Unveiling Motivations in Volitional Personality Change Across Demographic Variables

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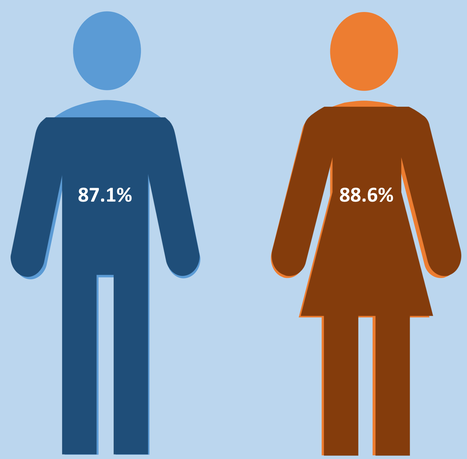
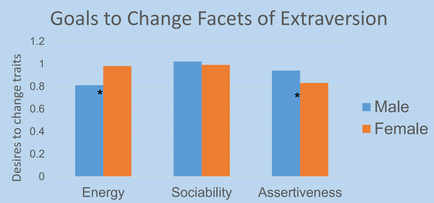
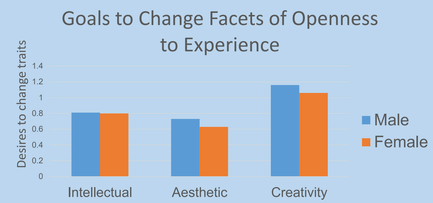
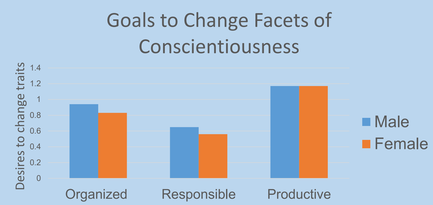
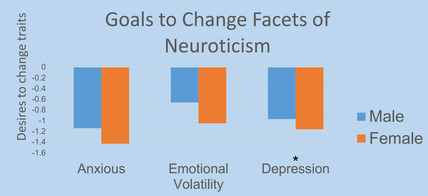
Percentage of Men and Women with Personality Change Goals

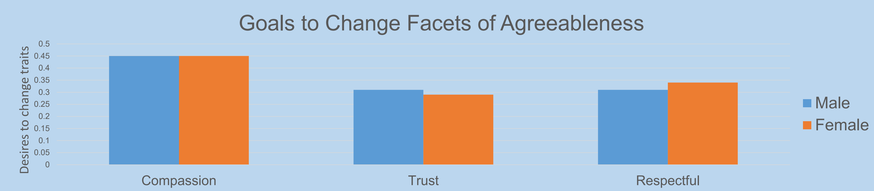




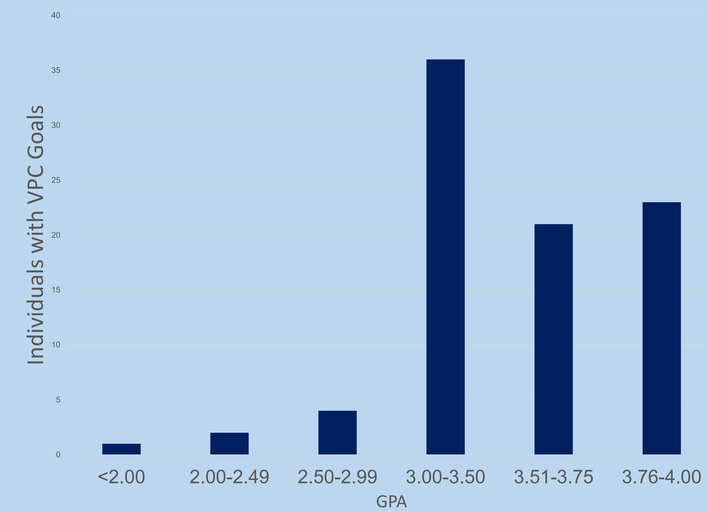








GPA and Personality Change Motivations



Introduction

- Previous research has assessed individuals' active efforts toward personality change, but to date, there has been no systematic assessment of the impact demographic variables have on personality change goals.
- We sought to assess differences among demographic and education outcome variables in instances of having a personality change goal and the exact nature of that goal.

Method

- 718 college seniors transitioning to the workforce completed a series of measures assessing personality trait levels and volitional personality change goals.
- We then evaluated the number of significant correlations between personality change and demographic variables (gender, GPA, socioeconomic status) across three Universities in the United States: University of California, Riverside, University of Houston, and University of Illinois Urbana Champaign.
- Measures:
  - Personality traits - Big Five Inventory 2 (BFI2; Soto & John, 2017).
  - Volitional Personality Change – (VPC; modified cBFI; Hudson et al., 2015)

Results

- While gender was not a significant factor in overall motivation of personality change (t = -0.09, p = 0.92), there are gender differences among specific VPC trait goals. Specifically, female participants reported wanting to decrease depression significantly more than male participants (t = 2.97; p < .001; (M_{women} = -1.15, M_{men} = -0.97). Women also wanted to increase energy significantly more than men (t = 2.66, p = 0.008, M_{women} = 0.98, M_{men} = 0.81) and assertiveness (t = 2.14, p = 0.03, M_{women} = 0.94, M_{Men} = 0.79).
- There was also a significant difference in VPC instances across GPA categories (*Chi-squared* = 16.03, p = 0.01) in which those with higher GPAs tended to have a personality change goal.

Discussion

- The findings revealed that while gender, SES, relationship status, job status, and age didn't significantly affect the prevalence of personality change goals, GPA showed a notable association. Individuals with higher GPAs were more inclined to set personality change goals, possibly driven by a desire for self-improvement and professional success.
- Women expressed a stronger desire to decrease depression and enhance energy and assertiveness compared to men, highlighting gender-specific focuses on emotional well-being and empowerment. This may stem from societal pressure to emotional labor, work-life balance, and leadership roles.
- Future research could delve into the underlying mechanisms behind demographic variability in personality change goals, providing insights into targeted interventions aimed at fostering positive transformation.