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What Do You Do? Occupational Prestige, the Psychological Indicator of Socioeconomic Status

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What is Occupational Prestige?

Three Pillars of Objective SES

Educational
Attainment

Income

Occupational
Prestige

(Diemer et al., 2013; Oakes and Rossi, 2003)

Occupational Prestige

Status proffered to individuals based on societal perceptions of the prestige of their job.

Previous approaches: Expert ratings (Edwards, 1917); class structure (Hall & Jones, 1950); from participant ratings (Duncan, 1961; Hollingshead, 1975; Hout, Smith, & Marsden, 2016; Myriantopoulos & French, 1968; Nakoa & Treas, 1992; Ganzeboom & Treiman, 1996)

Psychology research often ignores occupational prestige (e.g., Tan et al., 2020) or use methods that avoid independently assessing occupational prestige (see: Myriantopolous & French, 1968)

Occupational Prestige Ratings



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Rating Instructions

Please rate the occupations listed below based on your opinion about their prestige.
All Responses will be kept confidential.

Please use the full range of the scale as much as possible. We recommend ratings such as these:

- 100** – the occupation is more prestigious than any other
- greater than 75** – the occupation is much more prestigious than average
- between 50 and 75** – the occupation is somewhat more prestigious than average
- 50** – the occupation is about average relative to other occupations
- between 25 and 50** – the occupation is somewhat less prestigious than average
- less than 25** – the occupation is much less prestigious than average
- 0** – the occupation is less prestigious than any other

Registered Nurses

Assess patient health problems and needs, develop and implement nursing care plans, and maintain medical records. Administer nursing care to ill, injured, convalescent, or disabled patients. May advise patients on health maintenance and disease prevention or provide case management. Licensing or registration required. Includes Clinical Nurse Specialists. Excludes Nurse Anesthetists, Nurse Midwives, and Nurse Practitioners.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100



- Participants, $N = 3076$
- Ratings per occupation, $M = 152.80$
- Ratings per participant, $M = 52.60$
- Ratings per field, $M = 208.00$

Study Aims

- Estimate the reliability of ratings of occupational prestige of O*NET jobs
- Assess convergent and discriminant validity
- Identify the characteristics of jobs most associated with prestige
- Create a user-friendly resource to make it easy for researchers to measure occupational prestige



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Occupational Prestige Scores

Highest

Lowest

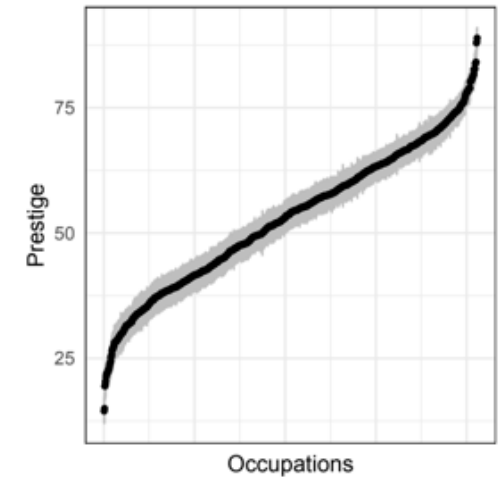
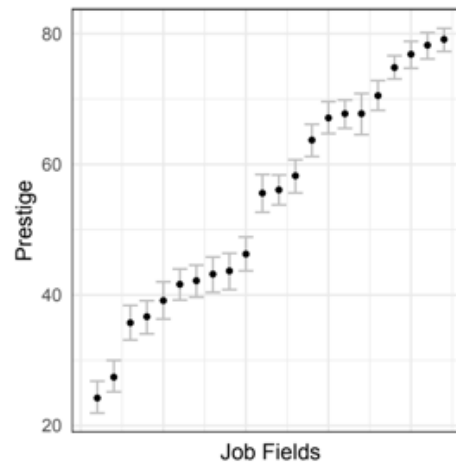
O*NET 2018 Title	Occupational Prestige	se
1. Physician and/or Surgeon	88.91	1.22
2. Surgeon	88.15	1.48
3. Neurologist	87.94	1.05
4. Aerospace Engineering Technician	84.13	1.35
5. Biochemist	83.93	1.03
6. Aerospace Engineer	83.83	1.41
7. Neuropsychologist	82.79	1.37
8. Nuclear Medicine Physician	82.71	1.56
9. Physicist	82.66	1.22
10. Pediatrician	81.82	1.18
11. Nuclear Engineer	81.45	1.53
...		
15. Judge, Magistrate Judge	80.86	1.30
...		
19. Chief Executive Officer	80.37	1.42
...		
373. Teacher and/or Instructor	59.29	1.65

O*NET 2018 Title	Occupational Prestige	se
1029. Dishwasher	14.50	1.36
1028. Telemarketer	15.00	1.57
1027. Parking Lot Attendant	19.46	1.45
1026. Locker or Dressing Room Attendant	19.97	1.67
1025. Cook - Fast Food	20.51	1.60
1024. Building Cleaning Worker	21.33	1.45
1023. Slaughterer and/or Meat Packer	21.57	1.43
1022. Food Server	22.03	1.26
1021. Street Vendor	22.04	1.58
1020. Laundry and/or Dry-Cleaning Worker	22.17	1.59
1019. Door-to-Door Sales Worker	22.24	1.46
1018. Food Preparation Worker	22.63	1.58
1017. Maid and/or Housekeeping Cleaner	22.66	1.70
1016. Septic Tank Servicer	22.96	1.71
1017. Food Service Attendant/Helper	22.99	1.74
...		
945. Bartender	33.37	1.92

Occupational Prestige Scores



Job Fields	Occupational Prestige	se
Engineering/Architecture	79.12	0.88
Life/Physical/SocialScience	78.23	0.95
Law/LegalSvcs	76.85	1.06
Computer/Math	74.81	0.93
Healthcare	70.51	1.17
Military	67.76	1.51
Arts/Design/Entn/SportsMedia	67.75	1.12
Busin/FinanOperations	67.10	1.16
Management	63.71	1.27
EduTraining/LibrarySvcs	58.24	1.24
CommSocialSvcs	56.09	1.22
ProtectiveSvcs	55.59	1.40
Mfg/Production	46.26	1.29
PersonalCare/RelatedSvcs	43.67	1.47
Install/Mntnce/Repair	43.19	1.29
Construction/Extraction	42.18	1.24
Office/AdminSupport	41.63	1.21
Farming/Fishing/Forestry	39.14	1.43
Sales/RelatedSvcs	36.68	1.32
Transportation/Material/Moving	35.74	1.38
FoodPrep/Serving	27.42	1.27
BldgGrounds/Cleaning/Mntnce	24.22	1.26



Fields: $ICC(2, 208) = .999$; $ICC(3, 208) = .999$

Jobs: $ICC(2, 152) = .996$; $ICC(3, 152) = .999$



Convergent and Discriminant Validity



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Correlations Between Current and Previous Occupational Prestige Measures and Other Objective Indicators of SES, by Occupation.

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4
1. Occupational Prestige	53.13	14.21				
2. OP GSS 1989 (Nakao & Treas, 1990)	48.80	16.05	.80* [.77, .82]			
3. OP GSS 2012 (Smith & Son, 2014)	44.89	15.55	.72* [.68, .76]	.67* [.62, .71]		
4. Income (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics)	64.64	32.92	.71* [.67, .74]	.69* [.65, .72]	.62* [.56, .67]	
5. Educational Attainment (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics)	3.81	1.28	.76* [.73, .79]	.81* [.79, .83]	.60* [.54, .66]	.71* [.67, .74]

Note. OP = Occupational Prestige. Income = yearly income in thousands of dollars. Educational Attainment response choices (Less than high school diploma, High school diploma or equivalent, Some college, no degree, Associate's degree, Bachelor's degree, Master's degree, Doctoral or professional degree) were converted to a 1-7 Likert scale for this correlation analysis.

* indicates $p < .01$.

Characteristics of Occupations Correlated with Occupational Prestige



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Positive/Psychological

Negative/Physical

Characteristic	mean.r	sd.r	Characteristic	mean.r	sd.r
Recognition	.84	.00	Spend Time Bending or Twisting the Body	-.54	.01
Achievement	.81	.00	Spend Time Walking and Running	-.52	.01
Working Conditions	.80	.00	Trunk Strength	-.52	.01
Inductive Reasoning	.78	.01	Spend Time Standing	-.51	.01
Deductive Reasoning	.78	.01	Spend Time Making Repetitive Motions	-.52	.01
Critical Thinking	.77	.00	Extent Flexibility	-.50	.01
Reading Comprehension	.75	.01	Stamina	-.50	.01
Complex Problem Solving	.75	.01	Dynamic Strength	-.50	.01
Active Learning	.74	.00	Static Strength	-.50	.01
Science - Knowledge	.72	.00	Gross Body Coordination	-.48	.01
Judgment and Decision Making	.72	.00	Speed of Limb Movement	-.48	.01
Systems Analysis	.71	.00	Handling and Moving Objects	-.49	.01
Writing	.71	.00	Performing General Physical Activities	-.47	.01
Analytical Thinking	.70	.01	Using Hands to Handle Objects or Tools	-.45	.01

Takeaways



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- Measure occupational prestige when you measure SES.
- Use the occupational prestige ratings presented in this work, which are reliable, have convergent validity with previous measures, and discriminant validity from other objective indicators of SES.
- High prestige occupations are associated with soft skills
 - E.g., critical thinking, inductive reasoning
- Low prestige jobs associated with physical requirements
 - E.g., standing, strength

Note: The occupational prestige ratings validated in this work will be made available soon in an easy-to-use format.

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