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BELIEF IN A JUST WORLD AND ADOLESCENTS' VOCATIONAL AND SOCIAL GOALS

Dorothea Dette, Joachim Stöber and Claudia Dalbert

INTRODUCTION

Suppose you are a teenager one year before graduation. You need to think about what you want to do with the rest of your life and what professional training to go for. What would you base your decision on? Of course, it is important to do something you enjoy – so how about becoming a professional football player, a rock star or model of the year? It's a nice idea, but you also need to consider your chances of success. Can you really make it in your chosen profession? Because if you discover too late that you cannot, you will have lost precious time.

The 'Can I make it?' question, the estimated 'probability of success', has indeed proved to be a valid predictor of goal-related decisions and goal commitment, and it is important to identify the potential determinants of this subjective estimation of success. Previous research has shown that, besides situational influences, stable dispositional factors and personality variables such as the 'big five' personality factors and self-efficacy are of importance. Moreover, the belief in a just world (BJW) has emerged to be relevant to many areas of daily life (for a comprehensive review, see Dalbert, 2001). However, the direct influence of the BJW on specific aspects of personal goals has, as yet, rarely been investigated (cf. Otto and Dalbert, in this volume).

The present chapter presents results from a study on the relationship between BJW and the personal goals of adolescents. Specifically, the aim of the study was to shed some light on the relationship between BJW and a central aspect of two important classes of personal goals, namely the probability of success in vocational and social personal goals. We will focus on adolescence, a potentially turbulent time, in which the formation of personal goals plays an important role (Nurmi, 1993; Oerter and Dreher, 1995). In the first part of the chapter, we will describe the BJW and its two facets, the general BJW and the personal BJW. Thereafter, we will outline research on personal goals in which the probability of success has emerged to be a central variable. In the second part, we will present findings from a questionnaire study with students attending the 9th grade of high school. Specifically, we will show that both the personal and the general BJW have significant and different influences on the estimated probability of success in adolescents' social and vocational goals. In the third and final part, we will integrate our findings, discuss limitations of our study and suggest future research directions.

Belief in a just world

According to the just world hypothesis (Lerner, 1965), people are motivated to believe in a just world where people generally get what they deserve and deserve what they get. To

put it simply, good behaviour gets rewarded, and bad guys get punished. This BJW helps people to orientate themselves in a complex social and physical world by assuming that their environment is reliable and orderly (Lerner and Miller, 1978). Not everyone has the same amount of trust in the world's justice, however. The strength of the BJW varies between individuals (Rubin and Peplau, 1973, 1975). The stronger a person's BJW, the more justice-motivated his or her reactions. This often leads to positive outcomes, such as enhanced coping behaviour and hence better well-being (Dalbert, 2002). In addition, the BJW serves other useful adaptive functions (Dalbert, 2001, 2002). It provides people with the confidence that they will be treated fairly and will not fall victim to an unforeseen and unjust fate. Thus, individuals high in BJW place more trust in others (Zuckerman and Gerbasi, 1977) and show more dyadic trust in times of need (Dalbert, 2001). This trust in fairness allows them to assume that today's investments will be fairly rewarded in the future. If I promise to behave according to certain standards, a good return on my investments is certain. The reasoning behind this is that if everyone behaves fairly, the world will be a just place. Consequently, the BJW may foster goal-directed behaviour such as investments in long-term goals (Hafer, 2000). Moreover, it may promote unspecific investments in times of need, for example, engaging in prosocial behaviour with the aim of earning a positive outcome for oneself when it is needed most (Zuckerman, 1975).

At first, the construct of the BJW was defined and measured in very broad terms and consisted mainly of beliefs about the world in general being a just place. With a greater focus on the individual, however, the view became more detailed. Several researchers argued that the BJW should be differentiated into a general and a personal BJW (Furnham and Procter, 1989; Hafer and Olson, 1993; Lerner and Miller, 1978). In addition to the general BJW, which reflects the belief that the world in general is a just place, a personal BJW has been conceptualised, reflecting the belief that one's own fate is just and that events in one's life are deserved. Lipkus, Dalbert and Siegler (1996) and Dalbert (1999) provided empirical evidence for the need to differentiate between general and personal BJW. They showed the personal BJW was stronger than the general BJW, as well as being a better predictor of mental health and more closely related to self-esteem.

Personal goals

According to Brunstein, Dangelmayer and Schultheiss (1996, p. 1006), 'personal goals are the consciously accessible and personally meaningful objectives people pursue in their daily life. Personal goals indicate what individuals are striving for in their current life situations and what they try to attain or avoid in various life domains.' The term 'personal goals' thus serves as an umbrella term for four different research traditions, namely research on current concerns (Klinger, 1977), personal projects (Little, 1983), personal strivings (Emmons, 1986) and life tasks (Cantor and Kihlstrom, 1987). On a rather abstract level, personal strivings are defined as patterns of goals that represent what a person typically tries to accomplish (Emmons, 1989). According to this definition, a striving can be achieved through a series of concrete, smaller goals. Thus, according to Emmons, strivings are a more abstract form of personal goals and do not include ways of reaching a certain goal. The concept of life tasks is more specific in this regard (Cantor and Kihlstrom, 1987). Here, goals do not remain static over the life course, but change with life situations and developmental phases. Every life task contains both the desired outcome and ideas and problem-solving strategies that help to fulfil it. Still more concrete are current concerns (Klinger, 1977). These result from the commitment a person has formed towards a desired state, and they are very difficult to relinquish. Moreover, current concerns are not only representations of the desired outcome, but also include plans and ideas on how to reach this outcome. The most concrete form of personal goals is the concept of personal projects (Little, 1983). Personal projects are seen as a set of interrelated acts that continue over time

and are carried out to reach a desired end state.

Despite these differences, the four concepts have been subsumed under the common term 'personal goals', mainly because they all follow what is called an 'idiographic-nomothetic approach' to assessment (Klinger, 1987; see also Brunstein and Maier, 1996). First, participants are asked to write down their own personal goals in a free format. Hence, the content of the goals reported may be different for each participant. This represents the idiographic part of the approach. Subsequently, participants are asked to rate their individual goals along a set of given dimensions (e.g. estimated probability of success). Thus, despite their individually differing content, the personal goals may be compared on common dimensions. This represents the nomothetic part of the approach. If the researchers did not specify particular categories of individual goals a priori, external raters categorise the goals reported so that it is also possible to compare categories of goals on common dimensions. Research on classifying goals has shown that most goals can be subsumed to two broad categories, namely vocational/academic goals and social/interpersonal goals (Carroll, Durkin, Hattie and Houghton, 1997; Pöhlmann, 2002; Wentzel, 1991). Moreover, these two goal domains represent the main topics that adolescents across different socio-cultural backgrounds mention when asked about their hopes and fears (e.g. Lanz and Rosnati, 2002; Nurmi, Poole and Kalakoski, 1994). Consequently, these two categories were also adopted in the present research.

Of course, it does not suffice to have set oneself certain goals. The goals also have to be pursued actively. Innumerable goals—New Year's resolutions, for example—never get accomplished. Why? Because if people are not committed, they do not invest in these goals, and therefore never achieve them except by chance or luck. Commitment is of pivotal importance to goal success. So what determines which goals are pursued with commitment?

We do not usually have just one goal, but strive toward many goals at a time. Some are more important than others; some are just as important but differ in content; some are far-reaching whereas others are only important on the short term; some are more difficult, some easier, and so on. However many goals there might be, ideally, every one of them should be pursued. An individual only has limited resources, however. Hardly anyone has the wherewithal to go for every single one of their goals. Therefore, a decision must be made on which goals to invest in and which to postpone or to drop. This decision is based on the comparison of two or more goals, and determines which goal is to be given commitment. Multiple factors influence the decision-making process, including the personality of the person involved and the characteristics of the goal itself.

The personal importance of goals and the estimated probability of success are central goal dimensions that most researchers have included in their assessment of personal goals (for an overview, see Emmons, 1997). According to Hollenbeck and Klein (1987)—who referred to these two factors as 'attractiveness of goal attainment' and 'expectancy of goal attainment'—they are also the two factors that lead to goal commitment. To our knowledge, the Hollenbeck and Klein model has only been partially tested empirically. One study examined the relationship of goal attractiveness and probability of success with commitment, and found both factors to have a significant influence on goal commitment (Metz-Göckel and Leffelsend, 2001). These results clearly show that probability of success is a major predictor of goal commitment. In the present chapter, we thus focus on the expectancy of goal attainment, or as we term it, the estimated probability of success in a given goal.

Adolescence and Personal Goals

Personal goals are important throughout life. However, they are especially important in times of rapid changes, when the individual has to find new perspectives, search for new challenges, and choose new orientations. One such time is adolescence. Indeed, the devel-

opment and successful pursuit of personal goals are central to adolescents' personality development (see Nurmi, 1991, 1993).

In developmental terms, adolescence can be very turbulent time. Rapid biological, intellectual and social changes require swift adaptation and quick reactions. Adolescents often feel trapped between the expectations of others and their own desires, and only gradually adapt to their new role (Oerter and Dreher, 1995). In classical developmental psychology, adolescence is one of several major stages of individual development throughout life (e.g. Havighurst, 1982; Erikson, 1989). In each of these stages, specific developmental tasks have to be fulfilled. In adolescence, self-definition is a major concern. The young person has to find a position in life, to feel a purpose, and identify a direction for the life course. Another major task is the formation of stable social networks outside the family. Friends become especially important in adolescence because—unlike family members—they are not given, but can be freely chosen. Another objective, and one that is closely related to social network building, is the adolescents' individuation from their parents (Dreher and Dreher, 1985). In short, adolescents face the challenge of setting the stage for their own life course.

One of the most important tasks here is the choice of a vocational career (Erikson, 1989; Havighurst, 1982; Marcia, 1966). This major step precedes entry into the job market, a pivotal point in every adolescent's life. The decision for a profession is one of the most important decisions in life. Moreover, it is one of the earliest, if not the earliest, decision with such a huge impact on the rest of the life course. As such, it is often a difficult decision, and one that is even more difficult to make at a point in life at which one is still very ignorant of the job market. It is almost impossible for school goers to make a truly informed decision, because life at school bears little resemblance to what awaits them on the job market. Still, the decision must be made even before the final exams are taken. Thus, the adolescents must rely on the resources they have and the help they are offered.

Another developmental task facing adolescents is the formation of a stable social network within, and more importantly, outside the family. Good relationships with relatives and peers are the primary source of social support and facilitate problem solving and promote health (Scholte, van Lieshout and van Aken, 2001). Thus, both vocational and social goals are of central importance in adolescence, and it is essential for young people to pursue and achieve both categories of goals.

Therefore, in order to gain a better understanding of goal pursuit in adolescence, it would be interesting to be able to predict the probability of success in personal goals. This would also provide an insight into why some people stick to their goals and succeed in reaching them, while others fail again and again. Some predictors of the probability of success have already been identified, namely personality, self-efficacy and situation-specific influence.

Personality and other predictors of the probability of success in personal goals

As the term 'personal' goals implies, personality is an important influencing factor here. The dominant model for capturing broad dimensions of personality is the five-factor model of personality. Its 'big five' dimensions have been labelled (a) neuroticism or, its opposite, emotional stability, (b) extraversion or surgency, (c) agreeableness, (d) conscientiousness or dependability and (e) openness, culture, or intellect (John, 1990). Though there has been—and still is—considerable debate as to whether these five dimensions constitute an adequate and comprehensive description of personality (e.g. Block, 1995; McAdams, 1992), the five-factor model of personality represents an established base from which one may start to explore potential relationships between personality and personal goals.

Thus far, however, only a limited number of studies have dealt with the relations between the 'big five' and personal goals. Two studies (Little, 1989; Little, Lecci and Watkin-

son, 1992) reported correlations between the big five personality factors and participants' ratings of their personal projects. Although the patterns for academic (vocational) and interpersonal (social) personal projects were somewhat different, the studies found that the big five personality traits influenced most of the goal dimensions in both domains. For example, neuroticism showed significant correlations with several goal dimensions related to the probability of success, and was positively correlated with estimations of stress and difficulty, and negatively correlated with control. Moreover, extraversion and conscientiousness showed correlations with success-related dimensions. Extraversion showed positive correlations with estimated efficacy, and conscientiousness with enjoyment and control. It thus seems likely that the big five personality traits will also influence a person's estimated of probability of success.

Besides the broad, general 'big five' personality factors, more specific predictors of specific goal contents have also been identified. Higher self-efficacy has been shown to be related to goal pursuit (Locke and Latham, 1990; Vrugt, Oort and Zeeberg, 2002). The construct of self-efficacy was introduced by Bandura and represents a core aspect of his social-cognitive theory (Bandura, 1977, 1995). Self-efficacy refers to the belief of being able to exert control and influence events in the desired direction. It is commonly understood to be domain-specific; that is, the expected control over events varies across situations. We can thus assume that social self-efficacy will be an influential predictor of the estimated probability of success in attaining one's social goals. Finally, whether or not action has already been taken to attain a certain goal may also play a role. The more people have invested in a goal, the higher the probability that they will eventually attain it. Preparations for vocational training should thus be another potential predictor of the probability of success in vocational goals. Moreover, we expect the BJW to be a relevant personality factor in the prediction of personal goals.

The belief in a just world and personal goals

The BJW serves important adaptive functions and has positive effects on mental health and well-being (Dalbert, 1997, 1999, 2001). Moreover, a recent study by Hafer (2000) suggests that the BJW may also be related to the pursuit of personal goals. People with a strong BJW assume that the world is a reliable and orderly place where everyone gets what they deserve (Dalbert, 2001). Based on this assumption, they can be confident that their current work and investments will pay off and be of benefit to them in the future. This is a basic condition for the formation and pursuit of personal goals. Personal goals, particularly high-level goals, may comprise numerous subgoals that need to be attained in preparation for the overarching goal (Emmons, 1989). Moreover, many important personal goals—especially vocational goals, but also social goals related to marriage and family life—consist in long-range goals that will not be attained for many years to come (e.g. Nurmi, 1989). Consequently, a considerable amount of time may elapse between today's efforts and future outcomes. Thus, it is crucial to believe that the world is a just place and that one will eventually be able to reap the rewards of one's effort. If the world were not just, it might well be that undeserving others benefit from one's investments. Indeed, Hafer (2000) showed a relationship between the BJW and personal goals. The more strongly participants focused on their long-term goals, the more they tried to protect their BJW. Clearly, then, the BJW is an important precondition for investment in long-term goals. This finding supports the idea that the BJW helps motivate investment in long-term goals, particularly as the BJW has been shown to be a rather stable personality trait (Dalbert, 2001) whereas personal goals are more situationally variable and thus less stable. Consequently, it seems likely that BJW should be a potential predictor of the estimated probability of success in personal goal

Aims of the present study

In the following study, we aim to explore the relationship between BJW and the expected probability of success in adolescents' vocational and social goals. Specifically, we investigate whether general and personal BJW are still predictive of higher probability of success in personal goals after controlling for the big five personality factors. Moreover, we examine whether general and personal BJW show specific relationships with estimated success in the two different goal domains after domain-specific predictors—i.e. preparation for vocational training (for vocational goals) and social self-efficacy (for social goals)—are introduced as concurrent predictors.

OUR STUDY

Sample and procedure

The sample consisted of 392 adolescents attending the 9th grade of 12 German secondary schools of the 'Realschule' type.¹¹ Gender was equally distributed, with 195 girls and 196 boys (one person did not indicate his or her gender). The mean age was 15.1 years ($SD = 0.61$; range 14-17 years). The assessment was conducted in the classroom during the lesson time. Written consent was obtained from students, parents and teachers prior to data collection.

Measures

Probability of success in vocational and social goals. First, participants were asked to list their two most important vocational goals and their two most important social goals in a free format. They were then instructed to estimate the subjective probability of success in each goal with the following instruction: 'Please indicate the probability of success in your goals'. The answer format was a 6-point Likert-type scale ranging from 6 ('very high probability of success') to 1 ('very low probability of success'). The mean of the two vocational goals ratings was used as a measure of the probability of success in vocational goals; and the mean of the two social goals ratings as a measure of the probability of success in social goals.

General and personal BJW. To measure the personal BJW, we used the Personal Belief in a Just World Scale (Dalbert, 1999). The scale consists of seven items (e.g. 'I believe that, by and large, I deserve what happens to me'). The reliability (Cronbach's alpha) was $\alpha = .83$. For the general BJW, we used the General Belief in a Just World Scale (Dalbert, Montada and Schmitt, 1987). The scale comprises six items (e.g. 'I think basically the world is a just place'). The reliability was $\alpha = .75$. Both scales employed a 6-point Likert-type answer format ranging from 6 ('totally agree') to 1 ('totally disagree'). As with all other scales, scores were calculated by averaging across items. Big Five Personality Factors. The big five personality factors were measured with a 30-item short form of the NEO Five Factor Inventory (Costa and McCrae, 1992; German version: Borkenau and Ostendorf, 1993) as developed by Trautwein, Köller, Watermann, Lüdtke, Maaz, Nagy and Baumert (in prep.). The inventory captures individual differences on the five personality traits neuroticism ($\alpha = .70$), extraversion ($\alpha = .57$), openness ($\alpha = .52$), agreeableness ($\alpha = .56$) and conscientiousness ($\alpha = .67$). The scale consisted of five items for the subscale openness (one item had to be excluded due to low item-total correlation) and six items for each of the other subscales. The answer format was a 4-point Likert-type scale ranging from 4 ('totally agree') to 1 ('totally disagree'). Social self-efficacy. Social self-efficacy was measured with

¹¹Germany has a three-tier system of secondary school education, with the Realschule representing the middle level. Many students attending Realschule leave secondary school education after 10th grade to begin vocational training. Thus, for Realschule students, the 9th grade is the year before graduation, and the time when choices about future professions have to be made.

the 8-item social self-efficacy scale developed by Satow and Mittag (1999). The scale captures participants' feelings of competence in difficult social situations (e.g. 'I easily find friends after moving to a new school'). Reliability was $\alpha = .66$. The answer format was the same 6-point scale as for the BJW scales. Preparations for vocational training were measured with 10 statements describing activities involved in the preparation for vocational training. (e.g. 'I have gathered information about schools offering vocational training'). The participants were asked to indicate whether or not they had already undertaken each action (dichotomous answer format), and positive responses were summed to give a score between 0 and 10. This measure was designed specifically for the purposes of the present study.

RESULTS

First, we inspected the bivariate correlations (see Table 1). The general as well as the personal BJW correlated significantly and in the expected direction with the probability of success in both vocational and social goals. Furthermore, preparations for vocational training, neuroticism, openness and conscientiousness correlated significantly with the probability of success in vocational goals. Social self-efficacy also correlated significantly with the probability of success vocational goals, and this correlation was of the same magnitude as that between social self-efficacy and the probability of success in social goals. Besides social self-efficacy, extraversion and conscientiousness showed significant correlations in the expected direction with the probability of success in social goals. We did not find a significant correlation between the probability of success in social goals and preparations for vocational training.

— insert Table 1 about here —

Bivariate correlations do not allow conclusions to be drawn on the relative importance of variables, however. Thus, we computed two separate multiple regression analyses to further test our assumptions. To prevent the accumulation of suppressor effects, only the variables that showed significant correlations with the criterion were entered in the regression equation and accepted as significant predictors if $p < .05$. This procedure allows the stable effects to be more pronounced and the unstable effects to be less important. The results of these regression analyses are shown in Figure 1.

— insert Figure 1 about here —

For the vocational goals, both beliefs in a just world, social self-efficacy, preparation for vocational training, neuroticism, openness and conscientiousness were entered into the regression procedure. Four significant predictors emerged from the regression. The more the adolescents endorsed the general BJW, the less neurotic and the more conscientious they were, and the more preparations they had made for vocational training, the higher the estimated probability of success in their vocational goals (see Figure 1). Together, the predictor variables explained 12 per cent of the variance. For the social goals, both beliefs in a just world, social self-efficacy, extraversion and conscientiousness were entered in the regression procedure. Two significant predictors emerged from the regression. The more the adolescents believed in a personal just world and the stronger their social self-efficacy, the higher their estimated probability of success in social goals (see Figure 1). Together, the two predictors explained 5 per cent of the variance.

DISCUSSION

In sum, the present findings show that the general and the personal BJW are significant

predictors of social and vocational goals, specifically of the probability of success in these goals. Adolescents with stronger beliefs in a just world assign a higher probability of success to their goals than do adolescents with a weaker BJW. This holds true even when concurrent predictors are entered into the regression equation. Furthermore, an important new finding emerged. Although both BJWs correlated with both goals to a comparable degree, the multiple regression revealed that the personal and general BJW were predictive of different goal contents: The general BJW was related to vocational goals and the personal BJW to social goals. This supports the need for a distinction between a personal and general domain of BJW and adds to the specific description of the two goal contents.

The probability of success in vocational goals was enhanced by the general BJW and additionally by intense preparation for vocational training, low neuroticism and high conscientiousness. This is in line with previous studies (Little, 1989; Little, Lecci and Watkinson, 1992). Personality, measured in terms of conscientiousness and neuroticism, predicted the probability of success in vocational goals. Furthermore and as expected, investments in goal attainment—here, preparations for vocational training—seem to increase the probability of success in vocational goals. In addition to all these factors, adolescents were most likely to believe that they would be able to achieve their goals if they had a strong general BJW, and if the impact of this general BJW was of a similar magnitude to that of their preparations for vocational training. Finally, on the bivariate level, social self-efficacy had shown a significant correlation with the probability of success in vocational goals, of the same magnitude as that with social goals. Although it is plausible to assume that social self-efficacy is also important in the vocational realm, in the multiple regression, the relation was no longer significant. Social self-efficacy showed a significant correlation with conscientiousness and neuroticism. This suggests that personality and social self-efficacy might explain the same portion of variance in the criterion. Thus, the multiple regression for the probability of success in vocational goals revealed only conscientiousness and neuroticism, but not social self-efficacy, to be influential.

The probability of success in social goals was enhanced by a strong personal BJW and additionally by strong social self-efficacy. The more the adolescents believed that the world is fair for them personally, and the more convinced they were that they can actively influence the outcomes of social situations, the higher their expectations of success in their personal goals. In addition to these two predictors, we had expected that strong extraversion would significantly increase the probability of success of social goals. Extraversion, shown to be related to social goals in prior research (Little et al., 1992), displayed a significant bivariate correlation with the probability of success in social goals, but had no such effect in the multiple regression. The reason for this could be the comparatively high correlation of extraversion with social self-efficacy. As both constructs were related, they might explain the same portion of variance in the criterion, meaning that only one predictor has a significant influence.

The limitations of the present study relate to three main points. First, we conducted our research with German high school students attending the 9th grade of Realschule (see Footnote 1). Therefore, it is questionable if our findings can be generalised to adolescents of other age groups, school education, or nationality. Second, although we have presented our findings in a way that suggests causality, our conclusions must remain preliminary, because our data were cross-sectional in nature. Future studies may profit from replicating the present findings in a longitudinal design to test the causal nature of the relationships reported here. Third, our study focused on one goal dimension only, namely the subjective probability of success. Even though this dimension has been shown to be intimately associated with a person's commitment to his or her personal goals, future studies should include additional goal dimensions associated with commitment, such as goal importance (Metz-Göckel and Leffelsend, 2001), or include direct measures of goal commitment (e.g.

Brunstein, 1993) in the assessment of adolescents' vocational and social goals.

Our data provide a further piece of evidence indicating that the distinction between the general and personal BJW is indeed useful and justified. Both the general and the personal BJW were predictive for the probability of success. On the bivariate level, both BJWs showed significant correlations with the probabilities of success in either content area. Interestingly, however, in the multiple regression, the general and personal belief were predictive of different goal contents. This finding is quite new, but is compatible with recent research (Dalbert, 1999, 2001). In our sample of school students, vocational goals were predicted by the general BJW. A possible explanation for this could be that vocational goals, which are still somewhat abstract for the students, are less closely related to their personal experiences. This corresponds with the general BJW, which is more distant to personal experience. Social goals, on the other hand, are probably closer and more familiar to the students. These were related to the personal BJW, which is likewise closer to personal experience. Thus far, the BJW has seldom been included in personal goal research (e.g. Hafer, 2000). Our results provide useful information in this respect. The belief in just world fosters a positive evaluation of the probability of success, which in turn strengthens goal commitment.

CONCLUSION

These results have several theoretical and practical implications. The BJW with its two facets general and personal BJW showed significant relations to personal goals, specifically to the probability of success in vocational and social goals. Moreover, the general and personal BJW were predictive for different areas of goal content. Thus, the theoretical distinction between a general and a personal BJW also seems to be useful in relation to personal goals, and should be examined in more detail in further research. The practical implications of our study are of equal importance. At the start of this chapter, we asked how adolescents could be helped to select and pursue their personal goals. In order to assist adolescents to master their transition into adulthood, it may be useful not only to support their efforts for goal attainment, but also to strengthen their belief in a just world.

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Table 1. Means, standard deviations, and bivariate correlations

	M	SD	Correlation											
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
1. Probability of success in vocational goals	4.24	1.01												
2. Probability of success in social goals	4.83	0.95	.21***											
3. General BJW	3.70	1.00	.14**	.14**										
4. Personal BJW	4.13	0.90	.15**	.16**	.63***									
5. Neuroticism	2.43	0.60	-.20***	-.09	.07	-.08								
6. Extraversion	3.11	0.48	.10	.13*	.03	.11*	-.17**							
7. Openness	2.54	0.56	.10*	-.04	.01	.11*	.03	.01						
8. Agreeableness	2.60	0.46	.01	.04	.01	.01	-.17**	.15**	-.06					
9. Conscientiousness	3.01	0.54	.26***	.12*	.20***	.27***	-.16**	.25***	.15**	-.00				
10. Social self-efficacy	4.72	0.71	.20***	.20***	.21***	.27***	-.15**	.38***	.17**	.05	.35***			
11. Preparations for vocational training	3.57	1.91	.14**	.05	-.07	-.02	-.05	.11*	.02	.04	.18***	.14**		

Note. N = 392. BJW = belief in a just world.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

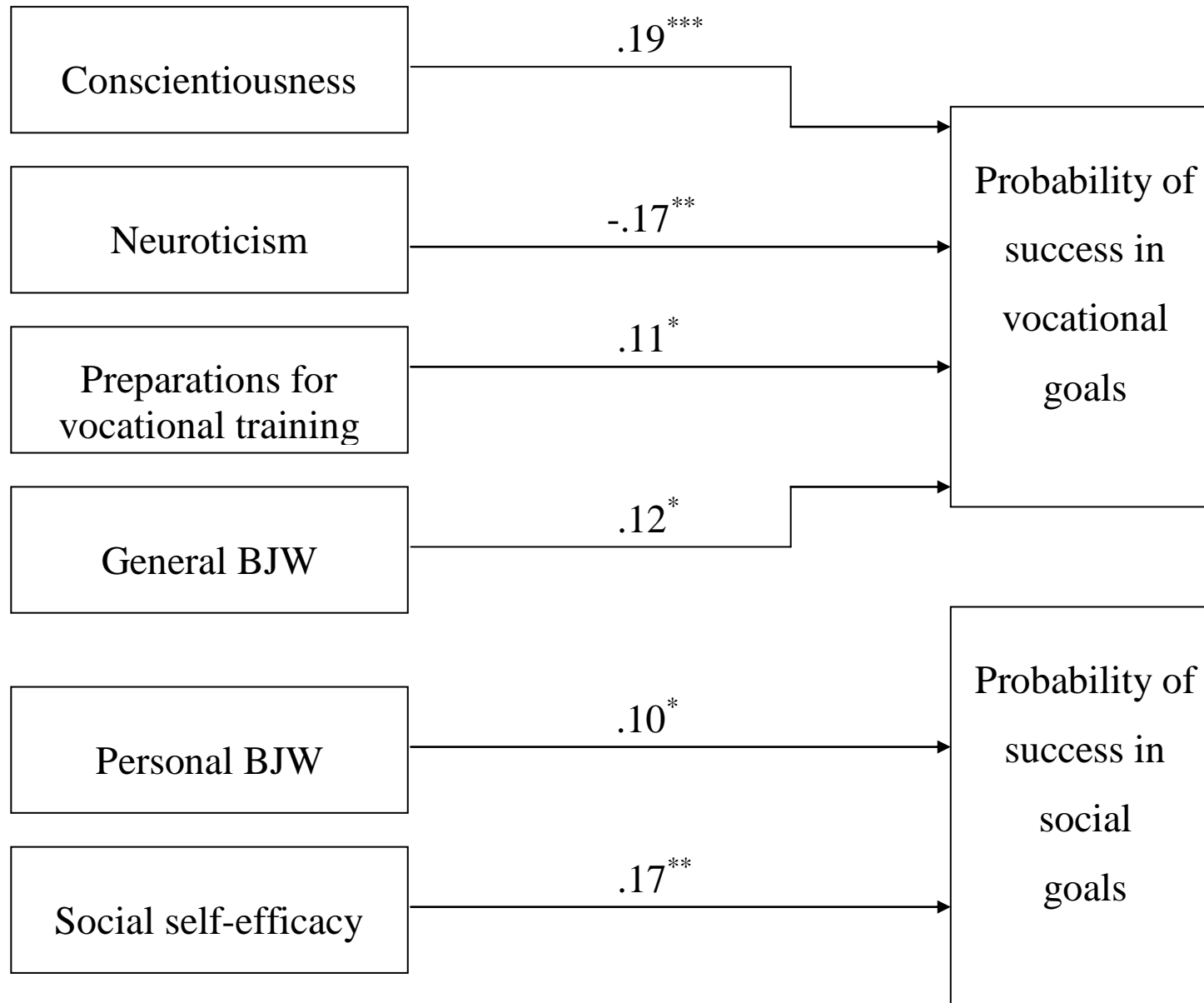


Figure 1. The prediction of the probability of success in adolescents' vocational and social goals (BJW = belief in a just world; standardized regression coefficients; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$)