Career decision-making, career barriers and occupational aspirations
in Chinese adolescents

Authors: Peter A Creed
Wong Oi Yin
Michelle Hood

School of Psychology
Griffith University, Australia

Contact: Professor Peter A Creed
School of Psychology
Griffith University
PMB 50, Gold Coast Mail Centre
Gold Coast, Australia 9726
Email: p.creed@griffith.edu.au

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Abstract

The study tested the relationship between occupational aspirations/expectations (type and status) and decision-making difficulties, efficacy and career barriers in 498 Chinese high school students. Males aspired to investigative and enterprising types, but expected realistic and enterprising ones; females aspired to enterprising and conventional types, but expected conventional and social ones. Students with aspirations/expectations type discrepancies were more likely to be higher achieving females; those with aspirations/expectations status discrepancies had poorer academic achievement, less confidence and perceived more barriers.

Keywords: occupational aspirations, occupational expectations, career decision-making difficulties, career decision-making self-efficacy, career barriers

Occupational aspirations are “expressed career-related goals or choices” that provide important motivational momentum for career-related behaviours and future educational and career success (Rojewski, 2005, p. 132). Aspirations can have lifelong consequences as they are associated with significant later outcomes, such as where one works and lives, and the standard of living one attains. Occupational aspirations have been widely studied in the West but have not been examined directly in China, despite the growing career research in that country (Granrose, 2007). The present study examined the occupational aspirations of a large group of Chinese adolescents who were nearing the end of their formal secondary education and contemplating life after school.

Occupational aspirations occupy a central role in many career development theories. They are typically characterised as developing from wishful views of the future to mature evaluations considered in the context of abilities, interests, values and opportunities (Gottfredson, 2002). Occupational aspirations can be either idealised or realistic. Idealised aspirations are occupations one would like to have if there were no limitations on opportunity, finances or ability when selecting a career. Realistic aspirations, or expectations, on the other hand, are the occupations one expects to have, given perceived or real limitations (Rojewski, 2005). Both aspirations and expectations reflect attitudes and beliefs, and thus are cognitive constructs that are presumed to influence current behaviour as well as planning for the future. In Gottfredson’s terminology, discrepancies between aspirations and expectations result from compromise and circumscription of what one would like to do occupationally and what one is limited to achieving. When discrepancies do occur, they typically reflect a lowering of aspirations relative to real or perceived career barriers (Rojewski).

Occupational aspirations and expectations have been shown to be related to a wide range of person and situation variables, including gender (Wahl & Blackhurst, 2000), race, socio-economic status (Hellenga, Aber, & Rhodes, 2002), educational aspirations and attainments (Marjoribanks, 2002), self-esteem and self-efficacy (Fouad & Smith, 1996), family and school environments (Bo, 1994), social support (Wall, Covell, & McIntyre, 1999), parental aspirations and expectations (Wilson & Wilson, 1992), and parenting style (Steinberg, Lamborn, Dornbush, & Darling, 1992).

At a theoretical level, Lent, Brown, and Hackett (1994) proposed key roles for career-related self-efficacy and outcome expectations in determining aspirations. However, few studies have directly tested these relationships. In one Australian study (Patton & Creed, 2007), adolescents who aspired to and expected high status occupations had higher career decision-making self-efficacy and less career indecision, whereas students whose aspirations and expectations were discrepant were less confident about making a career-related decision, more career indecisive, and had lower levels of career maturity.

Career decision-making is central to career development (Betz, 1992), and likely to be intimately related to career aspirations, particularly career expectations. Parsons, as early as 1909, described the career decision-making process as one of understanding oneself and the world of work, and having the ability to integrate these two domains to decide upon a career outcome. In recent years, Gati, Kraus and Osipow, (1996) conceptualized career decision-making as consisting of a readiness phase, during which lack of motivation, indecisiveness and dysfunctional beliefs were problematic, and a decision-making phase, during which it was important to access adequate and reliable information about the decision-making process, the self, and the world of work. Disruption in either phase can result in a distortion to the decision-making process and a

less than desirable outcome. This is likely to be the case especially in the decision-making phase when individuals are integrating information about themselves and the world of work and deciding upon realistic career outcomes.

Career barriers, which are “events or conditions, within the person or in his or her environment, that make career progress difficult” (Swanson & Woitke, 1997, p. 434), will impinge on the career decision-making process. They can be actual or real, or they can be imagined or perceived barriers thought by the person to be influential (Swanson & Gore, 2000). Lent, Brown, and Hackett (2000) stated, “...people are less likely to translate their career interests into goals, and their goals into actions, when they perceive their efforts to be impeded by insurmountable barriers or inadequate support systems” (p. 38). Thus, career barriers are also likely to be associated with occupational aspirations and expectations. Gottfredson (2002) and Lent et al. described career barriers as the primary reason for individuals compromising their career goals; that is, moderating aspirations to expectations.

The present study extended the empirical evidence related to occupational aspirations by testing the associations between aspirations, expectations and aspiration/expectation discrepancies and the important career variables of career decision-making and career barriers. Occupational aspirations, expectations and aspiration/expectation discrepancies were operationalised as job classifications (according to Holland’s, 1997, occupational classifications), job complexity, and job prestige or status. While the study was largely exploratory in nature, several hypotheses were proposed:

1. occupational aspirations would be largely unrelated to career decision-making and barriers, as aspirations reflect wishful occupations under ideal conditions;

2. occupational expectations would be positively related to career decision-making and negatively related to barriers, because arriving at expectations involves making decisions while considering barriers; and

3. the compromise process, which is a decisional process reflected in aspiration/expectation discrepancies, would be negatively related to career decision-making and positively related to barriers, as proposed by Gottfredson (2002).

The study also considered age, gender, academic achievement and socio-economic status when testing these relationships, as previous studies showed these person variables to be associated with career aspirations. As participants were adolescents attending a high school in the People's Republic of China, the study also contributed to the understanding of career development in this country. There are very few studies of career development in China, and there appears to be no direct investigation of career aspirations with Chinese students, whose decision-making styles may not parallel those of students in Western cultures (Mau, 2000), and who may be subject to different influences compared with adolescents in the West (Li & Wright, 2000).

Method

Participants

Participants were 514 final year high school students attending the participating school in Nanhai, China. Nanhai is an industrial city of 1 million people, situated in Guangdong province near Hong Kong. The school is a modern, local government funded institution, which employs local as well as some international teachers. English is taught as a second language, and the school offers a traditional academic curriculum along with music, art and sport specialties. Final year students were chosen as they would be contemplating career decisions related to finishing high school. Sixteen

surveys were discarded due to extensive missing data. This left 498 in the sample, although sample sizes for some analyses were slightly smaller because some students omitted some information. The final sample contained 245 (49%) girls, 245 boys (49%), and 8 students (2%) who did not indicate gender; mean age was 18.37 years ($SD = .57$). Students were asked to indicate their father's education level as a measure of socioeconomic status: 41% of fathers had a primary school education, 56% a high school education, and 2% a tertiary education. Students also provided a self-report proxy of their current academic achievement: 10% indicated their level was "well below average", 28% indicated "below average", 51% indicated "average", 9% indicated "above average", and 1% indicated "well above average".

Measures

Occupational Aspirations and Status Aspirations were assessed using two questions similar to those devised by Looft (1971) and used widely in the literature (e.g., Watson, Quatman & Edler, 2002). For Occupational Aspirations, students responded to the question, "If you were completely free to choose any job, what would you desire most as a lifetime job?". Responses were then classified (a) according to Holland's (1997) RIASEC coding system, which has been tested in China and found to be consistent with the structure identified in the West (Long, Adams, & Tracey, 2004), and (b) rated on level of job complexity, using the Dictionary of Holland Occupational Codes (Gottfredson & Holland, 1996). For example, medical practitioner was rated as high complexity (complexity rating = 73), whereas farmer was rated as low (rating = 63).

For Status Aspirations, students responded to the question, "What kind of job would you like to have when you finish your education: *An unskilled/ semi-skilled/ skilled/ semi-professional/ professional job*". Sample occupations were provided for each status level (e.g., typical jobs for the Skilled category were clerical worker, fire fighter,

police officer, hairdresser and electrician). Responses were coded 1-5, with higher scores indicating higher aspirations.

For *Occupational Expectations and Status Expectations*, two similar questions were used: “Sometimes we are not able to do what we want most. What job do you really expect to have most of your life?”, for Occupational Expectations, and “What kind of job do you really expect to have when you finish your education: *An unskilled/ semi-skilled/ skilled/ semi-professional/ professional job?*”, for Status Expectations. Responses were coded for Holland category, complexity and status in the same way as responses for the aspirations questions.

Discrepancy scores were calculated for Holland coding and status. Students were categorized as non-discrepant if they reported the same aspired and expected RIASEC coding and as discrepant if they reported different codings. Similarly, students were categorized as status non-discrepant if they reported the same status aspiration and expectation levels, and as discrepant if they reported different levels. These criteria are similar to those reported by Davey and Stoppard (1993) and Armstrong and Crombie (2000).

Career Decision-making Difficulties. Students completed a Chinese translated version of the 34-item Career Decision-making Difficulties Questionnaire - Revised (CDDQ-R: Gati & Saka, 2001; Chinese translation, Creed & Wong, 2006). This scale has 32 CDDQ-R items and 2 validity items, which were not used in any analyses, and contains three subscales related to decision-making: Lack of Readiness, Lack of Information and Inconsistent Information. Students responded to items such as, “I find it difficult to make a career decision because I don’t know what factors to take into consideration”, on a 9-point scale, with endpoints of *does not describe me* and *does describe me*. Higher scores indicated more difficulties. Gati and Saka reported alpha

coefficients of .88 (Lack of Information), .87 (Inconsistent Information), and .62 (Lack of Readiness). Internal reliabilities for the subscales in the present study were .90 (Lack of Information), .76 (Inconsistent Information) and .34 (Lack of Readiness). Because of the unsatisfactory reliability of Lack of Readiness subscale, only the Lack of Information and Inconsistent Information subscales are reported. Both subscales were related to other constructs in the study in the expected direction supporting the validity of the Chinese version of the scale.

Career decision-making confidence. Students completed the 25-item Career Decision-making Self-efficacy Scale – Short Form (CDMSE-SF; Betz, Klein, & Taylor, 1996; Chinese translation, Mau, 2000). They responded to questions such as, “How confident are you that you could determine what your ideal job would be?”, on a 5-point scale, with end-points of *no confidence at all* and *complete confidence*. Higher scores indicated greater confidence. Betz et al. (1996) reported an internal reliability for the CDMSE-SF of .94, which is consistent with reliability coefficients reported in other studies (e.g., Creed, Patton, & Watson, 2002). Mau (2000) used the CDMSE-SF with a Chinese (Taiwanese) sample and reported an internal consistency of .92 and expected relationships with other career constructs. The internal reliability coefficient for the present sample was .88.

Perceived career barriers. Students completed a modified Career Barriers scale based on a measure originally devised by Howell, Frese and Sollie (1984; Chinese translation, Creed & Wong, 2006). Students responded to the question, “How much effect do you think each of the following things will have in keeping you from getting the job you desire?”, for 10 barriers, such as “lack of interest by your parents” and “not enough money to attend college or university”. The 5-item response format had

end-points of *no effect* and *very much effect*. Higher scores indicated more perceived barriers. The internal reliability coefficient for the scale was .71.

Demographics: Students reported their age, gender, academic achievement (5-point scale with end-points of *well below average* and *above average*), and the highest education level of their father (4-point scale of *never received education/primary school/high school/university*).

Procedure

The study was cross-sectional and survey-based. Students attended the one grade in the participating secondary school. The classroom teachers administered the surveys in accordance with provided instructions regarding the testing protocol. A written, group careers audit was provided to the school following the data collection. As the main variables of interest, Occupational Aspirations, Expectations and Discrepancies, were categorical in nature, discriminant function analyses were used to test the hypotheses (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). The study was conducted under the auspices of the authors' human ethics committee.

Results

Occupational Aspirations, Expectations, Discrepancies and Complexity

Using Holland's RIASEC occupational codings, 379 (76.1%) students were coded for their most desired jobs, and 333 (66.7%) were coded for their expected jobs. Non-coded responses included "don't know", "anything" and "challenging". The careers most frequently aspired to were Enterprising, Investigative and Conventional, and those least aspired to were Artistic, Social and Realistic. The most frequently expected careers were Conventional, Social and Enterprising, while the least frequently expected were Realistic, Investigative and Artistic. Compared to girls, boys were more likely to aspire to Investigative and Realistic careers, and less likely to aspire to Artistic,

Enterprising and Social careers, $\chi^2(5) = 17.25, p = .004$. Boys were more likely to expect Enterprising and Realistic careers, and less likely to expect Social and Conventional careers, $\chi^2(5) = 31.32, p < .001$ (see Table 1).

Two hundred and forty-one students (75.5%) reported aspirations different from their expectations, whereas 78 students reported no discrepancy. The mean complexity rating for Occupational Aspirations (65.52; $SD = 8.73$) was significantly higher than the complexity rating for Occupational Expectations (58.56; $SD = 10.30$), $t(709) = 9.76, p < .001$, indicating the discrepancy in occupational preference was associated with expecting less complex occupations than those aspired to. No significant gender differences were found for complexity of jobs aspired to or expected. Discrepant students did not differ from non-discrepant students on Lack of Information, Inconsistent Information, Career Decision-making Self-efficacy, Perceived Barriers or Occupational Complexity, but they were more likely to be female (84.6%) than male (67.3%), $\chi^2(1) = 12.90, p < .001$, and to report higher levels of achievement, $t(414) = 1.99, p = .048$.

Insert Table 1 about here

Status Aspirations, Expectations and Discrepancies

All students responded to the Status Aspiration question, and all but four responded to the Status Expectation question. Overall, students held higher Status Aspirations than Expectations, $t(990) = 7.57, p < .001$. Boys were more likely to aspire to and expect professional jobs than girls, whereas girls were more likely to aspire to and expect semi-professional jobs (see Table 2).

Insert Table 2 about here

Status Aspirations. A discriminant function analysis was conducted to determine which variables were associated with Status Aspirations. As no students nominated the

Unskilled category as an aspiration, and only four students nominated the Semi-skilled category, this analysis was conducted using only the Skilled, Semi-professional and Professional levels. Career Decision-making Self-efficacy and Academic Achievement level, which were bivariately associated with Status Aspirations, were included as predictor variables. Table 3 summarises data for the study scales; Table 4 reports the bivariate correlations. One significant discriminant function was produced, $\Lambda = .98$, $\chi^2(4) = 11.83$, $p = .019$, which accounted for 2.22% of the variance (see Table 5). While the effect was small, this function was able to successfully classify 48.3% of cases correctly (cross-validation = 47.7%), an improvement on chance (of 33.3%). The function discriminated most strongly between the Professional group and the Skilled and Semi-professional groups. Academic achievement was the most important predictor, with high achieving students being more likely to aspire to a professional job. These results support H1, that occupational aspirations would be unrelated to the career variables.

Insert Tables 3-5 about here

Status Expectations. A second discriminant function analysis was conducted to test which variables were associated with students' Status Expectations. As few students selected the Unskilled category (2; 0.4%), only the four levels of Semi-skilled, Skilled, Semi-professional and Professional were included. Lack of Information, Inconsistent Information, Career Decision-making Self-efficacy, Perceived Barriers and Academic Achievement, which were associated with Status Expectations (Table 4), were included as predictor variables. One function was significant, $\Lambda = .89$, $\chi^2(15) = 58.54$, $p < .001$, which accounted for 10.63% of the variance (see Table 5). This function was able to successfully classify 42.7% of cases correctly (cross-validation = 42.3%), an improvement on chance (of 25%). The function discriminated most strongly between

the Professional group and the Semi-Skilled and Skilled groups. The important predictors, in order of importance, were Academic Achievement and Career Decision-making Self-efficacy. High achieving students with high levels of self-efficacy were more likely to expect a professional versus a semi-skilled or skilled occupation. These results partially supported H2, that occupational expectations would be related to the career variables.

Status Discrepancies. Three hundred and eighteen students (64.4%) expected the same status occupation as the one they aspired to, whereas 176 students (35.6%) expected a different status job to the one they aspired to. A third discriminant function analysis was used to test which variables were associated with being status discrepant. Lack of Information, Inconsistent Information, Career Decision-making Self-efficacy, Perceived Barriers and Academic Achievement were associated with Status Discrepancies (Table 4) and were included as predictor variables. One discriminant function, $\lambda = .90$, $\chi^2(5) = 49.53$, $p < .001$, accounted for 9.67% of the variance (see Table 5). This function successfully classified 66.2% of cases correctly (cross-validation = 65.8%; chance = 50%). The most important variables were, in order of importance, Academic Achievement, Career Decision-making Self-efficacy and Perceived Barriers. In support of H3, students who reported no status discrepancy were more likely to be higher academic achieving, have more self-efficacy, and to perceive fewer barriers.

Discussion

These Chinese students aspired to a narrow band of occupations, with more than two thirds of students aspiring to the three RIASEC categories of Enterprising, Investigative and Conventional. Expectations were more widely spread, with students largely expecting occupations in the four groups of Conventional, Social, Enterprising and

Realistic. Boys focused their aspirations in the Investigative, Enterprising and Conventional areas, and their expectations in the Enterprising, Realistic and Conventional groupings. Girls had broader aspirations (Enterprising, Conventional, Artistic and Investigative), but very narrow expectations, focusing largely on the two areas of Conventional and Social.

RIASEC category distributions for male and female high school students for the Self-Directed Search (SDS; Holland, 1994) in the United States (Holland, Powell, & Fritzsche, 1997) and Australia (Shears & Harvey-Beavis, 2001) are available to compare against this Chinese sample. The US and Australian distributions were very similar, with the exception that Australian females were less likely to select Artistic occupations, and more likely to select Investigative than their US counterparts. The US and Australian males had a clear preference for Realistic, Enterprising and Investigative occupations, whereas US and Australian females showed a preference for Social, Artistic, Investigative and Enterprising careers. For male students, the main differences between the Chinese and the US/Australians were that the Chinese were more likely to aspire to and expect Conventional careers, and less likely to aspire to and expect Realistic careers. For female students, the main differences were that the Chinese were less likely to aspire to and expect Artistic, Investigative and Social careers, more likely to aspire to and expect Conventional careers, and more likely to aspire to Enterprising careers.

Only Patton and Creed's (2007) Australian study had directly comparable data to the data reported in this study. They presented occupations aspired to and expected for an Australian sample of high school students. In this study, students as a whole more frequently aspired to Investigative, Social and Realistic careers, and more frequently expected Social, Realistic and Investigative careers. Thus, the present Chinese sample

differed from this Australian sample by being more likely to aspire to Enterprising and Conventional careers and less likely to aspire to Social and Realistic careers, and more likely to expect Conventional and Enterprising careers and less likely to expect Investigative careers. Girls differed from boys in being less likely to aspire to Realistic occupations and more likely to aspire to Investigative, Artistic and Social occupations. Girls also held different expectations than boys, being less likely to expect Realistic occupations, and more likely to expect Artistic and Social occupations. The Chinese girls differed from the Australian girls in being more likely to aspire to Enterprising careers and to aspire to and expect Conventional careers. Chinese boys were less likely than Australian boys to aspire to Realistic groupings.

It is not known whether the aspirations and expectations for Chinese adolescents reported in the present study are representative of urban Chinese students generally. However, Chinese professionals providing advice and careers interventions for Chinese adolescents need to be aware that career aspirations and expectations for their students may differ from adolescents in the West, and they should be alert also to gender differences in aspirations, which tend to parallel differences identified outside of China. Young women form their occupational aspirations in the context of other life goals, such as family and children, more so than do young men (Patton & McMahon, 1997), and Chinese cultural imperatives need to be considered here. Those working with adolescents in China may want to encourage students to think about a wider range of occupations and encourage students, girls especially, to give more consideration to occupations outside of those based on traditional gender stereotypes.

Three quarters of the students had different RIASEC expectations to their aspirations. These student changers (i.e., those with discrepant RIASEC aspirations/expectations) did not differ from the non-changers on any of the career

variables, although they were disproportionately female and reported higher levels of achievement. While girls were more likely to have discrepant expectations from their aspirations, the change in choice was not related to a reduction in the complexity level of the new occupation selected.

There were different results for occupational status discrepancies. For a substantial majority of students (64%), the status of their expected occupation matched the status of their aspired occupation. These non-discrepant students were more likely to be higher achieving, and differed from their discrepant counterparts by being more career-confident and perceiving fewer career barriers. On the other hand, those who were indicating a change in occupational status were less confident and more conscious of barriers. These results are important as they add to existing research by demonstrating that there are also relationships between the important career variables of confidence and perceived barriers and the process of compromise, as well as effects for gender and achievement, as found elsewhere (e.g., Rojewski, 2005). Practitioners who assist students to resolve these issues need to focus on enhancing career confidence and address perceived career barriers. Given that many students in this study had reconciled their aspirations and expectations, this assistance should begin earlier than the last few years of high school. Educators need to be aware that as children and adolescents develop, compromise of aspirations occurs. They need to ensure that young people in their care have sufficient knowledge, confidence and skills to deal with/adjust to perceived barriers so that they can develop realistic occupational expectations.

Consistent with previous research (e.g., Davey, 1993), students held higher status aspirations than expectations. Gender differences were also evident, with boys more likely to aspire to and expect professional status jobs and girls more likely to aspire to

and expect semi-professional jobs. This outcome varies from previous research, much of it conducted in the West, in which girls were more likely to aspire to higher status occupations than boys (see Rojewski, 2005). This difference might reflect the early stage of modernization of the Chinese labour market, and population expectations around that. Consistent with earlier Western research (Marjoribanks, 2002), higher achieving Chinese students were more likely to aspire to and expect higher status occupations. In addition, career decision-making self-efficacy was also associated with occupational status expectations; students with more confidence were more likely to have higher expectations. Thus, confidence, and not simply ability, is an important consideration when students are making decisions to determine expectations.

The examination of the relationships between aspirations and the career development constructs in the current study contributes to the understanding of adolescent career development, and, in particular, about this process in Chinese adolescents. The findings demonstrate the value of considering career decision-making and career barriers when examining occupational aspirations. The relationship between these variables is consistent with theories that stress the value of career decision-making (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 2002; Super, 1990) and the processes of circumscription and compromise in the maturation process (Gottfredson, 2002). Future studies need to continue to test the applicability of Western psycho-social constructs with Chinese adolescents, and, more generally, test how these career development variables can be manipulated to ameliorate goal reduction in the occupational area. Ideally, future studies should test these associations longitudinally to gain a fuller picture of how aspirations change during the important adolescent years. There is also room to examine a wider array of perceived barriers, including ones derived from within the Chinese setting. Being a Western scale, the one used in the present study may

not sufficiently capture the occupational impediments, either real or perceived, that concern Chinese adolescents. Finally, standard methodology (Looft, 1971) was used to measure occupational aspirations. Future studies might consider a more complex, multi-dimensional conception of this construct, which could, for example, include other aspirational domains, such as life and family, and examine how these are related to occupational goal-setting.

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Table 1

*Frequencies for Occupational Aspirations (N = 379; Females = 182; Males = 192)
and Occupational Expectations (N = 332; Females = 166; Males = 162)*

Holland Code	Aspirations			Expectations		
	<i>F</i> ^a	<i>M</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>T</i>
Realistic	12 (4.9)	22 (9.0)	34 (6.8)	18 (7.3)	38 (15.5)	57 (11.4)
Investigative	27 (11.0)	54 (22.0)	83 (16.7)	10 (4.1)	14 (5.7)	25 (5.0)
Artistic	29 (11.8)	17 (6.9)	46 (9.2)	5 (2.0)	2 (0.8)	7 (1.4)
Social	22 (9.0)	16 (6.5)	39 (7.8)	49 (20.0)	27 (11.0)	77 (15.5)
Enterprising	59 (24.1)	47 (19.2)	108 (21.7)	23 (9.4)	47 (19.2)	70 (14.1)
Conventional	33 (13.5)	36 (14.7)	69 (13.9)	61 (24.9)	34 (13.9)	96 (19.3)

Note: ^a Numbers in brackets are percentages

Table 2

Frequencies for Status Aspirations (N = 498; Females = 245; Males = 245) and Status Expectations (N = 494; Females = 242; Males = 244)

Job Status	Aspirations			Expectations		
	<i>F</i> ^a	<i>M</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>T</i>
Semi-skilled	0 (0.0)	4 (1.6)	4 (0.8)	16 (6.5)	26 (10.6)	42 (8.4)
Skilled	41 (16.7)	44 (18.0)	85 (17.1)	60 (24.5)	54 (22.1)	116 (23.3)
Semi-professional	96 (39.2)	70 (28.6)	169 (33.9)	105 (42.9)	84 (34.3)	192 (38.6)
Professional	108 (44.1)	127 (51.8)	240 (48.2)	61 (24.9)	80 (32.7)	144 (28.9)

Note: ^a Numbers in brackets are percentages

Table 3

Summary Data for Study Variables; N = 498 (N = 245 females, N = 245 males)

Variable	Males		Females		Total	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Lack of Information	55.14	21.81	59.79	22.26	57.51	22.13
Inconsistent Information	40.25	14.10	43.18	15.14	41.64	14.62
Career Decision-making Self-efficacy	83.19	12.71	80.55	11.87	81.93	12.36
Career Barriers	27.60	6.07	28.60	6.49	28.02	6.32

Table 4
Bivariate Correlations; N = 498

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Lack of Information	-	.50***	-.47***	.35***	-.04	-.14**	.10*	-.03	-.11*	-.11*	-.02
2. Inconsistent Information		-	-.26***	.28***	-.05	-.14**	.11*	-.02	-.10*	-.13**	.03
3. Career Decision-making Self-efficacy			-	-.25***	.10*	.24***	-.21***	.08	.11*	.18***	.03
4. Perceived Barriers				-	-.03	-.12**	.13**	-.08	-.08	-.06	.02
5. Status Aspirations					-	.60***	.18***	.01	.02	.12**	.02
6. Status Expectations						-	-.45***	-.09	.01	.26***	-.01
7. Status Discrepancies							-	.04	-.02	-.24***	.01
8. Age								-	.11*	.01	-.08
9. Gender									-	-.09*	-.02
10. Academic Achievement										-	-.13
11. Socio-economic Level											-

* = $p < .05$; ** = $p < .01$; *** = $p < .001$

Table 5

Standardized Canonical Coefficients for analyses predicting Status Aspirations, Status Expectations and Status Discrepancies; N = 494

Variable	Function 1	Function 2	Function 3
Status Aspirations			
Academic Achievement	.92*	-.38	-
Career Decision-making Self-efficacy	.53	.85*	-
Status Expectations			
Academic Achievement	.77*	.41	-.09
Career Decision-making Self-efficacy	.69*	-.35	.33
Perceived Career Barriers	-.27	.79*	.49
Lack of Information	-.44	.60*	-.30
Inconsistent Information	-.40	.15	.48*
Status Discrepancies			
Academic Achievement	.75	-	-
Career Decision-making Self-efficacy	.68	-	-
Perceived Career Barriers	-.42	-	-
Lack of Information	-.32	-	-
Inconsistent Information	-.30	-	-

Note: * Indicates largest absolute correlation between each variable and any discriminant function