



Navigating Transitions: Exploring the Evolution of Work Values Among Recent College Graduates



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Introduction

Previous research assessing the job-hunting process has focused on increased stress and anxiety yet has not evaluated how other job-related factors, such as work values, develop and change as individuals navigate the job market. The current project utilizes data from the Houston Occupational and Personality to explore how work values change as individuals progress through the job market after graduating from college.

Method

718 recent college graduates for 1 year following graduation as they transitioned to the workforce. We conducted a series of linear and multiple regression models to test the impact of time on work values to assess how these values change the longer individuals spend in the workforce following graduation, and across job status.

Results

- Altruism, Job Specialization, Management Role, Work Independence, Work-Life Balance, Task Variety, Task Interest, and Salary were measured.
- College graduates value Altruism ($B = -0.28, p < .001$), Job Specialization, Task Interest ($B = -0.12, p = 0.01$), and holding a Management Role ($B = -0.26, p < .001$) less after six months following graduation. Alternatively, individuals did not change in how much they value Independence ($B = 0.01, p = 0.78$), Work-life Balance ($B = -0.02, p = 0.59$), Task Variety ($B = -0.03, p = 0.59$), and Salary ($B = -0.04, p = .52$).
- For all 8 values, those who were employed, unemployed but seeking a job, or unemployed and not seeking a job changed differently in their work values over time

Discussion

Within-participant analyses demonstrate that individuals vary substantially in the trajectories of their workplace's values over time, with some undergoing substantial changes while others remain relatively the same.

We did not find, however, that these trajectories changed as a function of type. Future work will explore how changes in job type impact changes in work value trajectories.

Work Values of Graduating Seniors Over Time

