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STATED FUTURE VOCATIONS: AN INVESTIGATION
CONCERNING THEIR NATURE, BASIS IN REALITY
AND RELATED THEORETICAL ISSUES.

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of Master of Arts
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ABSTRACT.

Traditional theories of vocational choice, such as Ginzberg et al., Super, Roe, and Holland, assume or imply that vocational choice is a process continuing for a number of years, in which the number of choices made becomes less with increasing age, and these choices become more realistic. Also the outcome of this process is of vital importance to the life and well-being of the individual. A number of problems are inherent in such assumptions.

Because most of the research in this area has failed to adequately define what is meant by vocational choice, or to make distinctions between the kinds of jobs an individual would like, and actually expects to end up doing, then the discussions about the number and basis in reality of stated vocational choices are pointless. It has been found that one author's definition of vocational choice has been quite different from another's and yet their discussions would suggest they were the same.

Theories which assume that a vocational choice, and indeed work itself, is important in the lives of individuals need to be carefully re-examined. A growing body of evidence suggests that with such factors as automation and increasing leisure time many people are turning to non-work aspects of their lives for fulfillment.

The present study reviews the literature concerning these aspects and investigates the vocational choices of a sample of 646 males and females aged 11 to 17 years.

A distinction was made between vocational attainment, vocational choice, vocational preference and vocational aspiration. Vocational attainment was the job actually entered. Vocational choice was the job that was expected to be entered. Vocational preference was a job liked, but for some reason or reasons, was not expected to be entered. Vocational aspiration was the job liked, assuming there were no obstacles to its entry.

The number and kinds of choices, preferences and aspirations were studied, as well as the number and kinds of reasons given. Differences in results between males and females were sought.

Results suggest that young people can distinguish between vocational choices, vocational preferences and vocational aspirations as early as age 11. The number of selections in each age/sex group was few, but there were many and varied kinds selected. There were few reasons given, but a variety of kinds of reasons. Significant differences were found between the results of males and females, particularly in the kinds of jobs selected as choices and the kinds of reasons given for these.

It was concluded that the data indicated that choices are realistic from an early age, and therefore there is not a gradual reduction in the number of choices made with increasing age. Also, since the choice is made quite early, it does not have a great significance in the lives of many adolescents. Considering that work appears to be going to have less importance in people's lives in the future, perhaps vocational counsellors need to be concerned more with counselling on styles of life, rather than simply on eventual job attainment. Implications for vocational theories are discussed.

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INTRODUCTION.

Currently, theories of vocational choice are at a turning point. The flurry of activity in this area, following in the wake of the pronouncements of Ginzberg et al., nearly 25 years ago, has resulted in a great diversity of theorizing. However, there is considerable evidence to suggest that these theories are not adequate to meet present needs, and will certainly not meet those of the future.

There are three main areas of concern. The first is the emphasis which the theories place on the importance, in the lives of children, of making a vocational choice. The second is the extent to which these choices are considered to be based on reality. And thirdly, there is the considerable confusion about what a vocational choice is.

In a changing world situation, where there is a growing trend towards more leisure and less work, it was felt that there would be an increased interest in leisure activities, and a reduction in the importance of work in the lives of children. The latter would be reflected in an early realistic decision about a vocation, because a child learns from his own world, at a young age, those factors which are most determinative in attaining a job. Since attaining is different from choosing, preferring and aspiring, distinctions between these kinds of vocational selections were deemed necessary.

The ability of individuals to function in the future societies envisioned by such writers as Warnath (1975), depends on the kinds of life styles developed today. These will include vocations, but it is felt that vocational choice theories need to seek new directions, not based almost solely on work as in the past, but on the whole life of the individual.

It was in this context that the present literature review and survey of these areas of concern was conducted. It was felt they would give some evidence to indicate

which way vocational choice theories should turn, to meet future needs.

PART ONE.

STATED FUTURE VOCATIONS: A REVIEW
OF RELEVANT FINDINGS IN THE
LITERATURE.

Chapter 1.

Theories of Vocational Choice.

Crites (1969) in his survey of vocational psychology, classifies the major theories of vocational choice under three general headings. These are non-psychological, psychological and general. The non-psychological theories are the accident, economic and sociological theories. These imply that an individual enters a vocation solely because of environmental factors which are in operation. They deal respectively with chance or contingency factors, the laws of supply and demand, and the folkways and institutions of society.

The psychological theories of vocational choice place emphasis on the individual as a vital variable in the process of making a vocational choice. These theories assume the individual does have some freedom of choice. Crites lists four major types of psychological theories. These are trait and factor, psychodynamic, developmental, and decision making. According to Crites, each of these emphasizes a different aspect of the behaviour of the individual as the basic factor in choice.

General theories of vocational choice are, according to Crites, those which recognize that many factors may affect choice, and which attempt to outline the interaction of these factors in determining the individual's preferences for occupations and how they impinge upon the occupation's selection of individuals. These theories are the interdisciplinary conceptions of vocational choice as outlined by Blau et al. (1956), a general developmental interpretation of vocational choice such as that of Super (1957), and a typological theory of vocational choice as outlined by Holland (1973).

Crites feels that the most predominant and influential theories have been the psychological, particularly the self theory (psychodynamic) and developmental theories or a combination of them. The theories which appear to have had the most influence in

psychology seem to fall into these categories. They are the theories of Ginzberg et al. (1951), Super (1953), Roe (1956) and Holland (1973).

Ginzberg et al. (1951) pointed out that vocational counsellors were attempting to counsel without any theory as to how vocational choices were made. Crites (1969) cites the work of Carter in the forties as evidence that this was not quite so, but concedes that the work of Ginzberg et al. was the first real attempt to make an explicit theory. Ginzberg et al. stated that the basic elements in their theory of occupational choice were that it is a process, the process is largely irreversible, and that compromise is an essential aspect of every choice. They believed that,

"occupational choice is a process that takes place over a minimum of six or seven years, and more typically, over ten years or more. Second, since each decision during adolescence is related to one's experience up to that point, and in turn has an influence on the future, the process of decision-making is basically irreversible. Finally, since occupational choice involves the balancing of a series of subjective elements with the opportunities and limitations of reality, the crystallization of occupational choice inevitably has the quality of a compromise." (p.198).

The underlying belief of their approach was the premise that occupational choice was a developmental process involving decision-making. This could be divided into three periods - fantasy, tentative and realistic choices. These periods were approximately from ages 2-10, 10-17 and 17-21 respectively. In each period there was an increased tendency to make realistic choices.

The theory has been criticized for being inadequate by Super (1953), in terms of research design, numbers in the basic study, definition of choice, and because it does not adequately build on previous work or describe the compromise process. However, it's significance lies in the fact that it was the first real attempt at a cohesive theory.

Super and his associates, (1953, 1957, 1961a, 1961b,

1962, 1970), have made use of the work of Ginzberg et al. (1951), as well as others, and present vocational development as an ongoing, continuous and generally irreversible process. For Super the career process is a compromise within which is operating his main construct, the development and implementation of the self-concept. Super & Bohn (1970) write of the 'choosing person' as

"one whose self-concept and whose understanding of the world around him guide his decisions as he seeks self-actualization... Self-concepts are formed in early experiences with other people and with life situations; they are translated into occupational preferences through identification, experience, and observation. They are implemented in educational and occupational choices and modified by the resulting experiences. Situational determinants particularly relevant to the self are the role expectations of others, which are incorporated into the self-concept after modification by the individual's perception of them." (p.152).

However, this self-actualization process does not appear to be necessarily a satisfying, fulfilling one, supportive of one's self-concept.

Super introduced the concept of vocational maturity which suggests that as the individual matures vocationally, he passes through a series of life stages, and each one of these corresponds to some phase in the development of the individual's self-concept, Super (1957). He has attempted to integrate research and theoretical considerations, but his emphasis has been on the way in which the social environment can be manipulated and used by the individual, rather than a concern with the way in which the social environment structures and influences the situations open to the individual.

Roe and her associates, (1956, 1957, 1966), see the individual as an integrated and organized whole, who should be classified according to his goals or needs, whether they are conscious or not. She traces the individual's early psychosexual experiences, particularly those in the family and traces their effects on the

formation of needs and the patterning of psychic energy. She sees an occupation as a primary source of need satisfaction and arranges these goals or needs in a hierarchy of prepotency as defined by Maslow (1954). Since, for many people in most Western countries, the majority of low level needs, such as physiological and safety needs are satisfied, according to Roe, it is the higher level needs, such as the needs for esteem and self-actualization which are most important in motivating vocational behaviour, particularly self-actualization.

From her rather unsystematic approach she selects representatives from various vocational fields and differentiates their personality characteristics and needs. However, Roe does not relate specific needs to specific occupations. Instead she notes that any occupation may serve to satisfy needs at a given level.

Another theorist who has had considerable influence is Holland. Holland (1959, 1973) presents a theory which assumes that at the time a person chooses his vocation he is a product of his heredity and his environment. Holland (1973) summarizes his theory as follows.

1. In our culture, most persons can be categorized as one of six types: realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising, or conventional.
2. There are six kinds of 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. A person's behaviour is determined by an interaction between his personality and the characteristics of his environment." (pp. 2-4).

Thus, the choice of an occupation is an expressive act reflecting the individual's motivations, knowledge of the occupation in question, his insight and understanding of himself, his personality and his abilities. The theory has its shortcomings, such as the fact that his subjects are mainly a very homogeneous group of college students, none of his work carries

over to people actually on the job, and it has little support. Holland (1973, p.viii) notes this when he states "we may be wrong, but we are clear!"

All these theories seem to make either or both of the following assumptions about vocations. Firstly, vocational choice, as part of overall development and vocational development, is a process continuing for a number of years. Secondly, this process of vocational choice, and particularly its eventual outcome is some vitally important aspect of the individual's life, and essential for his well-being. Such assumptions are not necessarily so, and for many people a vocational choice and its eventual attainment, may not be such an important factor in their lives.