



CAREER DEVELOPMENT: PSYCHOLOGICAL AND SCIENTIFIC APPROACHES OF CAREER CHOICES

Payale Aanand

Academic Counsellor, IGNOU, Rehabilitation & Counseling Psychologist, Amar Jyoti Center, Delhi

ABSTRACT

In this age of increasing awareness and globalization, it is extremely essential to sensitize the school and college going students about various career choices available to them. In the area of child guidance, it is very important to make use of the science of child guidance principle and scientific testing to help children decide for the career choices. It is important to understand the nature and concept of career before understanding the theories of career development. A career can be 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 of life to the next" (Weinert, 2001). Super (1957) defines career as "The sequence of major positions occupied by a person throughout his preoccupational, occupational and post occupational life; includes work related roles such as those of student, employee, and pensioner, together with complementary vocational, familial and civil roles". Arthur, Hall and Lawrence (1989), defines career as "the evolving sequence of a person's work experiences over time". Collin (1998) posits that the orientation towards a particular career arises from the interaction between person and various organizations and the society. It means that the career is a function of both one's internal orientation and external factors. Savickas (2009) states that current view of careers is temporary, contingent, casual, contract, freelance, part-time, external, atypical, self-employed and external. Two of the commonalities emerging from these terms are, firstly that the responsibility to manage a career now falls on the individual. Secondly, all these terms describe a climate of constant change. The term "career" is the the sequence of interaction of individuals with society, education and organizations throughout their lifespan. It is necessary, however, to emphasize that the majority of the responsibility now rests on the individual for their own career progression, which requires sustained employability. The paper also highlights the role of Gardner's theory of multiple intelligence in career choices.

KEYWORDS : Career, Vocation, Psychological Sciences

INTRODUCTION

From the time of Parsons (1909), the terms career, vocation, and occupation have often been used synonymously. The term career has been criticized for its western middle class focus and the lack of its applicability across cultures and less developed countries. More recently the term 'work' has been applied to this area of human behavior to provide a more inclusive and less conceptually and culturally complex term. The words which have common understanding in career psychology include 'work' which typically refers to the domain of life in which people, paid or unpaid, provide labor for an outcome of a service or a good. 'Job' refers to a specific work position which may be permanent full-time or part-time and in a particular role or organization. 'Career' refers to the sequence of or collection of jobs held over an individual's life, although in western societies it has traditionally been conceptualized as a linear sequence of "jobs" which have a vertical 'advancement related' trajectory. Career psychology is concerned with the interplay between individuals and environments and attempts to describe the nature of the patterns of positions held and resultant experiences during an individual's lifespan. This sub discipline focuses on providing models and explanations for organizational career-related activities such as: the origin and measurement of individual aptitudes, personality, interests and career orientations, motives and values, how individual, social, chance and environmental factors shape educational and training experiences, employee employability, career embeddedness and mobility, experiences of career well-being, job and career satisfaction, career agency, early work history, occupational choice, organizational/job choice and career movements after organizational entry, work/family issues, career plateaus and retirement planning. Career development is a lifelong process of developing beliefs, values, attitudes, skills, personality and knowledge of the world of work. To have interface between education and career development, there are three assumptions common to many career development theories. First, career development is an integral part of one's developmental experiences, second assumption is that career planning and life planning are interrelated process and third assumption is that educational experiences at the primary and secondary school levels play a critical role in the career development process.

Some of the important divisions of development theories are as follows.

1. Holland's Theory: John Holland's theory (1959) is grounded on a modal of personal orientation or a developmental process established through heredity and the individual's life history of reacting to environmental demands. More simply put, individuals are attracted to a particular occupation that meets their personal needs and provides them satisfaction. Holland's theory is based on

four assumptions:

- Persons can be categorized as one of the following: Realistic (R-Physical activities, things), Investigative (I-thinking, problem solving, scientific activities), Artistic (A-free, unstructured, creative pursuits.), Social (S-teaching, helping roles.), Enterprising (E-persuade, manage people to attain goals.) or Conventional (C-orderly, systematic conditions that are directed by others in authority.)
- There are six modal environments: realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising and conventional.
- 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.
- Behavior is determined by an interaction between personality and environment.

Holland argues that personality is permanent, and he asserts that early life experience, self-perceptions and values influence the development of behaviors or personality. But his personality theory stresses that individuals are drawn to certain careers as a result of their personalities. Holland argues that career is an extension and expression of one's personality within the context of the world of work, and a 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 an occupation holds for them. If a person's degree of resemblance to the six vocational personality and interest types could be assessed, then it is possible to generate a three-letter code (e.g., SIA, RIA) to denote and summarise one's career interest. The first letter of the code is a person's primary interest type, which would likely play a major role in career choice and satisfaction. The second and third letters are secondary interest themes, and they would likely play a lesser but still significant role in the career choice process. Holland postulated that vocational environments 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 to express their attitudes and values.

2. Super's Theory: Super (1969) suggested that career choice and development is essentially a process of developing and implementing a person's self-concept. According to Super, self-concept is a product of complex interactions among a number of factors, including physical and mental growth, personal experiences, and environmental characteristics and stimulation. Super's theory has called for a stronger emphasis on the effects of 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 experience and progresses through the developmental stages. Life and work satisfaction is a continual process of implementing the evolving self-concept through work and other life roles. Super (1990) proposed a life stage developmental framework with the following stages: growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance (or management), and disengagement. In each stage one has to successfully manage the vocational developmental tasks that are socially expected of persons in the given chronological age range. For example, in the stage of exploration (ages around 15 to 24), an adolescent has to cope with the vocational developmental tasks of crystallization (a cognitive process involving an understanding of one's interests, skills, and values, and to pursue career goals consistent with that understanding), specification (making tentative and specific career choices), and implementation (taking steps to actualize career choices through engaging in training and job positions). Super (1990) postulated that a mini-cycle consisting of the same stages from growth to disengagement would likely take place within each of the stages, particularly when a person makes transition from one stage 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 circumstances. Parson's Trait Theory of Career Development: Frank Parson is often credited as the founding father of modern career and vocational psychology. Parsons' (1909) process of studying individuals, considering occupations and matching them provided the foundation for trait and factor theory. Emanating out of the logical positivist worldview, 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 future jobs. The three main elements of his career development theory which helps in career selection are

- 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

Each of these three elements represents a major contribution to career theory and practice, both of which formed a seamless amalgam to Parson's point which in itself is significant given debate on the links between theory and practice. His first element is very important in his theory and is consistent with the contemporary approaches in career assessment and choices. Parson's acknowledged that individuals differ in terms of their interests, abilities, values, personality and skills. Parson suggested that career counseling interview process would take fifteen minutes, a length of time which by today's counseling standards seems remarkably short. Gottfredson's Career Choice Theory of Circumscription and Compromise

It is a recently developed theory of career development. Gottfredson (2005) 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 is 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,

Gardner's Multiple Theory of Intelligence and Career Choices

Career choices have been changed after this theory has been introduced. It challenges a traditional approach of IQ assessment and the theory posits that humans have 8-9 distinct types of intelligence which are independent of each other. These include linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, naturalistic and experiential. Career tests based on this model help to identify an individual's strongest and specific area and profile to match them with their prospective professions.

The Implication of Multiple Intelligence Theory

Tests based on this theory often use questionnaires where the candidates rate their agreement with statements reflecting different

behaviors for example "I like music", "I am good in rating my own mood" etc. The tests help them to discover their unique strengths and expanding their career choices.

Myth and Unscientific Claims Related to Dermatoglyphics Multiple Intelligence Test (DMIT)

Many centers and few people in India are claiming that using Finger print analysis and the model of multiple intelligence theory of Gardner on which Dermatoglyphics Multiple Intelligence Test (DMIT) is based can assess inborn human talents, and strongly predict future using this test. These are unscientific claims and refuted by the Gardner himself. <https://www.multipleintelligencesoasis.org/blog/2019/10/3/denouncing-dermatoglyphics?rq=dermatoglyphics>

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

A number of career development theories have been proposed. Each theory stresses one point of view and thus does not explain the complex process in its totality. For the professional career counselors, 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. There is a strong need to formulate indigenous theories to have cross cultural validity which in turn will help in developing culture fair vocational and career selection psychological tests. In India, career choices are often parents' choice based and not individual choice based, there is a need to sensitize the teachers and the parents about the importance of individual's interest based career decision making which will not only give a feeling of contentment and mastery, in long run it might help improving social and economic capital of the country. It is important to remember that MI theory of Gardner has new approaches in career choices. Myths and unscientific claims related to DMIT based on this theory also needs to be debunked.

REFERENCES

1. Athanasou, J.A., & R. Van Esbroeck (2008). International Handbook of Career Guidance, 115 © Springer Science + Business Media B.V.
2. Edbroeck, R. V., & Vianen, A. E. M. (2009). Life designing: A paradigm for career construction in the 21st century. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 75(3), 239-250.
3. Enriquez, V. G. (1993). Developing a Filipino psychology. In U. Kim & J. W. Berry (Eds.), *Indigenous psychologies: Research and experience in cultural context* (pp. 152-169). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
4. Gladding, S. T. (1992). *Counseling a Comprehensive Profession* (3rd Edition). Eaglewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, Inc
5. Gottfredson, L. S. (1981). Circumscription and compromise: A developmental theory of occupational aspirations [Monograph]. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 28, 545-579.
6. Gottfredson, L. S. (2002). Gottfredson's theory of circumscription, compromise, and self-creation. In D. Brown & Associate (Eds.), *Career choice and development* (4th ed., pp. 85-148). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass
7. Gottfredson, L. S. (2005). Applying Gottfredson's theory of circumscription and compromise in career guidance and counseling. In S. D. Brown & R. T. Lent (Eds.), *Career development and counseling: Putting theory and research to work* (pp. 71-100). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.
8. Gysbers, N. C. (2000). Implementing a whole school approach to guidance through a comprehensive guidance system. *Asian Journal of Counseling*, 7, 5-17.
9. Patton, W., & McMahon, M. (2014). *Career Development and Systems Theory Connecting Theory and Practice* (3rd ed). Sense Publishers: Boston
10. Savickas, M. & Lent, R. (1994). *Convergence in Career Development Theories*. Palo Alto, California:
11. Super, D. E. (1957). *The psychology of careers: An introduction to vocational development*. New York: Harper & Row.
12. Weinert, A. B. (2001). Psychology of career development. *International Encyclopaedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences*, Elsevier Science, 1471-147
13. Zunker, V. G. (2006). *Career Counseling: A holistic approach*. Belmont, CA: Thomson Books/Cole
14. <https://www.multipleintelligencesoasis.org/blog/2019/10/3/denouncing-dermatoglyphics?rq=dermatoglyphics>