovery that “working class students tend to skew away from higher income careers.” (Binder et. al, 2016)

Balance First
“I know that I am passionate about marketing and interested in marketing. I never came to a conclusion that there is a sector (within marketing) that I am extremely passionate about. This allows me to pursue my interest in marketing without making a decision about a specific area or company I want to work for.” - Alexa Smith, senior studying MKTG and OIDD

True to their name, those with a “balance first” mindset, want to balance their interests with the allure of a high paying and prestigious career. They often pursue paths in the boutique consulting firms. They have an area that they believe they are interested in, but they want to specialize in that area or gain access to broad knowledge before transitioning into that career path for full time. Unlike those who are preparation first, they have a clear idea of what they are interested in, often a clear interest develops before senior year; or even from high-school. They see the most value in pursuing a career that allows them to enjoy the breadth of consulting while still remaining true to their interests.

These students are very neutral, they are in the middle of both extremes. They are not the most preparation minded, many admitted that they will be receiving a lower starting salary than some of their peers, and are willing to sacrifice that for a career that effectively blends their own interests with a more respected path. However, they are still influenced by the career perceptions of their peers. Many talked about being influenced by older peers, something that the interest first orientation doesn’t discuss. They respond to the many external influences of the Wharton environment by choosing a path that blends their existing interests (usually developed prior to college).

PERSONALITY & VALUES

Their personality and values were similar to the other groups. They want to make an impact in their chosen field. However, they showed a desire for tangible work and to feel they
have autonomy in their workplace. Some turned down other job offers in management consulting or corporate functions to work in positions where they could see a tangible impact. Others opted for boutique firms because they wanted faster career progression. They want all the allure and prestige of consulting but they want to feel as if their work truly matters to the larger company's purpose and vision. They often talked about feeling a sense of disconnect in larger companies and tend to prefer more intimate working environments.

**INTEREST-FIRST**

"*Anyone who is doing something different from other people, plays a big role in your identity.*"

~Sarah Chang, sophomore studying Cinema and Media Studies in the College and Undecided in Wharton

These are the students who are going against the grain because they have a predominant interest in something other than business. The career paths in this category include: a marketing anthropologist, business school professor, human resources professional, and film director. They talked about understanding the risk that they were taking in pursuing this path. But they seem to think about their interests first when choosing a career. When asked how to contextualize their career development journey, they often say: “first I was interested in…;” whatever path of their choosing, whether neuroscience, media, or film.

For the majority of these students, their interests developed prior to college or early on in their college experience. These students referenced books, high school classes, and experiences that molded them and shaped their interests. The sum of it is: they had an interest that was more important to them than pursuing the other career trajectories. Irrespective of their own household income or parents’ educational background, as they tend to skew lower income (per the results above); they decided to pursue what interests them the most.
PERSONALITY

Regarding personality, they were very similar to the other dimensions; but they had a higher emphasis on creativity and feeling their work is tangible. They showed a desire for work that was creative and innovative. Many of them are attracted to creative careers (graphic design or film), which probably explains the higher amount of openness on the FFM inventory. They also seem to be less team oriented in their approach to work; and more focused on how the work ties into their particular interests. This directly correlates with their slightly lower extraversion, per the results above. Also, these students exhibited a clear dislike for travel and a hectic work environment, which can be explained by their higher Neuroticism. Staying in a particular line of work or industry provides them with more stability and a stronger sense of work life balance.

VALUES & INTERESTS

Students in this group talked about wanting to work for companies that are ethical and that care about the environment. They also highly valued their own interests, hence the name interest first. For them, values and interests are intertwined. They also scored a bit higher on the PPDS, which indicates that they see their work as an integral part of their identity, almost like a calling. Many of them talked about wanting to tackle larger world issues and do humanitarian work, or fix the healthcare system or hold companies accountable for the mishandling of Big Data.

SUMMARY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Career Orientation</th>
<th>Preparation First</th>
<th>Balance First</th>
<th>Interest First</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VALUES</td>
<td>Learning, giving back to those close to them (family), Brand and prestige, Financial wellness, connections</td>
<td>Financial wellness, work-life balance, finding a job that provides them with the ability for impact</td>
<td>Creativity, passion, working for an “ethical” business, work life balance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**PERSONALITY**

| “Type A”, organized, likes fast paced work, high achieving and future oriented, extroverted and sociable, team oriented, values learning and building a strong network | A blend of the “preparation first” and “interest first” personality traits which provides them with a balanced outlook | People oriented, passionate, creative, care about a broader societal goal, want their work to directly impact others and to see that impact |

**INTERESTS**

| Interests not specific, many are broadly interested in business or a particular type of work (quantitative or qualitative), see themselves in this career for a short amount of time (2-3 years on average), wants to find good exit opportunities | Interested in seeing a variety of fields and optionality while still gaining competence in a core area of interest (ex. marketing consulting or working in a government relations consulting firm) | Interested in pursuing the goals that are personally meaningful for them, see themselves in the same career for a long period of time (ex. working in the entertainment industry for their entire career) |

**Limitations**

There are a couple of limitations I’d like to discuss. The first one is the sample size (N=212), a larger sample size would’ve provided me with more statistical accuracy. The second is social desirability bias; which is commonly reported in surveys. Students could be answering in the form of an “ideal self” instead of being genuine and truthful. The third is the limitation of interviewing students who haven’t accepted a job offer; their overall perspectives and choices are malleable and still subject to changes. A more minor limitation would be selection bias; some of the students are pursuing dual degrees in the college of arts and sciences (which focuses on the liberal arts) or the school of engineering.

**Organizational Implications**

If Wharton or other business schools want to increase the diversity of their students’ career choices, then they need to be mindful of a couple of things. First, they need to consider the role that upperclassmen mentors play in steering students toward particular career interests. They can establish a mentoring program to introduce students to those with divergent career options, which will broaden their interests. The literature discusses the importance of role models when
pursuing a career. Linking the students with mentors of divergent interests will destigmatize the path of pursuing an alternative career and encourage students to broaden their horizons. Second, they need to provide students with more structured career support. For the paths such as financial services and management consulting, there is a very clear hierarchy and career progression. It is as simple as submitting your resume to the career services drop and signing up for coffee chats or attending info sessions. For other paths, the road isn’t as clear. Those students have to be more active in finding resources. Increasing career support for alternative careers, including providing students with roadmaps, connections, and alumni mentorship; could prove fruitful.

**Areas For Future Study**

I remain fascinated by the reasons why students and professionals choose their careers. The project underscored some areas for future research that I’d like to explore, maybe in grad school or another educational context. While interviewing students, the topics of diversity & inclusion and perception of income were raised. Here’s what I discovered:

- For students of color or the BIPOC students, they referenced the importance of diversity & inclusion when referencing the companies they’d like to work for. Some said that they take pride in being the first and want to pave the way for those that look like them. Others talk about being attracted to cultures that already have established employee resource groups (ERGs) and a strong racial or ethnic community. I’d love to study what influences students to want to be “the first” or join an established racial or ethnic group within a workplace.

- While interviewing, I spoke to two FGLI students who are pursuing lower paying jobs. They spoke about how, in comparison to how they were raised, their starting salaries will be very high. I’d love to run a study on career choice and the starting
salary perception. I think *perception of salary* is more important than the salary itself. There are some students who may not be satisfied with $100K. There are others who would be satisfied with $75K. I’d love to discover what influences our perception and satisfaction with our starting salaries. Also what factors will cause someone to negotiate or determine a higher salary.

As you can conclude, I am interested in studying careers and managerial labor market outcomes as well. For someone who is indecisive about my own career, I love to study the career choices of others. There is so much to learn from the choices that others’ make. I think that this interest could lay a solid scholarly foundation for the future.

**APPENDIX**

**UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA**  
**RESEARCH SUBJECT**  
**INFORMED CONSENT FORM**

**Protocol Title:** *Psychometrically Analyzing The Career Choices of Business Majors*

**Principal Investigator:** Surayya Walters  
218 Eastchester Road  
New Rochelle, NY 10801

**Emergency Contact:** Surayya Walters  
914-246-1121

**Research Study Summary for Potential Subjects**

You are being invited to participate in a research study. Your participation is voluntary, and you should only participate if you completely understand what the study requires and what the risks of participation are. You should ask the principal investigator any questions you have related to participating before agreeing to join the study. If you have any questions about your rights as a human research participant at any time before, during or after participation, please contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at (215) 898-2614 for assistance.

The research study is being conducted to understand **how dispositional factors impact one’s career choice**. You are being invited to participate because you are a **student or alumni of The Wharton School**.
If you agree to join the study, you will be asked to complete an interview discussing your **career choice** and the factors that influenced this decision.

Your participation will last for the duration of your interview, approximately **one hour**.

The purpose of this research is to help us understand the underlying factors behind one’s career choice. The most common risks of participation are feeling bored or upset answering questions.

If you are interested in participating, the principal investigator will review the full information with you. You are free to decline or stop participation at any time during or after the initial consenting process.

**Why am I being asked to volunteer?**
You are being invited to participate in a research study because you are a current student or an alumni of The Wharton School.

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to **sign this form**.

**What is the purpose of the study?**
The purpose of the study is to learn more about the factors that influence the vocational choices of undergraduates and alumni who study (or have studied) business.

**Why was I asked to participate in the study?**
You are being asked to join this study because you are a student.

**How long will I be in the study?**
The study will take place over one session. The session will last approximately 1 hour.

**Where will the study take place?**
The study will take place over Zoom. You will be able to choose your location and time for this Zoom session. The interviewer will join you over Zoom.

**What will I be asked to do?**
During the session, an interviewer will ask you questions about your experiences regarding your career choice. **The interviewer will request your permission to record the interview so that it may be transcribed and analyzed.**

**What are the risks?**
There is minimal risk to participating in this study. However, it is possible that you could become bored or uncomfortable when answering questions about yourself and your experiences. Please remember that you do not have to answer questions if you do not want to do so.

**How will I benefit from the study?**
There is no benefit to you. However, your participation could help us understand how to improve career development programs for undergraduates studying business, which may benefit you
indirectly. You will receive a $10 Amazon Gift Card after the interview. In the future, this may help other people to be mindful of the factors impacting their career choice.

**Will I receive the results of research testing?**
Most tests done in research studies are only for research and have no clear meaning for participants. Research results will not be returned to individuals because analysis and reporting of aggregate data and will not pertain to individuals.

**What other choices do I have?**
Your alternative to being in the study is to not be in the study.

**What happens if I do not choose to join the research study?**
There are no negative consequences should you choose not to participate. You may choose to join the study or you may choose not to join the study. Your participation is voluntary. There is no penalty if you choose not to join the research study. You will lose no benefits or advantages that are now coming to you, or would come to you in the future. The researcher will not be upset with your decision.

**When is the study over? Can I leave the study before it ends?**
The study is expected to end after all participant interviews have been completed. The study may be stopped without your consent for the following reasons:

- The PI feels it is best for your safety and/or health-you will be informed of the reasons why.
- You have not followed the study instructions
- The PI, the sponsor or the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of Pennsylvania can stop the study anytime

You have the right to drop out of the research study at any time during your participation. There is no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled if you decide to do so.

If for any reason, you no longer wish to be in the research study, please contact Surayya Walters at surayyw@wharton.upenn.edu or 914-246-1121 and request to cancel your interview or request that your data be removed from the study.

**How will my personal information be protected during the study?**
Privacy of your interview will be maintained to the fullest extent possible. Only (Surayya) will have access to individual data without names or other identifiers and all data will be stored under pseudonyms on a password protected computer. The data will be analyzed and reported in aggregate form, without names or other identifying information. If information from this study is published, your name and other personal information will not be used. The Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of Pennsylvania will have access to your records.

**What may happen to my information collected on this study?**
Your information will be de-identified. De-identified means that all identifiers have been removed. The information could be stored and shared for future research in this de-identified
fashion. It would not be possible for future researchers to identify you as we would not share any identifiable information about you with future researchers.

**Will I have to pay for anything?**
You will not have to pay anything to participate in this study.

**Will I be paid for being in this study?**
There is no compensation for participating in this study.

**Who can I call with questions, complaints or if I’m concerned about my rights as a research subject?**
If you have questions, concerns or complaints regarding your participation in this research study or if you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you should speak with Surayya Walters at (914)-246-1121. If a member of the research team cannot be reached or you want to talk to someone other than those working on the study, you may contact the IRB at (215) 898 2614.

When you sign this form, you are agreeing to take part in this research study. If you have any questions or there is something you do not understand, please ask. You will receive a copy of this consent document.

______________________       ________________________       ________________________
Printed Name of Subject                  Signature of Subject                     Date

**SURVEY**

**Survey:**

**Q1-Q4 ask for consent and the respondent’s email address**

**Q5:** How are you affiliated with the Wharton school?
   1) I am a current undergraduate student at The Wharton School
   2) I am a graduate of The Wharton School

**Q6:** In what year will you graduate from the Wharton School
   1) 2022
   2) 2023
   3) 2024
   4) 2025
   5) 2021

**Q7:** Have you accepted a job offer?
   1) Yes
   2) No
Q8: What industry will you work in upon graduating from Wharton? If you did not accept a post-graduation offer (or are a freshman, sophomore, or junior), please select your greatest industry of interest
   1) Finance
   2) Consulting
   3) Software Development/Engineering
   4) Data Analytics
   5) Entrepreneur/Founder
   6) Marketing & Advertising (includes brand management)
   7) Real Estate Investment
   8) Real Estate Development
   9) Sales
   10) Business Development
   11) Management
   12) Technology (includes product and project management)
   13) Research (includes market research)
   14) Actuarial
   15) Retail
   16) Human Resources
   17) Legal Support
   18) Media & Entertainment
   19) Public Relations
   20) Social Media
   21) Nonprofit & Education
   22) Web Design/Development

Q11: Did one or both of your parents work in the same industry?
   1) Yes
   2) No

Q12: What is the highest level of education achieved by parent 1?
   1) No formal education
   2) High school
   3) Vocational training
   4) Some college or Associate degree
   5) Bachelor’s Degree
   6) Masters
   7) Doctorate/PhD
   8) Prefer not to say

Q12: What is the highest level of education achieved by parent 2?
   9) No formal education
   10) High school
   11) Vocational training
   12) Some college or Associate degree
   13) Bachelor’s Degree
   14) Masters
   15) Doctorate/PhD
   16) Prefer not to say
Q14: What is your current household income?/While you were a student at Penn, what was your household income?
1) Less than $30,000  
2) $30,000 to $50,000  
3) $50,000 to $100,000  
4) $100,000 to $150,000  
5) $150,000 to $400,000  
6) Over $400,000

Q16: Which category represents your racial identity?
1) American Indian or Alaska Native  
2) Asian  
3) Black or African American  
4) Hispanic, Latinx or Spanish Origin  
5) Middle Eastern or North African  
6) White  
7) Multiethnic  
8) Prefer not to disclose

Q17: What is your gender identity?
1) Male  
2) Female  
3) Non-Binary  
4) Other  
5) Prefer not to Disclose

Q18 is text shown prior to the psychometric scales

Q19: Please answer all questions about your values, personality, or interests honestly  
[Disagree Strongly | Disagree | Neutral | Agree| Agree Strongly]
1) New ideas and projects sometimes distract me from previous ones  
2) Setbacks don't discourage me. I don’t give up easily.  
3) I often set a goal but later choose to pursue a different one.  
4) I am a hard worker.  
5) I have difficulty maintaining my focus on projects that take more than a few months to complete  
6) I finish whatever I begin  
7) My interests change from year to year  
8) I am diligent, I never give up  
9) I have been obsessed with a certain idea or project for a short time but later lost interest  
10) I have overcome setbacks to conquer an important challenge

Q20: Five Factor Personality: “I would describe myself as…..”  
[Disagree Strongly | Disagree | Neutral | Agree| Agree Strongly]
1) Extroverted, enthusiastic  
2) Critical, quarrelsome  
3) Dependable, self-disciplined
4) Anxious, easily upset
5) Open to new experiences, complex
6) Reserved, quiet
7) Sympathetic, warm
8) Disorganized, careless
9) Calm, emotionally stable
10) Conventional, uncreative

Q22: Maximizer-Satisficer
[Disagree Strongly | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Agree Strongly]
1) Whenever I’m faced with choice, I try to imagine what all the other possibilities are, even ones that aren’t present at the moment
2) No matter how satisfied I am with my job, it’s only right for me to be on the lookout for better opportunities
3) When I am in the car listening to the radio, I check other stations to see if something better is playing, even if I’m relatively satisfied with what I’m listening to.
4) When I watch TV, I channel surf, often scanning through the available options even while attempting to watch one program
5) I treat relationships like clothing; I expect to try a lot on before I get the perfect fit
6) I often find it difficult to shop for a gift for a friend
7) Renting videos is really difficult, I am always struggling to pick the best one
8) I’m a big fan of lists that attempt to rank things (the best movies, the best singers, the best athletes, the best novels, etc.)
9) I find that writing is very difficult, even if it’s just writing a letter to a friend, because it’s so hard to word things just right. I often do several drafts of even simple things.
10) No matter what I do, I have the highest standard for myself.
11) I never settle for second best.
12) I often fantasize about living in ways that are quite different from my actual life.

Q22: Contingencies of Self Worth
[Disagree Strongly | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Agree Strongly]
1) When I think I look attractive, I feel good about myself
2) I feel worthwhile when I perform better than others on a task or skill
3) My self-esteem is unrelated to how I feel about the way my body looks.
4) Doing something I know is wrong makes me lose my self-respect
5) I don’t care if other people have a negative opinion about me
6) I can’t respect myself if others don’t respect me
7) Whenever I follow my moral principles, my sense of self respect gets a boost
8) Knowing that I am better than others on a task raises my self-esteem
9) My opinion about myself isn’t tied to how well I do in school
10) I couldn’t respect myself if I didn’t live up to a moral code
11) I don’t care what other people think of me
12) My self-esteem is influenced by how attractive I think my face or facial features are
13) Doing well in school gives me a sense of self-respect
14) My sense of self-worth suffers whenever I don’t think I look good
I feel better about myself when I know I’m doing well academically.

What others think of me has no effect on what I think about myself.

My self-worth is affected by how well I do when I am competing with others.

My self-esteem is influenced by my academic performance.

My self esteem would suffer if I did something unethical.

My self-esteem does not depend on whether or not I feel attractive.

My self-worth is influenced by how well I do on competitive tasks.

I feel bad about myself whenever my academic performance is lacking.

My self-esteem depends on whether or not I follow my moral/ethical principles.

My self-esteem depends on the opinions others hold of me.

Q24: RIASEC/Holland Code: “In my ideal job, I want to”

[Disagree Strongly | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Agree Strongly]

1) Operate machines for producing machine parts.
2) Perform maintenance on machines and tools.
3) Calculate the area of geometric figures.
4) Read scientific papers and books.
5) Perform analysis and lab experiments.
6) Explain natural or physical phenomena.
7) Participate in the designing of scenarios for theater pieces.
8) Perform an artistic presentation to an audience.
9) Sing in a choir.
10) Provide social communities and neighborhoods.
11) Provide guidance to individuals, groups or population about health and well being.
12) Be available to help people.
13) Take part in strategic planning for companies.
14) Manage goals and performance work teams.
15) Negotiate with customers.
16) Supervise the compliance with laws.
17) Analyze national and international economic scenarios.
18) Achieve important documents and files.

Q25: Proactive Personality

[Disagree Strongly | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Agree Strongly]

1) I am constantly on the lookout for new ways to improve my life.
2) Wherever I have been, I have been a powerful force for constructive change.
3) I enjoy facing and overcoming the obstacles to my ideas.
4) Nothing is more exciting than seeing my ideas turn into reality.
5) If I see something I don’t like, I fix it.
6) Not matter what the odds, if I in believe in something i will make it happen.
7) I love being a champion for my ideas, even against others’ opposition.
8) I excel at identifying opportunities.
9) I am always looking for better ways to do things.
10) If I believe in an idea, no obstacle will prevent me from making it happen.
11) I can spot a good opportunity long before others can.
Q26: Schwartz's Personal Values Questionnaire (PVQ)
[Disagree Strongly | Disagree | Neutral | Agree| Agree Strongly]
1) Thinking up new ideas and being creative is important to me, I like to do things in my own original way.
2) It is important for me to be rich. I want to have a lot of money and expensive things.
3) I think it is important that every person in the world be treated equally. I believe that everyone should have equal opportunities in life.
4) I think it is important to show my abilities. I want people to admire what I do.
5) It is important for me to live in secure surroundings. I avoid anything that might endanger my safety.
6) I like surprises and am always looking for new things to do. I think it is important to do lots of different things in life.
7) I believe that people should do what they are told. I think people should follow rules at all times, even when no one is watching.
8) It is important for me to listen to people who are different from me. Even when I disagree with them, I still want to understand them.
9) It is important for me to be humble and modest. I do not try to draw attention to myself.
10) Having a good time is important to me. I like to "spoil" myself.
11) It is important for me to make my own decisions. I like to be free and not depend on others.
12) It is really important to me to help the people around me. I want to care for their well-being.
13) Being very successful is important to me. I hope people will recognize my achievements.
14) It is important to me that the government insures my safety against all threats. I want the state to be strong so it can defend its citizens.
15) I look for adventures and like to take risks. I want to have an exciting life.
16) It is important for me to always behave properly. I want to avoid doing anything that people say is wrong.
17) It is important for me to be respected by others. I want people to do what I say.
18) It is important for me to be loyal to my friends. I want to devote myself to people close to me.
19) I strongly believe that people should care for nature. Looking after the environment is important to me.
20) Tradition is important to me. I try to follow the customs handed down by my religion or my family.
21) I seek every chance I can to have fun. It is important to me to do things that give myself pleasure.

Q27: Self Monitoring
[True| False]
1) I find it hard to imitate the behavior of other people
2) My behavior is usually an expression of my true inner feelings, attitudes, and beliefs.
3) At parties and social gatherings, I do not attempt to do or say things that others will like.
4) I can only argue for ideas which I already believe.
5) I can make impromptu speeches even on topics about which I have almost no information.
6) I guess I put on a show to impress or entertain people.
7) When I am uncertain how to act in a social situation, I look to the behavior of others for cues.
8) I would probably make a good actor.
9) I rarely seek the advice of my friends to choose movies, books, or music.
10) I sometimes appear to others to be experiencing deeper emotions than I actually am.
11) I laugh more when I watch a comedy with others than when alone.
12) In groups of people, I am rarely the center of attention.
13) In different situations and with different people, I often act like very different persons.
14) I am not particularly good at making other people like me.
15) Even if I am not enjoying myself, I often pretend to be having a good time.
16) I'm not always the person I appear to be.
17) I would not change my opinions (or the way I do things) in order to please someone else or win their favor.
18) I have considered being an entertainer.
19) In order to get along and be liked, I tend to be what people expect me to be rather than anything else.
20) I have never been good at games like charades or improvisational acting.
21) I have trouble changing my behavior to suit different people and different situations.
22) At a party, I let others keep the jokes and stories going.
23) I feel a bit awkward in company and do not show up quite as well as I should.
24) I can look anyone in the eye and tell a lie with a straight face (if for a right end).

Q28: Passion-Purpose-Decisions Scale (PPDS): Alumni
[Disagree Strongly | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Agree Strongly]
1) I enjoy talking about my work to others
2) I never take work home with me
3) My work is one of the most important things in my life
4) I find my work rewarding
5) My job is an important part of my identity
6) I would continue with my current line of work if I was not being paid
7) I would choose my current work-life again if I had the opportunity
8) I expect to be doing the same work in five years

Q29: Passion-Purpose-Decisions Scale (PPDS): Students
[Disagree Strongly | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Agree Strongly]
1) I enjoy talking about my chosen industry to fellow students.
2) I never discuss my chosen career or industry outside of pre-professional clubs and internships.
3) My decision to pursue a career in this industry is one of the most important things in my life.
4) I find the work in my chosen industry interesting.
5) My job will be an important part of my identity.
6) I would work in my chosen industry if I was not being paid

INTERVIEW GUIDE
Opening Script:
My name is Surayya Walters, and I’m a senior studying career choice. Thank you for partaking in this study. (Repeat the stipulations outlined by the consent form). Do I have your permission to record this interview? START recording.

Preliminary Questions:

De-Identification

1. What name would you like for a pseudonym?

Undergraduate

1. OPENING: Tell me about yourself.
2. What year will you graduate from The Wharton School?
3. What industry will you work in directly after graduation?
4. What organization will you work for OR which organizations can you envision yourself working in?
   1. What will your role be?
   2. How long do you anticipate being in that role?

Alumni

1. OPENING: Tell me about yourself.
2. What year did you graduate from The Wharton School?
3. Which industry did you work in directly after graduation?
4. What was your exact role?
5. How long did you work in that role?

Semi-Structured Interview Questions:

1. Can you walk me through the process of choosing or obtaining this job?
2. How did you choose this job or career path?

3. Why did you choose this job or career path?

4. Which experiences highlighted or underscored this specific career path?

5. How does this career align with your personality, values, or interests?
   a. How does this career align with your personality?
   b. How does this career align with your values?
   c. How does this career align with your interests?

6. How did others (friends, family, peers, etc.) react to this career choice?

7. How does (did) this career choice impact you?

8. What are (were) the pros of this job?

9. What are (were) the cons of this job?

10. ALUMNI:
    a. Have you faced any barriers or challenges to pursuing this career?

11. How does this job align with your goals, both short and long term?

**FAQs**

**FAQs: Survey**

1. How long was the qualtrics survey?
   15 minutes

2. What scales were used in the survey?
   Grit-S
   FFM shortened scale
   Maximizer-Satisficer
   Proactive Personality Scale
   Self Monitoring Scale
   Schwarz’s PVQ
Contingencies of Self Worth
Passion-Purpose-Decisions-Scale

3. Were there any other scales you considered?
   Yes - I considered some other scales that didn’t make it to the final cut.

4. How did you analyze the data?
   Data was analyzed and collected using SPSS

5. What statistical analyses did you perform?
   Binomial Logistic Regression Analysis

FAQs: Interview

1. How long were the interviews?
   a. The average interview was 45 minutes.

2. Where did you conduct the interviews?
   a. Interviews were conducted via zoom. Zoom provided me with a transcript that I edited in NVivo.

3. What was the incentive for interviewing?
   a. All interviewees received a $10 Amazon gift card.

4. Who can view the interview transcripts?
   a. Only for research based purposes will you be allowed to view the interview transcripts. If you want to view the transcripts, feel free to contact me at surayyaw@wharton.upenn.edu.
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