

## ABSTRACT

### **Career Development: Factors Influencing the Vocational Interests of Secondary School Students at the Prestige High School**

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This study investigated the vocational/work-related interests of 158 fourth- and fifth-form students (90 males and 68 females) at a secondary school in Trinidad and Tobago. It used a census approach to evaluate the cross-cultural applicability of Holland's (1997) RIASEC model and the impact of personality traits and demographic factors on students' work-related interests. Data were collected through self-administered questionnaires. Analysis of the data revealed the usefulness of Holland's RIASEC model, as five of the six clusters were found. It was also found that 1) some personality traits and demographic factors had considerable effects on the students' work-related interests; 2) their realistic interests were dependent on their gender, form, and subject cluster; 3) interests in realistic areas of work were more common among males, Form 5 students, and those enrolled in vocational subject areas; 4) the investigative and conventional interests of the students were determined solely by their having emotionally stable traits, while their artistic interests were influenced primarily by gender, being more popular among females; 5) social work found greater favour among female students than it did among males; and 6) subject cluster, emotional stability, and social status, determined by the highest level of education attained by the female parent as well as gender, were all significant predictors of the enterprising students' interests.

**Keywords:** Case studies; Career development; Vocational interests; Secondary school students; Trinidad and Tobago