Examination of the Big Five and Narrow Traits in Relation To Learner Self-Direction

Student Name

EDU 999

Professor Ashford

January 1, 2099

The **title page** is the first page of your paper. In order to make a good first impression, it is important to have a well-formatted title page in proper APA format that clearly represents your paper.

**Abstract**

Self-direction in learning is a major topic in the field of adult learning.  There has been extensive coverage of the topic by theorists, researchers, and practitioners. However, there have been few studies, which look at learner self-direction specifically as a personality trait. The present study addresses the relationship between learner self-direction of college students when the traits represented by the five-factor model differentiated from narrow personality traits.  Analysis of the data revealed five significant part correlations between specific traits and learner self-direction.  Results were discussed in terms of the predictive relationship between personality variables and learner self-direction.

This claim establishes the important contribution of this particular study.

An **abstract** is a brief summary of your paper with an overview of key points.  Your topic and research questions should be clear, and you may include the importance of your results in continuing current academic research.

Consider briefly mentioning key terms, participants, methods, analysis, and the final conclusion.

An ideal abstract is one paragraph.

Examination of the Big Five and Narrow Traits in Relation To Learner Self-Direction

[Self-direction in learning is a major topic in the field of adult learning.] It has been shown that many psychological variables are related to learner self-directedness (Oliveira & Simões, 2006). However, there are few studies that look at learner self-direction specifically as a personality trait. Traits are relatively consistent for learners across situations and over time, and if learner self-direction changes across situations and over time, the most logical interpretation of why the personality trait—learner self-direction relationship is relatively consistent within and across such disparate factors as age and returning to college after a long break is because the personality traits are driving the relationship. This implies that other personality traits are affecting learner self-direction, not that learner self-direction is influencing [The goal of the present study] is to try to understand the connection between personality and self-direction in learning and ascertain to what extent individual personality traits are related to learner self-direction when the traits represented by the five-factor model of personality (Digman, 1990) are differentiated from narrow personality traits. [The study draws on and extends the work of Lounsbury, Levy, Park, Gibson, and Smith (2009), who reported on the development of a valid personality measure of learner self-direction.]

This sentence defines the key term and introduces the topic.

This statement articulates the goal of the study and the purpose of analysis.

This statement acknowledges the work of others leading to this study, placing it in conversation with other theorists.

Please see our guide to **Entering the Conversation** for even more guidance on establishing your research and contribution to your topic.

A **Literature Review** is a survey of scholarly sources that provides an overview of a particular topic. It generally follows a discussion of the paper's thesis statement or the study's purpose.

Literature reviews are a collection of the most relevant and significant publications regarding that topic in order to provide a comprehensive look at what has been said on the topic and by whom.

**Literature Review**

Click the following link for directions on creating a Literature Review and to see a sample: Literature Review Information and Sample.

## Method

> In the **Method** section, your reader should be able to reproduce the methods that you used in order to conduct your research study. What process did you follow in order to accomplish this study?

For this study, the focus is on *learner self-direction* as an individual differences variable that can be represented on a continuum from low to high rather than a categorical or nominal variable. We conceptualize and measure learner self-direction as a personality trait reflecting individuals': preference to be in charge of his or her learning process; ability to conceptualize, plan, implement, and evaluate one's academic experience; and dis[p]

and to work independently or in group settings with little guidance.

> This first paragraph of your **Method**'s section should give your reader a general idea about what you specifically measured in your research.

### Population and Sample

Undergraduate students enrolled in an introductory psychology course ($n = 1484$) and undergraduate student-mentors in a peer-mentoring program ($n = 618$) at a large southeastern state university were recruited to participate in this study. Of the 2102 participants in this study, 40% were male (60% female). Fifty-seven percent of the participants were Freshmen; 26%, Sophomores; 14%, Juniors; and 5%, Seniors. Eighty-four percent of the participants identified themselves as Caucasian, 9%--African-American, 2 %--Hispanic, 2%--Asian, and 3%--other. The median age of participants was 18-19 years old.

> Within the **Method** section, include the population(s) you studied, the size and specifics of this population, how they were chosen, and why they were chosen.

### Instrumentation

The personality measure used in this study was the Resource Associates' Transition to College inventory (RATTC) (Lounsbury & Gibson, 2010). The RATTC is a normal personality [evaluate] adolescents (Jaffe, 1998) and adults through high school and [measures] Big Five Traits of Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion,

> Also within the **Method** section, include whether you used questionnaires, did a comparative study or a case study, studied a controlled group and a non-controlled group, created an experiment using specific equipment, etc. Be sure to explain these instruments or methods to your reader to provide a clear awareness of what this method is or involves.

Agreeableness, and Neuroticism.  The RATTC also measures the narrow traits of Aggression,

Career-Decidedness, Optimism, Self-Directed Learning, Sense of Identity, Tough-Mindedness,

and Work Drive.

## Results

Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients were calculate[d]

direction and the Big Five traits as well as narrow traits of Wor[k]

Descriptive statistics and intercorrelations among the study variables a[re]

[As can be seen in Table ], all of the Big Five personality traits are correlated significantly and

positiv[ely] learner self-direction, except for Extraversion.  Specifically, in descending order

or m[agnitude] correlations with Self-Directed Learning were: Openness ($r = .43$, $p < .01$),

Agre[eableness] .21,  $p < .01$), Emotional Stability ($r = .20$, $p < .01$), Conscientiousness ($r =$

.20, [ ] [Ext]raversion ($r = .01$, ns),  and the narrow personality traits also correlated

sign[ificantly] learner self-direction, with the larges[t] magnitude correlation observed for

Work Drive ($r = .49$, $p < .01$), followed by Optimism (

[ The next phase of the analysis involved e]  of learner self-

direction with Openness, Conscientiousness, Extrave[rsion,] [Emo]tional Stability,

Optimism, and Work Drive.  A multiple regression ana[ly]sis was conducted with learner self-

direction as the dependent variable, and the remaining variables as predictors entered

simultaneously.  The part correlations represent the correlations of learner self-direction with

each of the predictor variables, independent of the other predictors.  Thus, the squared part

correlations give an indication of the unique contribution of each variable to learner self-

direction.  An examination of the squared part correlations of the five significant variables

indicates that Work Drive accounted for 9.6% of the variance, Openness accounted for

approximately 4.3% of the variance, Optimism account[ed] [Include an overview of the findings in the final paragraph of this section.] % of the variance, and Extraversion and Agreeableness each accounted for less tha[n] variance in learner self-direction.

All variables were entered simultaneously into a [regression] model to estimate the degree of learner self-direction prediction. [The overall regression was significant, $F$ (7, 2094) = 15.19, p < .01, and these variables accounted for over 52% of the variance in learner self-direction.] As can be seen in Table 1, five of the variables explained significant variance in the model: Work Drive, Openness, Optimism, Emotional Stability, and Extraversion (Table 6). The strongest correlate of learner self-direction was Work Drive (β = .37, $p$ < .01), followed by Openness (β = .23, $p$ < .01), Optimism (β = .12, $p$ < .01), Emotional Stability (β = .07, $p$ < .01), Extraversion (β = -.05, $p$ < .05), Conscientiousness (β = .03, ns), and Agreeableness (β = .02, ns), which had the lowest magnitude correlation with learner self-direction in the study.

Table 1. *Simultaneous Regression*

| | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coeff. | | | Correlations | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | B | SE | β | $t$ | Sig. | Zero-order | Partial | Part |
| (Constant) | .57 | .13 | | 4.36 | .00 | | | |
| Work Drive | .39 | .03 | .37 | 15.90 | .00 | .49 | .33 | .31 |
| Openness | .24 | .02 | .23 | 10.08 | .00 | .43 | .22 | .21 |
| Optimism | .18 | .03 | .12 | 5.85 | .00 | .31 | .13 | .09 |
| Emotional | .11 | .02 | .07 | 4.69 | .00 | .20 | .10 | .05 |
| Extraversion | -.07 | .02 | -.05 | -3.40 | .01 | .01 | -.08 | -.04 |
| Agree. | -.04 | .02 | .02 | -1.67 | .10 | .21 | -.04 | -.03 |
| Conscien. | .01 | .02 | .03 | .09 | .93 | .20 | .01 | .01 |

[If you can make a chart or another type of visual of your findings, do that! It is a helpful component to explaining your research.]

In the **Discussion** section, you analyze and interpret your findings. What do the results mean? Explain what ideas and outcomes the information supports and if any information you found is contradictory. Which of your hypotheses are supported by the findings? Which are not?

Explain if you found what you set out to find. In other words: Which of your hypotheses are supported by the findings? Which are not?

Summarize how your study connects back to your original hypothesis.

Quote the claims of other researchers and their discussions, and then comment on how your findings support or refute these claims. Discuss how you contribute to the body of knowledge on the topic.

## Discussion

The present study was generally successful in terms of [its] research propositions. Six of the eight hypotheses were support[ed] and extends prior studies (Kirwan, et al., 2010; Lounsbury, e[t al.,]) direction was uniquely related to four of the Big Five traits st[udied] narrow traits examined here. [ The present findings reinforce and support Lounsbury, Levy et al.'s (2009) study which demonstrated ] '…the importance and richness of the self-directed learning construct and … its role as a personality trait" (p. 417). Considering first the Big Five traits, [the significant, positive relationships between them and learner self-direction are consistent with Lounsbury, Levy et al.'s (2009)] findings. Regarding the narrow traits, significant, positive relationships between learner self-direction and Work Drive as well as Optimism were also supported.

Brockett and Hiemstra (Brockett & Hiemstra, 1991) emphasized the importance of self-directed learners being able to plan their own learning program and consistently evaluate progress. Hiemstra (1994) noted that self-directed learners should be prepared for the "unexpected" and capable of dealing with challenges in learning. Ponton and Carr (2000) state [that the] concept of autonomy (Knowles, 1980; Merriam & Caffarella, 1999) exists under the [...] characteristic rubric of self-directed learning." (p. 273). A student showing *initiative*, [...]ness, and *persistence* is exhibiting manifestations related to personality characteristics [...]. Ponton and Carr (ibid) note that Confessore (1991, p. 129) suggests that individuals [who exhibit] these "conative" factors in their learning activities "possess traits which are essential to successful self-direction in learning" (p.273). These factors are related to Ponton's (1999)

discussion of autonomous learning consisting of five behaviors: *goal-directedness, action-orientation, active-approach to problem solving, persistence in overcoming obstacles, and self-startedness* which is consistent with the afore-mentioned conceptualizations of Work Drive (Lounsbury & Gibson, 2010).  Again, this aligns with Lounsbury, Gibson et al's (2004) Work Drive construct as a predictor of performance and Gladwell's (2008) emphasis on persistence leading to success.

[There are two primary limitations of the current study]that should be acknowledged. First, this study was limited to a four-month interval in time in a single geographic area at a large, public universi_____ the question of generalizability to other time periods, geographic areas, and _____ties. Second, most of the study participants were lower-level students; thus, _____ to know if the results would generalize to samples of primarily upper-level _____ts.

> Comment on any limitations to your study.  How might your study have been lacking? What might you have overlooked?

There are a number of other interesting areas for future research which could clarify and extend the present findings.  In addition to the need for replication on diffe_____ esearch could be conducted on how the Big Five and narrow personality traits rela_____ dentity and learner self-direction.  Another topic for investigation is the rel_____ of students and learner self-directedness.  As mentioned earlier, perhaps the most important need for future research is to utilize]longitudinal research designs to help clarify the direction of causality for personality traits vis-à-vis self-directed learning and to try to determine how these linkages are established.

> Suggest additional research your findings could/should lead to.

The **Conclusion** should be a short section with no new arguments or evidence.

### Concluding Remarks

The results of the present study indicate that the Big Five traits as well as the traits measured in this study were each related to learner self-direction, with W Openness accounting for most of the variance in learner self-direction on their own whole, the present findings were interpreted as, in part, confirming and extending Lounsbury et al. (2009) and K ding the Big Five, narr learner self-direction, demons y of personality trait—learner self-direction relationships across a nographic and personal subgroups of students, and providing some cl causal arrow may be from personality traits to learner self-direction.

In your **Conclusion**, summarize the main points of your research by restating the purpose of your research paper, describing your overall evidence, and stating your main conclusions.

In this final section, state the paper's relevance. You can do this by explaining what the reader should have gained from your research and explaining how this paper adds to, expands, or alters the ongoing conversation on this topic.

[In conclusion, it is clear that learner self-direction has multiple connections to personality] traits and is not clearly associated with just one of the Big Five traits. In a sense, this pattern of multiple connections to personality is consistent with the diverse factors learner self-direction has been linked to in the theoretical literature, as, for example, the six vectors of college student development that Chickering and Reisser (1993) posit as leading to identity establishment for college students.[ Hopefully, further research will ]extend and clarify the nomological network of personality traits and self-direct ing across a broad range of settings.

Be sure to make suggestions for further research.

In your conclusion, you can also explain what needs to happen as a result of your research. However, this is *optional*.

For an essay, paper, report, or any other kind of writing assignment that requires outside research, a **References** list must be included. This list includes citations for all the resources you consulted or cited within your paper (as noted in parenthetical in-text citations throughout).  For help formatting your references list, click here.

References

...cted learning and the hard-to-reach adult. *Lifelong Learning: The*

...-18.

...(1991). Self-direction in adult learning: Perspectives on theory,

research, and practice. Retrieved from http://home.twcny.rr.com/hiemstra/sdlindex.html

Chickering, A., & Reisser, L. (1993). *Education and identity*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Confessore, G. J. (1991). Human behavior as a construct for assessing Guglielmino's *Self-*

*directed learning readiness scale*: Pragmatism revisited. In H. B. Long & Associates

(Eds.), *Self-directed learning: Consensus and conflict* (pp. 123–146). Norman, OK:

Oklahoma Center for Continuing Professional and Higher Education, University of

Oklahoma.

Costa, P., & Kalick, B. (2003). *Assessment strategies for self-directed learning (Experts in*

*Assessment Series)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Costa, P., & McCrae, R. (1992). *Revised NEO Personality Inventory (NEO-PI-R) and NEO Five-*

*Factor Inventory (NEO-FFI) professional manual*. Odessa, FL: Psychological

Assessment Services.

Digman, J. (1990). Personality structure: Emergence of the five-factor model. *Annual Review of*

*Psychology, 41*, 417–440. doi:10.1146/annurev.ps.41.020190.002221

Gladwell, M. (2008). *Outliers: The story of success*. New York, NY: Little, Brown and

Company.

Hiemstra, R. (1994). *Self-directed learning*. Retrieved from

http://home.twcny.rr.com/hiemstra/sdlhdbk.html

Jaffe, M. L. (1998). *Adolescence*. New York, NY: Wiley.

Kirwan, J. R., Lounsbury, J., & Gibson, L. (2010). Self-directed learning and personality: The
big five and narrow personality traits in relation to learner self-direction. *International
Journal of Self-Directed Learning, 7*(2), 21–34.

Knowles, M. S. (1980). *The modern practice of adult education*. New York, NY: Cambridge
Books.

Lounsbury, J., & Gibson, L. (2010). *Technical manual for the Resource Associates Personal
Style Inventory and Adolescent Personal Style Inventory*. Knoxville, TN: Resource
Associates.

Lounsbury, J., Gibson, L., & Hamrick, F. (2004). The development of a personological measure
of work drive. *Journal of Business Psychology, 18*, 347–371.

Lounsbury, J., Gibson, L., Sundstrom, E., Wilburn, D., & Loveland, J. (2003). An empirical
investigation of the proposition that "school is work": A comparison of personality-
performance correlations in school and work settings. *Journal of Education and Work,
17*, 119–131.

Lounsbury, J., Levy, J., Park, S., Gibson, L., & Smith, R. (2009). An investigation of the
construct validity of the personality trait of self-directed learning *Learning and Individual
Differences, 19*, 411–18. doi:10.1016/j.lindif.2009.03.001

Lounsbury, J., Loveland, J., Sundstrom, E., Gibson, L., Drost, A. W., & Hamrick, F. (2003). An
investigation of personality traits in relation to career satisfaction. *Journal of Career
Assessment, 11*, 287–307.

Lounsbury, J., Steel, R., Loveland, J., & Gibson, L. (2004). An investigation of personality traits in relation to adolescent school absenteeism. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 33*, 457–466.

Lounsbury, J., Sundstrom, E., Gibson, L., & Loveland, J. (2003). Broad versus narrow personality traits in predicting academic performance of adolescents. *Learning and Individual Differences, 14*(1), 65–75. doi:10.1016/j.lindif.2003.08.001

Lounsbury, J., Tatum, H., Gibson, L., Park, S., Sundstrom, E., Hamrick, F., & Wilburn, D. (2003). The develpment of a Big Five adolescent personality scale. *Psychological Assessment, 21*, 111–133.

Merriam, S. B., & Caffarella, R. S. (1999). *Learning in adulthood.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Moon, H., Hollenbeck, J. R., Humphrey, S. E., & Maue, B. (2003). The tripartite model of neuroticism and the suppression of depression and anxiety within an escalation of commitment dilemma. *Journal of Personality, 71*(3), 347–368. doi:10.1111/1467-6494.7103004

Oliveira, A. L., & Simões, A. (2006). Impact of socio-demographic and psychological variables on the self-directedness of higher education students. *International Journal of Self-Directed Learning, 3*(1), 1–12.

Ponton, M. K. (1999). The measurement of an adult's intention to exhibit personal initiative in autonomous learning. *Dissertation Abstracts International, 60*, 3933.

Ponton, M. K., & Carr, P. B. (2000). Understanding and promoting autonomy in self-directed learning. *Current Research in Social Psychology, 5*(19), 271–284.