

LONGITUDINAL STUDY OF AUSTRALIAN CHILDREN: Adolescents' Work Values

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The Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (LSAC), managed by the Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS), documents the development of ~10,000 children and families from all parts of Australia. The LSAC data is national in scope and enhanced through data linkage with several administrative databases (with participant's consent), such as The National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy or Medicare Australia, thus providing a comprehensive image of Australian children.

During my internship at AIFS, I had the opportunity to contribute to the official yearly LSAC report, by co-authoring a chapter dedicated to uncovering patterns between various adolescents' characteristics and their work values. **Due to protocol, I am not able to disclose the actual findings until the report is published later this year.** Consequently, this poster will focus on the aim and processes of my research endeavour. For illustration purposes, this poster presents a small example of the type of findings that can be found in the chapter.

Objective and Relevance

The purpose of the second chapter of the forthcoming LSAC Annual Report is to put adolescent's work values in a wider context, by exploring potential associations between five work values and demographic and educational factors as well as personal aspirations. This type of research is relevant in understanding the dynamics occurring pre- and post- choosing career paths. This in turn has implications for different parties from teachers and career consultants to policy makers as it can contribute to a better mapping of underlying dynamics of the labour market.

Data Subset and Methods

The first research stage I was involved in was the literature review which informed the operationalisation and the final choice of variables that we would choose, including various factors that could influence an adolescent's work values. The LSAC report is mainly descriptive in nature so the next steps were concerned with uncovering associative links. Using a subset of the 6th wave of the LSAC data, essential data management was first performed such as recoding variables and handling missing data variables in Stata. For instance, new variables were created such as

HIGH
INCOME

POSITION
OF
POWER

TIME
FOR
FAMILY

HELPING
OTHERS

FIND
INTERESTING

*The five work values included in the study
(registered as dichotomous variables with 1 being "very important"
and 0 the rest of the original Likert scale)*

In relation to

1. Gender attitudes
2. Parents' education
(differentiated by gender)
3. Parents' occupation
(differentiated by gender)
4. Educational achievement
5. Career aspirations
6. Employment
7. SEP
8. Educational aspirations
9. Location (rural vs urban)
10. Parents' employment

categories for the mother and the father of the study child, with an additional category to account for those who do not have their mother/father in their primary household. In the case of these variables, this process was followed by data exploration through cross-tabulations to highlight at the relationship between parents' occupation and work values, separately for boys and girls. In each of these cross-tabulations, confidence intervals were analysed to spot significant associations using Excel. Following this, I presented my findings along side several logistic regressions models which produced odds ratios regarding the factors related to work values.

(A very) Small Sample of the Findings

Significant correlations were found between adolescents' work values and their career aspirations. Those wishing to work in scientific research were ~10 times less likely to regard *high income* as very important in comparison to aspiring legal professionals, education professional, doctors, nurses and midwives respectively and ~7 times less likely than remaining categories. Aspiring scientists were also less likely to consider *having a position of power* as very important in contrast with adolescents interested in pursuing a legal position. Moreover, teenagers interested in a research career and engineering-related were less likely to rank *"to help others"* as a very important job characteristic in comparison with aspiring health, legal, educational professionals, vets, nurses and midwives. Out of the eleven career categories included in this chapter, aspiring nurses and midwives were the most likely to have chosen the ability to *help others* as a very important job attribute.