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Signature David L. Stewart

Date August 8, 1972

FACTORS AFFECTING VOCATIONAL DECISION-MAKING
A SURVEY OF LITERATURE

by

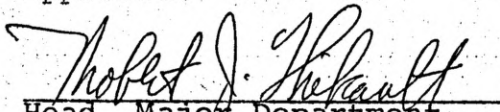
LOIS KATHERINE STEWART

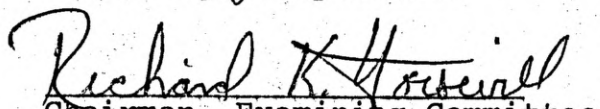
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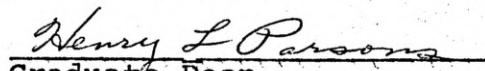
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Head, Major Department


Chairman, Examining Committee


Graduate Dean

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
VITA	ii
ACKNOWLEDGMENT	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.	iv
ABSTRACT	vi
 CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTION	1
STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM	2
PURPOSE OF THE STUDY	2
GENERAL QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED	3
GENERAL PROCEDURES	3
LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY	4
DEFINITION OF TERMS.	4
SUMMARY.	5
II. PROCESS OF VOCATIONAL CHOICE	6
INTRODUCTION	6
VARIOUS THEORIES OF VOCATIONAL CHOICE.	7
Trait-Factor Theory.	7
Sociology and Career Choice.	8
Self-Concept Theory.	8
Vocational Choice and Personality Theories	9
Systems Approach	9

Chapter		Page
	IDENTIFICATION OF SPECIFIC VOCATIONAL FACTORS	10
	THE WORK ROLE.	15
	SUMMARY.	19
III.	REVIEW OF INFLUENCES GOVERNING VOCATIONAL CHOICE.	21
	INTRODUCTION	21
	INFLUENCE OF SPECIFIC FACTORS.	22
	Social Class Factors	22
	Economic Factors	29
	Physical Factors	31
	Environmental Factors.	32
	Educational Factors.	36
	Personality Factors.	39
	Perceptions of Occupations	43
	EXPERIENCES THAT LEAD TO WISER DECISION-MAKING.	47
	THE EFFECT OF THEORY ON COUNSELING . . .	51
	SUMMARY.	52
IV	SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS .	54
	SUMMARY.	54
	CONCLUSIONS.	55
	RECOMMENDATIONS.	58
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	60

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this review of literature was to examine the influence, significance, and relationship of factors that affect vocational decision-making. An attempt was made to identify specific factors under the headings of social class, family, educational, environmental, economic, physical, personality, and perception of occupations that might be of value for a counselor involved in vocational counseling.

It was assumed that a review of the literature would identify and establish certain characteristics of particular factors that function in a vocational choice. The assumption was correct. There are interrelationships between social class, family, and economic factors most of the time. Environmental, personality, and physical factors can function simultaneously also.

Conclusions and recommendations were given. Some of the most important of these were: (1) The age of crystallization of work choice varies with social class, academic, and economic factors. (2) Parents, occupational role models, and teachers are key influencers in a student's vocational choice. (3) Vocational counseling for girls should come earlier than for boys because their plans usually are contingent on marriage. (4) Counselors in low economic areas might emphasize clarification of occupational information to prevent misconceptions. The teaching of occupations may be more valuable in a school curriculum that is composed of ethnic groups too. (5) Physically handicapped students would benefit from client centered counseling in the early years to improve their poor self-concept and to consider the advantages of work experience during the teen years to improve self confidence. (6) More practice in decision-making is advocated as a valuable tool in vocational planning and time management for a student.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In a time when our nation is undergoing a social revolution as well as a technological revolution, a counselor needs to be more aware of the factors involved in vocational decision making. Any endeavor that leads to congruity between man and society leads to a healthier individual and a healthier society. The counselor of today has to cope with Alvin Toffler's concept of transience in the world of work.

We can by analogy, think of transience as the rate of turnover of the different kinds of relationships in an individual's life. Moreover, each of us can be characterized in terms of this rate. For some, life is marked by a much slower rate of turnover than for others. The people of the past and present lead lives of relatively "low transience" -- a condition in which the duration of relationships is cut short, the through-put of relationships extremely rapid. In their lives, things, places, people, ideas, and organizational structures all get "used up" more quickly (Toffer, 1970:46).

The task of making a vocational decision is one that may be made many times during the lifetime of a current high school or college student. Career education as a result of the 1968 Vocational Education Amendments, states as one of its principles, that vocational guidance and counseling to facilitate occupational choice should be available to

students in the elementary school and the junior high school as well as in the high school (Evans, Mangum, Pragan, 1969: 88).

Therefore, through an examination of various factors that influence vocational choice, it is hoped that this study may provide a counselor with pertinent information that may be used for interpretation and application in his role as an advisor in vocational guidance.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The focus of this study is to present a recent survey of literature for the purpose of determining factors and guidelines relative to the process of successful vocational decision-making.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to examine the effects of familial, social, situational, and personality variables on career behavior and choice. It was felt that a counselor in an educational setting might find these concepts of value in helping clients to make the most effective use of their special characteristics.

GENERAL QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED

1. What are the various theories of vocational choice?
2. What are the significant factors in a vocational choice?
3. What influence do these factors have on a vocational choice?
4. What relationship do these factors have in the selection of an occupation?
5. What experiences may lead to wiser vocational decision making?
6. What factors may influence a counselor's approach to vocational planning?

GENERAL PROCEDURES

A review of literature available at Montana State University Library was used as a basis for obtaining information needed for this survey. The material was selected from professional journals in the fields of education, counseling, psychology, and sociology and from hardbound publications.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study was limited to pertinent information published since 1966. It also included those factors which are significant for pupils in junior high school through college.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Counseling is individualized and personalized assistance with personal, educational, or vocational problems, in which all pertinent facts are studied and analyzed, and a solution is sought, often with the assistance of specialists, school and community resources, and personal interviews in which the counselee is taught to make his own decisions (Good, 1945:104).

Guidance is a form of systematic assistance (aside from regular instruction) to pupils, students, or others, to help them acquire knowledge and wisdom, free from compulsion or prescription and calculated to lead to self-direction (Good, 1945:194).

Vocational interests is the measured patterns of likes and dislikes that have been found experimentally to differentiate successful adults in one occupation from those in other occupations; it is also the student's expressed interest in or his choice of an occupation (Good, 1945:449).

Vocational aptitude is the potentiality for achievement in a given type of occupation, usually indicated by performance in a test involving operations judged to be analogous to those basic to achievement in that type of occupation (Good, 1945:28).

Vocational decision-making is the active involvement of an individual in the process of making a choice in the occupational field.

SUMMARY

As the need for repeated vocational decisions becomes more and more apparent in the future because of increasing life spans and the advancement of technology, counselors need to be aware of the dynamics and factors related to choice. Familial, social, economic, situational and age all influence a vocational choice to some degree. With increased knowledge and application of the tools available, counselors may guide others to more successful choices in the occupational fields. Equipping the client to make the most satisfactory choice for himself is the challenge of the counselor. This may lead to more productive and satisfied citizens in the world of tomorrow.

CHAPTER II

PROCESS OF VOCATIONAL CHOICE

INTRODUCTION

It is estimated that because of rapidly advancing technology each person now twenty years of age may have as many as six careers during his lifetime. This means, in effect, that the individual who learns to make decisions appropriately early in life will have advantages over the person who moves along deciding matters by trial and error. The questions involved in choosing goals range widely, from how one's schedule of time and activities is made to what specific factors influence the choice of a job (Gilmer, 1967:289).

Vocational or career development as an area of investigation has been concerned with trying to understand the elaborate socialization process required to transform the child into the working adult, as well as to discover the manner in which work is related to the life styles of adults in the labor force (Tennyson, 1968:346).

This researcher felt that a brief synopsis of the various theories of vocational counseling would give a counselor a framework in which to make use of the information about specific factors and their influence.

The general plan of this chapter observes the following sequence:

1. Various theories of vocational choice.
2. Identification of specific vocational factors.
3. The work role.

This approach may give a more complete overview of the problems pertinent to vocational decision making.

VARIOUS THEORIES OF VOCATIONAL CHOICE

Career development theories seem to fall in various categories. The oldest theoretical approach has been known by a variety of names, most commonly the trait-factor approach.

Trait-Factor Theory

This system assumes that a straightforward matching of an individual's abilities and interests with the world's vocational opportunities can be accomplished, and once accomplished, solves the problems of vocational choice for that individual. The use of standardized achievement tests and interests tests is the primary tool for a counselor using this theory.

Sociology and Career Choice

This approach has as its central point the notion that circumstances beyond the control of the individual contribute significantly to the career choices he makes and that the principal task confronting the youth (or older person for that matter) is the development of techniques to cope effectively with the environment. Thus, a counselor might be concerned with the educational advantages offered in his school and scholarships available to needy students and the implementation of vocational courses.

Self-Concept Theory

A third approach actually weaves two models into one and can be called either the developmental or the self-concept theory. Super and Ginzberg and Carl Rogers and client-centered counselors use this method. The approach holds as its central theses that (1) individuals develop more clearly defined self-concepts as they grow older, although these vary to conform with the changes in one's view of reality as correlated with aging; (2) people develop images of the occupational world which they compare with their self-image in trying to make career decisions; and (3) the adequacy of the eventual career decision is based

on the similarity between an individual's self-concept and the vocational concept of the career he eventually chooses.

Vocational Choice and Personality Theories

Here, the ideas range from elaborate lists of needs inherent in the process of vocational choice and the detailed personality types for career areas described by Holland. There are also many research projects on the personality characteristics of people in different vocations, the life styles of various professionals, and the specific needs of workers in particular industries or jobs.

Systems Approach

Applied to career development, the systems approach is most clearly seen in the analysis of decision making. Decisions may be viewed as links in a chain. Each decision can be made only immediately prior to action, yet preparation for the act of deciding and plans for the implementation of the decision itself are necessary. Furthermore, even though decisions have immediate implications, the long range effects on future decisions are to be considered even though not made final now (Osipow, 1968:11, 236).

All of these approaches are intertwined and in many instances draw heavily on one another both in terms of practice and actual research.

IDENTIFICATION OF SPECIFIC VOCATIONAL FACTORS

Peters and Hansen (1966:50), have identified the following influences on career development:

1. Social Class Membership - The facts that identify the counselee's social class, including occupation and income of parents, education of parents, place and type of residence, and ethnic background.
2. Home Influences - Goals that parents have for the counselee, place among siblings, influence of siblings, role of counselee in the family, family values and counselee's acceptance of them.
3. School - Scholastic achievement, relationships with peers and with faculty, group goals and values in the school, vocational specialization, if any.
4. Community - Group goals and values - the "thing to do" in the community, special career opportunities or influences, counselee's identification with the community and desire to stay there and accept its values.

5. Pressure Groups - Has the counselee (or his parents) been exposed to any particular influence that leads him to value one occupation over another? Is this influence compatible with the counselee's abilities, values, and needs?

6. Role Perception - Does the counselee want to be a leader, a follower, an isolate, or just a "good Joe?" Is the counselee's perception of himself and his role in accord with the way others perceive him?

Holland (1966), in this theory of vocational choice, suggests that if an individual possesses an accurate perception of self and reality the likelihood that he will select environments congruent with his personal orientation is increased (Walsh and Barrow, 1971:271-278).

Holland feels that to obtain a person's profile, one can use his scores on selected scales from "interest" and personality inventories, his self-description, his choice of vocation or field of history, his life history, or combinations of these data. For example, certain scales of the Vocational Preference Inventory, the Strong Vocational Interest Blank, and the Kuder Preference Record have been designated as estimates of the types. The person's profile can then be interpreted by applying the descriptions of the types. Each environment is dominated by a given type of

personality, and each environment is typified by physical settings posing special problems and stresses (Holland, 1966:11).

Realistic

The model type is masculine, physically strong, unsociable, aggressive; has good motor coordination and skill; lacks verbal and interpersonal skills; prefers concrete to abstract problems; conceives of himself as being aggressive and masculine and as having conventional political and economic values.

Intellectual

The model type is task-oriented, intrceptive, asocial; prefers to think through rather than act out problems; needs to understand; enjoys ambiguous work tasks; has unconventional values and attitudes; is anal as opposed to oral.

Social

The model type is sociable, responsible, feminine, humanistic, religious, needs attention; has verbal and interpersonal skills; avoids intellectual problem solving, physical activity, and highly ordered activities; prefers to solve problems through feelings and interpersonal manipulations of others; is orally dependent.

Conventional

The model type prefers structured verbal and numerical activities and subordinate roles; is conforming (extrceptive); avoids ambiguous situations and problems involving interpersonal relationships and physical skills; is effective at well-structured tasks; identifies with power; values material possessions and status.

Enterprising

The model type has verbal skills for selling, dominating, leading; conceives of himself as a strong, masculine leader; avoids well-defined language or work situations requiring long periods of intellectual effort;

is extraceptive; differs from the Conventional type in that he prefers ambiguous social tasks and has a greater concern with power, status, and leadership; is orally aggressive.

Artistic

The model type is asocial; avoids problems that are highly structured or require gross physical skills; resembles the Intellectual type in being intraceptive and asocial; but differs from that type in that he has a need for individualistic expression, has less ego strength, is more feminine, and suffers more frequently from emotional disturbances; prefers dealing with environmental problems through self-expression in artistic media (Holland, 1966:16-17).

Thus, Holland believes that a vocational choice is based on the counselee looking for an occupation that will satisfy his personality and life style and these are the factors behind his choice.

Donald Super in his twenty year study on career development lists twenty-one different factors that influence a vocational choice. They are:

1. Mental ability: academic standing
2. Special aptitudes and abilities
3. Interests
4. Values
5. Personality characteristics
6. Physical and health requirements
7. Sacrifices
8. Amount of schooling: general education; training
9. Cost of training or getting started
10. Availability of training facilities
11. Earnings
12. Other benefits: retirement, leave provisions, etc.
13. Physical conditions

14. Hours
15. Regularity of employment, security
16. Physical conditions: variety, routine, challenge
work under pressure
17. Social conditions: congeniality of fellow
workers
18. Advancement
19. Location
20. Supply and demand
21. Familial attitudes and wishes (Super and
Overstreet, 1960:161-164).

Developmental behavior is related to vocational choice. The process of exploration, preparation, and crystallization are three of the stages a person must go through in the development of a career choice. Super feels that an educational institution has a great deal of influence on the timing of vocational decisions by its very structure. For instance, the subjects a student chooses in high school may lead to exploration of occupations related to a particular subject such as science. A ninth grade student's decision to participate in a vocational curriculum may influence his decisions about further training. Crystallization of a vocational preference, requires the individual to formulate ideas about work appropriate for himself. It also requires him to develop occupational and self-concepts that will help him to mediate his tentative vocational choice by means of relevant educational decisions. It most typically occurs during the 14 to 18 year age range (Osipow, 1968:124).

Anne Roe (1956), in The Psychology of Occupations, stated that vocational choice is determined by the motivations of self-expression, status, association with people, money and security, variety in work, and helping others. The external influences that shape interests are family, school, availability of finances, early extended contact with an occupation, and friends.

Career development concepts used in Career Education in the state of Wisconsin state the following facts:

1. Occupational supply and demand has an impact on career planning.
2. Job specialization creates interdependency.
3. Environment and individual potential interact to influence career development.
4. Occupations and life styles are interrelated.
5. Career development requires a continuous and sequential series of choices.
6. Education and work are interrelated.

THE WORK ROLE

One of the main factors in vocational choice is whether the role of work is an important facet in one's life style. If the need and value of work as a means of self-

expression and existence is internalized, a person is motivated to choose a type of work.

The complexities of modern society are such that most persons must be able to play a fairly large number of differing roles, some of which demand behaviors that may be quite contradictory. The same man may be called upon to be authoritative and decisive within the family, obedient and compliant on the job, cheerful and outgoing with his friends. It is not surprising that some people find these wide shifts in expectations difficult to meet and are unable to play one or another or all of these roles effectively. Since the role of the worker is one of the more important roles people are expected to play, it is useful to summarize the sorts of behaviors that are required.

First, the individual must have some motivation to work, although the precise nature and source of his motivation may vary widely from person to person. Second, he must have some necessary minimum of aptitude and skill. Third, he must be able to conform to certain work rules. Fourth, he must be able to meet certain minimal standards for productivity and quality. Fifth, he must "look" like a worker, i. e., he must meet certain conventional standards for dress, demeanor, and deportment, with the additional

proviso that he must have awareness of what is expected from him in different occupations and workplaces. Sixth, he must be able to relate appropriately to various kinds of people on the job, showing the required amount of respect to his superiors and the required amount of camaraderie with his peers. Seventh, he must be able to shift his emotional and cognitive gears well enough so that he can "turn on" all those behaviors appropriate to work and "turn off" all those affects and needs which are mobilized and gratified by other settings.

It should be perfectly clear that the above-stated list of requirements are those of a role-model. Not everyone becomes adept in meeting all of those requirements, and many fall short in meeting one or more of them. By and large, however, they sum up to the kind of persons demanded by a work-oriented society (Neff, 1968:130-131).

Three types of role behavior in work can be described as upward mobile, indifferent, and ambivalent. Many researchers say that both upward mobility and indifference are functions of class and education as well as of personality.

Upward mobiles are people who have tendencies toward high job satisfaction and identify strongly with the

organization. They are conformists and motivated by a desire for power. The upward mobile is rule-and-procedure oriented and often views individuals in detached terms. He places personal advancement before group acceptance, feels little sense of conflict, and goes in heavily for the paraphernalia of organizations.

The great mass of wage and salary employees come within the category of the indifferents. These are the people who withdraw from system participation when possible. He seeks off-the-job satisfaction. He rejects the values of success and power, paying lip service to the system only when he has to. Many indifferents, both blue-collar and white-collar, pay lip service to getting ahead but transfer their expectations to their children. He identifies primarily with his immediate work companions. His personal life is more rewarding than his job. An indifferent's motive to work is to provide for the basic necessities and to structure time.

Ambivalents can be described as both creative and anxious. They can neither reject the organization's promise of success and power nor play the varied roles required to compete for them. Intellectual interests of the ambivalent person tend to run high. He is frequently found with

limited interpersonal facility, not knowing how to get along with people. His career expectations are idealistic, often unrealistic, and he often finds himself unable to bargain effectively. He honors theory and knowledge and rejects authority. This attitude may be related to the finding that in a number of companies studied, there was no relationship between intelligence and aptitude, on the one hand, and rank and salary, on the other (Gilmer, 1967:330-331).

SUMMARY

Career development is an on going process and may be approached from several theoretical foundations. There is the trait-factor theory which deals with abilities and interests, the sociology or environmental approach which is concerned with altering external factors, the self-concept theory which has as its central theses that a vocational choice is the expression of one's self concept, and the vocational choice and personality theories which see a choice as satisfying a need or life style of an individual. The systems approach is one that approaches decision making as a sequential process.

Specific vocational factors are identified as extrinsic or intrinsic and include social class membership, home influences, school, community, pressure groups, and role perception. Intrinsic motivations are self-expression, status, association with people, money, security, variety of work and helping others.

The role of work is seen both as a motivation and list of behaviors required in a work oriented society. Types of work behavior may be described as upward mobile, indifferent, and ambivalent.

CHAPTER III

REVIEW OF INFLUENCES GOVERNING VOCATIONAL CHOICE

INTRODUCTION

Research studies have been made continuously in an attempt to establish a scientific basis for vocational choice. The most recent findings will be examined in this chapter. The results of various experimental studies may help a counselor in his role as a facilitator of self-realization in the client.

Many of the studies are repetitious so only the most pertinent ones were included under the factors discussed. An attempt was made to include the influences, relationships, and experiences that play an important part in a student's vocational choice. In order to do this, the chapter will be divided into three parts as follows:

1. Influences of Specific Factors.

Social Class, Family, Educational, Environmental, Economic, Physical, Personality, Occupational Perception.

2. Experiences That Lead to Wiser Decision-Making.

3. The Effect of Theory on Counseling.

The classification of influences and relationships by specific factors was judged to be the most orderly method of presenting the findings.

INFLUENCE OF SPECIFIC FACTORS

Social Class Factors

Perhaps the broadest and most significant social factor affecting human behavior is social class identification.

Tseng (1971:88-92), found in his study of 178 male students of grades nine through twelve from a geographically isolated and culturally deprived area, that lower socioeconomic groups had significantly lower occupational aspiration and more distorted perception of the occupational prestige hierarchy than middle class students. The middle class group also possessed higher achievement motivation than lower class groups.

Therefore, in order to stimulate social mobility in the lower socioeconomic groups, it would be necessary to help improve the goal they set for the attainment of higher level occupations, change their perceptions concerning the world in general, and help them to aspire to acquire a stronger urge to approach success.

The importance of assured, steady work (job security) seems to be characteristically associated with youth whose parents are in low skilled occupations.

Youths of professional or managerial parents place more value on rewards of work that are extrinsic in nature such as money, prestige, and security.

Work values of social classes are well underway by the fifth grade and fairly well established by eighth grade (Hales and Fenner, 1972:199).

Peters and Hansen (1966:149), found that blue collar workers placed emphasis on the physically easy nature of work, the economic rewards, the conditions of work, and cleanliness. White collar workers emphasized the nature of the work itself and freedom. They also conclude that for the college graduate, apparently, the status of the first job is not so important a determinant of subsequent occupational status as for say the high school graduate.

A study of middle class values of students in the last twenty years indicates that students want a different type of education. There is a desire for more emphasis on appreciation of ideas and training that would develop skills and techniques applicable to a career. Students seem to be more individualistic, less imbedded in groups, and less other directed (Hoge, 1970:170-197).

It would seem that the lower social class is motivated more by job security and the physical aspect of work.

The upper class would tend to choose jobs on the basis of prestige, salary, and the amount of freedom to express themselves. The middle class is most concerned with obtaining competent skills and techniques. Since work values are learned early in life and pretty well stabilized by junior high, an elementary counselor would have the most opportunity to influence motivations. A junior high counselor would be more aware of the values of a client from a specific social class in the exploration stage of occupations. Experiences that lead to higher risk taking, competent skills, and a better self concept may change the expectations of the lower class. Emphasis on future planning and possible training after an entry level job has been obtained, would be one of the most important tasks of a counselor working with a lower or middle class student.

Family Factors

Parents, regardless of their social class do a great deal to determine whether a child will be work-oriented or a sluggard, whether he will seek or avoid responsibility.

Some of the most occupationally helpless young people are the children of self-made men who say, "I don't want my boy to work as hard as I did."

Siblings may also have an important influence on the career plans of each other. The oldest child's success and satisfaction in an occupation may influence his younger brother in that direction.

Vocations are often influenced by a person's perception of the occupations held by his mother and father also. Many males and females tend to follow in the footsteps of their parents whether their interests lie in that direction or not. When the financial factor of training for a particular occupation is removed, most students were found to prefer an occupation more closely correlated with their own interests. Opportunities for jobs, training and approval of parents also seem to govern an ultimate choice (Clack, 1968:282-286).

Kandel and Lesser's study of 2,327 adolescents in the United States shows that parents' aspirations have been shown to affect adolescents' college plans more strongly than the father's occupation (Kandel and Lessner, 1970: 270-287).

One hundred sixty-one black adolescents and 218 white adolescents from "working class" families were asked to designate in order the key figures who exercised a principle influence over them in their selection of occupations

they aspired to enter. The males cited as key figures - persons holding the preferred occupation, parent, teacher, peer or sister or brother, relative not of the immediate family, counselor, and neighbor in that order. Females cited mother, persons in preferred occupation, peer, brother or sister, relative not of the immediate family or teacher, father, counselor and neighbor.

In each sex group, the same-sex parent ranks first or second in order of influence, while a person who himself holds the preferred occupation ranks in the alternate position. Teachers rank fourth and counselors seventh in influence. Through the teacher, the school thus appears to have exercised an impact on occupational preference subordinate only to parents, occupational role models, siblings, and close personal friends. For the counselor, who even in the best of school circumstances can be expected to exercise key influence over small proportions of the student body, the implications seem clear. He might spend his time more profitably with the key influencers (Pallone, Rickard, Hurley, 1970:501).

Mrs. Barbara Bullivant, secretary of the Confederation for the Advancement of State Education, states that

parents may need advice on career choices. She argues that parents can often give children a more realistic view of what will happen to them when they start work. However, some parents have too low an estimate of their child's capabilities. Girl's parents may need special help to appreciate that careers for girls are not just a waste of time and money; help should also go to parents of immigrant children, since they "cannot always call on the same background information which most parents acquire during their own years at school and in employment" (Sproule, 1970:7). Perhaps group counseling of both parents and students may be more effective at arriving at a realistic vocational decision.

In a study done at Slippery Rock State College of 235 undergraduate junior and senior education majors, it was found that first born men expected the higher status, men who were only children expected the highest salaries, and later-born men had lower expectations than other groups for both status and salary. Among women, first-borns had the highest salary ambitions. Later born women exceeded first-borns in status ambition, with only children again having the lowest expectations (Platt, Moskalski, and Eisenman, 1968:170-173).

This seems to agree with Tolman's theory that first borns identify more with the adult world but disagrees on the point of the only child having more driving ambition. The study may have some implications for counselors in that girls and boys in relationship to birth order have different expectations.

Career oriented women have been influenced more frequently by occupational role models in their career choice or a working mother and have had more work experience themselves. Moreover, girls with working mothers learn a more favorable definition of combining a career and marriage (Almquist and Angrist, 1970:242).

Women who score high on feminine social orientation tend to have grown up in families where father was in control. They do not seem as interested in the working world but prefer to make marriage their career. Those who score high on stop-gap job orientation tend to have found it easy to enter their desired fields and to have grown up in an environment where mother was the disciplinarian and father had little energy (Nagely, 1971:331-341).

Discipline and personality of parents seem to have a definite influence on a girl's motivation to work. Knowledge that both parents work may help a counselor decide the

type of approach he will take with a female student.

Since vocational plans for girls are so heavily contingent on marriage plans, vocational counseling with girls needs to be, in a sense, life planning, with cognizance of a number of major contingencies involved. The advent of children, the possibility of widowhood, or the disablement of a spouse are all events that may be encountered by a wife. These factors may be choice points in her life when she has to make a decision whether to work or not (Cooperman, 1971:15).

Economic Factors

A study by Vander Well (1970:30), of college students indicated that students with financial need chose specific occupations earlier than did students without financial need and were more stable in their choices, but that they were no more likely to have vocational (rather than academic) college goals than were students without financial need.

Different ethnic groups also have particular attitudes which influence vocational choice. Cervantes, (1970: 22-23) in a study of Mexican American children states:

In Chicano culture, the family comes first so that a child is expected to stop being a financial

crain and start being a financial contributor as soon as possible. Because of their language handicap, they are quickly classed by schools as slow learners, and eventually guided into vocational courses and seldom encouraged to consider college.

Vander Well's study suggests that financial need may cause one to focus on a specific career sooner. It also may act as a positive agent in forcing a person to decide his goal and start taking steps to accomplish it earlier in life. Cervantes counters that financial need because of ethnic values pressures a student into a lower compromise choice. Perhaps this is where a counselor should spend some time with parents on the possibilities open to their child. A student who has no hope of financial aid from his family or emotional support for his ambitions may benefit from scholarships due to the fact that he must make a choice early that will please his family value system.

Noblett and Asher (1971:254-257), in their profiles of senior high school students who work, concluded that boys and girls who work tend to be less academically oriented than their nonworking peers and desire to enter the vocational world sooner.

A counselor might consider exposing these students to the future potentialities of the occupations they are now

performing. Further training that might be of value and how it may be obtained could promote a look at longer range goals.

Physical Factors

The Physical health of an individual may definitely limit the number of choices open to one. Persons who come in contact with food preparation and teachers are required to be free of tuberculosis. Airline pilots and stewardesses must pass physical exams and maintain a certain weight.

Physically handicapped individuals may look at an occupation from a different point of view because of their limitations.

In amputees, the limiting factors may be both physical and psychological. Their choices may be made more often on the basis of secondary gains (i.e., attention, dependency, etc.). Overawareness of "being different" may lead to occupational preferences where a physical disability is not visible such as a desk job for a leg amputee (Willis, Harford, and Eddy, 1970:310-312).

The child with rheumatic fever or heart disease is particularly in need of vocational counseling early. Some occupations are closed to him because of physical demands, hours and regulations by certain firms. A heart patient learns to lie because they are given a more thorough physical examination than other employees in order to be put on

a company health plan. He seems to benefit from part-time work experience during his teen years (Lawrence, 1961:138).

Physically handicapped individuals tend to have a more negative self-concept of themselves. The more negatively one views himself, the greater the value he places upon intellectual stimulation, prestige, independence, etc. in the work situation; conversely, the more positively one views himself, the less value he places upon these sources of reward or satisfaction (Pallone, Richard, Hurley and Terman, 1970:376-377).

Building self confidence and acceptance of self would appear to be the primary goal of a handicapped client. The challenge of a paying job is one way a client may test his competence and ability to function in society.

Environmental Factors

Occupational structure ebbs and flows according to supply and demand, advancing technology, population growth, and the age of workers. The adverse symptoms of society such as the drug problem has resulted in an increased emphasis on the health occupations. Pressure groups such as television, periodicals, advertisements, and information materials prepared by various firms put more stress on the

advantages of certain occupations. These groups appeal to the emotional needs of students and may influence a choice.

The reasons for choosing occupations operate with different forces at different times. This can be shown by the heavy enrollment in the social studies in college in periods of economic and social disturbance, and in science, literature, and other fields in more prosperous times, when interest presumably is less affected by social pressure (Super, 1942:150).

In the view of many observers, the convergence of white and blue collar job loss during the recent recession, marks the end of job security for the middle class. Everyone is going to be in the same boat and regarded like factory crews that are expandable in good times and collapsible in bad times (Klein, 1972:294).

Preparation for useful and remunerative employment is now viewed by many civic leaders and policy makers as a major means of reducing poverty and relief roles, juvenile delinquency, and disorder in the cities, so increasing support from public funds is being channeled in the direction of vocational education.

Vocational counselors are beginning to realize that it is no longer appropriate to limit themselves to helping

a person find a career suitable to his interest and aptitude. What good does it do to know that choosing a career involves implementing a self-concept if there are no jobs available that allow one to be the kind of person he wants to be (Bickford, 1971:5)?

Projected job demands and the supply available is a full time study for the Bureau of Labor. Business firms also make their own forecasts and projections for the future. John Haas, (1969) administered 116 questionnaire items to 139 managers and engineers of a large basic metals firm. The respondents expected that in the future (1) more education will be required in their work; (2) the reward structure will increasingly depend on performance; (3) the computer will play an increasingly important role at work; (4) interpersonal skill requirements will increase in importance; (5) while more autonomy will be desired; less will be available; (6) the external environment of government regulation, overseas markets and customer demands will take on increasing importance (Bass, 1972:20).

This researcher wonders if the above list might not apply to quite a number of occupations and might be considered as a general guideline of the expectations of industry.

Along with the general growth in population in the

United States, will be corresponding increases in the number of people in the work force. If present trends continue, the average worker will be living longer. Moreover, more women, more highly educated workers and more professionals, technicians, and managers, are likely to be in the work force of the 1970's and 1980's.

In 1985, the only uncertainty about the age structure of the population concerns that number and distribution of persons who will be under 15 at that time. The rapid growth in the number of young adults between 20 and 34 years of age and the lack of growth in the 45 to 64 year age group may have particularly significant implications for the structure of executive management and political leadership in the future. For one thing, it may mean that there will be a shortage of experienced older men available for positions of leadership in politics, industrial management and government. Those who will be available will be much in demand and there may be some pressure for them to postpone retirement. The shortage of mature men for positions of leadership may also provide greater opportunities for women (Bass, 1972:23).

What implications does the above information have for a school counselor? The parents of a client will be

experiencing both the advantages and disadvantages of the occupational structure. Their aspirations for their children may be more toward the management level and college. High school girls may demand more of a counselor's time in planning careers. A counselor may also be spending more time with groups helping them to learn to express themselves more clearly. He also may find his own profession using the computer as a tool in counseling students.

Educational Factors

Children who perform favorably in the school environment are likely to be influenced toward higher education and in turn toward the professions.

Apart from specific friendship patterns, a student from a middle class family is more likely to attend college if he attends a school from which a high percentage of graduates go on for higher education. Attending a vocational high school has an obvious effect on choice.

Teachers also influence by encouragement and reward in meeting their expectations.

Bright students who have not chosen a specific vocation may be delaying that choice because they are capable of doing many things and therefore, have many more alternatives open to them (Baird, 1968:178-179).

The type of school a student attends, therefore, has a basic influence on his further training for an occupation. Since a college education usually includes people who are aiming at the professions and managerial positions, one might surmise that they are upward mobile.

High earning blue collar workers fail to encourage their off-spring to attain more than a high school diploma (Ginzberg, 1972:49). Education seems to be interrelated with family and social factors as the above evidence shows.

Regardless of educational background, the college graduates studied by Lee (1970:49), agreed the most important factors in job selection were an appealing job, the potential for advancement, and the variety of people met.

Peer values and educational institutions may be a significant stimulus in stabilizing work values. The adolescent may adapt himself to his own life style rather than perpetuating the one of his parents if he goes to college.

During the 1968-1969 academic year, 100 randomly selected men from the College of Business Administration at Bowling Green University were interviewed concerning their immediate post-college plans. The students were evenly divided between members of the entering freshman class and

seniors planning to graduate no later than the summer of 1969. Replies were divided into four categories: enter family business, enter graduate or law school, seek definite type of work, and undecided.

The freshman and seniors had about the same immediate post-college plans and the largest number of both planned for a specific type of work. Little if any difference appeared between the freshman and seniors in their expectations of staying in one industry for ten years - sixty per cent thought that they would. Working conditions, in which a friendly atmosphere and pleasant work were significantly more important to the freshman, and further job training, was significantly more important to the seniors. The freshman and seniors did not differ in their opinions on desirable characteristics of the first job--such as salary, personal considerations, advancement, and security. When questioned about business structure, the seniors showed a significantly better understanding of the management structure than did the freshmen, and were more aware of needed staff specialization (Barker, 1970:241-245).

These findings suggest that the majority of students who go to college plan to choose a specific type work as a career but are not cognizant of the structure of the

occupation and the need for specialization until the senior year. If the structure of a particular type of work and the implications of specialization were presented to a freshman, he might find his course work more meaningful.

Personality Factors

The person who "moves toward people," "who wants to be helpful," will be guided toward a general area of occupations in which friendly, frequent contact with others is inherent in the structure of the occupation. A person who needs to express control, mastery, or domination will move toward those occupations in which this need can find expression. Some people will choose occupations negatively; we find the person, for example, who wants to have as little as possible to do with people or who wishes to avoid problems. This individual will be likely to seek out an occupation that makes few demands upon him (Gilmer, 1967:288-289).

Students who chose teaching as either their ideal or probable job choice were more likely than nonteachers to come from working-class families, and to be interested in a job which gave them opportunities to work with and be helpful to people. Cultural interests and outside intellectual activities tended to become less important for both

prospective teachers and nonteachers as they progressed through their university courses. Both groups attached significantly less importance to participation in religious societies and reading in fields outside the degree subject (Cohen, 1969:41).

Holland's description of the intellectual type agrees with Cohen conclusions on a teacher having unconventional values and attitudes.

Vocational choice involves a degree of risk. The varies among different occupations with respect to attaining the requisite education and skills for entry, to obtaining employment once the entry requirements have been met, and to maintaining a position and advancing in it once employed.

High risk takers have a certain life style which counselors may take into account so that they may emphasize life plans instead of occupational careers. They have a strong preference for esthetic activities in school which include drama, music, and literature.

In interpersonal relations they feel at ease at social functions, are less threatened by talking to strangers and like loud parties. They are self-confident, social, and oriented to leadership.

Males reject tradition with respect to family structure and politics, while females reject areas of religion and family structure. They indicate a preference for a profession that allows them to be creative, even if the profession is unstable and risky. Their intellectual orientation is one of working out problems on their own. Concentration and enjoyment of mental activities for pleasure is also high.

Preference for high risk may reflect decidedly positive attributes.

Risk takers have been shown to be a "valuable commodity" in any organization and that risk taking involves characteristics of competence, control of anxiety, and spontaneity (Witwer and Stewart, 1972:165).

Studies show that there are three general types of personality in any organization of an appreciable size. Found at or near the top of the organizational pyramid are the "upward mobiles," who react positively to the large bureaucratic situation and succeed in it. The uncommitted majority in the organization are the "indifferents," who see their jobs as mere instruments toward obtaining off-work satisfactions. Then there is a small, perpetually disturbed minority composed of persons who can neither renounce their claims for status and power nor play the disciplined role to get them (Gilmer, 1967:329).

Although persons may select occupational environments congruent with their personalities, it must also be remembered that companies of the same occupation may have either a democratic or authoritarian personality also.

Interests are part of personality factors. It is not possible at present to predict reliably whether a high school student's expressed vocational choice will be confirmed by his responses on a standardized preference inventory such as a Kider DD. Counselors should use both expressed choice and the inventory to assist him in his appraisal. Leisure time activities should also be taken into account (Nelson, 1971:21-24).

High risk takers have leisure activities that include drama, literature, and music. Expressed interests and tested interests may be related to risk taking.

When a student is placed in a forced choice situation between interest and ability in doing a task, ability is of greater importance in decision-making (Sharf, 1970: 258-262).

Ziegler (1970:133-136), in his study of 428 male college students representing 39 college majors concluded that individuals found a greater congruence between

themselves and their most preferred occupations than in the ones least perceived.

Students identify with certain occupations and find others in them with similar personalities. Ability is more important than interest when a choice has to be made by a student. Personality interests may also be related to successful experiences in school.

Perceptions of Occupations

Many vocational decisions are based on vague or inaccurate perceptions of occupations. In certain situations hasty and inaccurate decisions may represent a major disaster in the life of an individual who has developed an inappropriate occupational goal. The consequences of lost time, opportunities, finances, and diminished self-regard are difficult to assess. One might speculate, however, that an individual's accuracy of perception has a significant meaning for the proper understanding of, and choice of, occupations.

Counselors and students easily can fall prey to inaccurate perceptions of different occupations. The increasing complexity of current occupations and the rapid proliferation of new jobs also furthers inaccuracy. People

typically respond to this complexity by stereotyping occupations. One of the dangers of relying on occupational stereotypes in the decision-making process is that the stereotype tends to narrow a person's focus of an occupation. This effect seriously limits consideration of occupations within a particular vocation which ultimately may be attractive and rewarding to the individual.

If counselors are aware of the variables related to the accuracy of occupational stereotypes they can take active steps to increase the perceptual accuracy of each of their counselees. Students who are able to assess accurately the requirements of various occupations also are in a more advantageous position to choose wisely. With more accurate occupational stereotypes one would assume that a wider range of possible jobs could be available, and in the same sense, that some jobs might be more meaningfully rejected. Accurate perceptions could provide people with clearer images of alternative occupations, thereby facilitating decision making (Banducci, 1970:534).

Responses from 679 high school senior boys to 12 occupations of selected worker trait requirements needed for successful performance of a job resulted in the following

conclusions: (1) Students with crystallized vocational plans have more accurate stereotypes of occupations; (2) Students with high academic development have more stereotypes of high-level jobs like Engineer, etc.; (3) Students with low academic development and low socioeconomic status had more accurate stereotypes of low-level jobs; (4) Those students of the Realistic, Intellectual, and Enterprising Vocational Preference Inventory types also were found to have the most accurate stereotypes of occupations (Banducci, 1970:538).

Academic ability level of a student may have to be taken into account when occupational information is disseminated. Traditional forms of occupational information might be inadequate and may need to be replaced or supplemented by types of information which are specifically keyed to the ability level of a particular student.

Other factors may be involved in the differential perceptions of students from different socioeconomic levels. For example, other ability factors, sibling and peer relationships, and prevocational or vocational as well as social experiences are no doubt operating to contribute to these differences of perception. Since students from lower socioeconomic status are less accurate than high-socioeconomic-

status students in their overall perception of occupations, a concerted effort should be made to provide them with the types of occupational information and kinds of experience which would help correct misperceptions, provide additional knowledge, and make possible the consideration of alternative choices.

A careful review of a person's socioeconomic status, academic development, vocational interests, and degree of crystallization of plans can provide the counselor with important clues that have a bearing on the accuracy with which an individual views occupations. Armed with this kind of information, the counselor can take specific action to fill gaps which may exist in an individual's perception of an occupation he is currently examining or those which he has not yet considered. With an increase in accuracy, a person should be able to view occupations more realistically and reduce the unknown factors which introduce confusion into the occupational choice process.

Subjects who are high in motivation possess high occupational aspiration, have accurate perceptions of occupational prestige and chose prestigious occupations (Tseng and Carter, 1970:150).

EXPERIENCES THAT LEAD TO WISER DECISION-MAKING

The usual orientation program often does not meet all a student's needs for exploring his career choices, life goals, and motivations. An orientation course can go further toward meeting these needs. It should include presentation of information necessary to evaluate various occupations in terms of projected future supply and demand, some testing of students to point toward their basic interests and abilities, help the students in gaining insight into their own personality and behavior, and provision of open communication with someone representing the establishment, as well as with students holding different points of view (Snider, 1970:138).

The group counseling program at the University of Minnesota is directed toward effectively and efficiently aiding students in interpreting vocational plans.

The goals in the group discussion consist of defining the problem, characterizing the individual under discussion, suggesting various courses of action, assessing probabilities of success, and evaluating satisfactions with choices suggested. Group members become quite adept at

interpreting results of such tests as the Strong Vocational Interest Blank. This model seemed to adapt itself well to vocational planning and decision (Hewer, 1968:250-257).

Role playing in group counseling is an effective means of trying out the behaviors associated with different levels of work. A student becomes aware of his attitudes toward authority when acting the part of an employee facing a manager in a simulated situation. He also may demonstrate his ability to solve a problem when given a case study to analyze. Behaviors like delegating authority and handling an insubordinate employee in playing the role of manager gives him insight into his feelings about being a leader (Etekin and Snyder, 1972:215-218).

Video tapes of school leaders demonstrating a job interview is a favorable way of presenting information. Groups watching the tape were more apt to identify with students they respected and knew than a programmed film (Thoresen and Hamilton, 1972:40).

Research studies directed by John Krumboltz at Stanford University have developed and tested a series of job experience kits for stimulating interest in particular occupations and for increasing vocational exploration. The kits actively engage the student in realistic though

simulated problems encountered on the job by workers in a specific occupation. These were simulated experiences in X-ray and medical laboratory occupations. This type of experience made the student more aware of the fact that he was or was not interested in the medical field. It also led to insight into the type of environment one might encounter in a job of this type (Johnson, 1971:25-30).

One simulation game, the Life Career Game, has interested counselors because of its focus on the role of decision-making in the lives of individuals. The game is constructed to give students practice in decision-making. Students are divided into teams of three or four and plan several years of the life of a hypothetical person. The teams make decisions for the hypothetical person such as the type of educational experiences he will have, whether or not he will work, and how he will spend his leisure hours. One round of the game represents one year of the hypothetical person's life, and each team receives a score after every round to help players evaluate the decisions they have made. Scores are based on the probabilities of certain things happening in a person's life given his personal characteristics, past experiences, and present efforts.

The probabilities are derived from U. S. Census and other survey data. The game appears to be a promising technique for training students in decision-making, since it can be played with a group as large as 30.

Research findings of Johnson and Euler (1972: 155-159), indicated that in playing the Life Career Game students not only learn educational and occupational information, but use this information to make decisions. The information, then, becomes more personalized and is retained longer.

Experimentation with the teaching of occupations has been conducted since the Vocational Act of 1968, and in some cases years before. According to the review of literature on the teaching of occupations from 1965 to 1970 by Sinick, Gorman, and Hoppack, (1971:136) the following conclusions were made:

Courses and units on occupations apparently accomplish more than the "dissemination" of occupational information. They may have a salutary effect on noncognitive variables like attitudes toward work and workers, realism of interests and of aspiration level, self-understanding and self-assurance. An occupation course also improves vocational and overall maturity, motivation and involvement, independence and competence in decision making.

Experimental programs by IBM and Harvard University Graduate School of Education are now in progress. A systems approach using the computer as a data information bank looks promising as a tool in decision-making. Test

scores may be stored in the data bank and a student may talk to the computer about various choices he has in mind. The computer in turn will take information about the student and apply it to the problem. Some programs also will print out the names of students who want information on a particular occupation so that a counselor may identify when he has enough for a group counseling session (Scates, 1969).

THE EFFECT OF THEORY ON COUNSELING

What the counselor decides to do when confronted with career choice questions depends upon the estimate he has of the source of the problem and the precise nature of its behavioral correlates.

Thus, if he decides that career choice is a process of matching oneself against jobs or positions in terms of interests and aptitudes, he will arrange, wherever possible, opportunities for his client to explore a variety of positions. He will proceed with self-clarification and clarification of various career patterns.

If the counselor theorizes that career development is an elaboration and extension of the self, his counseling efforts will be directed toward self-exploration and self-

expression. He may conclude that the introduction of tests and occupational information may inhibit the process of self-discovery.

A counselor might assess his client's inability to make independent vocational decisions as an indication of emotional problems that require psychotherapy. Therefore, he may direct his efforts toward removal of the block (Osipow 1968:9-10).

The systems approach is in a position to take the most useful concepts of each theory of career development and apply them to the understanding of individual behavior. Elements of the social, personal, and economic situation within which individuals operate may be more explicitly analyzed, and the relationship of the larger systems to one another may be more clearly understood than in the traditional approaches to behavior which tend to emphasize only one major segment of either the individual or his environment (Osipow, 1968:241).

SUMMARY

The most extensive part of this review of literature was concerned with the influences and relationships of social class, family, educational, environmental, economic,

physical, personality, and occupational perception factors on vocational choice. Studies show that all these factors may play a part in selecting a career. Social, family and economic factors are interrelated. Environmental, personality, and physical factors function simultaneously under many circumstances. Perception of occupations is governed by all factors.

Many methods have been explored in an attempt to facilitate wiser decision-making. Some of the tools used by counselors that have proved valuable in this area are group counseling, role playing, video tapes, simulations, games, occupational courses, and the computer.

Final emphasis was placed on how a counselor's theoretical foundation governs his approach to vocational counseling. What use he will make of the findings which influence vocational choice is largely determined by his philosophy of career planning.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

SUMMARY

The method by which one earns a living is a principle determinant of such other aspects of life as social status, economic condition, use of leisure, place of residence, and the welfare of one's children. In turn, many of these same factors play an important role in choosing a career.

The purpose of this review of literature was to examine the influence, significance, and relationship of factors that affect vocational choice.

An attempt was made to identify specific factors under the headings of social class, family, educational, environmental, economic, physical, personality, and perception of occupations that might be of value for a counselor involved in vocational counseling.

Findings show that social, family, and economic factors are interrelated quite often. Environmental, personality, and physical factors function simultaneously under many circumstances. Perception of occupations is usually governed by all factors. The family and education play the most important part in a vocational choice for a student.

A counselor in a high socioeconomic area will deal with different motivations in vocational choice than one in a low socioeconomic area.

Career development is viewed as a sequential process and may be approached from several theoretical foundations. A counselor's philosophy influences his method of vocational counseling. He may use the trait-factor theory, the sociology or environmental approach, the self-concept theory and the vocational choice or personality theory, or the systems approach.

There are experiences that help to lead to wiser decision-making that a counselor may use. Misconceptions about occupations especially, may be clarified by an educational institution. Although there are many variables that operate in making a vocational choice, research has identified significant factors that a counselor would be wise to explore when counseling a client.

CONCLUSIONS

The results of this review are grouped under the following headings for the convenience of the reader:

Social Class Factors

1. Lower social classes are motivated by job

security and the physical aspect of work.

2. Upper class student tend to choose jobs on the prestige, salary, and freedom of expression.

3. The age of crystallization of work choice varies with social class, academic, and economic factors.

Family Factors

1. Parents, occupational role models, and teachers are key influencers in a student's vocational choice.

2. Birth order of male and female students influences expectations toward salary and prestige.

3. Work values are established early in life and are determined to a great extent by parents.

4. A girl's decision to work is often the result of the family environment and mother's attitude.

Economic Factors

1. Financial need may cause one to focus on a specific career at an earlier date.

Physical Factors

1. Physically handicapped individuals benefit from early counseling and work experiences during the teen years.

Environmental Factors

1. Occupational structure, population growth, and demands of industry influence vocational decisions.

2. The reasons for choosing occupations operate with different forces at different times according to the social pressure of the economy.

3. Education, occupational skill, and interpersonal skills will be important assets in procuring a job in the future.

Educational Factors

1. An academic or vocational high school influences further educational training and aspirations for particular careers.

2. Vocational counseling for girls should come earlier than for boys.

3. Group counseling, role playing, video tapes, simulations, games, occupational courses, and the computer are tools that may be used to facilitate decision-making.

Personality Factors

1. High risk takers prefer a profession that allows them to be creative, even if the profession is unstable and risky. They also have definite personality characteristics.

2. Ability is more important than interest when a forced choice is made by a student.

Occupational Perception
Factors

1. Students with crystallized vocational plans have more accurate stereotypes of occupations.
2. Students of low socioeconomic levels have less overall perception of occupations and their structure.
3. Practice in decision-making leads to retention of occupational information and more realistic choices of vocation.
4. The systems approach incorporates the most realistic factors of vocational planning.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of this review of the literature this researcher makes the following recommendations:

1. In view of the primary influence that parents have as key influencers in aspirations, determiners of work values, and economic evaluators of further training, group counseling of parents and students might be more appropriate than a career day.

2. Vocational planning for girls might be handled on a concentrated basis a year earlier than boys. A dual approach which considers marriage and a career or a career only using the systems approach seems a valid way of handling counseling for girls.

3. Counselors in low economic areas might emphasize clarification of occupational information to prevent misconceptions. The teaching of occupations may be more valuable in a school curriculum that is composed of ethnic groups too.

4. Financial need could be approached as a positive aspect of crystallization of choice rather than an incentive for acceleration into a vocational program.

5. Physically handicapped students would benefit from client centered counseling in the early years through improving their self-concept. They might not settle for secondary motivations in an occupational choice if they accepted themselves and their limitations in a realistic fashion.

6. Further research studies need to be done on the correlation of two and three variables on social class. For instance, what are the similarities between upper and lower class when faced with financial need for further training?

Does knowledge of prestigious jobs influence the choice of a lower class student? Can educational institutions influence choice more by teaching occupational skills than parents or socioeconomic factors? These are questions, that when answered, should provide more insight into the process of vocational choice.

7. More practice in decision-making is advocated because it is not only valuable in vocational planning, but in the planning of a student's time in and out of school. Learning to think in terms of personal short term and long term goals leads to more awareness and control over one's life.

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