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MOTIVATION TO MANAGE AND THE MANIFESTATION OF A MANAGERIAL ORIENTATION IN CAREER PLANNING

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Prior research has indicated, as managerial role motivation theory would predict, that university students with higher levels of independently measured managerial motivation are more likely to cite some type of managerial activity as a career objective (Miner, 1968a, 1968b; Miner & Smith, 1969). Bedeian (1977) also has shown that various personality factors, self-esteem in particular, play a role in aspiring to prestigious occupations, including managing. Research by Schein (1975, 1978) indicates that certain motivational, attitudinal, and value syndromes tend to guide and influence people in decisions throughout their careers. Significantly for the present study, he has identified a managerial competence syndrome (or career anchor), which leads individuals to seek continually for positions with greater managerial responsibility. There is other evidence that expressed vocational choices of the kind utilized in these studies are in turn rather good predictors of subsequent employment (Wiggins & Weslander, 1977).

Although none of the preceding research has employed formal career planning documents, it would appear appropriate to explore relationships between the content of such documents and managerial motivation as a next step. Accordingly the following hypothesis was formulated for test:

Individuals who have a stronger motivation to manage will manifest this motivation in their career planning—

- a) by describing their present work as more managerial in nature.*
- b) by describing their planned work as more managerial in nature.*
- c) by planning a greater degree of future change in the direction of managerial work.*

Although the essentially concurrent nature of this research precludes testing of causal relationships, the theoretical rationale underlying the hypothesis is that existing motivation to manage influences career planning statements regarding planned work. Furthermore, in the absence of special circumstances such as managerial role-motivation training that might intervene, it is assumed that motivation to manage is a generally stable characteristic. Accordingly, present motivation reflects past motivation, and that in turn exerts a causal impact on present work. Finally, it is assumed that a developmental process occurs whereby motivation to manage is increasingly likely to be tied to managerial work as an individual

gains more experience in the world of work (usually with age). Thus, change from present to planned work also should reflect managerial motivation at least in the early phases of career development, before stabilization has occurred. In other words, a currently planned future position should more nearly reflect the base level of managerial motivation than a current position resulting from a decision made at some time in the past, when knowledge of work relationships would be expected to be less perfect.

Method

Sample—The subjects were 56 students enrolled in a graduate level management course taught by one of the authors. A major portion of the course was devoted to personal career and life planning. The mean age of the students was 30.2 years, with a standard deviation of 4.8 years. Practically all of the students were employed on a full time basis at the time the research was conducted. There were 10 females.

The Course—The graduate course in management included a series of sessions on career planning, which were conducted as a pilot project for possible subsequent inclusion in the course. The Miner Sentence Completion Scale (MSCS) was administered in conjunction with the pilot module. Students completed the scale near the beginning of the course, and results were not reported until the end of the course after they submitted written career plans. This was to minimize contamination of the career plans that might result from knowledge of their MSCS scores. To test the hypotheses, the Miner Sentence Completion Scale scores were correlated with various indexes derived from the written planning documents.

The career planning portion of the course consisted of a series of lectures to establish a conceptual framework for career planning; a series of roundtable discussions to relate the philosophies of authors of management classics to the individual student's philosophy; several workshops on techniques pertinent to career planning; and "sharing" activities to enable the students to exchange thoughts and ideas. The end product of the course was a detailed document describing each student's life aspirations and employment plan extending at least five years into the future. This document included:

1. A detailed *analysis of personal values* that would become the basis for establishing personal life/career objectives;
2. A detailed articulation of *personal objectives* including a measure of attainment and a description of how these objectives were derived; and
3. A *personal development life/career plan* in which students analyzed their personal strengths that would help them meet objectives and identified shortcomings that would inhibit their achievement of objectives. They also delineated a plan to overcome their shortcomings and preserve their strengths.

Measures—Motivation to manage was measured using the Miner Sentence Completion Scale in the original free response format (Miner, 1964). This instrument yields two overall measures of managerial motivation—a total item score with a possible range from +35 to -35 and a rare score with a possible range from +8 to -8. The latter index was devised for the purpose of removing any conformity or social desirability effects that might be present in the raw item scores. The rare score was developed in accordance with the theory of projective test interpretation (Tomkins & Miner, 1957). The primary requirement of this scoring procedure is that patterns of responses given by a subject be compared against frequencies obtained from a normative group, to determine if a rare pattern (one occurring 5 percent of the time or less) is present. If a subject gives responses on a particular subscale matching one or more patterns that are rare in the normative group, a +1 or -1 is given as the case may be. The normative group utilized in obtaining this score contained managers drawn from a wide range of functional areas (Miner, 1964). The total item score is a composite of seven subscale scores, each with a possible range from +5 to -5. These subscales are designed to tap various motivational states related to managerial role requirements—attitude toward authority figures, competitiveness (measured in the context of both games and the work arena), assertiveness, power motivation as manifested in the desire to impose wishes, the desire to stand out from a group in a distinctive role, and the desire to perform routine administrative functions.

Considerable evidence of the measure's psychometric soundness, including its reliability and validity, has been accumulated (Miner, 1977a, 1978). A brief discussion of the measure's reliability and validity follows.

The reliability of the MSCS has been assessed by a number of different methods. When 20 records were rescored at 4-month intervals by the same person, perfect agreement was obtained on 95.4 percent of the individual items. When 12 records were scored independently by 2 experienced scorers, perfect agreement occurred on 92.4 percent of the items. Because of the offsetting effects, disagreements of this magnitude yield only minor variations in actual scores. Item score correlations between scorers have consistently been over .90; subscale correlations average in the high .80s (Miner, 1977b).

The MSCS has consistently yielded evidence of criterion related validity (concurrent and predictive) against criteria of managerial success (Miner, 1965, 1977a). As might be expected, managerial groups have been found to score above comparable non-managerial samples. In addition, business students aspiring to managerial careers tend to obtain relatively high scores, whereas students wishing to become teachers, accountants, counselors, and other types of professionals or specialists score low; thus the MSCS has been found to be predictive of career aspirations in the manner anticipated (Miner, 1977a).

To test the hypothesis the MSCS scores were correlated with various indexes derived from written planning documents prepared by the students

toward the end of the course. The measures of managerial orientation in these documents were derived by one of the authors based on a thorough reading.

The second author was purposely not involved in this process because he had taught the career planning course and it was felt that his knowledge of the students could bias the measures. However, interrater reliability coefficients were obtained from a scoring of a random sample of 21 papers by the second author. The independently derived measures yielded coefficients in the range of .80 to .84, suggesting satisfactory reliability. Reliability coefficients were calculated for each of the four measures of managerial orientation in career planning and are as follows (these four measures are described later in this paper):

- *present work*—.83
- *planned work*—.82
- *present and planned work*—.84
- *change from present to planned work*—.80

Eliminating bias due to the fact that one of the authors taught the career planning course was a major concern. The other author had no contact with the students and thus could not introduce bias in assigning the measures of managerial orientation of present and planned work. However, the high reliability between the raters' measures suggests that possible bias of the author who taught the course did not in fact affect his scoring. The four measures obtained in this manner were:

Managerial orientation of present work—Each subject's reported present employment was first scored on the following scale:

- 4 A manager of some kind in either a business or government bureaucracy
- 3 A manager in an essentially professional organization
- 2 A business entrepreneur
- 1 A professional entrepreneur in either private practice or a professional partnership
- 0 None of the above occupations mentioned, including not employed

The value thus obtained was then multiplied by 2 if there was a clear indication that the individual liked the work or was satisfied in it. The final scores thus ranged from 0 to 8. The mean was 1.8 and the standard deviation was 2.7.

Managerial Orientation of Planned Work—Each subject's planned work history was evaluated using the same 0 to 4 scale as for present work. The highest possible score was assigned; thus the most managerial occupation noted, other than the present job, served as the basis for scoring. This value was then multiplied by two if there was evidence in the planning document of a high level of commitment to achieving the planned work. The mean was 3.8 and the standard deviation 2.5.

Managerial Orientation of Present and Planned Work—This measure was simply the sum of the present and planned work scores. It provided an

overall index of managerial orientation and could, and did, range from 0 to 16. The mean was 5.5 and the standard deviation 4.1.

Change in Managerial Orientation from Present to Planned Work—This score was obtained by subtracting the managerial orientation of present work score from the managerial orientation of planned work; thus the possible range was -8 to $+8$. Minus values were in fact rather infrequent, however, and the mean change score was $+2$ with a standard deviation of 3.2. Because the magnitude of the change scores was strongly influenced by the size of the present work value ($r = -.64$), partial correlations were used to provide the basic test of the hypothesis.

The rationale underlying these measures derives from managerial role-motivation theory (Miner, 1965). It also derives from the findings indicating a developmental sequence whereby existing managerial motivation levels are increasingly tied to managerial performance in large organizations of the bureaucratic form with increasing exposure to the world of work (Miner, 1968a; Miner & Smith, 1969). The scale was originally constituted with reference to the managerial orientation of planned work, assuming that the process of tying motivation to manage to bureaucratic management is a gradual one, often moving through various stages of approximation to the theoretical ideal.

In this scale a 4 is assigned to managing in a large and bureaucratic organization, a 3 to managing in a large and nonbureaucratic organization; a 2 to managing in an organization that is neither large nor bureaucratic, a 1 to a potentially managerial position in an organization neither large nor bureaucratic, and a 0 to a position that in no way approaches the theoretical ideal. Because commitment level is a theoretically important consideration in evaluating career planning measures, it was decided that some index of this variable should be incorporated. A multiplicative formula was utilized in order to keep the score value of a complete departure from the theoretical ideal at 0. In the absence of any theoretical or empirical guidelines, a decision was made to minimize the amount of skewing and discontinuity at the upper score levels by using a multiplier of 2.

Having established such a scale for planned work, it seemed desirable to utilize a similar approach for present work in order to make the two measures essentially comparable. The basic 0-4 scale presented no problems in this regard. However, although commitment was relatively easy to determine for the planned positions (and satisfaction could not be determined because the position had not yet been occupied), the reverse was true for present positions. Invariably the planning documents discussed present work in terms of whether it was satisfying or not, rather than in terms of commitment, if this kind of consideration was discussed at all. Thus came the decision to substitute satisfaction for commitment in the present work scale, assuming that the two variables play essentially similar roles vis-à-vis work motivation. The intercorrelations among the criterion measures are contained in Table 1.

TABLE 1
Correlation Among Measures of Managerial Orientation in Career Plans

<i>Managerial Orientation in Career Plans</i>	<i>Present Work</i>	<i>Planned Work</i>	<i>Present and Planned Work</i>	<i>Change from Present to Planned Work</i>
Present work	—	.25	.81**	-.64**
Planned work		—	.78**	.58**
Present and planned work			—	-.07

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

TABLE 2
Correlations Between Miner Sentence Completion Scale (MSCS) Measures and Managerial Orientation in Career Plans

<i>MSCS Measures</i>	<i>Present Work</i>	<i>Planned Work</i>	<i>Present and Planned Work</i>	<i>Change from Present to Planned Work^a</i>
Total scores				
Item	.35**	.40**	.48**	.02 (.33*)
Rare	.22	.42**	.40**	.15 (.39**)
Authority figures	.03	.15	.11	.09 (.14)
Competitive games	.17	-.07	.07	-.20 (-.12)
Competitive situations	.03	.12	.09	.07 (.12)
Assertive role	.31*	.19	.32*	-.11 (.12)
Imposing wishes	.32*	.48**	.50**	.11 (.44**)
Standing out from group	.10	.17	.17	.05 (.15)
Routine administrative functions	.12	.27*	.24	.11 (.25)

^aPartial correlations holding managerial orientation in present work constant are given in parentheses.

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

Results

As indicated in Table 2, the data support all aspects of the hypothesis with some consistency. In particular, it appears that the imposing wishes index of power motivation is related positively to exhibiting a managerial orientation in career planning.

A post hoc analysis also was conducted to investigate those particular individuals for whom the managerial motivation scores did not predict managerial orientation levels in the career planning documents. The combined present and planned work managerial orientation score and the overall item score were used in this analysis, and each variable was split at the median to establish on and off quadrant cases. Using this criterion, 39 subjects were correctly predicted and 17 were not—8 with lower managerial orientations than their relatively high managerial motivation would suggest and 9 with the reverse pattern. The only finding of significance emerging from this analysis was a higher level of competitiveness among the off quadrant subjects. This was characteristic of the group whose strong managerial motivation was not matched by a comparable level of managerial orientation only; the competitive situations score for the low

motivation to manage and high managerial orientation subjects was not significantly different from that of the predicted subjects.

An analysis using the grade assigned to the career planning documents by the course instructor failed to reveal any significant relationships with either independent or dependent variables.

Discussion

The results of this research offer considerable support to managerial role motivation theory (Miner, 1965). This is most evident in the total score findings and in the imposing wishes subscale findings, but other subscales yield supporting data on occasion. The research also provides information extending prior findings regarding the role of personality factors, and motives in particular, in vocational choice directly to the career planning process. It now is apparent that strong motives can manifest themselves in career plans. Thus the study makes at least an initial contribution to an understanding of the dynamics of the career planning process.

The role that power motivation (imposing wishes) appears to play in planning for a managerial career, although not totally unexpected, emerged as much more significant than role motivation theory alone would have predicted. A check of prior studies in which managerial motivation was related to the choice of a managerial career, although not within a specifically career planning context, indicates that a similarly distinctive role for power motivation was not in evidence. However, in two of three studies the imposing wishes subscale, along with others, did differentiate those who expressed a preference for managing from those who did not (Miner, 1968a, 1968b; Miner & Smith, 1969). The samples in both instances in which differentiation did occur were made up of graduate students in their late 20s and early 30s having much in common with the present subjects. In contrast, the one case in which differentiation was not found involved undergraduates in their late teens and early 20s. On this evidence it would appear that power motivation comes to influence career processes, and managerial aspirations in particular, only at a rather late developmental stage.

The analysis intended to identify possible causes of failures in prediction from the managerial motivation measures suggests that certain individuals who have a relatively strong motive to manage and are very competitive may well plan on essentially nonmanagerial careers. The predominant orientation among these subjects is toward helping professions such as teaching and counseling. There also is a tendency to emphasize nonconfining activities of the type reflected in travel. Overall these data appear to suggest that other strong motives may conflict with the managerial motives and lead to a career planning objective outside the bureaucratic context. The other not predicted group—those with low managerial motivation, but unexpectedly high managerial orientations—are predominantly bureaucratic managers at present who are not too happy with their situation.

It is entirely possible, given their lack of satisfaction in managerial work and low managerial motivation, that they are not very effective managers and may ultimately be forced out of their managerial roles.

In considering these conclusions and speculations from analyses of the off quadrant cases, the post hoc nature of the data should be emphasized. At best these represent hypotheses for future research. In no sense do they have the same status as the basic findings of this study indicating a clear relationship between motivation to manage and the manifestation of a managerial orientation in career planning documents. These latter findings provide further evidence of the construct validity of the motivation to manage variable.

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