

# Factors influencing career choice among the senior high school

[Business](#), [Career](#)



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work to my dearest wife Rose and children: Albert, Elikplim and Herbert.

## **ABSTRACT**

The researcher set out to investigate factors that influence career choice among the senior high school students in the South Tongu District of Volta Region, Ghana, and the extent to which those factors influence students' choice.

Survey design was used. The main instrument used for data collection was questionnaire. Simple random sample techniques was used to select 200 students, and convenient sampling techniques used to select three administrators and three guidance and counselling coordinators for the study from the three public second cycle institutions in the District. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used in analysing data. The construct validity was established using factor analysis and reliability using Cronbach's alpha.

The results of the main hypothesis and the research questions postulated for the study revealed that Intrinsic factors reliably predicted career choice suggesting that Extrinsic factors and Interpersonal factors are not significant predictors when the effects of Extrinsic factors and Interpersonal factors are controlled for. This helps students learn about and explore careers that ultimately lead to career choice. This played a critical role in shaping students career choice.

It was recommended that Career Education and Guidance should be introduced in the primary school to enable children to explore the world of work as young people need to make a smooth transition from primary school to the initial years of senior high school and the Ministry of Education should allocate fund for a Guidance and Counselling activities in all basic and second cycle schools. This will enable the guidance coordinators to function effectively at their various levels of work.

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## **CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION**

### **Background to the Study**

The importance of career choice among senior high students cannot be over emphasized. Students at this level are mainly adolescents who are moving from this stage of development into adulthood. Pearson Education limited (2007) defines an adolescent as a young person, usually between the ages of twelve and eighteen, who is developing into an adult.

Encarta (2009) defines adolescent as, ‘ somebody in the period preceding adulthood: somebody who has reached puberty but not yet adult’. At this stage the individual is said to be going through the period of adolescence. A comprehensive study conducted in America by Remmers and Raddler (1957) cited in Horrocks (1962) indicated that one-third of teenagers after finishing high school within six months expected to be at work, though know less about how to choose a job, train for it and establish in it. “ A job is a kind of work and a career is time spent in one type of job area of interest” (Kelly-Plate and Volz-Patton, 1991, p. 13). Most students have very little help in developing a career direction while still in senior high school.

They are often influenced by the media, peers, and with very little knowledge of what they might primarily be interested in or motivated to do.

Most of them may have a level of uncertainty of where to get help on how to choose a career. Since career is a lifelong plan, students at this level should be assisted to enable them have a clear cut plan as it will be difficult for them at their age to see things clearly about themselves. Thinking or making a decision about one's career and making a choice is vital. Fry, Stoner and Hattwick (1998) opine that it is never too early to begin thinking about careers when in high school. Some students may have clear career direction in mind while many of them will have little clue as to which career is best for them.

Fry et al, further said “ even if you are a freshman or sophomore, now is the time to begin thinking about your life beyond college” p. 561. Various people choose jobs for various reasons. A lot of people look for jobs that will pay well since everyone needs money for the basics such as food, clothes, accommodation, education, recreation and others. For many men and women, work helps define their identity and their sense of self-worth (Thio, 1989). They see themselves as people, who are responsible, who get things done and capable enough to be paid for the services they render. People take pride in the work they do. They also like the feeling that comes with doing their work well.

People enjoy using their skills, talents and working hard to improve those skills. People work to be useful, by working; people feel that they are contributing their quota to the development of the society. They may work to take care of themselves and their family or work to help other people in the society. Most people choose jobs that will enable them interact with others.

For example, journalism, teaching, and selling enable one to interact with a whole lot of people. They do not like to be alone for a long period. Their job gives them the opportunity to be with others and talk to people. It is clear that work fulfils many important needs and even those who become rich overnight still work.

Since no one particular job satisfies all needs, the right job can be satisfying in a very special way, and that is why it is important to think carefully about one's own wants, needs, interests and abilities before making a choice. One needs not to joke about his choice of career. Working should not be just occupying oneself. O'Toole (1973), cited in (Thio, 1989, p. 444) opines that People with satisfying jobs have better mental health than those with less satisfying work. Thus, people who are happy with their jobs also tend to have better physical health and to live longer. Although diet, exercise, medical care and genetics are all related to the incidence of heart disease, job dissatisfaction is more closely linked to the cause of death. Each individual is faced with choosing among the large areas of occupational cluster of work.

Such as agriculture, business and office, communication and media, health, hospitality and recreation, manufacturing, marine science, construction, arts, humanity and sciences, home economics, marketing and distribution, natural resources and environment, personal services, public service, and transportation. Rao (1992) cited in Kankam & Onivehu (2000) identified two factors that call for guidance and counselling services or activities in secondary schools one of which is the making of academic choice that in the end determines the vocational future. The origin of vocational guidance can

be traced to the United States of America. Educational guidance originated from the development of vocational guidance services.

In 1908 the Vocational Bureau of Boston was formed under the auspices of an American lawyer and educator; Frank Parsons to assist young men make vocational choices based on their occupational aptitudes and interest (Fruehling, 2008). Guidance began to spread as a result of Parsons' ideas. Brewer (1942) cited in Archer (1997) put across four conditions that work together to bring about the beginning and development of vocational guidance. These are: division of labour, the growth of technology, the extension of vocational education, and the spread of modern forms of democracy. The four elements listed above were however, intensified by the First World War which led to the shortage of skilled manpower.

Though in Ghana vocational/technical can be traced back to the 19th century when both the Basel and Wesleyan missionaries made a shift from the initial three R's - reading, writing and arithmetic to agricultural and technical curriculum (Hama, 2003), guidance in Ghana started in 1955 when the Ministry of Labour, Education and Social Welfare came together and established Youth Employment Department. Its aim was to cater for the needs of the unemployed middle school leavers below the age of twenty years. By 1960, there were about thirty of such centres in the country (Ackummey, 2003).

## **Statement of the Problem**

Searching for a job, career planning and deciding on what to choose play an important role in students career choices.

Many students often are faced with uncertainty and stress as they make career choices. Many of them do not make adequate research on their own career nor do they receive adequate directions from their school guidance coordinators. Most of them are not aware of what goes into career choice. Many youth go into unsuitable careers due to ignorance, inexperience, peer pressure, advice from friends, parents and teachers or as a result of the prestige attached to certain jobs without adequate vocational guidance and career counselling. Lawer (2007) researched on assessing the effectiveness of career guidance in senior secondary schools in Kumasi Metropolitan District.

He concluded that majority of students were not aware of major occupation groups in Ghana, knowledge of training and qualification necessary for employment in the various occupations, conditions of work, earning and other rewards of occupation, and did not have better understanding of their career interest, aptitudes and abilities. This clearly shows that majority of them were not concerned about their future career. This situation compels one to ask whether they are given the needed guidance on available careers relating to the programmes they are pursuing. Are they aware of what goes into career choice? And what specific factors influence their choice and how do those factors influence them? This study therefore seeks to find out the extent to which intrinsic, extrinsic, and interpersonal factors influence the choice of career of senior high students.



**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to identify those factors that influence students' decision concerning choice of career in the South Tongu District and the extent to which these factors influence their choices. In addition, the study seeks to examine the differences between intrinsic factors, extrinsic factors, and interpersonal factors in making career choice. It will also attempt to find out problems encountered by students in making their career choices.

**Hypotheses**

The study sought to test a logistic regression model in which Intrinsic, Extrinsic and Interpersonal factors are assumed to influence students' career (blue/white collar jobs) in the senior high schools.

The following supplementary hypotheses were also tested:

1. There will be significant sex differences in Extrinsic, Intrinsic, and Interpersonal factors.
2. There will be significant age differences in Extrinsic, Intrinsic, and Interpersonal factors.

**Research Questions**

The following research questions were also used to guide the researcher to carry out the study.

1. To what extent do Intrinsic factors influence students' choice of career?
2. To what extent do Extrinsic factors influence students' choice of career?
3. To what extent do Interpersonal factors influence students' choice of career?

#### 4. What problems do students face in making their career choices?

### **The Significance of the Study**

Many factors affect career choices of senior high school students. Identifying these factors would give parents, educators, and industry an idea as to where students place most of their trust in the career selection process. It will not only focus on factors influencing career choice among students in the South Tongu District, but also highlight career decision making tools that have implications for career counselling. In addition, it will equally provide an update study into how intrinsic, extrinsic and interpersonal factors influence career choice for others who wish to further research into this area of study.

### **Delimitation**

The study focuses on what goes on in the South Tongu District instead of looking at the country as a whole, hence its application to the country or larger population may not be reliable. 1. 8 Definition of Terms For the purpose of this study the following operational definitions will be used: Intrinsic factors: include interest in the job and personality that satisfies work. In the broader sense they are basic and essential features which form part of someone rather than because of his or her association. Extrinsic factors: include availability of jobs and how well an occupation pays or brings benefit. They also include those essential features as a result of the individual's associations or consequences.

Interpersonal factors: include the influence of parents and significant others. It is concerned or involved relationships between people. Career: is a pattern of work related to preparations and experiences which is carried through a

person's life. Job: is a piece of work carried out for a pay. Work: physical and mental effort directed towards doing something. It is a job in the broader sense. Student: refers to a learner in a senior high school. |

### **Organisation of the Study**

The whole study was organized in five main chapters.

The first chapter deals with the background to the study, the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, hypotheses, and the significance of the study, delimitations, and definition of terms. The second chapter reviewed related literatures that are relevant to the study. It considers the previous studies on the topic. It includes other areas like factors influencing career choice, career decision-making, types of career- blue/white collar jobs, barriers to career choice, the role of guidance co-ordinators in career choice, counselling implication of the study, theoretical framework of the study, and the summary of the literature review.

Chapter three focuses on the methodology, the research design, population, sample and sampling procedure, instrumentation- validity, reliability and method of collecting data and its analysis. Chapter four deals with data presentation and analysis, and finally, the fifth chapter covers discussion, summary of the major findings, conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for future study.

## **CHAPTER TWO REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

### **Introduction**

This chapter deals with the review of related literature. It was organized under the following sub-headings: factors influencing vocational choice,

career decision-making, Types of career- blue/white collar jobs, barriers to career choice, the role of guidance coordinators in vocational guidance, counselling implications of the study, and the theoretical framework of the study.

It ends with the summary of the literature review done.

### **Factors Influencing Vocational Choice**

Adolescent occupational choice is influenced by many factors, including intrinsic, extrinsic and interpersonal factors. Kankam & Onivehu (2000) indicate intellectual ability, aptitudes, the school, family, personality, self-esteem, values, interest, and environmental influences as factors that influence people's choice of career. In the same year, Bedu-Addo (2000) states the following as factors influencing career choice: intellectual ability, aptitudes, the school, family, personality, self concept and self esteem, values, interest, and environmental influences.

Similarly, Taylor and Buku (2006) also state abilities, needs and interests, stereotype/prestige, values, the school/educational attainment, family/parental, placement, and aspiration. Mankoe (2007) lists the following as factors that influence people's choice of career: people's interests, abilities and personalities, people's occupational preferences, life and work satisfaction, and employment variables. Jones and Larke (2001) researched on factors influencing career choice of African American and Hispanic graduates of a Land-grant College of Agriculture. The purpose of this study was to identify and describe the factors that were related to African American and

Hipic graduates' decisions to choose (or not to choose) a career in agriculture or a related field prior to or after college.

The population for this study was all African American and Hipic graduates who received a first degree in an agriculture-related field at Texas A & M University between May 1990 and December 1997. Five hundred and fifty-one questionnaires were mailed to respondents. The research design applied was Ex post facto and both descriptive and inferential statistics were used. The findings revealed that, various commonalities and differences existed among the two groups. When respondents enrolled in their first agriculture-related course did not have a major effect on their probability that they will select an agriculture-related career. However, the role of significant others and specific job-related factors is validated in this study.

But having people who were not white to encourage respondents to consider an agriculture related career, increased respondents likelihood of pursuing an agriculture-related career. Respondents were more likely to pursue an agriculture-related career if their father's occupation was agriculture-related. Parents' level of education did not play a critical role in the respondents' choosing an agriculture-related career. Salary was not considered to have an impact on respondents' choice of their current career nor on their choice of agriculture as a career. But having limited job opportunities in agriculture led respondents' to choose other careers. Likewise, retirement plan and job opportunities impacted respondents' selection of a career.

Issa and Nwalo (2005) conducted a research on factors affecting the career choice of undergraduates in Nigerian Library and Information Science

Schools. Data were analysed for frequency and percentage using the cross-tabs sub-programme of the SPSS. The study revealed that majority did not make the course as their first choice but ended up in the Library School as a last resort. However, those who did were influenced mostly by previous library work experience. Available sources of information on the course include parents/relations and peers. There are slightly more male librarianship students than females, indicating its popularity among both sexes. That 46.9% of them were in the 22-26 age bracket showed that the younger undergraduates constitute the majority.

The study concludes that despite the evidence of improved popularity of the programme among the respondents, it remains largely unpopular among prospective undergraduates in Nigeria when compared with such other courses as Accountancy, Medicine and Law. It thus recommends that public awareness about the profession and the programme be intensified by all stakeholders if it must attract some of the best brains in the country who can meet the challenges of the 21st century librarianship in Nigeria. This work was similar to that of Jones and Larke (2001) in purpose, sample and method except that while Jones and Larke focused on African American and Hispanic graduates of college of agriculture, that of Issa and Nwalo concentrated on undergraduates in Nigerian Library and Information Science Schools. The research design applied and instrument used would be relevant to the present study.

Myburgh (2005) researched on an empirical analysis of career choice factors that influence first-year Accounting students at the University of Pretoria: a

cross-racial study. This cross-cultural study examined the career choices of Asian, black and white students at the University of Pretoria to identify the factors motivating Accountancy students to become chartered accountants (CA) as only two and half percent (609) of 24, 308 registered chartered accountants in South Africa in 2005 were black, and only six percent (1, 573) were Indian. Understanding the attitudes and the perceptions of CA first-year students can help course administrators/curriculum designers to align marketing and recruiting strategies with specific personal occupational preferences of different racial groups enrolled for local CA courses. Survey design was used. Questionnaires are used in collecting data with a sample population of 550 and descriptive statistics used in analysis data collected. The finding revealed that performance in Accounting at school and the advice of parent, relatives and school teachers greatly influenced the students' decision to become chartered accountants. All the three racial groups ranked availability of employment as the most important benefit of CA career and the employment security as the second most important. The cost of education and the difficulty of qualifying as a chartered accountant were identified as a problem.

The purpose, sample and method used in data collection were similar to that of the above authors except that he focused on first year Accounting Students of the University of Pretoria. His finding on cost of education as a problem was similar to that of Amedzor (2003) and Borchert (2002). The methodology used here would be relevant to the current work. Trauth, Quesenberry & Huang (2008) researched into A Multicultural Analysis of Factors Influencing Career Choice for Women in the Information Technology

(IT) Workforce. This article presents an analysis of cultural/actors influencing the career choices of women in the IT workforce. They employed the individual differences theory of gender and IT as a theoretical lens to analyze a qualitative data set of interviews with 200 women in different countries.

The themes that emerged from this analysis speak to the influence of cultural attitudes about maternity, childcare, parental care and working outside the home on a woman's choice of an IT career. In addition, several additional socio-cultural factors served to add further variation to gendered cultural influences: gendered career norms, social class; economic opportunity, and gender stereotypes about aptitude. These results lend further empirical support to the emergent individual differences theory of gender and IT that endeavours to theorize within-gender variation with respect to issues related to gender and IT. They also point to areas where educational and workplace interventions can be enacted.

This work was similar to others as far as purpose is concerned; however, it focused just on women in the Information Technology Workforce. Borchert (2002) researched on career choice factors of high School Students. It aimed at finding out how influential were factors of personality, environment and opportunities in making career choice. The purpose of the study was to identify the most important factor within these three factors that 2002 Germantown High School senior students used in deciding upon career choices. A survey was the selected instrument device with a sample population of 325 and both descriptive statistics were used in analysing data



collected. The finding revealed that, personality factors were identified as most important in choosing career.

Environmental factors were not significant in making their choice, though they did not show outright disregard for them. There are opportunities for educational facilities and industries where students find themselves intellectually qualified for certain areas but lacked money needed to complete their training. His finding on lack of money to complete their training was similar to that of Amedzor (2003) and Myburgh (2005). The research design used, data collection procedure, and areas of assessing students' choice were related to the present work. Ferry (2006) researched into Factors Influencing Career Choices of Adolescents and Young Adults in Rural Pennsylvania.

The qualitative study reported here explored factors that play key roles in rural high school seniors and young adults career choice process. Interview was used in collecting data from 12 focus groups from 11-county rural areas in the central Pennsylvania using purposeful sampling. The cultural and social context of family and community were found to be instrumental in how youth learn about careers and influential in the choice process. The economic and social circumstances of the broader community coloured and influenced the youth perceptions of appropriate career choice. Extension strategies that target parents and community to increase their involvement in youth career selection can promote sound career decisions. This work was similar to that of Borchert (2002).

However, it used interview and concentrated on a focus group. The areas of assessing students' choice were related to the present work. Adjin (2004) researched into career choice in senior secondary schools: a case study of Sogakope Secondary and Dabala Secondary Technical Schools in the Volta Region of Ghana and used descriptive research design. He focused on factors that influence career choice, how proficient are the counsellors in handling students' vocational problems in making career choice and ways of improving career/vocational education. He made use of stratified sampling with a sample population of 200 respondents and descriptive statistics was used in analysis of data.

The result of the study showed that interest was the most motivating factor that influenced career choice among students in Sogakope Senior Secondary and Dabala Secondary Technical Schools considering: ability, interest, monetary reward, and prestige. Also majority of the students of Sogakope and Dabala second cycle schools received help from their parents/guardians in choosing career and some gave no reason for making their choices. Responses collected also indicated that there were guidance coordinators in the schools who organised talks on career choice, decision making and good study habits. However, other areas like problem solving, field trips/visit, group guidance/counselling, individual counselling were not all effective. His work was similar to that of Borchert (2002), Amedzor (2003), Annan (2006) and Edwards and Quinter (2011) in purpose, method and target group.

By contrast previous research by Amedzor (2003) and subsequent researches by Annan (2006) and Edwards & Quinter (2011) showed prestige,

personality, and advancement opportunities and learning experiences respectively as the most important factors that influence choice. The research design, instrument used and the areas covered in this work were similar to the present study. Amedzor (2003) researched on career guidance needs of junior secondary two pupils in Ho Township basic schools and used descriptive survey design. It focused on career guidance needs of adolescents in the basic schools, factors that militate against effective guidance services and factors that facilitate the delivery of guidance services in schools. She used simple random sampling and sample population of 200 respondents and descriptive statistics used in analysis of data.

Her research showed that, prestige was the most important factor that influences career choice of students in Ho Township considering prestige, personal interest, and parental influence. And they also need financial support for training towards their chosen careers. Most of them shared the view that they need an expert to counsel them on how to choose, train, enter and be established in a career. Majority of the coordinators were not train, and guidance activities were below average and students were not willing to approach the coordinators. Her areas of assessment are covered in the current study. Though, the researcher looked at factors that influence choice like others, it mainly focused on identifying career guidance needs of junior secondary two pupils.

The sampling procedure, research design and instrument used were similar to the present study. Annan (2006) examined factors affecting career choice among senior secondary school students in Shama Ahanta East Metropolis

and used descriptive survey design. He used simple random sampling and sample population of 200 respondents and also used descriptive statistics in analysis of data. This study revealed that personality was most influential factor that influenced career choice among senior secondary students in Ahanta East Metropolis and significant others as the least factor taking into consideration (ability, personality, material benefit, home background, gender factors, and significant others).

Adolescents have difficulties in how to choose a career and there was adolescent male gender biased in career choice as compared to female counterparts. It was similar to that of Borchert (2002), Amedzor (2003), Adjin (2004), Annan (2006) and Edwards and Quinter (2011) in purpose, method, and target group. The methodology used and the purpose of the study relate to the current work. Edwards and Quinter (2011) researched on Factors Influencing Students Career Choices among Secondary School students in Kisumu Municipality, Kenya. The purpose of this study was to examine factors influencing career choice among form four secondary school students in Kisumu municipality, Kenya. The study was conducted using descriptive survey design with a population of 332 students.

The data for this study was collected using questionnaire and interview schedules. The findings of this study indicate that availability of advancement opportunities and learning experiences are the most influential factors affecting career choices among students. While males reported learning experiences and career flexibility as the most influential factors, females however reported availability of advancement opportunity and

opportunity to apply skills as the most influential factors. However, no variance was reported for persons influencing career choice by gender. The methodology used and the purpose of the study relate to the current work.

Despite the fact that much has been written about the individual variables influencing career choice, the literature review however, revealed that very little empirical studies on this subject matter exist especially regarding the factors influencing career choice among senior high students in the South Tongu District of the Volta Region, Ghana and the differences that exist among these factors. This study will, therefore, serve to fill up the missing gap in this aspect of the literature.

### **Career Decision**

Making Decision making can defined as “ an act of choice by which an executive selects one particular course of action from among possible alternatives for the attainment of a desired end or as a solution to a specific problem” (Attieku, Dorkey, Marfo-Yiadom & Tekyi, 2006). It involves conscious or unconscious attempt at making a choice out of competing alternatives. It implies selecting from alternative policies, procedures, and programmes.

Career decision making is vital as the country is faced with the problem of unemployment which is the result of poverty and other social vices in the country. The previous Government introduced the Youth Employment Programme to address the situation. It aimed at facilitating job creation and placement of youth in the various economic ventures as well as social

services in all districts throughout the country. The programme consists of ten modules out of the JHS/SHS graduates qualify to undertake:

1. Youth in Agri-Business
2. Community Protection System
3. Waste and Sanitation Management Corps
4. Auxiliary Health Care Workers' Assistants (Micah, 2007).

However was this able to eradicate the problem of unemployment? For the child to make a better decision about choice of career he must be helped in the areas below:

- Self awareness
- Educational awareness
- Career awareness
- Career exploration, and
- Career planning and decision making (Gibson & Mitchell, 1995).

Self awareness: Each child must be aware of and respect his/her uniqueness at an early age as human beings. Knowledge about one's aptitude, interests, values, personality traits, abilities and others is very essential in the development of concepts related to self and the use of these concepts in career exploration (value clarification, group guidance films and video tapes, written assignments and standardized test).

Puplampu (1998) posit that for one to make good choices, he needs career guidance or career counselling, needs to be aware of him/her self, and to have knowledge of occupations and options available. Educational

awareness: It is very essential in career planning for one to be aware of the relationship between self, educational opportunities and the world of work (group guidance, games related to hobbies and recreation, guided activities).

Career awareness: Students at all levels of education should be assisted to have a continuous expansion of knowledge and awareness about the world of work. At each level students' should be assisted to develop recognition of the relationships between values, life styles and careers (through films, career days, interest inventory).

They are to be aware of relationships between desirable school habit-responsibility, punctuality, efforts, positive human relationships and good worker traits. Career exploration: This represents a well designed, planned inquiry and analysis of career that are of interest. Comparisons, reality testing, and standardised testing, and computerised programmes may be useful. Career planning and decision making: Students at this level are to be helped to take control of their life and become an active agent for shaping their own future. They need to narrow down their career possibility and then move on to examine and test these options as critically as possible.

Students need to be aware of the process of decision making and choosing between competitive alternatives, examining the consequences of specific choices, the value of compromise, and implementing a decision. Students are to recognise the impact of their current plan and decision making on their future. Knowledge about the above helps students to make informed decision and enable then to cope with career development tasks posed by the society during their school period. Students at this level are influenced

by what they see around them- family, friends, neighbours, televisions or in movies. That is why experts suggest that students need to be aware of themselves, and the world around them in order to fully understand and make use of information about their individual interests and what exist beyond their immediate world.

It is helping them to explore their likes and dislikes, expand their understanding of the world at large, and enhance their knowledge of how business works. The whole aim is to provide students with the broadest opportunity to learn and grow. In addition to the above, the following theories will also help the individual to be equipped with personality factors, environmental factors and other factors that influences choice of career.

1. Trait-and-factor Theory
2. John Holland Career Choice Typology
3. Anne Roe Personality/Need Theory
4. The Ginzberg, Ginsburg, Axelrad and Herman Theory
5. Donald Super's Developmental/self-concept Theory
6. Four- Humors Theory
7. Social-Cognitive Theory

#### **Trait and Factor/Actuarial Theory of Career Development**

It is also called matching or actuarial approach. It is referred to as the oldest theoretical approach to career development and Parsons as the originator (Kankam & Onivehu, 2000). It is based on the measurement of individual characteristics denoted as traits and factors. Traits refer to characteristics typical of the individual over time, relatively stable, consistent in situations



and provide a basis for measuring, describing and predicting behaviour. Factor refers to a construct which represents a group of traits that correlate with each other. Williamson (1939, 1949) cited in Zunker (1990) was one of the prominent advocate of trait-and-factor counselling.

Utilization of Williamson's counselling procedures maintained the early impetus of trait-and-factor approach evolving from the works of Parsons. Even when integrated into other theories of career guidance, the trait-and factor approach plays a very important role. Some of the basic assumptions that underlie the trait-and-factor theory are:

1. Every person has a unique pattern of traits made up of interests, values, abilities and personality characteristics, these traits can be objectively identified and profiled to represent an individual's potential
2. Every occupation is made up of factors required for the successful performance of that occupation. These factors can be objectively identified and represented as an occupational profile
3. It is possible to identify a fit or match between individual traits and job factors using a straight forward problem-solving/decision making process.
4. The closer the match between personal traits and job factors the greater the likelihood for successful job performance and satisfaction.

Some assumptions of this theory by Miller, and Klein and Wiener are below:

Miller:

- Vocational development is a cognitive process

- Occupation is a single event; choice is greatly stressed over development
- There is a single 'right' occupation for everyone; there is no recognition that a worker might fit well into a number of occupations.
- Single person works in each job; one person- one job relationship
- e) Everyone has an occupational choice (<http://faculty.tamu.commerce.edu/crrobinson/512/tandf.htm>)

Klein & Wiener:

- Each individual has a unique set of traits that can be measured reliably and validly.
- Occupation require that workers possess certain traits for success
- Choice of occupation is straight forward process and matching is possible
- The closer the match between personal characteristics and job requirements, the greater the likelihood for success-productivity and satisfaction (<http://faculty.tamu.commerce.edu/crrobinson/512/tandf.htm>)

It called for clear understanding of oneself. Knowledge of job requirements, conditions of success, and true reasoning in relation to these two groups of facts. This theory is used by many career practitioners in one form or another. Many of the aptitude, personality and interest tests and information materials that emerged from this approach have involved and remain in use up to now e. g. General Aptitude Test Battery, occupational profiles and ever expanding computer-based career guidance programmes. Trait-and- factor

theory is criticised as not able to produce a perfect match between people and jobs (Walsh, 1990) and became increasingly unpopular in the 1970s, describe as going into 'incipient decline' (Crites, 1981).

In essence, the trait-and-factor approach is far too narrow in scope to be considered as a major theory of career development. However, we should recognize that standardized assessment and occupational analysis procedures stressed in trait-and-factor approaches are useful in career counselling (Zunker, 1990). In addition to the above, trait-and-factor theory focuses on personality factors without considering the influence of environmental factor like availability of jobs to match the individuals' trait and interpersonal factors in career choice. And can not provide enough bases for the current studies.

### **John Holland's Vocational Personality**

John Holland's theory shows that there is a match between an individual's career choice and his or her personality and numerous variables that form their background (Zunker, 1990). According to this theorist, once individuals find a career that fits their personality, they are more likely to enjoy that particular career and to stay in a job for a longer period of time than individuals whose work do not suit their personality. He groups individuals into six basic personality types. Holland's theory rests on four assumptions:

1. In our culture, persons can be categorized as one of the following:  
Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional.
2. There are six modal environments: realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising and conventional.

3. 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.
4. Behaviour is determined by an interaction between personality and environment (Bedu-Addo, 2000).

According to Holland, realistic personality types are practical, stable, self-controlled, independent and down to earth. They enjoy working with their hands, especially in projects which allow one to be physically active, they may be a doer. These individuals are physically strong and have very little social know-how.

They are oriented towards practical careers such as labour, farmer, truck driver, mechanic, construction work, engineer or surveyor, landscape architect, aircraft mechanic, dental technician, electrician, athletic trainer, carpenter, licensed practical nurse, archaeologist, hairdresser, physical therapist, dressmaker, fire fighter, caterer, plumber, x-ray technician, etc. According to him, the investigative personality types are conceptually and theoretically oriented. Investigators are observant and curious about things around them. Typically they are inquisitive and intellectually self-confident as well as quite logical. They delight in situations that call for creative or analytical approach. They are thinkers rather than doers. They enjoy working on their own. They are best suited for careers that offer clearly defined procedures, research and the chance to explore a wide range of ideas are the best choices for investigating people, e. g. practical nursing, medical lab assistant, pharmacist, ecologist, math teacher, medical technologist,

research analyst, surgeon, dietician, physician, police detective, veterinarian, meteorologist, horticulturist, dentist, computer analyst, science teacher, technical writer, science lab technician, computer system analyst, military analyst, college professor, lawyer, consumer researcher, astronomer, computer security specialist, horticulture, emergency medical technology, respiratory therapy, surgical technology, dental assistant, water and waste technology, computer languages, computer sciences, economics, biochemistry, geology. According to Holland, artistic personality types are original, innovative, imaginative, and creative. They prefer situations that are relatively nstructured and interact with their world through artistic expression, avoiding conventional and interpersonal situations in many instances. They do well as painters, writers, or musicians, artist, English teacher, drama coach, musicteacher, graphic designer, advertising manager, fashion illustrator, interior decorator, photographer, journalist, reporter, cosmetologist, librarian, museum curator, cartographer, dance instructor, entertainer, performer, architect, etc. According to theorist, social personality types are understandable, friendly and people oriented. These individuals often have good verbal skills and interpersonal relations. They are helpers and enjoy jobs that let them interact with people.

They are well equipped to enter professions such as teacher, social worker, counsellor, youth services worker, recreation director, physical therapist, occupational therapist, extension agent, therapist, teacher, personnel director, funeral director, minister, chamber of commerce executive, athletic coach, claims adjuster, parole officer, attorney, sales representative, fitness instructor, cosmetologist, paramedic, mental health specialist, social worker,

nurse, dietician, information clerk, child care worker, travel agent, airline personnel, receptionist, waiter/waitress, office worker, home health aide, career counsellor, etc. According to him, enterprising personality types are gregarious, dominant and adventurous. They are generally extroverted and will often initiate projects involving many people and are good at convincing people to do things their way. They have strong interpersonal skills and enjoy work that brings them into contact with people.

They are best counselled to enter career such as real estate appraiser, florist, lawyer, TV/radio announcer, branch manager, lobbyist, insurance manager, personnel recruiter, office manager, travel agent, advertising agent, advertising executive, politician, business manager. According to Holland, conventional personality type refers to those individuals who show a dislike for unstructured activities. They enjoy collecting and organizing information in effective and practical way. They are often like being part of large companies though not necessarily in leadership positions. They enjoy steady routines and following clearly defined procedures.

They are best suited for jobs as subordinates, banker, file clerks, accountant, Business teacher, bookkeeper, actuary, librarian, proof reader, administrative assistant, credit manager, estimator, cad operator, reservations agent, bank manager, cartographer cost analyst, court reporter, medical secretary, auditor statistician, financial analyst, safety inspector, tax consultant, insurance underwriter , computer operator, medical lab technologist, cashier, hotel clerk, etc. It has been employed as popular assessment tools such as the Self-Directed Search, Vocational Preference

Inventory and Strong Interest Inventory. Dictionary of Holland occupational Code came as a result of Holland's work. John Holland created a hexagonal model that shows the relationship between the personality types and environments. [pic] Figure 2. 1: Holland Hexagonal Model It could be noticed that the personality types close to each other are more alike than those farther away.

We can see this most clearly when we compare the personalities opposite each other, on the hexagon. For example, read the description of the types for Realistic and Social. You will see that they are virtually the opposite of each other. On the other hand, Social and Artistic are not that far apart. Holland topology is based on the following key concepts: Congruence: it refers to the degree of fit between an individual's personality orientations and actual or contemplated work environment. One is believed to be more satisfied with his career and can perform better if he is in a congruent work environment. Consistency: it refers to the degree of relationship between types or the various classifications.

Types that are adjacent on the hexagon have more in common than types that are opposite. For instance, the conventional type might be more realistic and enterprising than be artistic. Differentiation: it is the establishment of differences or a difference among two or more things. It refers to the degree to which a person or his environment is clearly defined. Vocational identity: extent to which a person has a clear self perception of his or her characteristics and goals, and to the degree of stability which an occupational environment provides.

Holland's theory is criticised as basically descriptive with focus on explanation of casual basis of time period in development of hierarchies of the personal model styles. He was concerned with factors that influence career choice rather than development process that leads to career choice (Zunker, 1990). This theory focus mainly on how a personality can be matched with a career rather than how other factors like environmental and/or interpersonal factors influence the individual's choice. It is therefore limited as far as the current research is concerned.

### **Anne Roe's Personality/Need Theory**

Akinade, Sokan and Oserenren (1996) posit that this theory see one's need as the main determinant of the nature of an individual's interests including vocational interest.

This theorist was of the view that career choice is based on childhood orientation or experience at home to satisfy needs; and that people choose occupation that satisfies important needs. This theory attempts to understand, make meaning of, and utilize individual motives, purposes and drives to support career development. She believed work can satisfy needs in different ways hence classification of occupation into eight groups. According to Roe (1956) cited in Zunker (1990), the first five can be classified as person-oriented and the last three as non-person oriented.

1. Service (something for another person);
2. Business contact (selling and supplying services);
3. Organisation (management in business, industry and government);
4. Technology (product maintenance, transportation of commodities );



5. Outdoors (cultivating, preserving natural resources);
6. Science (scientific theory and its application);
7. General culture (preserving and transmitting cultural heritage)
8. Arts and Entertainment (creative art and entertainment)

Anne Roe's theory was based on Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs stated in this order:

1. Physiological needs
2. Safety needs
3. Need for belongingness and love
4. Need for importance, respect, self-esteem and independence
5. Need for information
6. Need for understanding
7. Need for beauty and aesthetic
8. Need for self-actualization