Stability and Change in Educational; and Occupational Aspirations

Mina N. Vida
Jacquelynne S. Eccles
University of Michigan
Previous studies on adolescents’ educational and occupational aspirations have sought to identify factors that influence its stability or change.

- For example (Bandura, 1977) studied the impact of self-efficacy on educational and occupational choices and Eccles and colleagues tested the relation between self-concept of ability, gender, and value with educational or occupational fields (Eccles, 1994, Eccles and Vida, 2003).
- Since the adolescent years are the period for discovering interest, efficacy, and values, new aspirations or goals may be created that are more achievable and satisfying.
On the other hand, the adolescent years are a critical period for discovering interests, efficacy, talents, and values. Those discoveries can create new aspirations or goals that may be even more achievable and satisfying.
Research Questions:

Does aspiration stability/change between grade 12th and 6 years post high school related to mental health, physical health, educational achievement, work or family outcome at 3 point of times.

- Is the stable group better off at age 25?
- Does Stability Matters?
Methods

- The data are derived from “Michigan Study of Life Transition” (MSALT),
- (Eccles & Barber PI), a longitudinal study of 700 high school seniors at 3 points in time:
  - Time 1  High school seniors (1990).
  - Time 2  Two years post high school (1992).
  - Time 3  Six year post high school (1996).
Demographics of Participants at Time 3 (age 25)

- Sample size: 350-580 (varies by analyses).
- Ethnicity: 91% European American
- Gender: 60% females
- Education attained: 45% HS or more, 45% BA/BM, 10% graduate school
- Job Status: 12.9% unemployed, 17.9% Part-Time, 69.2% full-Time
- Income: $20,000-29,000 (median)
- Marital Status: 24.6% married
Sample of Measures

**PREDICTORS:**
- Educational aspiration:
  - When you think about your future how much of schooling do you like to have?
- Occupational aspiration:
  - When you think about your future what kind of jobs do you like to have?

**Outcomes:**
- Self-esteem
  - How often do you feel satisfied with yourself the way you are? (1-7).
- Worry
  - How worried are you about your future(1-7)
- Health
  - How do you rate your overall health? (1-7).
- Educational achievement
  - What is the last year of school you have completed? (1=diploma/GED; 9=(MA+/MS+)).
- Satisfaction With the Job
  - How satisfied are you with your present job? (1-7).
Young Adults Educational Aspirations at Time 1.
Young Adults Educational Aspirations at Time 2.
Young Adults Educational Aspirations at Time 3.
Change/Stability in Educational Aspiration and It’s Relation with Time1 measures

![Bar Chart](chart.png)

- Self-Esteem
- Worry
- GPA

- Lower
- Stable
- Higher
Figure 1:

- More worried about their future.
- Had lower GPA
Change/Stability in Educational Aspiration and It’s Relation with Time 2 Measures
Change/Stability in Educational Aspiration and It’s Relation to Time 2

- Figure 2:
- Had lower GPA.
- Lower educational attainment.
Change/Stability in Educational Aspiration and It’s Relation with Time 3 Measures
Changed Educational Aspiration and It’s Relation to Time 3 Measures

- **Figure 3:**
- Higher social-isolation.
- Lower GPA at Time1.
- Lower educational attainment.
- More were married.
- Fewer had children.
Occupational Aspiration at Time 1
According to Educational Requirement
Occupational Aspirations at Time 2 According to Educational Requirement

[Graph showing percentage distribution of educational requirements: Hs Diploma, Some College, BA/BS, Advanced]
Occupational Aspiration at Time 3 According to Educational Requirement
Change/Stability in Occupational Aspiration and It’s Relation with Time1 Measures
Change/Stability of Occupational Aspiration and It’s Relation with Time 1 Measures

- Figure 4
- Lower GPA at Time 1.
Change/Stability in Occupational Aspiration and It’s Relation with Time 2 Measures

- Self-Esteem
- Coping
- Worry
- Soc.-Isolation
- Ed. Attained
- Sat-Job
- GPA
- Health
- Full-Time

Legend:
- Green: Lower
- Yellow: Stable
- Red: Higher
Change/Stability in Occupational Aspiration and it’s Relation with Time 2 Measures

- **Figure 5**
- Lower GPA at Time1.
- Lower Educational attainment.
Change/Stability in Occupational Aspiration and It’s Relation with Time 3 measures
Change/Stability in Occupational Aspirations and it’s Relation to Time 3 measures

- Figure 6.
- Lower GPA at Time1.
- Less coping ability.
- Fewer married.
- Fewer had full-time job.
- (only those to changed to lower aspiration)
Conclusion

- In general our study is consistent with earlier works that the stable groups are better off than those who change to lower aspiration level.
- At age 18 the changed group reported more worries for their future,
- Later on they reported less coping ability and higher rates of being socially isolated.
- Among 11 measures of well being GPA and educational attainment were related most strongly to the success or failure of change.
- As these young adults got older, the ‘change groups’ presented more negative effect in their lives. Even the those who changed to higher aspiration, had lower educational achievement at the end.
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