

The Influence of Family Social Class on Career Choice: From the Perspective of Social Cognition

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Abstract: Based on the cognitive theory of social stratum, this paper discusses the influence of family social stratum on self-concern and others' concern career choice, as well as its mechanism and boundary conditions. Through questionnaire method (Study 1) and experimental method (Study 2), the results show that family social class is positively correlated with ego-focused occupations and negatively correlated with others concerned occupations; independent self-construal plays a mediating role between family social stratum and ego-focused occupation, while interdependent self-construal plays a mediating role between family social stratum and other concerned occupation; individual and collectivist values regulate the family social class by predicting the indirect effect of career choice through self-construal.

Keywords: Family social class; Career choice; Social stratum cognitive theory; Self-construal; Individualism and collectivism values

1. Question Raising

Career choice is an important decision-making behavior of individuals connecting the society. Previous studies related to career choice mostly used professional fields (literature, music, etc.), functions (accounting, doctors, etc.) or conditions (income, status, etc.) as the basis for classifying career types^[1,2], few studies examine the relationship between social class and career choice from the perspective of individual cognition of the relationship between self and others. The reason may be that previous studies usually assume that job seekers are economically rational and try to maximize their own interests^[3]. However, with the prosperity of society and the change of people's work concept, the role of perceptual or subjective cognitive factors is becoming more and more prominent. For example, many college students do not engage in occupations related to their major after graduation. In addition to the factors of market choice, some reasons may come from their subjective cognition of the profession. The work related to the major may match their knowledge and skills, but it cannot match their cognitive characteristics^[1,4]. This shows that in addition to objective factors, the cognitive characteristics of

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occupation will also affect individual career choice behavior. Workplace is a social environment that includes person-person and person-job interaction. The cognitive characteristics of career can be reflected in the relationship between individuals and others or the environment. Specifically, when individuals pay more attention to their own abilities and development, they may ignore the connection with others, and have more self-centered emotional experience in the process of work, such as pointing to the happiness and pride within themselves when achieving achievements. Therefore, they tend to engage in ego focused occupations; when individuals pay more attention to the harmonious social relationship in the collective or working environment, they will attach great importance to the change of their relationship with others, and are prone to other centered emotions, such as empathy and sense of peace pointing to others^[5]. Therefore, they tend to engage in other focused careers. The study found that individuals are more willing to choose occupations that are consistent with their cognitive characteristics, because the consistency of occupational cognitive characteristics will make them think they are more matched with their occupations, so as to promote personal development and job performance^[6,7].

As the main living background of an individual, the differences in objective resources and subjective experience play an important role in the development of individual cognitive tendency, The social economic state of origin (hereinafter referred to as family social class) may affect the specific performance of individuals in their career by affecting their subjective cognition^[8,9]. For example, some studies have found that individuals with high family social class prefer to regard work as a source of personal satisfaction and can show more personal leadership than individuals with low family social class^[10]. According to the social cognitive theory of social stratum^[11], individuals with low family social stratum often face the lack of resources, resulting in their low sense of control over life, more dependent on the external environment and pay attention to the thoughts and behaviors of others, so they prefer situational cognition guided by the external environment; in contrast, individuals with high family and social class have more material and experience resources. These resources bring them more choices and give them more opportunities to express their feelings and pursue and achieve their goals. Therefore, they prefer individual oriented solipsistic cognition. That is, individuals with low family social class pay more attention to the relationship between themselves and others or the environment, while individuals with high family social class tend to focus on self-related factors^[12-15]. Therefore, based on the influence of family social class on the cognition of the relationship between self and others, we speculate that individuals of high/low family social class may also show certain cognitive preferences in career choice.

Hypothesis 1: family social class has a significant positive predictive effect on ego-focused occupations and a significant negative predictive effect on others concerned occupations.

In addition, the social stratum cognitive theory also explains the cognitive characteristics of individuals at different levels from the perspective of self-concept, that is, individuals with low family social stratum have holistic and relevant self-concept, and individuals with high family social stratum have analytical and autonomous self-concept^[16]. Since self-concept plays a guiding role in individual decision-making behavior, individual understanding and definition of self, that is, self-construal, may play an important role between family, social class and career choice. Markus and Kitayama^[17] divide self-construal into independent self-construal and interdependent self-construal. The former takes its own internal attributes, such as personality, ability and attitude, as the core of self-concept, while the latter pays more attention to the relationship between self and others or the outside world^[19,20]. It is found that individuals with high family social class have stronger independent self-construal, while individuals with low family social class have stronger interdependent self-construal. The reason may be that individuals with high family social class pay more attention to themselves and express their attitude based on the richness of resources, and tend to define themselves with their own characteristics or characteristics, so as to develop a strong independent self-construal; on the contrary, individuals with low family and social class

are more limited by objective resources, they think that they have few choices and low sense of personal control, so they pay more attention to the vision and evaluation of others, regard themselves as interdependent with others and society, and tend to define themselves through their relationship with others. Thus, a strong interdependent self-construal is developed^[20-22]. At the same time, the social cognitive career theory of Lent, Brown and Hackett^[23] and the career theory of Super^[24] also emphasize the close relationship between self-construal and career choice. Career choice and development is a process in which individuals gradually realize their self-concept. People complete the construction of self-concept through career choice, and self-concept in turn will guide their career choice, that is, self-construction and career choice affect and complement each other. Ego-focused occupation will promote the autonomy of independent self-construal individuals, and the requirements of independent self-construal on individual internal attributes (such as individual ability, goal, etc.) Also urge them to choose ego-focused occupation; similarly, other people's attention occupation will promote the connection of social relations of interdependent self-construal individuals, and the requirements of interdependent self-construal on the external environment will also urge them to choose other people's attention occupation.

Hypothesis 2a: Independent self-construal plays a mediating role between family social class and ego-focused occupation.

Hypothesis 2b: Interdependent self-construal plays an intermediary role between family social class and others' concerned occupation.

It is worth noting that although the living environment of the family and social class as individuals has a certain impact on their self-construal, the relationship between the two will also be subject to a more macro factor—values. As a frame of reference for defining self, values have an important impact on individual self-construal^[25-27]. At present, most studies divide values into two types: Individualism and collectivism, the former pays attention to individual goals and rights, while the latter is guided by collective interests and pursues collective goals^[28]. In this study, although the family social class provides certain resource conditions for self-construal, the type and intensity of self-construal eventually formed by individuals will be affected by values. Specifically, when individuals have strong individualistic values, they mainly give priority to their own needs and interests. Compared with the lower family social class, the rich resources provided by the higher family social class can alleviate the pressure brought by the external environment, give individuals more opportunities and conditions to pay attention to and develop themselves, and promote their independent self-construal; however, when the individual's collectivist values are strong, the interests of others and the team are given priority. Compared with the higher family social class, the environment created by the lower family social class will make the individual pay more attention to the connection between self and others, so as to promote their interdependent self-construal. That is, when the types of self-construal are consistent with the characteristics of values, the influence of family and social stratum on self-construal is more significant.

Hypothesis 3a: Individualistic values regulate the relationship between family social class and independent self-construal. The stronger the individualism, the stronger the positive predictive effect of family and social class on independent self-construal, on the contrary, the weaker it is.

Hypothesis 3b: Collectivist values regulate the relationship between family social class and interdependent self-construal. The stronger the collectivist concept, the stronger the negative predictive effect of family and social class on interdependent self-construal, and vice versa.

The above hypothesis further reveals two regulated mediation models.

Hypothesis 4a: Individualistic values regulate the mediating role of independent self-construal between family social class and ego-focused occupation. The stronger the individualism is, the stronger the mediating effect of independent self-construal between family social class and ego-focused occupation is, on the contrary,

the weaker it is.

Hypothesis 4b: Collectivist values regulate the mediating role of interdependent self-construal between family social class and other concerned occupations. The stronger collectivism is, the stronger the mediating effect of interdependent self-construal between family social class and other people's concerned occupation is, and vice versa.

To sum up, based on the individual's cognition of the relationship between self and others, this study divides occupations into ego-focused and others concerned occupations, and discusses the influence of family and social stratum on these two types of career choices, as well as the action mechanism (self-construal) and boundary conditions (values) for the first time. Firstly, it provides a new perspective for the research of "career matching" based on people's cognition and practice; secondly, the mediating role of self-construal not only supports the main viewpoints of social stratum cognitive theory, but also reveals the internal mechanism of family social stratum affecting career choice; thirdly, the regulating role of values is also conducive to clarify the shaping conditions of family social class for self-construal, so as to better understand the relationship between family social class and career choice; finally, the results of the study can also expand the practical application of social stratum cognitive theory in career choice, and provide theoretical guidance for individual job selection and enterprise recruitment.

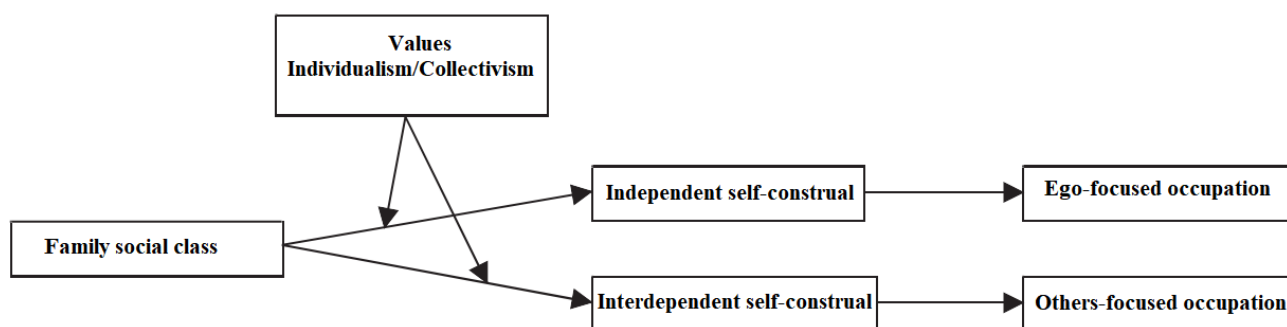


Figure 1. Research hypothesis model.

2. Study 1: The Influence of Family Social Stratum on Career Choice and the Intermediary Role of Self-Construal

2.1. Research object

Study 1 distributed questionnaires to workers from all walks of life in China, covering 10 provinces in China. In order to improve the recovery rate of the questionnaire and urge the subjects to answer the questions carefully, inform the subjects before filling in that their answers can only be paid after being reviewed and approved by the main test. After statistics, a total of 330 questionnaires were distributed, and 326 questionnaires were recovered (the recovery rate was 98.79%). After excluding the serious missing data, 265 valid questionnaires were finally obtained (the effective rate was 81.29%). Among them, there are 127 males, accounting for 47.92% of the total, with an average age of 30.66 years ($SD = 7.56$ years). From the registered residence situation, 144 people from the city accounted for 54.34% of the total proportion.

2.2. Research scale

In order to ensure the reliability and validity of the measurement tools, this study adopts the scales commonly

used in the existing literature. Before the formal finalization of the questionnaire, college students are taken as subjects to simulate the questionnaire distribution process and test, so as to evaluate the appropriateness of questionnaire design and expression, and modify the wording and typesetting of the questionnaire appropriately.

2.2.1. Family social class

The scale developed by Lu^[29] based on China's localization is adopted. The scale is divided into 10 classes based on political, economic and cultural resources, including 10 levels from low to high, from the unemployed to national and social managers, with a value of 1-10 respectively. The subjects were required to report what kind of occupation their parents belong to, and take the higher score of their parents to represent the objective social class level of their family. The higher the score, the higher the social class will be.

2.2.2. Self-construal

The self constructed scale compiled by Ng^[30] was used, including 10 questions and scored with 5 points. Five of them belong to the independent self-construal scale, such as "I like to receive praise or reward in public", The scale's internal consistency α coefficient is 0.70; the other five belong to the interdependent self-construal scale. For example, "my happiness depends on the people around me", the scale's internal consistency α coefficient is 0.70.

2.2.3. Career choice

Based on the research of Han and Ling^[31], this paper gives a specific and detailed description of self-care occupations and others' attention occupations, and requires subjects to score the degree of conformity between their occupations and these two occupations by 5 points respectively. The content description of ego-focused occupation is as follows: "your career often evokes ego-focused emotions, such as personal pleasure and pride. The work process emphasizes personal internal attributes (such as ability and goal), and requires individual knowledge, experience and expression." The content description of other people's concerned occupation is as follows: "your career often evokes other centered emotions, such as empathy and harmony. In the process of work, you emphasize the connection between individuals and others (such as social and colleague relations), and tend to associate with or be close to others in the social environment. Your work requires unity and coordination, and harmony prevails."

2.3. Research results

2.3.1. Common method deviation inspection

Firstly, the Harman single factor test was conducted by SPSS 22.0. The results of non rotating principal component factor analysis showed that the variation explained by the first factor was only 22.6%, which was less than the critical standard of 40%. Secondly, the confirmatory factor analysis is carried out with AMOS 17.0. The results show that the proposed hypothetical model has good fitting (CFI = 0.91, IFI = 0.91, RESEA = 0.06, χ^2/df = 1.82, $p < 0.001$), indicating that the discriminant validity between the research variables is good, and there is no obvious homologous deviation.

2.3.2. Descriptive statistics

Table 1 presents the mean, standard deviation, correlation coefficient and internal consistency coefficient of Study 1 variables. As shown in **Table 1**, family social class is significantly positively correlated with independent self-construal ($r = 0.32$, $p < 0.001$) and ego-focused occupation ($r = 0.22$, $p < 0.001$), and independent self-

construal and self-care occupation are significantly positively correlated ($r = 0.32, p < 0.001$); there was a significant negative correlation between family social class and interdependent self-construal ($r = -0.33, p < 0.001$) and others' attention occupation ($r = -0.19, p = 0.001$), and there was a significant positive correlation between interdependent self-construal and other-focused occupation ($r = 0.43, p < 0.001$).

Table 1. Mean, standard deviation and correlation coefficient of Study 1 variables ($n = 265$)

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1 Gender	1.52	0.50							
2 Age	30.66	7.56	-0.04						
3 Urban and rural areas	1.46	0.50	0.05	-0.03					
4 Family social class	5.16	2.82	-0.10	-0.04	-0.31***				
5 Independent self-construal	3.55	0.64	0.01	0.06	-0.20**	0.32***			
6 Interdependent self-construal	3.31	0.65	0.001	-0.02	0.07	-0.33***	0.09		
7. Ego-focused occupation	3.23	1.10	-0.13*	-0.02	-0.19**	0.22***	0.32***	-0.04	
8. Other-focused occupation	3.20	0.90	0.14*	-0.04	0.14*	-0.19**	-0.15**	0.43***	-0.22***

Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$ (bilateral), the same below.

2.3.3. Hypothesis test

Firstly, hierarchical regression is used to test hypothesis 1. The results in **Table 2** show that family social class has a significant positive predictive effect on ego-focused occupations ($\beta = 0.16, p = 0.01$), which has a significant negative predictive effect on other people's concerned occupations ($\beta = -0.16, p = 0.01$), hypothesis 1 is verified. Then, the process program model 4 to test the mediation effect made by Hayes^[32] is used to verify hypothesis 2. The results in **Table 3** show that the indirect effect value of independent self-construal between family social stratum and ego-focused occupation is 0.03, and its 95% confidence interval is [0.02, 0.06], excluding 0, which indicates that independent self-construal plays a significant intermediary role between family social stratum and ego-focused occupation. Hypothesis 2a is verified. The indirect effect value of interdependent self-construal between family social class and other people's concerned occupation is -0.04, and its 95% confidence interval is [-0.06, -0.03], excluding 0, which indicates that the intermediary effect of interdependent self-construal between family social class and other-focused occupation is significant, and hypothesis 2b is verified.

Table 2. Hierarchical regression analysis of Study 1

	Ego-focused occupation		Other-focused occupation	
	M1	M2	M3	M4
Gender	-0.12	-0.10	0.13*	0.11
Age	-0.02	-0.02	-0.04	-0.04
Urban and rural	-0.19**	-0.14*	0.13*	0.08
Family social class		0.16**		-0.16**
R^2	0.04**	0.06**	0.03*	0.04**
ΔR^2	0.05**	0.02**	0.04*	0.02**

Table 3. Analysis of mediating role of self-construal in Study 1

		Effect value	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
Ego-focused occupation	Family social class	0.05	0.02	0.01	0.10
	Independent self-construal	0.03	0.01	0.02	0.06
Other-focused occupation	Family social class	-0.02	0.02	-0.06	0.02
	Interdependent self-construal	-0.04	0.01	-0.06	-0.03

2.4. Study 1 discussion

Study 1 investigated the influence of family social stratum on career choice and the intermediary role of self-construal between them. The results show that the family social class has a significant positive predictive effect on ego-focused occupations and a significant negative predictive effect on others concerned occupations, which

shows that there are differences in career choices among individuals of different family social classes. More importantly, the results of Study 1 also show that self-construal mediates the relationship between family social class and career choice, that is, individuals with higher family social class have stronger independent self-construal, so they prefer to choose ego-focused career in the process of career choice; the individuals with lower family social class have stronger interdependent self-construal, so they tend to choose other people's concerned occupations in the process of career selection, that is, the family social class affects their career choice through individual self-construal.

However, some researchers believe that the objective measurement of family social class in Study 1 belongs to sociological variables rather than psychological variables, which leads to the neglect of the role of individuals in the subjective cognition of family social class and can not accurately reflect the impact of family social class^[33,34]. Therefore, Study 2 further investigated the influence of subjective cognition of family social class on career choice through experimental manipulation. In addition, as a holistic cognitive orientation, values also play an important role in the shaping process of family social class on self-construal. Therefore, Study 2 introduces values as a regulating variable to deeply explore the boundary conditions of family social class and self-construal type affecting career choice.

3. Study 2: The Moderating Role of Individualism and Collectivism Values

3.1. Subjects and procedures

216 college students participated in the experiment and questionnaire survey, and a total of 181 questionnaires were collected (the effective recovery rate was 83.80%), including 53 boys, with an average age of 22.94 years ($SD = 1.78$ years). All subjects participated voluntarily and had not participated in similar experiments before. Adopt 2 (subjective social class: (high, low) \times 2 (type of career choice: design between subjects of self concern type and others concern type).

Firstly, referring to the research of Kraus, Piff and Keltner^[35], the subjective family social class of the subjects was manipulated, and the subjects were randomly assigned to two groups, including 92 in the high social class group and 89 in the low social class group; secondly, referring to the method of Han *et al.*^[31], we describe the main characteristics of ego-focused occupations and other-focused occupations in the form of recruitment advertisements, and investigate the subjects' career choice preference by measuring the attraction of different types of recruitment advertisements to the subjects. Two groups of subjects from high/low family social strata will randomly get job advertisements with ego-focused or other-focused (that is, each subject can only get one type of job advertisement), and measure the attraction of the job advertisement to them in the form of questionnaire; Finally, the subjects were asked to fill in their basic personal information (gender, age, town/village) and related scales (self-construal scale, values scale). The specific experimental process is shown in **Figure 2**.

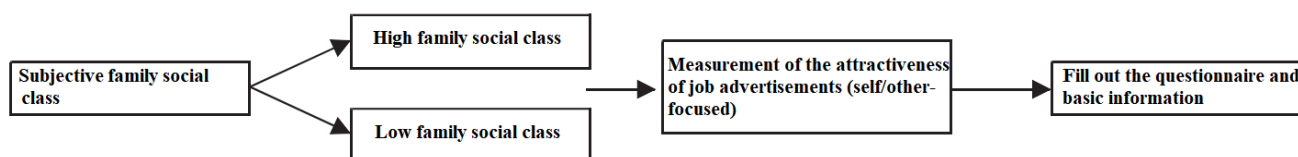


Figure 2. Experimental flow of Study 2.

3.2. Research scale

3.2.1. Family social class

Using MacArthur's subjective social class ladder scale and referring to the method of Kraus *et al.*^[35], the subjects' subjective family social class was manipulated through guidance. One group was manipulated by the high family social class, and the other group was manipulated by the low family social class. The individuals manipulated by the high family social class were required to compare their families with the families at the bottom of the society, while the individuals manipulated by the low family social class compared their families with the families at the top of the society, and then asked the subjects to fill in the score of their perceived social class, a total of 1-10 grades.

3.2.2. Career choice

With reference to the methods and materials of Han *et al.*^[31], the recruitment posters (including text and pictures) of ego-focused occupations and others concerned occupations were made respectively. First of all, in order to ensure that the recruitment advertisement can really convey the cognitive characteristics of self concern and others' concern to the subjects, two representative emotions of self concern and others' concern—pride and empathy were selected. The subjects were required to score the two types of recruitment advertisements by 7 points from three aspects: pride (self-confidence, excitement) and empathy (warm-hearted, emotional and touching); secondly, the subjects are required to fill in the degree of attraction of the profession to him/her according to their real situation, including 6 questions and 7 points. For example: "the job described in the advertisement is very attractive to me." The internal consistency α coefficient of the self-focused occupational scale was 0.78, and that of the other-focused occupational scale was 0.63.

3.2.3. Values scale

The values scale compiled by Oyserman^[36] is adopted, including 28 topics, which are scored by 7 points, of which 14 topics belong to the individualistic values scale. For example: "I made better decisions myself." The scale's internal consistency α coefficient is 0.77; the other 14 topics belong to the collectivist values scale, for example: "What's good for my team is good for me." The scale's internal consistency α coefficient was 0.93.

3.2.4. Self-construal scale

Consistent with Study 1, the self-construal scale compiled by Ng^[30] was used, with 7 points. The internal consistency α coefficient of the independent self-construal scale is 0.76, and the internal consistency α coefficient of the interdependent self-construal scale is 0.63.

3.3. Research results

3.3.1. Manipulation inspection

The results of *t*-test on the manipulation of family social stratum show that the subjects who accept the manipulation of high family social stratum have significantly higher subjective scores on family social stratum than those who accept the manipulation of low family social stratum ($t(179) = 9.70, p < 0.001$), which proves the effectiveness of family social stratum manipulation; through *t*-test on whether the two types of job advertisements can convey the characteristics of ego-focused and other-focused occupations, it is found that the pride experience induced by ego-focused occupations is significantly stronger than that induced by other-focused occupations ($t(179) = 2.64, p = 0.009$), and the empathy experience induced by other-focused occupations is significantly stronger

than that induced by self concern occupations ($t(179) = 3.66, p < 0.001$), which proves the effectiveness of job advertisement manipulation of the two types of occupations.

3.3.2. Descriptive statistics

The data of 181 valid subjects were analyzed by SPSS 22.0. **Table 4** and **Table 5** respectively present the mean, standard deviation, correlation coefficient and internal consistency coefficient of subjects in the self attention and others attention occupational groups on various research variables. From **Table 4** and **Table 5**, it can be seen that family social stratum is significantly correlated with intermediary variables and outcome variables, that is, it preliminarily meets the hypothesis.

3.3.3. Hypothesis test

Firstly, hierarchical regression is used to test the hypothesis. The results show that family social class has a significant positive predictive effect on self-care occupations ($\beta = 0.26, p = 0.01$), which has a significant negative predictive effect on other people's concerned occupations ($\beta = -0.40, p < 0.001$), hypothesis 1 was verified.

Table 4. Average value, standard deviation and correlation coefficient of each variable in Study 2 ego-focused occupation group ($n = 91$)

Variables	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6
1 Family social class	1.46	0.50						
2 Independent self-construal	3.91	1.00	0.60***	(0.79)				
3 Interdependent self-construal	4.22	0.79	-0.13	-0.31**	(0.63)			
4 Individualism	3.65	0.79	-0.28**	0.28**	-0.48***	(0.79)		
5 Collectivism	4.57	0.89	0.10	-0.04	0.55***	-0.37***	(0.89)	
6 Ego-focused occupation	3.59	0.81	0.28**	0.56***	-0.42***	0.34***	-0.10	(0.78)

Table 5. Average value, standard deviation and correlation coefficient of each variable in Study 2 other-focused occupation group ($n = 90$)

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6
1 Family social class	1.56	0.50						
2 Independent self-construal	4.18	0.64	0.50***	(0.65)				
3 Interdependent self-construal	3.81	0.60	-0.38***	-0.31**	(0.60)			
4 Individualism	4.15	0.59	0.09	0.23**	-0.12	(0.69)		
5 Collectivism	3.30	1.03	-0.72***	-0.46***	0.30**	-0.11	(0.91)	
6 Other-focused occupation	3.97	0.61	-0.38***	-0.19	0.66***	-0.09	0.24**	(0.63)

Then, the PROCESS plug-in model 4 produced by Hayes^[32] to test the mediation effect is used to verify hypothesis 2. The results in **Table 6** show that the indirect effect value of independent self-construal between family social stratum and ego-focused occupation is 0.60, and its 95% confidence interval does not include 0, which indicates that the mediation effect of independent self-construal between family social stratum and ego-focused occupation is significant, and hypothesis 2a is verified; the indirect effect value of interdependent self-construal between family social class and other-focused occupation is -0.28, and its 95% confidence interval does not include 0, which indicates that the intermediary of interdependent self-construal between family social class and other-focused occupation is significant, and hypothesis 2b is verified.

Secondly, the results of hierarchical regression also show that the interaction of family, social class and individualism has a significant positive predictive effect on independent self-construal ($\beta = 0.99, p = 0.005$), the interaction of family, social class and collectivism has a significant negative predictive effect on interdependent self-construal ($\beta = -1.12, p = 0.01$). In order to further verify the regulatory effect of hypothesis 3, a simple slope test was carried out, as shown in the interaction diagram (**Figure 3**). The higher the family social class is, the stronger the independent self-construal is. Regardless of the level of individualism, the influence of family social class on independent self-construal is significant. However, compared with low individualism ($\beta = 1.07, p <$

0.001), high individualism has a greater impact on the relationship between them ($\beta = 1.91, p < 0.001$). Hypothesis 3a is verified. At the same time, the lower the family social class, the stronger the interdependent self-construal is. Under the low level of collectivism, this kind of relationship is not obvious ($B = 0.38, p = 0.31$); under the high level of collectivism, this kind of relationship is very significant ($\beta = -0.74, p < 0.001$). Hypothesis 3b is verified.

Finally, the PROCESS plug-in model 7 is further used to test whether values can regulate the mediating role of self-construal. The results show that assuming that the 4A model is established ($R^2 = 0.32, F(2,88) = 22.70, p < 0.001$), the direct effect of family social stratum on self-care occupations is not significant ($\beta = -0.15, t(89) = -0.83, p = 0.41$), and the effect of independent self-construal on self-care occupations is significant ($\beta = 0.50, t(89) = 5.89, p < 0.001$). The moderating effect of individualism is shown in **Table 6**. Although the mediating effect of independent self-construal is significant at the three levels of individualism, the mediating effect of independent self-construal gradually increases as individualism changes from one standard deviation below the mean to one standard deviation above the mean. This shows that the higher the level of individualism, the stronger the mediating effect of independent self-construal, that is, there is a regulated mediating effect, and the hypothesis 4b is verified. At the same time, the PROCESS analysis results also show that hypothesis 4b is true ($R^2 = 0.46, F(2,87) = 12.24, p < 0.001$). Among them, the direct effect of family social class on other-focused occupations is not significant ($\beta = -0.19, t(88) = -1.85, p = 0.07$), and the influence of interdependent self-construal on other-focused occupations is significant ($\beta = 0.61, t(88) = 3.93, p < 0.001$). The regulating effect of collectivism is shown in **Table 6**. When collectivism is one standard deviation lower than the average, the influence of family social class on others' concerned occupations through interdependent self-construal is not significant; When collectivism is one standard deviation higher than the average, family social class has a significant impact on other people's concerned occupations through interdependent self-construal. This shows that the higher the level of collectivism, the stronger the mediating effect of interdependent self-construal, that is, there is a regulated mediating effect, and the hypothesis 4b is verified.

Table 6. Bootstrap test of total effect, mediation effect and regulated mediation effect

Total effect	Effect quantity		Boot 95% CI		
Family social class→ego-focused occupation	-0.15		[-0.50, 0.21]		
Family social class→other caring occupation	-0.19		[-0.39, 0.02]		
Intermediary effect					
Family social class→independent self-construal→ego-focused occupation	0.60		[0.33, 0.88]		
Family social class→interdependent self-construal→other-focused occupation	-0.28		[-0.44, -0.14]		
Mediated effect					
(Independent self-construal)	Effect quantity	Boot95%CI	(Interdependent self-construal)	Effect quantity	Boot 95%CI
Individualism—low	0.54	[0.30,0.81]	Collectivism—low	0.23	[-0.26, 0.67]
Individualism—medium	0.76	[0.45,1.05]	Collectivism—medium	-0.11	[-0.39, 0.11]
Individualism—high	0.95	[0.58,1.34]	Collectivism—high	-0.46	[-0.74, -0.21]

3.4. Research 2 Discussion

Study 2 used experimental manipulation of subjective family social class to investigate the impact of family social class on career choice and the role of self-construal and values. Firstly, the results of Study 2 shows that individuals with high family social class are more likely to be attracted by ego-focused occupations, and individuals with low family social class are more likely to be attracted by other-focused occupations. This result is consistent with Study 1; secondly, self-construal plays an intermediary role between family, social class and career choice, which is also consistent with Study 1; finally, Study 2 also confirmed that the mediating role of

self-construal is also different under the guidance of different values. That is, the higher the level of individualism, the stronger the mediating role of independent self-construal between family social class and ego-focused occupation, the higher the level of collectivism, and the stronger the mediating role of interdependent self-construal between family social class and other concerned occupation.

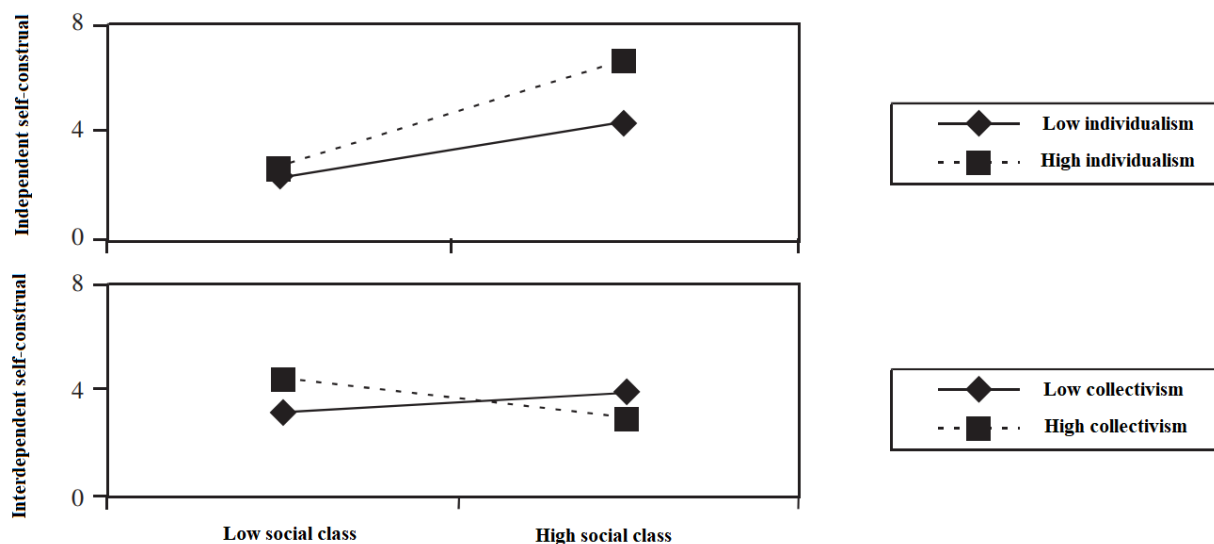


Figure 3. The moderating effect of values on the relationship between family social class and self-construal.

4. General Discussion

This study uses the questionnaire method (Study 1) and the experimental method (Study 2) to explore how the family social class affects the individual's choice preference for ego-focused occupations and other-focused occupations through the intermediary mechanism of independent self-construal and interdependent self-construal, and the intermediary role of the two types of self-construal will also be affected by the boundary condition of values. Generally speaking, when the cognitive characteristics of individuals and occupations are more consistent, they are more willing to engage in this kind of occupation. The results have certain enlightenment significance for job seekers and managers. Specifically, career choice requires individuals to weigh at least two aspects: objective conditions (professional skills, income, distance, etc.) and subjective cognition (social relations, organizational atmosphere). Appropriate weighing results are conducive to the good combination of employees and positions. However, when the trade-off is biased, for example, individuals may excessively pursue the objective conditions of their career without considering whether they match the cognitive characteristics of their career, or pay too much attention to the social relationship of their career without considering the matching degree of skills required by their career, which will have a certain negative impact on personal development and organizational performance, such as unable to effectively complete work objectives and poor adaptability to work, there may be more negative emotions at work, etc. It is worth noting that although there are high and low differences in social strata, there is no difference between good and bad cognitive tendencies. This study does not suggest that job seekers or managers should choose careers or recruit talents according to social strata, but based on the perspective of cognition, it helps people better understand or examine their choices when choosing jobs, so as to ensure job performance and promote personal all-round development.

In addition, by manipulating the subjective family social stratum, the research also shows that the family social stratum at the subjective cognitive level is not inherent and unchanged. Individuals' perception of the family social stratum can be changed by certain means, and such subjective cognition will affect their subsequent

behavior. Moreover, some studies have found that self-construal can also be initiated by experimental manipulation^[26,37]. This suggests that individuals or enterprises can use some psychological methods to guide themselves or employees scientifically and appropriately in their future career, so as to dig out more possibilities of employees in career development and achieve a benign match between people and positions.

Finally, this study also has some limitations. On the one hand, in order to reduce the pressure or fatigue caused by too many and too long questions when the subjects fill in the questionnaire, which affects the quality of the questionnaire results, the selected scales are relatively short, and the internal consistency coefficient is not high enough. For future research, a more high-quality and comprehensive scale can be selected and sampled again. On the other hand, the measurement of career choice in this study mainly refers to the research of Han *et al.*^[31]. Although it has some innovation, there is no mature scale at present. Future research can further develop the measurement methods of other people's attention occupations and self attention occupations.

5. Conclusion

Individuals with high family social class tend to choose ego-focused occupations based on their independent self-construal, while individuals with low family social class tend to choose others concerned occupations based on their interdependent self-construal; the stronger the individual's individualistic values, the more independent self-construal can promote the positive relationship between family, social class and ego-focused occupation; When the individual's collectivist values are stronger, the more interdependent self-construal can promote the negative relationship between family social class and other-focused occupation.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declared no conflict of interest.

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