

THE IMPLICATION OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT THEORIES FOR GUIDANCE COUNSELLORS

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ABSTRACT

Career development is a process, dynamic and developmental which encompasses both the pre-occupational and post-retirement years of a person's life. It means that most individuals have not just chosen a job once but end with it. He chooses and engages in many related activities all the way to attain his goals. It is imperative to understand that this career development process is where an individual fashions a work identity. In educational development, career development provides and helps a student in selecting a career or subject to undertake in the future. Educational institutions provide career counsellors to assist students with their educational development. Theories and research describing career behaviour provide the conceptual glue for as well as describe where, when and for what purpose interventions should be implemented. The current paper will focus on four theories that are related to career development and their practical implications for counsellors.

Keywords: Career, Career Development, Theories of Career Development and Counsellor

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In this age of increasing awareness and globalization, it is extremely essential to sanitize secondary school students about various career choices available to them. Educational institutions provide career counsellors to assist students with their educational development. It is imperative when educating the young people that the current school systems assist and consider the significance of this responsibility for the youths and their future. The influence on and outcomes of career development is one aspect of socialization as part of a broadened process of human development.

Industrialization makes available a wide range of career opportunities. Expanding opportunities in turn bring in their wake, uncertainty and confusion as to which job to choose. To meet this problem the field of career counselling has developed various theoretical rationales to give focus on the type of help counsellors give. These theories are very valuable to the counsellor. For they provide him with a map that helps to organise and put together, in a very simple useful and logical manner, the much data he collects on a given individual. Indeed, career development theories help provide the counsellor with the skills and knowledge he needs to help his client make decisions that will help accomplish objectives that lead to the client's personal growth. A counsellor should be able to help a client accurately anticipate the consequences of his decisions might be. It is his use of theory, that will therefore enable him to predict his client's behaviour more successfully. The rest of this

paper deals with the following: Career; Career Development; Theories of Career Development and the practical implication of the Theory of Career Development for Guidance Counsellors.

2.0 CAREER

A career is defined as a pattern of work experiences comprising the entire life span of a person and which is generally seen with regard to a number of phases or stages reflecting the transition from one stage to the next (Weinert; 2001). Super (1957) defines a career as the sequence of major positions occupied by a person throughout his preoccupation, occupational and post-occupational life, including work-related roles such as those of students, employees and pensioners, together with complementary vocational familial and civil roles. Arthur, Hall and Lawrence (1989) define a career as the evolving sequence of a person's work experience over time. According to Ukpabia (2012) career is a function of both one's internal orientation and external factors.

3.0 CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Career development is the lifelong process of managing progression in learning and work. The quality of this process significantly determines the nature and quality of individuals' lives: the kind of people they become, the sense of purpose they have, and the income at their disposal. It also determines the social and economic contribution they make to the communities and societies of which they are part.

According to Achebe (2008), Career development is a process, dynamic and developmental which encompasses both the preoccupation and post-retirement years of a person's life. It is a lifelong process of developing beliefs, values, attitudes, skills personality and knowledge of the world of work (Ekpenyong: 2010).

In the world of Sharma (2016) career development is a continuous lifelong process of developmental experiences that focuses on seeking, obtaining and processing information about safe, occupational and educational alternatives, lifestyles and role options. It is the process through which people come to understand them as they relate to the world of work and their role in it. Career development in this sense need not be confined to the few: it can, and must, be made accessible to all.

Career development matters, both for individuals and for the country as a whole. According to Atueyi and Isiaku (2011), career development can be seen as the hub of any meaningful development since man heeds to all activities on earth. It is important to note that when a youth is developed career-wise, he now has ample opportunity, skill and zeal to develop the nation.

4.0 THEORIES OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Theories are thus, usefully to counsellors in career counselling in articulating more clearly, the help he gives their client, how and why he gives that help and what the expected result would be. An overview of the major theories that have practical implications for school counsellors is examined hereby.

To this end four theories namely Super's Developmental Theory, Parson's Trait and Factor Theory, Holland's Need/Personality Theory and Gottfredson's Career Choice Theory of Circumscription Compromises.

4.1 Super's Developmental Theory

The developmental theory was propounded by Super in 1990. The theory postulated that career choice and development is essentially a process of developing and implementing a person's self-concept. According to Super (1990), self-concept is a product of complete interactions among a number of factors, including physical and mental growth, personal experience, and environment characteristics and stimulation. The theory assumes that career development is a lifelong process which involves a series of decisions extending over many years of an individual's life. Each decision one makes involves a compromise between one's self-concept and the reality of the work situation and between social context and the reciprocal influence between the person and the environment. A relatively stable self-concept should emerge in late adolescence to serve as a guide to career choice and adjustment. However, self-concept is not a static entity and it would continue to evolve as the person encounters new experiences and progresses through the developmental stage. Life and work satisfaction is a continual process of implementing the evolving self-concept through work and other life roles.

Indeed, the career development theory proceeds in sequential life stages starting from birth till death each with further discrete sub-stages one proceeds from growth (0-14 years) and sequentially to exploration (15-24), establishment (25-45), and decline (65-death). Each state has its own development tasks: In each state, one has to successfully manage the vocational development tasks that are socially expected of persons in the given chronological age range. Super (1990) postulates that a mini cycle consisting of the same stages from growth to decline would likely take place within each if the stages, particularly when a person makes the transition from one state to the next.

In addition, individuals would go through a mini-cycle of the stages whenever they have to make expected and unexpected career transitions such as loss of employment or due to personal or socioeconomic development is not a liner process of self-concept implementation, but a process of negotiations and compromise in which both the self and one's environment have to be consulted. The concept of life role can also be useful in understanding the cultural dynamics involved in the career choice process.

4.2 Parson's Trait and Factor Theory

According to Pattson (2014), the trait and factor theory was propounded by Parson in 1909. The theory states that an individual possesses a unique pattern of traits. These are abilities, interests and personal characteristics which are fairly stable since they seldom change after adolescence. Trait and factor theory relies on measurement and objective data that is interpreted by an expert who, on that basis also makes predictions about an individual's suitability for a future job. There are three main elements of traits and factor theory which help in career selection.

- a) A clear understanding of yourself, aptitudes, abilities, interests, resources, limitations and other qualities.
- b) A knowledge of the requirements and conditions of success, advantages and disadvantages, compensation, opportunities and prospects in different lines of work and
- c) True reasoning on the relations of these two groups of facts.

According to Parson each of these three elements represents a major contribution to career theory and practice, both of which formed a seamless amalgam to Parson. This point in itself is significant given the debate on links between theory and practice. The first element in this theory is consistency with the contemporary approaches to career assessment and choices. The theory acknowledged that individuals differ in terms of their interests, abilities, values, personalities and skills. The theory suggested that the career counselling interview process would take fifteen minutes, a length of time which by today's counselling standards seems remarkably short.

4.3 Gottfredson's Career Choice Theory of Circumscription and Compromise

Gottfredson (2005) formulated the career choice theory of circumscription and compromise. The theory assumed that career choice is a process requiring a high level of cognitive proficiency. A child's ability to synthesize and organize complex occupational information is a function of chronological age progression as well as general intelligence. Cognitive growth and development are instrumental to the development of a cognitive map of occupation and conceptions of self that are used to evaluate the appropriateness of various occupational alternatives. In contrast to the established notion that choice is a process of selection. The theory states that career choice and development could instead be viewed as a process of elimination or circumscription in which a person progressively eliminates certain occupational stages. Gottfredson maintained that the career aspirations of children are influenced more by the public than private aspects of their self-concept. A developmental model was proposed consisting of four stages of circumscription. The first is called orientation to size power (ages 3-5), and the child perceives occupations as roles taken up by big people (adults). The second stage is called orientation to sex- roles (ages 6-8), and in this stage sex-role norms and attitudes emerge as defining aspects of a child's self-concept. The child evaluates occupations according to whether they are appropriate to one's sex and eliminates from further consideration alternatives that are perceived to be gender inappropriate. The third stage is called orientation to social valuation (age 9-13) as social class and status become salient to a child's developing self-concept. Accordingly, the emerging adolescent eliminates from further consideration occupations that are too low or too high in prestige. The fourth stage is called orientation to the internal unique self (ages 14 and above), in which internal and private aspects of the adolescent's self-concept such as personality, interest, skills and values, become prominent.

4.4 Holland's Theory of Need/Personality

Holland (1959) propounded the Theory of Need/Personality. The theory is grounded on a model of personal orientation or a developmental process established through heredity and the individual's life history of reacting to environmental demands. The theory stipulates that

individuals are attracted to a particular occupation that meets their personal needs and provides them satisfaction. The theory is based on four assumptions:

- a) Persons can be categorized as one of the following: Realistic (R-Physical activities, things), investigative (R-Thinking, problem-solving, scientific activities: Artistic (A free, structured creative pursuits) social (S- teaching) helping roles) enterprising (E-persuade, manage people to attain goals) or conventional (C-orderly).
- b) People search for environments that will let them exercise their skills and abilities, express their attitudes and values, and take on agreeable problems and roles.
- c) There are six model environments:- realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising and conventional.
- d) Behaviour is determined by an interaction between personality and environment.

Holland (1959) argues that personality is permanent, and asserts that early life experience, self-perceptions and values influence the development of behaviours or personalities. The theory argues that a career is an extension and expression of one's personality within the context of the world of work and subsequent identification with specific occupational stereotypes. Where individuals compare themselves to their own perceptions of occupations and either accept or reject them based on the psychological and sociological relevance on occupation holds for them. The theory posits that the vocational environment could be arranged into similar typologies. In the career choice and development process, people search for environments that would allow them to exercise their skills and abilities and express their attitudes and values. In any given vocational environment, there is a tendency to shape its composition so that its characteristics are likely to feel unfulfilled and dissatisfied

5.0 PRACTICAL IMPLICATION OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT THEORIES FOR GUIDANCE COUNSELLORS

5.1 The implication of Super's Departmental Theory for Guidance Counsellors

According to Zunker (2006), many aspects of super's developmental theory are attractive to career guidance counsellors. It offers a comprehensive framework to describe and explain the process of vocational development that could guide career interventions and research. The counsellor of a developmental persuasion needs to determine the life stage and developmental tasks of his client and find out if the latter is ready to cope with those tasks as compared with those in his life stage. Indeed, he needs to find out also how ready the client is. If prepared for it, then, the counsellor should be prepared to remedy this. For instance, the secondary school student is in the explanatory stage: His primary developmental task is exploration (crystalizing a choice), specifying and implementing it. This means that since his clients differ in their abilities, some are more capable to start thinking about the work they might do. Others can specify their preferences either in broad or more specific terms. The counsellor must see his client's commitment to that task as very provisional and tentative indeed rather than firm at this stage.

Specifying a job preference and implementing it does not mean that a life work is finally chosen. It simply means that the client has thought of something he might like to do more than some of the others he has been considering. He thinks that that preference is worth further exploration and acting upon. The goal of implementation is to convert his vocational

desires and intentions into reality but in such a way that premature closure of explorations is discouraged. Thus, whether the explored preference is in broad or specific terms, the counsellor will need to help his client further evaluate how appropriate and practical his preference has been.

Gladding (2014) posits that developmental counsellors should insure that the career pattern of females should be appropriate to their sex role while simultaneously encouraging them to broaden their preferences to include a wide range of possible occupations available to women today such as being a pilot. Since this emphasizes the influence of parents, the counsellor will need to involve parents by teaching them the process of career development and choice factors. With their fresh understanding of the part they have to play they will be more ready to support the counsellor in his effort to help the client arrive at the most appropriate decisions for his own satisfaction and not those of his parents.

5.2 Practical Implication of Trait and Factor Theory for the Counsellor

A counsellor who operates within this framework is required to process objective test material and a fund of occupational information. For example, he will need to assess the interest of his client with the Vocational Interest Inventory (Bakare: 1977) or the Vocational preference Inventory (Holland: 1976) and the Scholastic Aptitude Test (Obe: 1988) as well as the Differential Aptitude Test, the counsellor determines the client's general and specific abilities and aptitudes. The counsellor should then give the client occupational information which can be obtained from interviews with experts in the client's interest area, solicited career talks, career information monographs, gazettes, newspapers, manpower board brochures, and field trips in the client's community. Having obtained these two categories of information, through an interview the counsellor then matches the client's profile of personal characteristics with the requirement of the job the client is interested in. It is clear that the counsellor who uses this approach needs to have an amiable test materials and occupational information. However, he must realize that there are other factors which affect career decision-making that he has ignored.

This approach then is rather limiting. This is the approach popularly used by employment officers in this country. But the counsellors while practising it should remember to use it in junction with techniques from other approaches if he is to be very useful to their clients.

5.3 Practical Implication of Holland's Theory of Need/Personality For the Counsellor

A counsellor using this approach is expected to assess his client's personality and needs. This can be achieved with the Vocational Preference Inventory (Holland: 1959). If the client is unsure about what to do, he can be helped to explore his abilities, interests and preferences using the Self Directed Search (SDS). As the name implies, these instruments help the client himself to explore his own characteristics (his daydreams, the various activities he likes to do, those he can do competently, his self estimate (in mechanical, scientific, artistic, teaching, sales, clerical, musical and mathematics ability as well as his own manual, managerial, office and friendliness skills) as compared to others of his own age. It exposes him also to a variety of occupations related to his personality and interest of which he may be unaware. He can then be helped to match his characteristics with the job environment that will satisfy his needs.

5.4 Practical Implication of Gottfredson's Career Choice Theory of Circumscription and Compromise for the Counsellor.

Gottfredson's theory offers unique perspectives on career guidance professionals' internationality. For instance, in many cultures, life accomplishment is measured by successes in education and public examinations and attainment in career positions that have high social status and influence. Likewise, gender stereotype is also a part of many cultures (e.g. Asian cultures), and individuals are encouraged to pursue occupations that are perceived to be compatible with their gender. Hence, Gottfredson's theory offers a framework in which the influence of prestige and sex type could be understood in diverse cultural contexts. Meanwhile, as career guidance interventions are becoming more central in primary and secondary schools around the world (Gysbers:2000), the theory by Gottfredson could be used as a conceptual guide to program development. Gottfredson (2005) outlined a model of career guidance interventions aiming to reduce risk and enhance development, encouraging positive adaptation in relation to cognitive growth, self-creation, circumscription, and compromise. The model consisted of counsellor strategies and tools that could be used to optimize (a) learning and the use of complex occupational information, (b) experience and activities that allow children and adolescents to understand their career-related personal traits, (c) self-insight to construct and conceptualize a future career path that is realistic and feasible, and

(d) Wisdom in self-investment to elevate the odds of successfully implementing preferred career options. These broad strategies are applicable to a variety of cultural contexts in which opportunities exist for career interventions in school settings.

6.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

A number of career development theories have been proposed. There are many theoretical frameworks available to counsellors for their work with clients in the area of career development. These include Anne Roe's and Hoppock's (need), Krumboltz's (behavioural), Kats, Hill, Goldstein's (decision making) and others which are variants of the major ones.

The four perspectives discussed suggest more practical applications for the career counsellor. A career counsellor should however be exposed to the money approaches available. The theories indicate similarities in their assumption that individual differences exist in abilities, interests, aptitudes, needs and personalities. Some recommend the use of objective instruments to assess and interpret these while others recommend interview or subjective methods. For the professional career counsellor, the various theories of career development provide useful points of departure. Since the clients come from different cultural backgrounds and hold different views, no single theory can satisfactorily explain the complex process of career and vocational choice. The theories of career development open the door wide for the counsellor to ferret out the expertise needed for his work and the process of achieving his helping role.

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