



Personality and College Major Choice: Which Come First?

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ABSTRACT

The present study attempts to solve the nature of the known individual differences in personality related to academic college major choice. The question whether these precede or follow the choice of an academic major is still open. To rule out environmental influences during academic study, group differences in personality were assessed in perspective college students, thus before the incoming in a specific academic major. The Big Five Questionnaire-60 (BFQ; Caprara, Schwartz, Capanna, Vecchione, & Barbaranelli, 2006) and a questionnaire assessing the behavioural intention to enrol in different university faculties were administered to a sample of 886 last-year students who enrolled in different senior high schools. Among the Big-Five Factors, Extraversion and Conscientiousness have been found the explanatory variables predicting high-school students' expressed choice for their perspective academic career. These findings give a preliminary empirical support to the hypothesis of the pre-existence of group differences in personality at the moment of their choice for a specific academic career. Limitations and implications for future research are discussed.

KEYWORDS

Personality Traits; College Major Choice

Cite this paper

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