

Abstract

Women in male-dominated fields experience high rates of attrition. This attrition could be linked to perceived identity compatibility (PIC), which measures belonging between an individual and their field. London and colleagues (2011) found that women in STEM majors high in PIC also had higher motivation in STEM. The present study investigated the associations between PIC and expected post-undergraduate achievement among people in male-dominated majors (MDMs). It was predicted that higher levels of PIC would be associated with higher expected degree and more prestigious desired occupations, especially for women in MDMs. The dataset used is a part of a larger study examining the daily experiences of women in MDMs. Participants were separated into three groups: women in MDMs ($n = 40$), men in MDMs ($n = 40$), and women in GNMs (gender-neutral majors, $n = 40$). Via a Qualtrics survey, participants reported their PIC (London et al., 2011), highest expected academic degree (from no degree to professional degree, PhD, MD, etc.), and desired occupation. Desired occupation responses were coded using the NORC occupational prestige score (Smith & Son, 2014). A series of multiple regression analyses with PIC as a predictor and the NORC score as the criterion variable. PIC was not a significant predictor of higher NORC scores ($B = .32, p = .04$) nor did it predict a higher expected degree ($p = .64$). Future research could expand group design to include men in GNMs. It would also be valuable to recruit a more diverse sample as many theories on social belonging apply to more than simply gender.

Keywords: STEM, Gender, Social Belonging, Achievement, Education, Identity

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