

## **The nature and measurement of work involvement**

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The construct 'work involvement' was viewed as having three dimensions: *job involvement*, or psychological identification with the position or job occupied; *specialization involvement*, or psychological identification with the career or specialization of which the present job is a part; and *importance of performance to self-esteem*, an individual difference variable akin to the Protestant ethic. Two studies of professional Army officers are described ( $n = 100$ , and  $n = 384$ ). Factor analysis of questionnaire items supported the hypothesis that the three attitudes are distinct. Scales were developed to measure the attitudes, and assessments of their validity and reliability are presented.

A person who is 'involved' in his work takes his job and/or career seriously, has important values and components of his identity at stake in it, will be affected emotionally and significantly by work experiences, and will be mentally preoccupied by work (Gurin *et al.*, 1960; Locke, 1976). Thus, whereas job satisfaction implies 'happiness' or 'contentedness' (Locke, 1976), involvement implies 'commitment' (Guion, 1958). Some have argued that feelings of involvement are, in many ways, more appropriate criteria of adjustment to work than are feelings of satisfaction (Argyris, 1964; Lawler, 1975) and it is not surprising that work involvement is attracting increasing research interest (e.g. Rabinowitz & Hall, 1977).

Previous studies of work involvement have sometimes failed to distinguish between three possible interpretations of the concept, or have failed to acknowledge that it might be multidimensional. The aim of this paper is to establish the logical existence of three dimensions of work involvement and to describe the nature and development of scales designed to measure them.

### **WORK INVOLVEMENT: UNI- OR MULTIDIMENSIONAL?**

Rabinowitz & Hall (1977), in a review of the literature, identified two attitudes which represent distinct conceptualizations of work involvement. The first was that a work-involved person is 'psychologically identified with his job', in that by doing his job he is able to express his self-image in what is, to him, an important life-role. The second conceptualization was that a person is involved in his work to the extent that his work performance affects his self-esteem or feelings of personal worth, i.e. that doing well at work makes him feel good about himself and that doing poorly makes him feel bad. Rabinowitz & Hall called this second attitude 'performance-self-esteem contingency'.

Rabinowitz & Hall's conclusions were based on reviews of studies in which they inspected the definition of work involvement (or similar rubric) used in each case. Their interpretation of work involvement as multidimensional is supported by empirical studies

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which investigated the factorial structure of the Lodahl & Kejner (1965) scale designed to measure job involvement (Schwyhart & Smith, 1972; Wood, 1974) and by a study by Saleh & Hosek (1976). The latter amalgamated many items from job involvement scales into a 65-item questionnaire, administered it to two samples (245 students and 621 businessmen) and factor analysed the results, using principal components analysis with varimax rotation. Among the four factors which emerged were two which they interpreted similarly to Rabinowitz & Hall's two dimensions, viz. 'psychological identification with the job' and 'performance-self-esteem contingency'. (The other two factors did not appear to be equivalent to any plausible concept of work involvement, as is argued fully in Jans, 1979a.)

Studies of work involvement have sometimes overlooked the possibility that a person's feeling of identification with his job might be different from his identification with his career (whether the career is based on an occupation or an organization). Such a situation is plausible whether or not the person has a distinct career orientation. Career orientation, as Osipow's (1968) review of the literature on career choice suggests, could be due to a number of factors, including psychological or sociological factors, or to both. If, for example, a person's family background stressed work-related values (e.g. the Protestant ethic), the importance he places on a successful career is likely to be greater than that of a person from a different background; alternatively, by the 'career development' process (Hall, 1971), a person's self-image may change over time so that it becomes increasingly 'congruent' with the career role (Super, 1957).

People with strong feelings about the goodness and importance of work in general, and who find a career where the occupational role is congruent with their self-image, might frequently experience strong identification with both the career and the job they happen to be in at any time. Even for this type of person, however, career involvement and job involvement may at times be unrelated. For example, professional military officers, whose career patterns are characterized by frequent job rotation (Jans, 1979b), may often experience a lack of congruence of such attitudes if they regard the staff appointments which form part of the rotation scheme as much less personally rewarding than regimental or operational appointments. On the other hand, people who lack an orientation towards a career may be unlikely to identify with the concept of a career and may often find themselves in jobs with which they do not identify; but for various reasons they might also find jobs which are interesting and involving in the short term.

In an era where people are increasingly concerned with their occupational experiences beyond their immediate job, i.e. are tending to become more career oriented (Hall, 1976), career involvement is often likely to be different from job involvement. It was reasoned, therefore, that work involvement is likely to have three dimensions, postulated as being:

(a) *Importance of performance to self-esteem*: This is what Lodahl & Kejner (1965, p. 24) called 'the internalization of values about the goodness of work in the worth of the person'. It is seen as being primarily an individual difference variable, akin to the Protestant ethic.

(b) *Job involvement*. A feeling of psychological identification with the job (the position which the person is occupying).

(c) *Career involvement or specialization involvement*. A feeling of psychological identification with the career or specialization of which the person's present job is a part. The 'career' could be defined in either occupational or organizational terms; in a large and complex occupation or organization, it could be defined as a specialty or 'subcareer' within the larger career (as is done below).

#### METHOD

##### *Study 1: Instrument*

*Development of items*. Certain items from Saleh & Hosek's (1976) study appeared to be

relevant to the constructs under study. These items (see Jans, 1979a, pp. 551–552, for the specific items which were taken and adapted from Saleh & Hosek) were in some cases reworded so as to be comprehensible to the occupational group under study, and to focus attention on particular aspects of either the present job or the employment area/specialization. (In the Australian Regular Army, an employment area is a family of jobs which have in common an overall purpose, a hierarchy of appointments and thus implied line(s) of advancement, and a particular kind of work.)

Items 1, 2, 4, 5, 8 and 10 were designed to tap feelings about job involvement. They were written so as to focus attention on the present job, in terms of the relevance of the job to personal career plans, the satisfaction gained from the job in comparison with other life-roles, and the kind of work done (use of valued skill and ability, and the importance of the work to that person). These aspects of the job reflected the notion of job involvement as being associated with an expression of the self-image in a valued life-role.

Items 13, 14, 15 and 16 were worded so as to be concerned with similar aspects to those of the 'job involvement' items (kind of work and relevance to personal career plans) but with the focus on the employment area or specialization rather than on the present job.

Items 3, 6, 7 and 12 were aimed at feelings of self-esteem, in terms of anxiety-oriented behaviour associated with performance in the present job (feeling badly about poor performance, perfectionism and anxious anticipation of the immediate future) and general personal involvement.

These items, after review by other Army behavioural scientists as to their appropriateness as indicators of the three defined constructs, were tested for comprehension and discriminability through a number of small pilot studies. The items, each with Likert format of five-point response scales, were then included, for study 1, as part III of a questionnaire which also covered work satisfaction and career goals. The items were randomly ordered, except that the three items which referred to 'employment area' were grouped because of the relative unfamiliarity of this term to the study population. The 14 items are shown in Table 1. (Note that the numbering used above and in Table 1 shows the order of the items in study 2. The order was slightly different for study 1.)

### *Study 1: Sample*

Questionnaires were sent to 146 officers in the Australian Regular Army in four different employment areas (field-force subunit commanders and three staff specialities). The rank was from Captain to Lieutenant Colonel. The study was presented as an 'unofficial' survey conducted by the writer as a postgraduate student seeking to fulfil examination requirements. From this group, 100 usable questionnaires were returned, the minimum which Comrey (1973) recommends for reliable factor analysis.

### *Study 1: Results*

Data were factor analysed using principal components analysis (using the package developed by Nie *et al.*, 1975). Because it was not unlikely that the three variables would be related to each other, both oblique and orthogonal rotation were used. Whatever the type of rotation and whatever the value of delta used in oblique rotation, the factorial content remained stable. The factor matrix, for an oblique rotation with a small value of delta, is shown in Table 1. In accordance with frequent practice, factors were interpreted by consideration of the items which have a loading on them of  $\pm 0.30$  or more. The factor analysis accounted for 61.5 per cent of the variance. The interpretation of the three factors is as follows:

*Factor 1.* This factor appears to represent 'job involvement'. Seven of the 14 items load on it, five being items which were designed to tap this construct. Of the other two, item 6 ('very much involved personally') had been expected, from examination of Saleh &

Table 1. Results of factor analyses of data from studies I and 2

Item <sup>a</sup>	Results of factor analysis of work involvement items: oblique factor pattern matrix after rotation with Kaiser normalization												
	Study 1 ( <i>n</i> = 100, $\delta = -0.1$ )					Study 2 ( <i>n</i> = 384, $\delta = 0$ )							
	Factor <sup>b</sup>					Factor <sup>b</sup>							
	I	II	III	IV	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	I	II	III	IV	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	Mean	SD	
1. The performance of my present job is a good test of my skill and ability	73	-05	10	53	59	-15	07	04	49	2.13	1.09		
2. Other kinds of work in the Army are more important to me than the kind I do in my present job	-74	-12	26	63	-50	24	03	34	54	2.93	1.41		
3. I feel badly if I don't perform well in my present job	-04	-01	57	31	31	06	18	39	31	1.41	0.75		
4. My present job plays an important part in my plan for getting ahead in the Army	51	71	30	60	40	-39	02	08	45	2.24	1.20		
5. I am able to utilize abilities I value in the performance of my present job	51	02	31	42	75	-09	-12	08	54	2.13	1.09		
6. I am very much involved personally in the kind of work I do in my present job	52	04	15	36	61	01	30	-07	61	2.01	1.14		
7. I'm really a perfectionist about the work I do in my present job	15	17	46	35	37	10	38	10	38	2.44	0.98		
8. The major satisfaction in my life comes from my present job	79	06	05	56	37	-08	42	-29	56	3.45	1.28		
9. I feel depressed when I fail at anything connected with my work	-	-	-	-	-04	-04	37	17	19	2.32	1.10		
10. I live, eat and breathe my present job	52	15	09	43	06	03	72	-25	55	3.72	1.24		
11. You can measure a person pretty well by how good a job he does	-	-	-	-	-06	-13	29	09	12	2.45	1.08		
12. Sometimes I lie awake at night, thinking ahead to the next day's work (in my present job)	15	03	37	20	06	-06	42	01	23	2.68	1.31		
13. Getting ahead in my present employment area is important in my ideas about my future Army career	08	66	23	61	01	-71	04	17	54	2.55	1.23		
14. The most important things that happen to me in my Army career involve the work in my present employment area	16	76	-28	76	-05	-67	16	-15	55	3.10	1.25		
15. My present employment area plays only a small part in my ideas about my future Army career	-19	-67	20	64	-06	74	05	02	56	2.84	1.29		
16. If I were to accomplish something or achieve something in my Army career, I would prefer that it be connected with the kind of work done in my present employment area	75	13	-17	66	27	-56	05	-27	66	2.71	1.35		
Eigenvalue	5.84	1.10	1.67		5.45	1.69	1.27	1.03					
Percentage	41.7	7.9	11.9		34.0	10.6	8.0	6.4					

Note: 1 = 'strongly agree'; 5 = 'strongly disagree'.

<sup>a</sup>Order of items is as it was in study 2. In study 1, order was slightly different. Items 9 and 11 were not included in study 1.

<sup>b</sup>To facilitate comparison by the reader, the second and third factors which emerged in study 1 have been called here factors III and II respectively.

Hosek's (1976) study, to be associated with feelings about the importance of self-esteem; it appears that the sample interpreted the item to be involvement with the job rather than with work in general, and thus it did not seem out of place in this factor. Item 16's presence in this factor group was puzzling but could have been due to the use of the phrase 'kind of work', which appears also in two other items which load on this factor. With the exception of this item, the items framed in terms of employment area (specialization) do not load on this factor, supporting the proposition that psychological identification with the job is different from that with the specialization.

*Factor 2.* This factor appears to represent 'specialization involvement'. Three of the four items loading on it are concerned with reactions to the employment area (items 13, 14 and 15). As noted above, item 16 was expected to load on this factor, but it did not. Item 4 (which was intended to tap job involvement) loads on this factor but it also has substantial loadings on the other two; possibly this is because the words used cause it to be linked conceptually with them: 'getting ahead' is perhaps associated with feelings of self-esteem, 'present job' with feelings about the job itself, and 'my plan . . . in the Army' with feelings about the specialization.

*Factor 3.* This factor appears to represent 'importance of performance to self-esteem'. It contains items 3, 7 and 12. Although each referred in its wording to the 'present job', they all reflect a distinct concern with performance or doing the job. Each of these had been chosen to represent the feeling of importance of performance to self-esteem, and factor 3 was so interpreted. As noted above, item 6 had been expected to load on this factor (it had done so on a similar factor in Saleh & Hosek's study).

The results of study 1 supported the original proposition that there are three dimensions of work involvement. However, even though the factorial solution was unambiguous, the sample had been small. Study 1 was, in fact, a pilot study for study 2. To determine the internal consistency (Cronbach, 1951) of scales comprising the items, three scales, which were defined in terms of each factor, were constructed. The scale measuring importance of self-esteem (The sum of scores on items 3, 7 and 12) had an alpha coefficient of 0.58; those of the other two scales were comfortably above 0.80.

### *Study 2*

Study 2 was part of a larger study which assessed the influences of certain individual and situational variables on attitudes to work. The analysis described below was aimed at verifying the nature and quality of the three work involvement dimensions.

#### *Study 2: Instrument*

Two items were added to the set used in study 1. In accordance with McKennell's (1970) recommendation that the coefficient alpha of a scale should not be less than 0.60, an attempt was made to strengthen the importance of performance to self-esteem scale by adding items derived from Saleh & Hosek's (1976) study. These are shown in Table 1 (items 9 and 11). The item sequence was rearranged in study 2, to avoid the possibility that some intercorrelations noted in study 1 were spurious, due to physical rather than conceptual proximity.

#### *Study 2: Sample*

Questionnaires were sent to all 618 Army officers in five employment areas: regimental infantry, warehousing, supply control/operations, training, and materiel development. Regimental infantry comprises all the officers in the Army's six infantry battalions and the Special Air Service Regiment; all are members of the Royal Australian

Infantry Corps. Members of the second and third employment area groups are also homogeneous with respect to corps, all being members of the Royal Australian Army Ordnance Corps. In contrast, the fourth and fifth groups were heterogeneous in their corps compositions. Ranks of respondents ranged between Second Lieutenant and Lieutenant Colonel. From the returns, 384 usable cases were acquired. This response rate (62 per cent) was not high but, as is shown in Jans (1979a, p. 248), the rank distribution of the sample is close to that of the population and can thus be said to be representative of it. Moreover, an 'official' survey of officers' opinions conducted a few months before achieved only a 74 per cent response rate (Armstrong, 1977). The approach to the population was evenly divided between personal visits and mailed questionnaires (the response rates were about equal for these two methods), and it was apparent during visits that there were many genuine factors acting to hinder officers' participation in the study (see Jans, 1979a, for full details).

### *Study 2: Results*

Means and standard deviations for the 16 items are shown in Table 1. The data were factor analysed in the same way as before. Table 1 shows the factor pattern matrix of an oblique rotation solution with delta equal to zero. (Various values of delta, and an orthogonal solution, were attempted; the basic factorial structure remained the same.) The principal components analysis accounted for 59.0 per cent of the variance.

It can be seen that the factorial structure of the data in the larger sample is not as simple as is that of study 1. Four factors emerged, six of the 16 items having substantial loadings on more than one of these. However, the interpretation of the factors is similar to that associated with the study 1 results.

*Factor 1 (job involvement).* The four items which have a significant primary loading on factor 1, and the four which are 'shared' with another factor, suggest that this factor represents the construct 'job involvement'. It is obviously not as 'pure' a representation of the construct as was the first factor in the pilot study results; the reasons for this are discussed shortly.

*Factor 2 (specialization involvement).* Factor 2 contains four items which have significant loadings on it alone. These are the last four items (13-16) which are all concerned with the employment area. Despite the fact that item 16 did not load on the same factor as these other items in study 1, as noted above, it more plausibly belongs with these items than those in factor 1. Item 4 ('my present job plays an important part in my plan about getting ahead in the Army'), which loaded only on this factor in study 1, now has a stronger loading on another factor. This factor is interpreted as 'specialization involvement'.

*Factor 3 (importance of performance to self-esteem).* Factor 3 contains six items with significant primary loadings, two of which have significant secondary loadings on factor 1 (items 7 and 8). The four 'unambiguous' items suggest that this factor can be interpreted as the construct 'importance of performance to self-esteem'. (It will be recalled that items 9 and 11 were included in the study 2 questionnaire in order to strengthen the internal consistency of the scale.)

*Factor 4.* Factor 4 contains only two items (items 2 and 3) with significant loadings and both these had significant loadings on other factors. Item 2 has, as expected, its primary loading on the factor representing the construct 'psychological identification with the kind of work', and item 3 on that representing 'importance of performance to self-esteem'. Because of the significant loadings of these two items on more than one factor, and because of their conceptual difference, it was felt that this factor could not be interpreted as a distinct construct but existed, rather, as an artifact of the data from this particular sample (a phenomenon which is not uncommon, as Kerlinger, 1973, explains).

## SCALE CONSTRUCTION AND CHARACTERISTICS

The results of study 2 supported the conceptual, as well as the statistical, distinctiveness of the three dimensions tentatively identified in study 1. Accordingly, three scales were constructed and their validities and reliabilities were assessed. The three scales were called 'job involvement' (defined as the sum of four of the items which loaded on factor 1: items 1, 2, 5 and 6), 'specialization involvement' (defined as the sum of four of the items which loaded on factor 2: items 13, 14, 15 and 16), and 'importance of performance to self-esteem' (defined as the sum of seven of the items which loaded on factor 3: items 3, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12). Item scoring was reversed so that high scores reflect positive attitudes.

Internal consistency of the scales was assessed using the programme developed by Nie *et al.* (1975). The results are shown in Table 2. According to the criteria of McKennell (1970), the scales have acceptable values of coefficient alpha, albeit somewhat low in one case.

Table 2. *Items which were summed to give scores for each scale, and associated reliability characteristics (data from study 2)*

Scale name	Scale items	Internal consistency (alpha) standardized	Alpha if item deleted
Job involvement	1	0.78	0.71
	2		0.77
	5		0.70
	6		0.70
Importance of performance to self-esteem	3	0.68	0.66
	7		0.63
	8		0.63
	9		0.66
	10		0.59
	11		0.68
	12		0.65
Specialization involvement	13	0.81	0.79
	14		0.76
	15		0.76
	16		0.76

Validity of the scales was assessed in terms of their discrimination between groups (Cronbach & Meehl, 1955). A questionnaire item in study 2 had asked respondents to choose between a number of non-corps employment areas, among which were materiel development and training, the two non-corps employment areas which were represented in the sample. The subjects from these two employment areas were divided into two groups, according to whether or not they chose, as first preference for future non-corps employment, their present employment area (e.g. 'training' being chosen by a member of the 'training' employment area subsample). The mean scores on each of the three involvement scales for subjects in the two groups in these two employment areas were then compared. It was reasoned that, if the scales were valid, the group which chose further employment in their present employment area would have higher scores on the job involvement scale and the specialization involvement scale than would those who chose another area as first preference. It was also expected that differences between the groups on importance of performance to self-esteem would not be significant, since this scale was

Table 3. *Differences in mean scores on work involvement variables of two sets of subjects: Those who prefer work in future to be in the same employment area, and those who would prefer a different employment area*

(1) 'Materiel developmental' subjects					
Variable <sup>a</sup>	Chose 'materiel and logistic management' (n = 30)		Chose another employment area (n = 31)		t (d.f. = 59)
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
JI	10.52	4.12	8.84	3.68	1.69*
SI	8.83	4.00	7.16	3.68	1.70*
IPSE	22.25	0.62	22.04	0.61	1.34
(2) 'Training' subjects					
Variable	Chose 'training management' (n = 30)		Chose another employment area (n = 111)		t (d.f. = 139)
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
JI	12.95	2.72	10.28	3.76	4.35**
SI	10.47	3.47	7.24	3.73	4.44**
IPSE	22.54	0.65	22.35	0.64	1.42

\* $P < 0.05$  (one-tailed test); \*\* $P < 0.001$  (one-tailed test).

<sup>a</sup>JI = job involvement; SI = specialization involvement; IPSE = importance of performance to self-esteem.

interpreted as representing a consistent value orientation to work, rather than an attitude which would be dependent on the degree of congruence between the individual and the kind of work he did (Holland, 1973).

Table 3 presents mean values and shows the results of *t* tests of the differences between the groups. It can be seen that the differences between the two sets of respondents are, in both cases, in accordance with the expected differences: officers who desire future work in their present employment have higher scores on job involvement and specialization involvement than those who do not. At the same time, the notion of importance of performance to self-esteem as a stable, value orientation is supported, since the members of the prefer/not prefer groups do not differ on this variable.

#### DISCUSSION

It was postulated that work involvement could be conceptualized as being multi-dimensional, and that for people who move frequently between jobs there would be three dimensions: one being a stable value orientation to work, and the other two being feelings of identification with, separately, the job and the career. This is in contrast to previous studies, which did not identify the separation of the latter two dimensions. The empirical studies reported above support this reasoning.

The distinction between job involvement and specialization involvement shows that Army officers are likely to form different levels of psychological identification with their jobs and with their employment areas. This is probably due to both the high degree of job



rotation in the Army (Regular Officer Development Committee, 1978) and the 'generalist' ethos which prevails among many in the officer corps (Jans, 1979b), whereby an officer wants to specialize only in operationally oriented employment areas but, for career development purposes, expects to experience many different jobs covering a range of employment areas. Thus the situation could arise where, for example, an officer in a non-operational employment area (e.g. personnel management) could strongly identify with the job because of its associated rewards (challenge, autonomy, chances for growth, etc.) yet have low identification with that employment area if he hopes to ultimately specialize in a different one (e.g. operations management).

The term 'work involvement' is more appropriate than 'job involvement' as a generic descriptor of the cluster of attitudes which make up the construct. Moreover, it is likely that a separation between job involvement and career/specialization involvement exists for other occupational groups. For example, some managers may identify with the specialization of marketing but have low involvement with the job or organization in which they are using that particular expertise. Alternatively, a manager may have high job or organizational involvement and, because he sees himself as a 'general manager' rather than a specialist, regard his functional role in that organization (e.g. production) as important only in so far as it contributes to his further career in the organization.

In the second of the two studies reported above, four factors were derived from the factor analysis of the data, in contrast to the three clear-cut factors of the first. The fourth factor of the second study included only two items, each of which had a significant loading on another factor: one item was expected to have loaded on the factor representing job involvement, the other on that representing importance of performance to self-esteem. The reason for this may have been due to the greater propensity of members of the second sample to be performing or instructing in the work of their corps or regimental employment area. Only about one-third of the first sample were in their corps employment area; in contrast, not only were 45 per cent of the second sample directly employed in a corps employment area, but many members of the training employment area group were instructors at corps schools and were thus likely to see themselves as having strong associations with their corps. Officers are likely to have strong identification with their corps employment area, if only because of the more intense socialization associated with it in comparison with non-corps areas (Regular Officer Development Committee, 1978; Jans, 1979b). At the same time, as the narrowly distributed scores on importance of performance to self-esteem suggest (Table 3), an individual's score on this variable is unlikely to vary much between employment areas. The consequence was that, in the sample in study 1, there would have been more likelihood for officers to have lower scores on job involvement and higher scores on importance of performance to self-esteem than in the sample in study 2. In the sample in study 2, officers would be more likely to have simultaneously high scores on both variables, not because of any systematic relationship between the two variables but simply because of the nature of the jobs sampled. It is likely, then, that the relationship between job involvement and importance of performance to self-esteem which led to their becoming associated in a fourth factor is spurious.

The statistical grouping of items 1, 2 and 5 supports their initial choice as being representative of the attitude 'job involvement'. These items deal with feelings about the job, about the expression of valued skill and ability, and about the personal importance of the work done in it; these concepts are consistent with Rabinowitz & Hall's (1977) notion of expression of the self-image in a valued life-role. Item 6 is statistically related to these three items; although it was originally chosen to tap feelings of 'importance of performance to self-esteem', its wording shows that it is not out of place with the other three.

The grouping of the four items which represent the construct 'specialization involvement' is equally clear-cut, both statistically and conceptually. 'Importance of performance to self-esteem', on the other hand, seems to be a more complex attitude. It covers not only

feelings of anxiety about performance (items 3, 7, 9 and 12) but also commitment (item 10) and satisfaction (item 8). Some of these items had substantial loadings on the factors representing job and specialization involvement, all of which suggests that the items which make up importance of performance to self-esteem are perhaps the most suitable single construct to represent 'work involvement'; perhaps, as Lodahl & Kejner (1965) proposed, the attitude is closely related to the Protestant ethic.

By clarifying the meaning of work involvement, this study, and that of Saleh & Hosek (1976), have indicated an important weakness in the many studies which have uncritically used the Lodahl & Kejner (1965) 'Job Involvement' scale. That scale was defined by its designers as 'the internalization of values about the goodness of work'. However, many of its items are more consistent with the interpretation of 'job involvement as a component of the self-image' (Rabinowitz & Hall, 1977). Lodahl & Kejner's concept remains valid, but only as an incomplete account of the dimensions of work involvement.

It is likely that it is the 'psychological identification with the job or career area' aspects of work involvement which have caused the variable 'job involvement' to be correlated with situational variables (such as participation in decision making, and autonomy) in many studies. On the other hand, 'importance of performance to self-esteem' is likely to have been that part of work involvement which causes the latter to be related to personal variables, such as values and age. Plainly, the appropriateness of a particular independent variable depends very much on what dimension of work involvement one intends to measure. It behoves future researchers to choose carefully that aspect of work involvement which is most relevant to their theoretical propositions.

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