

Connecting the Calling: Applying Holland's Theory within the U.S. Hispanic Population

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Career counseling holds a pivotal role in empowering Hispanic Americans, a group that faces unique vocational challenges and opportunities. This paper delves into the application of Holland's RIASEC model within the context of the U.S. Hispanic population. Holland's model categorizes careers and personal inclinations into six types: Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional, offering a lens through which individuals can find careers that resonate with their personality and skills. By examining how this model can be tailored to meet the specific needs of Hispanic Americans, this paper aims to shed light on strategies that career counselors can employ to facilitate more meaningful and effective career guidance for this demographic.

Hispanic Population Employment Data

As of July 1, 2022, the Hispanic community has reached 63.7 million individuals, establishing itself as the largest racial or ethnic minority in the United States, as reported by the U.S. Census Bureau (2023). This group's significant presence underscores the importance of tailored career counseling services to meet their unique needs. Hispanic Americans represent a substantial portion of the U.S. workforce, accounting for 19.1 percent as of the third quarter of 2023, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2024). Despite their considerable contribution to the labor market, the unemployment rate among Hispanics is 1.6% higher than that of their White counterparts, highlighting disparities that need to be addressed within career counseling frameworks.

The Hispanic population faces economic challenges, particularly within the service sector. As noted by Khattar, R., & Vela, J. (2022) on [Americanprogress.org](https://www.americanprogress.org), Hispanics constitute

24 percent of tipped employees in the U.S. Many of these positions are compensated through a subminimum wage, making Hispanic workers especially susceptible to economic instability due to their reliance on variable tips. This aspect of their employment situation further emphasizes the necessity for career counseling approaches that consider the socioeconomic nuances affecting the Hispanic community.

Holland's Theory

John L. Holland's Theory of Vocational Choice illuminates the critical link between job satisfaction and the alignment of an individual's personality with their work environment. This concept is encapsulated in the RIASEC model, which delineates six primary personality and work environment types: Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional.

Individuals with a Realistic orientation are naturally inclined towards engaging in physical, hands-on tasks. Those who are Investigative prefer to immerse themselves in analytical and problem-solving endeavors. Artistic personalities are characterized by their pursuit of careers that allow for creative and expressive freedom. Social types find their calling in roles that enable them to support, teach, or care for others. Enterprising individuals thrive in environments that present opportunities for leadership and persuasive activities. Lastly, Conventional personalities are most satisfied in roles that are structured and governed by clear rules.

The essence of Holland's model is the emphasis on the necessity for individuals to find careers that resonate with their personal RIASEC profile to achieve job satisfaction and stability. Tools like the Self-Directed Search (SDS) are designed to help people discover their RIASEC type, facilitating a career choice that leads to greater job fulfillment.

Supporting the efficacy of Holland's theory, Brown & Lent affirm that "there is empirical support for many aspects of Holland's theory. The presence of the RIASEC types has been well-documented, and the interrelationships of types appear to be fairly consistent across major segments of the U.S. population" (2021, p. 117). This acknowledgment underscores the widespread applicability and reliability of the RIASEC model in guiding successful career decisions across a variety of populations.

Applying the Theory to the Population

Barriers to Access

In the journey toward career development, Hispanic Americans encounter unique barriers that can impede their progress. Among these challenges are cultural differences and language barriers. The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5-TR) acknowledges the profound impact of cultural, ethnic, and racial identities on social adaptation. While these identities can bolster resilience and provide group support, they also have the potential to create conflicts or adaptation difficulties (APA, 2022, p.860). This duality highlights the importance of recognizing and addressing cultural and linguistic nuances in career counseling to foster effective engagement and support for Hispanic clients.

Substance abuse presents another significant barrier, particularly among adolescent males of Mexican descent. Research conducted in California reveals that these adolescents report substance use disorders at a rate of 14%, higher than their White (12.7%) and African American (7%) peers, and this is compounded by a lower likelihood of completing substance abuse treatment programs (Burrow-Sánchez, J. J., et al., 2015). The implications of these findings

underscore the necessity for tailored intervention strategies that not only address the substance abuse issues but also consider the cultural and social contexts of the Hispanic population.

Navigating the Barriers

Navigating the barriers to career development that Hispanic individuals face requires a multifaceted approach, incorporating both established counseling theories and modern technological tools. Holland's RIASEC model offers a foundational framework for understanding individual career preferences and designing tailored counseling interventions. Implementing RIASEC assessments during career counseling sessions enables individuals to identify their personality types and explore career paths that align with their natural inclinations. Additionally, the online resource O*NET (<https://www.mynextmove.org/explore/ip>) serves as an invaluable tool, offering public access to a wealth of career counseling assessments and resources grounded in Holland's theory. This platform facilitates a deeper exploration of compatible careers, taking into account the unique cultural and linguistic needs of the Hispanic population.

Recent studies reinforce the effectiveness of leveraging online and remote career counseling and telehealth methods. Research published in *Res Militaris* highlights the significant impact of web-based career counseling interventions on enhancing students' career decision-making capabilities. This finding suggests that career practitioners and counselors can significantly benefit from incorporating online interventions into their practice, thereby supporting students more effectively in their career development journeys (Ardi et al., 2022). Additional related research featured in *The Journal of Positive Psychology* demonstrates the success of telehealth methods in promoting the wellbeing of community-dwelling older adults,

indicating the broad applicability and positive outcomes of remote counseling and therapy across different demographics (Fallon et al., 2024).

By integrating Holland's RIASEC model with the accessibility and flexibility of online resources like O*NET, career counselors can offer Hispanic clients personalized and effective support. This approach not only addresses the specific barriers these individuals may face but also harnesses the potential of digital platforms to expand access to career counseling services, making the journey toward career development more inclusive and adaptable to the needs of a diverse population.

Combining Local and Online Resources

In developing a career development plan that is responsive to the needs of the Hispanic population, it's crucial to integrate both local and online resources other than just O*NET that can all synergize together in offering the most comprehensive support.

PA CareerLink

PA CareerLink represents a collaborative effort between government entities and nonprofit organizations, providing a wide array of services aimed at facilitating job searches, resume development, and career counseling. This initiative is specifically designed to cater to the unique demands of Philadelphia's diverse workforce, incorporating programs dedicated to assisting veterans and individuals with disabilities. More information about their offerings can be accessed through their online platform.

Transformation to Recovery Philadelphia

Transformation To Recovery emerges as a vital community resource based in Philadelphia. As a faith-based nonprofit focusing on addiction recovery, it was established by Christ Church South Philly in 2018 as a response to the escalating opioid crisis in the area. Their mission and services are detailed on their website, providing support and resources for individuals seeking recovery.

LinkedIn Learning

LinkedIn Learning stands out as an excellent digital educational platform, offering an extensive range of courses related to resume crafting, job application completion, and cover letter writing, all instructed by field experts. This platform is invaluable for clients aiming to update their job application materials with contemporary techniques and insights. The significance of the internet in the job search process cannot be overstated, having evolved into a primary tool for many job seekers over the past two decades. Not only does it offer a broader spectrum of job opportunities compared to traditional print media, but social networking sites like LinkedIn serve as effective platforms for job networking. This digital avenue significantly expands the scope for identifying job openings and connecting with potential employers.

Tenability of the Plan

I am confident that this career development plan, grounded in the thoughtful application of Holland's Theory and the integration of both local and online resources, has the potential to yield outstanding outcomes. Success hinges on the commitment and active participation of both the counselor and the client. It's essential to recognize that while dedication and effort are

fundamental to any effective plan, these must be directed by ethical guidelines and principles to ensure they lead to constructive results.

In line with the American Counseling Association's *Code of Ethics*, particularly sections A.1.a on Primary Responsibility and A.1.d on Support Network Involvement, this plan emphasizes the counselor's duty to prioritize the client's best interests (ACA, 2014). This includes making referrals to social support networks that genuinely aid the client in their employment journey, without any ulterior motives such as receiving kickbacks from referred sources. Such practices not only undermine the ethical foundation of the counseling profession but also jeopardize the quality of care provided to the client, potentially leading to adverse outcomes for all parties involved.

Adherence to these ethical standards ensures that the career development plan not only supports clients in achieving their vocational goals but also upholds the integrity and trustworthiness of the counseling process. By maintaining a client-centered approach and engaging with reputable resources, the plan stands as a viable and ethical pathway to career advancement for the Hispanic population, promising both effectiveness and integrity in its execution.

Concluding the job search to answer a Calling

Integrating spirituality into career counseling, especially within the context of Hispanic Americans, requires a nuanced understanding of how cultural and spiritual values intersect with vocational aspirations. Drawing from the insights provided in *Vocation and Lifelong Spiritual Formation: A Christian Integrative Perspective on Calling in Mid-Career* it's clear that the concept of calling transcends mere job selection, becoming a reflection of one's deeper purpose

and spiritual identity (Lemke, 2020). This perspective is particularly relevant for Hispanic individuals, whose cultural and often spiritual heritage plays a significant role in shaping their identity and life choices.

Incorporating Holland's Theory of Vocational Choice and Adjustment into this spiritual framework allows counselors to guide Hispanic clients in exploring careers that not only match their interests and skills but also resonate with their spiritual values and sense of calling. For example, understanding a client's spiritual commitments, such as those pertaining to family and community roles, can influence their preferred work environment and career path, much like observing the Sabbath influences job considerations for Jewish clients.

Hispanic clients might view their careers as extensions of their spiritual lives, seeking roles that allow them to express their values, such as service to others, community engagement, or environmental stewardship. Counselors can facilitate this exploration by encouraging clients to reflect on how their work can serve as an expression of their spiritual beliefs and contribute to their community's wellbeing.

Acknowledging the role of spiritual and personal growth in career development suggests that career counseling for Hispanic Americans should also focus on how vocational choices can support ongoing spiritual formation. This approach not only helps clients find careers that are fulfilling on multiple levels but also ensures that their vocational paths are in harmony with their cultural and spiritual identities, fostering a sense of purpose and meaning in their professional and personal lives.

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