

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE THE CAREER CHOICES OF UNIVERSITY  
OF CAPE COAST STUDENTS

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2012

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OF CAPE COAST STUDENTS

BY

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Thesis submitted to the Department of Educational Foundations of the Faculty of Education, University of Cape Coast, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for award of Master of Philosophy Degree in Guidance and Counselling

AUGUST 2012

## DECLARATION

### Candidate's Declaration

*I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.*

Candidate's Signature: ..... Date.....

Name: Ineke Bossman Fabea

### Supervisors' Declaration

*We hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the University of Cape Coast.*

Principal Supervisor's Signature..... Date: .....

Name: Prof. Kafui Etsey

Co-supervisor's Signature..... Date: .....

Name: Mrs. Anita Turkson

## ABSTRACT

This study focused on the factors that influence the career choices of University of Cape Coast students. The study investigated the educational, social, inherent and economic factors that influence the career choices of the University of Cape Coast students. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. Purposive, stratified, quota and simple random sampling techniques were used to sample 471 respondents for the study. The study also sought to know the best predictor of career choices of the University of Cape Coast students. Five research questions were formulated to keep the study in focus.

Three likert scale type of questionnaire was used in collecting responses from the students. Z for proportion test of significance was used to analyse the first four research questions. Regression was used to analyse research question five. The findings show that, educational factors, social factors and inherent factors were the best predictors of career choices of University of Cape Coast students with the equation  $Y = -1.259 + 0.841 \text{ Inherent factors} + 3.528 \text{ Educational factors} + -2.432 \text{ Social factors}$ .

A recommendation for the study is that more career guidance seminars be held for students in the universities so as to help the university student know the right factors to consider when choosing a career. Another recommendation was also that career choice be inculcated into the curriculum so that right from the start, students would know what should go into their choices of career.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

No academic output of this nature could be attributed to the sole effort of one person. Many individuals in various ways have made invaluable contributions to this study from its commencement to the conclusion. In this regard, my vast appreciation goes to my supervisors, Prof. Kafui Etsey and Mrs. Anita Turkson, for their patience, guidance, commitment and useful suggestions which have contributed in making this thesis a success.

I am indebted to Prof. Yaw Sekyi Baidoo my one and only uncle, for his kind heart. I do not have enough words to express how grateful I am to him. To my “mothers”, Vida Okyere Baidoo and Cecilia Constance Baidoo, I am especially grateful. I can never forget my ever loving grandparents, Mr. & Mrs J. K. Baidoo for their spiritual, moral, physical support and encouragement. Also to you, Mr. Kyeremeh Tawiah Dabone, my best friend, you are a friend indeed. All my siblings and cousins deserve my very sincere appreciation. To all individuals who made significant contributions towards the success of this work; Prof. F.K. Amedahe, Fred, Ama Boatemaa, Peter Opoku, all my friends, my course mates and the entire lecturers and staff of the Department of Educational Foundations, I am grateful.

I express much gratitude to the heads, lecturers and students of the departments used in the study for their support and co-operation. To all authors whose work and materials were used for the study, I say thank you very much.

## **DEDICATION**

To my loving mother of blessed memory, Matilda Marian Koko

Baidoo.

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **Background to the Study**

Our successful existence in the contemporary world means an ability to solving numerous problems and making countless choices. Fast changes around us show that the number of choices to be taken grows daily. Some of such choices are about friends to move with, types of school to attend, programmes of study and choice of career. Career has been defined as the total pattern of one's activities held during a person's life-time (Natalie, 2006). According to the Webster's international dictionary (1998) career stresses an individual's achievement or advancement in a particular career. Career is a life work. Career is a lifelong experience, which enables individuals to earn money or to get all his or her needs provided.

Holland (1990) posits that, career is a lifelong assignment which decides how an individual would live. Being able to cater for one's self-well, providing for one and the family all depend on the individual's career. As indicated by Holland (1990), an individual's lifestyle may most likely be influenced by his or her career. For example, where one will live, the kind of company one will keep, places where children will attend school and the frequency with which the family may move from place to place can be affected by the type of career one has (Hoppock, 2005). Other issues that may be influenced by one's career include values, ideals, standards and how a

person even dresses in his/her everyday life. For example the way a banker dresses to work is totally different from the way a trader dresses to sell. When people want to dress the way they feel like dressing, society sees it as inappropriate because every career has a dress code. The quality of family life in terms of the social and economic status can be affected by one's career choice. The salary and benefits structure of a particular career really influences a person's life. For example if the salary is rewarding, the individual may decide to spend some quality time outside home with the family. But if the salary is not huge, such pleasures of life that helps us in relieving stress are not thought of.

The importance of career cannot be overemphasized since through it one is able to provide the basic necessities of life such as food, shelter and clothing and other higher level needs such as those of self-actualization. Moreover, career provides a sense of purpose, self-fulfilment, challenges and development (Baruch, 2004). An individual's career does not influence his life and family alone but the society and country in which the person lives as well. When an individual has employment, he or she is able to contribute his or her quota through the payment of income tax to help in the development of the country making the country have a good economy.

The person with a career is able to put up developmental projects such as buildings that would help in the development of the community in which he or she lives. It can be noted that with employment, one can invest in so many things such as, creating job opportunities for others and thereby reducing the unemployment in our country.

The individual who has the career may be able to live a good and a fulfilling life. Such an individual is able to raise a healthy family since with a good career choice all may go well for such an individual. These and many things show how relevant a career is in the live of all humans.

From a Christian perspective, having a career is a good thing. The Bible states in 2nd Thessalonians 3:10 that if any would not work, neither should he/she eat. Ghana is experiencing the 'sakawa' (cyber fraud) saga where the youth use the internet to dupe people for their monies. This happens because such individual's might have left a higher education institution with the intention of finding "something to do" to cater for the parents who saw him or her through formal education and also get a living for him or herself. After school, the individual is not expected to depend on his/her parents because he/she is seen as an adult. When he/she even stays with the parents, asking for money from parents is very difficult (Bandura, 2003). When people get nothing to do, they resort to anything available to make ends meet.

Career choice is the process of making a decision as to which career to go for from all careers available. According to Holland (1990), career choice is a process of selecting careers that fit an individual's personality and environment. According to Kankam and Onivehu (2000), career choice is recognizably a complex process. According to them, the foundation for the choice lies in the individual's values and goals which enable them to order their current undertakings towards their future goals. They further posit that, though the future cannot be predicted, with a great degree of accuracy, it is equally true that it cannot be ignored.

Career choice is not solely an intellectual process. Many motivational influences bear on the direction taken. It is a process that unfolds at varying rates and different times for different people. Counsellors and teachers therefore, serve a most useful function when they do have students decide on their choice of careers, encouraging them and helping them through the decision process (Kankam & Onivehu, 2000).

The need for career choice then becomes quite obvious. Indeed career choice is as important as choosing a life partner since it is also a lifetime process. Just like becoming miserable when the wrong marriage partner is chosen, one can also become very unhappy if ones career is not well planned (Bedu-Addo, 2000).

The need for career choice starts right from the junior high school right through to the university and then later in life. Career choice helps students to know early enough which subjects go with what career. This is to ensure that a student does not choose subjects that will not eventually lead him/her to the future careers. For example a student must know that a subject like history does not go with a career like medicine, neither will expertise in music land one in the engineering field.

Career choice enables the students to know about their interest, abilities and personality characteristics associated with careers. That is to say one must have an interest in a career he/she wants to enter. He/she must possess the ability to do the career. An individual's personality should conform with his/her choice of career (Bedu-Addo, 2000). This means that if a person enters an occupation that is in opposition to his/her personality, interests and abilities he/she is likely to have little or no satisfaction on the career.

When the university student has a career choice, it opens doors to the student to have attachments with companies of choice that have that career in their firms so that the student gets the feel of his or her choice of career before completing school. The attachment brings experience to the student and therefore if he/she enters same or similar career after school, the job becomes easy. It also brings familiarity between employers and the student so that if the student is hard working he/she can be employed right after completion of school.

With a career choice in mind, a student can send application letters to companies even before school is completed. This may make it easy for such a student to look for a career because the student has an idea of where to go with an application letter and not to roam from every company looking for any vacant position.

Another point worth mentioning is that career choice is necessary because it makes the student learn about the career markets and the opportunities available to young people. This is because even though students may have heard about certain careers, they know little about the career markets. Thus through career choice and career guidance, students can gain firsthand information on the nature of careers, the educational and professional qualifications and other academic requirements needed for the career. Additionally, as a result of career choice, students can be exposed to prospects on the career- salaries, opportunities for further training, career hazards and other risks in the career.

Knowing more about career choice helps to avoid unrealistic career choice. In other words one needs to examine him/herself before choosing a



particular career not because of the prestige or status attached to it. Career choice is so essential in the lives of all persons and this is why Miller (1986) does not want anything to impede this process of career choice when he states that:

The choice of a career is perhaps one of the more critical decisions that a person is required to make. Any factors that impede or hinder that decision, or limit access into any educational programme necessary to develop and explore careers, must be viewed as intolerable in a democratic society (p. 64).

An individual's choice of career is usually influenced by a number of factors. Some of these factors are parents, interest, ability, peers and society. In a typical Ghanaian society, high premium is placed on certain careers such as medical, judicial, lecturing and security. Bandura (2003) states that each individual undertaking the process of career choice is influenced by the community the individual finds himself in. So an individual wanting acceptance in the community chooses the favourite career of the community and by so doing may be called successful. He/she is considered a failure if he/she chooses otherwise. Some of these professions are the doctor, lawyer, teacher and engineer. The question is should an individual be given a negative branding for choosing a career of interest? Can't the individual be himself? Such an issue can land an individual in a state of dilemma whether to listen to himself as an individual or society.

According to Hewitt (2010) most people are influenced by careers that their parents favour in order to avoid conflicts in the home. In the same vain, Taylor (2002) revealed that children may choose what their parents desire

simply to please them. This makes the youth confused as to why parents still see them as kids and incapable of making their own decisions. Such an individual enters this career for the parents denying the self which may render the individual incomplete in the career.

Most people do not see the importance of counselling in their decision making processes and in their choices. Such individuals may depend on perceptions about a particular career and after entering it realize their mistake since the perceived idea about the career may be false. Such individuals would have gotten the right information about the desired career from a counsellor if they had gone for counselling, since information service is part of counselling.

In 2005, career trend was observed in Ghana where most of her youth trooped into the nursing career because the government realized the risks involved in that career and therefore increased the salary of nurses. This made so many young people strive to be in the nursing profession because they would earn much. These individuals forgot that career is not all about money and that their interest and abilities really count in their choice of career. The individual who went into nursing because of money sees blood and may even collapse and with frustration shouts on patients in the course of performing his or her duties as a nurse. This is because the interest that took him/her there was not for the career itself but on the monetary aspect of the career.

The factors above after influencing the individual's career choice may have a negative or positive impact the individual's life. Career choice is a very critical aspect of human life which every individual should take heed to. Without a career, an individual's life may not be as fulfilled as wanted. And without a career choice, any career may not also bring fulfilment as well.

## **Statement of the Problem**

According to Hansen (1997) career guidance which is needed to provide students with realistic explorative opportunities that could lead to sustainable career choice is not available in most of the Ghanaian senior high schools. Furthermore, career choice which is a long process that empowers the prospective employees for exploration of occupational and educational opportunities as well as the sustainability of career development is lacking in the Ghanaian educational system (Hall, 2002).

From available literature, most of the previous studies which were based on careers focused on the career choice of junior and senior high school students with no or little on the career choice of the university student. Career choice however is a developmental process which continues till an individual reaches the age of 60 (Super, 1957).

In Ghana, many youths make wrong career choices due to ignorance, inexperience, peer pressure, advice from friends, parents and teachers, or as a result of the prestige attached to certain jobs without adequate vocational guidance and career counselling (Salami, 1999). Consequently, many of them may be choosing careers that are unsuitable for their personality. When this occurs, they constitute nuisance to themselves and their employers. They are usually unable to contribute meaningfully to the society, and they ultimately become liabilities to the nation. Considering the aforementioned problems of career choice and the gaps created by previous researchers is what necessitates the present study.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to find out the factors that influence the choice of career of university students. In particular the study was designed to find out if educational factors influence students in their career choice, whether economic factors influence the choice of career of students, whether social factors influence student's choice of career, and also if inherent factors influence the career choice of students. The study also sought to find best factors among the factors above that predict the career choice of University of Cape Coast students and make recommendation for policy and practice.

### **Research Questions**

In order to find out what factors influence the career choice of students using the different variables, the following five questions guided the study:

1. What educational factors influence the choice of career of University of Cape Coast students?
2. What economic factors influence the choice of career of University of Cape Coast students?
3. What social factors influence the University of Cape Coast students' choice of career?
4. What inherent factors influence the career choice of University of Cape Coast students?
5. What factors are the best predictors of the career choice for University of Cape Coast students?

### **Significance of the Study**

It was hoped that the findings of the study would be of immense help to stakeholders of career guidance in the country. The stakeholders include

university students, educational institutions, and counsellors. The study would help the students because they would come to know the importance of career choice. Students would also know the essence of considering their abilities, interests, aptitude and many others before making a career choice.

By this study, parents would realize how important they are as a source of encouragement in the career choice of their wards. The parents would also be made aware of the capabilities of their wards in making decisions as well as making choices so will not make their choice of careers for them but help them choose careers that best fit their personality.

This study should give information to the teachers as helpers of the student in their career choice process. As teachers really know students in terms of their achievement levels, they will help them make realistic career choices.

The result of this study would help the school counsellor to know the factors that influence the university student in his or her career choice. This would help in the career guidance of the students. Finally, the study would serve as a literature which other researchers would consult if the need be since not much has been done on the career choice of the university student.

### **Delimitation**

The study did not survey all factors that influence the career choice of University of Cape Coast students. The educational, economic, social, and inherent factors as indicators of career choice as used here are not the only factors which could be derived from the theories that are used in the study. Some factors that were not considered are health, socio-economic background of parents and locality. The study also limited itself to only the University of

Cape Coast out of about 30 universities in Ghana. The study confined itself to students of the Department of Nursing, Department of Basic Education, School of Agriculture and the School of Business.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The descriptive survey status of the study reveals information relative to the prevailing conditions in a specific set of circumstances. As information was gathered through the use of questionnaire, the usual weaknesses which accompanied the use of the instrument were present. These weaknesses include; bias, incompleteness, variability in response, mechanical limitations or make-up, non-response errors, lack of clarity in definitions, ambiguities or inappropriate wording, limited responses and briefness.

During the collection of data, respondents complained that the questions were many which made some of them not respond appropriately because they were getting bored. In addition, the sample used for the study was taken from one geographical area that is Cape Coast, hence will be tentative and cannot be generalized. The study can only be generalized to programmes used in the study in other universities in the country.

### **Definition of Terms**

The following terms are conceptually or operationally defined to enhance the understanding of the readers of this work.

1. Career – In this study, career is the job or work one does to earn a living.
2. Choice – In the study, the term career choice refers to the basis of student in preferring the career he wants whether it comes from his/her

relatives, peer, and his values in life, interest and school guidance counsellor.

3. School Guidance Counsellor – A person specialized in assisting the students in choosing their career and solving educational problems in schools.
4. Sakawa – cyber fraud
5. Educational factors – factors in the field of learning that have potentials of influencing an individual’s career choice.
6. Social factors – factors in the society that have the ability of influencing an individual’s career choice.
7. Economic factors – factors that have the potency of influencing ones career choice in the area of finances and conditions of the work.
8. Inherent factors – factors within an individual that have the ability of influencing his/her choice of career.

### **Organization of the Rest of the Study**

This study is organized into five chapters including chapter one. Chapter two deals with issues concerning the theoretical framework and empirical review that guided the study. The chapter was divided into two sections. The first section focused on the concept of career, concept of choice with theories on career choice. The identity of this study was based on these theories. The second section dealt with empirical review of factors and their implications on the present study.

The third chapter covered the research design and procedures employed for the study. The chapter also described clearly the sample and the

instrumentation and the last section of the chapter dealt with the procedures adopted for gathering data and analyzing the data.

The fourth chapter presented the results and the discussions obtained. The chapter was grouped into two parts. The first part was the preliminary data and the second part being the main data. The final chapter presented the summary of the study, conclusions and recommendations.



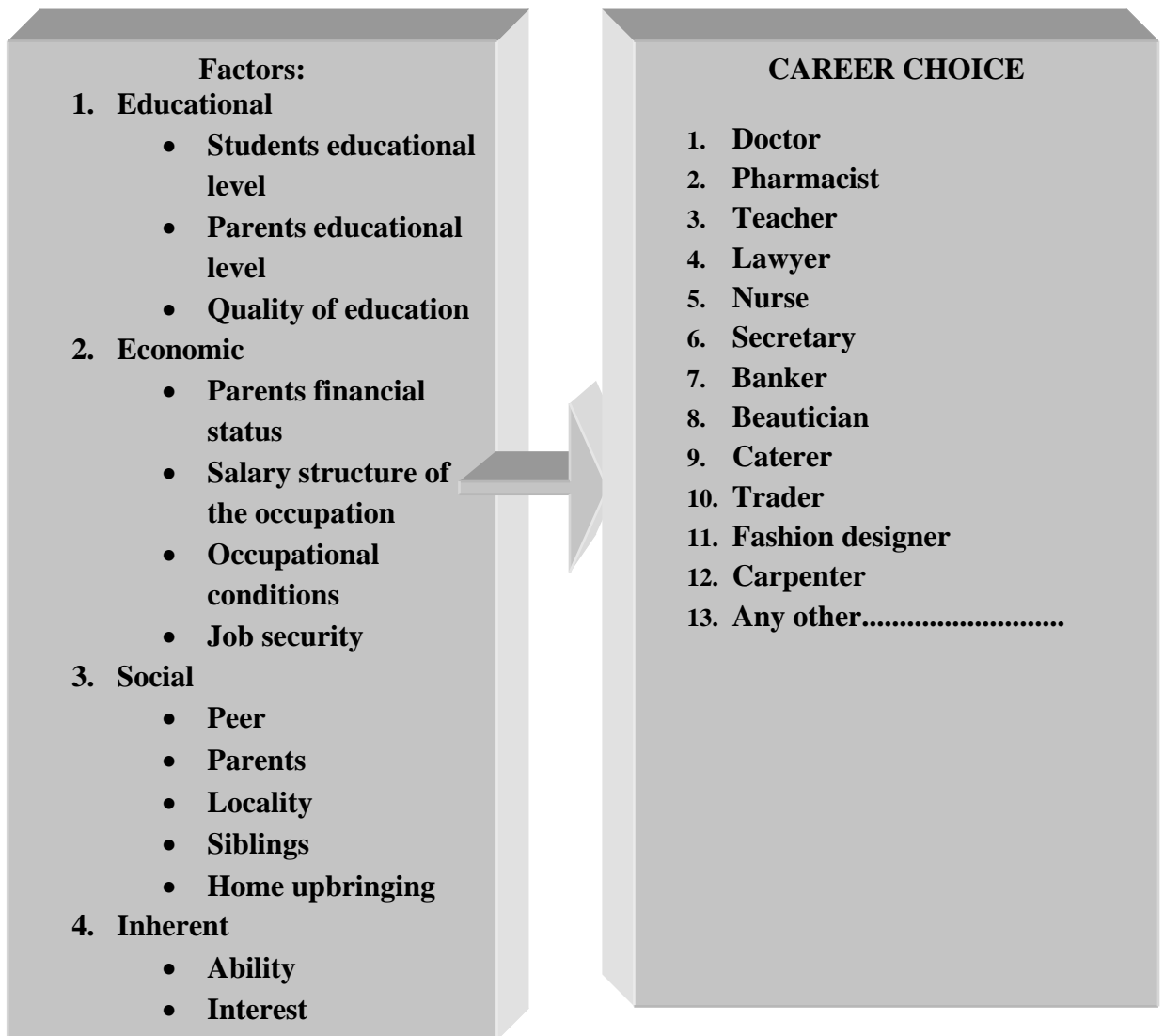
## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

This chapter presents a review of literature related to the study. The review is in two parts, the theoretical/conceptual framework and the empirical review.

#### **The Conceptual Framework for the Study**

Figure 1 explains the whole idea behind the study. It deals with the various factors used in the study i.e. economic, social, inherent and educational factors as influential factors in the career choice of University of Cape Coast students. The various factors have under them the various elements that makeup that factor per this study. And finally, the belief that these factors would lead students to the careers also in Figure 1 and many others not captured. This aspect of literature covers the concept of career, the concept of choice, career choice as a concept, brief history of the career choice process and theories of career choice.



**Figure 1.** The conceptual framework for the study.

### **The Concept Career**

A career is a sequence of positions held by a person during the course of a life time (Bedu–Addo, 2000). It comprises a series of work related activities that provide continuity, order, and meaning in a person’s life. A career may consist of the changes in values, attitudes and a motivation that occurs as a person grows older.

In both the perception the primary focus is on the individual. The underlying assumption is that a person can shape his destiny through a series

of well planned and well timed positive moves (Osipow, 2003). However, it must be stated here as a word of caution that mere choice does not ensure career success. He continued to state that, a person's career is shaped by many complex factors such as education, environment and parents.

Career is also defined by the dictionary as a person's course or progress through life (or a distinct portion of life) (Webster's International Dictionary, 1998). It is usually considered to pertain to remunerative work. The term, career, comes from the French word, 'carrier', which means road or racecourse which, in turn, comes from the Latin word, 'cararia', which is a track for wheeled vehicles which originated from the Latin word, carrus, which means wagon (Bedu-Addo, 2000).

According to Bedu-Addo (1989) career refers to a person's lifetime sequence of occupations, activities, responsibilities and services performed. Furthermore, Shertzer and Stone (1976) saw career as a chosen pursuit, life work, and success in one's profession. It is a sequence of major positions occupied by a person throughout his lifetime. Additionally Orlando (2010) pointed out that career is the totality of work one does in his lifetime and is person-centered. Orlando further posits that career is a meaningful progression on a person's working life. It is a course pursued over a period of time.

Further, Helliwell and Wolf (1972) defined career as encompassing a variety of possible patterns of personal choice related to an individual's total lifestyle, including occupation, education, personal and social behaviour, learning how to learn, social responsibility and leisure time activities. Finally Super (1975) proposed a definition of career that involved the interaction of various life roles over the life span. He called it the 'life career rainbow'. For

Super then the term, career, refers to all the roles a person may play during the lifetime and the pattern in which they fit together at any point in time.

### **The Concept of Choice**

Webster's International Dictionary (1998) defines choice as the voluntary act of selecting or separating from two or more things that which is preferred; and the determination of the mind in preferring one thing to another. The definition incorporates two components: First is the availability of alternatives, which presents an objective reality, and the second one, is the act of preference, which involves a subjective process. If a reference to career 'choice' is made, availability of career choices and the dynamics of choosing a career should be examined. Hence, in order for career choice to take place, there should be alternative career routes available and there should be an individual preference between these career options.

### **Career Choice as a Concept**

Bedu-Addo (2000) posits that, preparation for work involves developing an occupational self-image, wherein an individual attempts to match his or her strengths and weaknesses, values, and preferred lifestyle with the requirements and advantages of a range of different occupations. Brown (2002) describes the process of choosing a career as one of estimating one's ability and values, estimating the skills and abilities required for success in a given occupation, and estimating the work values that will be satisfied by the various occupational alternatives available.

Career choice is a complex phenomenon which can be better appreciated through a study of its key components, i.e. career and choice. Dating back to the seminal works of Hughes (1937) and Goffman (1968), career has been the

focus of many studies. However, the contemporary formulations of the concept by critical realists embody a layered conception that embraces subjective experiences and objective structures of work in interplay (Layder, 1993). The dictionary definition of choice is the voluntary act of selecting or separating from two or more things that which is preferred; and the determination of the mind in preferring one thing to another (Webster's International Dictionary, 1998). The definition incorporates two components: First is the availability of alternatives, which presents an objective reality, and the second one, the act of preference, which involves a subjective process. If a reference to career choice is made, availability of career choices and the dynamics of choosing a career should be examined. Hence, in order for career choice to take place, there should be alternative career routes available and there should be an individual preference between these career options.

Osipow (2003), in the context of evidence of rigidities of supply and demand in career markets, persistence of structural and institutionalised forms of discrimination in employment, as well as path dependence by education and experience in many fields of career, deem career choice a highly contestable phenomenon. The constrained and variable nature of available career routes in real life makes career choice in its pure form, (i.e. a free and unconstrained career choice based on individual will) a rare commodity, a naive expectation or even a misguided belief.

The basic definitions stated above embody the two highly polarized considerations on career choice: One consideration is that of individual agency in career choice. Individual agency includes dispositions, human capital, attitudes and personality, which act as moderators of career choice. Marshall

(1989) stated that agency approach expresses independence through self assertion and control over the environment. Agentic career choice seeks control, certainty and predictability. In other words agency asserts itself in focused, direct action to alter or control environment. The second consideration is that of opportunity structures and constraints that make available and limit career choice. Contextual affordance and opportunity structures are important constructs, through which the effects of the environments on the choice process can be studied. These constructs focus on the resources or hardships that are embedded in the individual career context (Lent & Brown, 1996). Studies in career literature characteristically examine career choice from either one of these considerations (Johnes, 1999; Hallissey et al, 2000), or from a mixed agency and structure framework where the contextual influences are viewed as antecedents or mediating factors of career choice (e.g., Slater, 1980; Kyriacou & Coulthard 2000; Kyriacou et al. 2002).

The dualism of human agency and social structure marks the contested ground of career choice (Roberts, 1977). Traditional theories of career choice are criticized as accepting agentic masculine career behaviour as normative (Marshall, 1989). Another criticism to agentic career approach comes from Mignot (2000), arguing that theories that emphasize the power of individual agency are insufficient to explain the role of structural and cultural factors in shaping individual career choice behaviour in a systematic way. Mignot (2000) believes that it is necessary to revise and re-theorise how contemporary careers are constructed by individuals and to gain a critical appreciation of how these constructions relate to social systems and structures. Social structure is not seen as an entity external to the individual, rather individuals

are regarded as active agents who both construct and are constrained by their social world. A conception that takes the importance of personal agency and explain how internal and external factors serve is needed to enhance or constrain agency in the career decision-making process (Albert & Luzzo, 1999).

Although, Albert and Luzzo (1999) are congruent with the argument that individual agency cannot be considered in isolation from contextual factors and that there is an interplay between the two in shaping career choices, nevertheless, they continue to draw causal relationships of unidirectional and linear fashion between the influence of agency and structure in shaping career choice. For example, Johnes' (1999) examination of the 1991 US National Household Education Survey revealed that expected earnings, fertility and schooling of women have an impact on their career choices.

In the study a direct relationship was also noted between individual choice and availability and nature of opportunity structures. Another piece of research that emphasized the role of agency and ignores structural considerations would be Hallissey's (2000) study which examined 150 undergraduate students' motivations for choosing careers in dentistry in Ireland. His research identifies that while some students emphasized the service aspects of dentistry, others were motivated with career processes. The author also compared his findings with students from Israel, Australia, South Africa, USA and the UK and noted that in comparison to their Irish counterparts, the service element was less pronounced as a motivational factor between students from other countries. Another example of research, which combines structure and agency considerations, is Slater's (1980) research on

librarians and information professionals. Slater (1980) identified an entry motivation scale, which ranges from agentic to structural considerations, including factors such as (a) vocation (deliberate and involved entry), (b) family tradition, (c) careerist or 'sensible' reasons, (d) delaying move, 'buying time to think', (e) weak motivation but own decision, (f) guided by others' advice, (g) unplanned, accidental chance and refugee syndrome. These seven factors were later categorized by the same author as individual decision-making and external influences. Similarly, studying 298 undergraduate student's career choices in teaching in England, Kyriacou and Coulthard (2000) used a 20 factor scale which includes a range of job attributes and job-person fit as proxy for factors which influence career choice. In a later study, Kyriacou et al. (2002) examined a sample of 84 Norwegian students' views on a career in teaching. Their study revealed that students' career choices are informed by the availability of career opportunities and paths. Similarly, Özkale (2004) examined a sample of 386 undergraduate Turkish students in order to identify the factors influencing engineering as a choice of career and he revealed three factors namely interest in engineering, desire to become a leader and scores achieved in university entrance exam as being factors that influenced students in choosing engineering as a career choice. He found significant differences by gender. While women students have drawn their influence from acquaintances and family of both genders, it was clear that male students were mostly influenced by women. Another important result was the influence of relatives on the students' engineering choice both on female and male students, the influence being stronger for the former. This pattern is verified also in some other countries (Brainard & Carlin, 1998).



As exemplified above, earlier works on career choice have examined it often through dualistic analytical frameworks such as ‘pull’ and ‘push’ factors, or typologies such as of career, service, instrumental, individual and group orientations, or in terms of job-person fit at individual, intermediate-organisational and at macro labour market levels. The studies which used structure and agency and ‘push’ and ‘pull’ factors as a framework for examining career choice focus on the choice of self-employment over other forms of employment. This framework has been dominant particularly in the literature on motives for setting up small and medium enterprises. For example, Shapero (1971) identified four factors that influence the choice of business entry. These are external ‘push’ factors such as redundancy or forced migration, ‘pull’ factors such as individual attitudes, belief and general psychological make-up, the social becoming and status and the access to various relevant resources. Bates (1999), Borooah and Hart (1999) and Clark and Drinkwater (2000) refer to complex mechanisms of ‘push’ and ‘pull’ for choosing self-employment as a career. More specific research on minority ethnic employment has also adopted ‘push’ and ‘pull’ frameworks. Studies by Boissevain (1984) and Barrett et al. (1996), for example, have tried to explain the main reasons for the choice of self-employment between minority ethnic people through ‘pull’ and ‘push’ factors. However the main concern over this approach is its bluntness as an analytical instrument for reflecting the truly complex nature of such choice. Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) critique the use of ‘push’ and ‘pull’ as an analytical framework, contending that ‘social agents are not ‘particles’ that are mechanically pushed and pulled by external forces. They are rather bearers of capitals, and depending on their trajectory

and on the position they occupy in the field by virtue of their endowment (volume and structure) in capital, they have a propensity to orient themselves actively either toward the preservation of the distribution of capital or toward the subversion of this distribution (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992).

### **Brief History of the Career Choice Process**

Frank Parsons, the founder of the vocational guidance movement (Baker, 2009; Parsons, 1909), opened the doors to the practice of matching one's self to one's job traits, a process that continues to this day (Niles, 2001).

Parsons' work was the foundation for what is now known as Trait-And-Factor Theory (Parsons 1909; Sharf 1997). The theory assumes that all individuals have unique interests, abilities, and values, while each occupation has unique characteristics related to tasks, skills required, and rewards. As the oldest and most widely used of the career development theories, Trait-And-Factor theorists believe that these unique characteristics of both individuals and jobs can be measured objectively and will produce the highest amount of satisfaction for both workers and employers when they are correctly matched together (Ireh, 2000). This approach is much more assessment-based and pays limited attention to a client's emotional or motivational states. In essence, the client narrows his occupational search by gaining an understanding his career aptitude and interests based on one or more vocational interests inventories.

Based on those results, the counsellor assists the client in finding occupations where his/her reported skills and interests have the strongest match, thereby placing the client into an area where they have the greatest likelihood for success. For example, if a client's assessment(s) demonstrate his or her highest interests and abilities with people, he or she should not go into

careers where he or she is primarily working with data/materials or one that has limited interaction with other workers or clients.

Holland's subsequent work (1966; 1973) was based on shared psychological features, such as skills and personality. From his testing, Holland eventually came to the conclusion that every person or occupation can be broken down into six categories, known as RIASEC codes: (Realistic—skilled trades/technical occupations; Investigative—scientific occupations; Artistic—artistic/literary/musical occupations; Social— educational/religious occupations; Enterprising—persuasive occupations; and Conventional—clerical/business occupations) (Figler & Bolles 2007; Holland & Lutz, 1968). Assessments based on Trait-and-Factor Theory, where a person's thoughts and behaviours were assumed to stay fairly constant over their lifetime, continued to strengthen as more and more tests were created to match a person's personality and skills to a specific job.

Assessment tools, such as Holland's Self-Directed Search (Holland, 1997) were designed to test a client's internal thoughts and feelings toward certain occupations and then compared them to coded job fields. Once you matched the person's scores with the jobs that matched those particular traits, the person would then presumably be happy doing that type of work. Specifically, assessments like the Self-Directed Search by Holland (1997) ask a series of questions that eventually provide a total number score for each of the six 6 categories. The highest number represents the person's strongest interests and favorite activities. The three highest scoring categories together constitute an individual's three-letter code. For example, an Enterprising person may score highest in the E (Enterprising), second highest in the S

(Social), and third highest in the C (Conventional) categories for a code of ESC. The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) eventually adopted Holland's coding system for its job classification system, which now provides individuals the opportunity to match their codes with specific jobs. If an ESC client were to look for possible job matches, they would find a list of occupations that would include: Business Manager, Financial Planner, Travel Guide, Sales Agent/Manager, or Telemarketer. While this guide is good, it can be problematic for some.

In contrast, Donald Super proposed that people are much more fluid than the static nature assumed by Trait-And-Factor theorists (Super, 1957). He posited that, the matching model assumes that the adolescents or adults who are assessed are all sufficiently mature vocationally to have mature and stable traits (Super, 1983). However, various career counsellors have noted that many students are unable to voice their true skills or sometimes even understand them from a lack of vocational maturity.

Donald Super went on to develop the concept of the Life-Career Rainbow (Super, 1980) as a visual picture of how a person plays multiple roles throughout his or her lifespan. These roles may overlap each other and vary by degrees of intensity, emphasizing that roles and perceptions change throughout one's life and, so does one's values and career choices. For instance, a young college student may hold a variety of roles, including but not limited to son/daughter, student, spouse, parent, worker, and citizen. Depending on the individual's goals and values, the person's views of his or her career choice(s) will vary as greatly as the roles he or she are currently playing (Super, 1980).

Another leading theorist for career counselling, Krumboltz (1979), developed the social learning theory of career decision making, based on the idea that the development of career interests is the result of an infinite number of learning experiences. What individuals observe from these experiences develops into their general observations and personal beliefs. Abilities and emotions (along with environmental and cultural factors) either positively or negatively reinforce certain activities. Individuals will naturally gravitate toward areas that they feel are emotionally positive or are rewarded by their peers/society (Krumboltz, 1993). The consequences of these experiences and observations create an inner belief (whether realistic or not) that individuals then use as their template for making further career decisions. This potentially falsified belief in one's abilities (or non-abilities) is why Krumboltz believed counsellors, who only provide assessments during sessions, are missing a major function of their role. Despite the general assumption that values are stable and unassailable, they can change as a result of new experiences to presume their intractability could be to the detriment of many youth. Thus, tests that presume that measured characteristics are static rather than changeable tend to channel people toward a particular career based on limited past experience, not on what they might learn in the future (Krumboltz & Worthington, 1999). Consequently, such a static view of a person's traits may, in fact, be counterproductive in helping him or her explore emerging career options.

In the current approach to career counseling, clients now receive a more constructivist type approach from their counseling sessions, which is a view that human beings are active agents who individually and collectively co-

constitute the meaning of their experiential world (Neimeyer, 1993). The client's current interests, job experiences, and career successes and failures are all elements that are examined through a more narrative approach to determine a person's occupational ideology. This narrative approach is used by counsellors to help clients articulate and clarify their life themes, whereby the counsellor then assists clients in framing these experiences into a continuous life story (Savickas, 1995). Narratives that situate career indecision in the context of a life theme, with its central preoccupation and corresponding plot, serve to clarify choices and enhance the ability to decide (Savickas, 1995).

In the last few decades, career counselling has evolved from a pure trait-and-factor practice into a form of counselling where assessment results are seen as merely providing pieces of information used to form a more holistic picture of the client that includes defining the individual's reality through a narrative history with the counsellor (Brott, 2001). One of the primary factors in this change is due to the significant differences in this postindustrial age. Campbell and Ungar (2004), stated that,

There is no longer a predetermined path or a logical linear progression from school to the workplace to retirement. Rather there is an opportunity to design a work life which is satisfying to the individual and which can be redesigned as needs, interests, and life experiences change (p. 18).

### **Importance of Counsellor Interventions and Assessments in Career Choice**

Ginsburg, Axelrad, & Herma (1951) assumed that an eventual career choice is the culmination of initial and subsequent vocationally and

educationally relevant decisions. Interestingly, early literature published by Osipow, Clarke and Barak (1976) indicated that “the failure to deal effectively with the phenomenon of vocational indecision is that most research attempts have been designed to deal with the construct of indecision as a totality” (p. 234). The belief was that if career choice was the culmination of relevant decisions, then it would be important to separate the construct into components that would prove to identify the multi-dimensions of career indecision that would in turn result in identifying the antecedents of indecision.

Almost 20 years later, Hartung (1995) stressed that while research has continued to assess career uncertainty, it is still an elusive construct to explain and complex to understand. Hartung (1995) acknowledged the importance of both early interventions and the continued efforts in the identification of the multiple dimensions of career indecision, indicating that “surveying clients in terms of their choice status continues to help researchers understand the complexity of career indecision and choice” (p. 3). Ultimately, surveying clients assists career and guidance counsellors in planning appropriate career interventions. Unveiling the important idea that investigating careers at the secondary level is not about having students decide what “job” they will have for the rest of their lives, but rather participating in a process that would assist in uncovering and identifying factors that generate levels of uncertainty, so that a foundational conduit for future career decisions has been established.

Osipow’s (1997) work would concur with Hartung’s (1995) and took it one step further by suggesting that all students, regardless of social background, personality, and past experiences, would improve their future

career decision-making process by having a solid high school educational program and knowledge in how to access career information. Osipow (1999) reported that assessments could identify aspects of the career decision making process in which an individual may be deficient and assist in the acquisition of skills and awareness of options. The suggestion is that assessments provide an opportunity to explore what Osipow (1999) called “sub-problems” or sub-factors of gathering information, generating, evaluating, and selecting alternatives for implementing decisions.

Kapes, Mastie and Whitfield (1994) cautioned that while assessments provide an opportunity of investigation, the career guidance provided by counsellors should be solidly based on philosophical underpinnings of career development of which the following should serve to be the foundational principles of intervention and assessment: 1) Career development is an ongoing process, a series of choices; 2) Decision-making and planning are processes, which can be learned and applied throughout the life span; 3) Multiple self-factors are involved in career choices; and 4) The myth of the “One Right Job” is detrimental and inaccurate.

Asserting that “the ability to make an informed choice is paramount to helping undecided students,” Harris-Bowlsbey (as cited in Hayes, 1997, p. 2), the past president of the National Career Development Association, also emphasized the importance of student awareness of options and alternatives. She stated, “No one can choose an alternative if they don’t know that it exists” (p. 2). As a result, she believed that high school counsellors need to be “proactive in developing programs” (p. 2) that assess student’s needs and then provide them with choices or options.



Furthermore, Hayes (1997) emphasized that regardless of the many factors, early intervention assessment programs and sound academic curriculum in high school would give students a solid foundation in tempering career indecision. Her thoughts were echoed by Herr and Cramer (as cited in Kraus & Hughey, 1999), who concluded that the major objective of high schools' career guidance programs should be in assisting students by the use of research and technology in developing effective career decision-making skills. Changes in the economy, downsizing, dislocation, layoffs, and the number of adults making job changes are a reflection of career stressors that students will ultimately face (Kraus & Hughey, 1999). Therefore, it seems essential that the impact of early intervention on the career decision-making process should not be taken lightly given the influence on the future of each individual.

Gordon (as cited in Hayes, 1997), discussed the significance of early intervention in high school. She stressed that there is a lot of excitement about personal counselling, but much less excitement about helping students to learn the process of making vocational choices. This is especially unfortunate when you consider that we are talking about helping a person decide how they will spend one-half of their waking life; the amount of money that they will earn during their lifetime (which will in turn strongly affect their lifestyle); and what their degree of life satisfaction will be.

### **Theories of Career Choice**

Several theories have been formulated to explain how and why individuals choose and enter varying occupations. These theories have also attempted to describe and explain some of the difficulties that often arise in

the process of making and implementing a career decision. It will not be possible to attempt to describe all the various theories. However, this study deals with five major theories that have viable educational implications for the Ghanaian school system.

### **The Developmental Theory of Career Choice**

This theory was propounded by E. L. Ginzberg and associates in 1939. The theory sees career choice as an irreversible process which occurs in reasonably clearly marked periods of a person's development (Osipow, 2003). The process is characterized by a series of compromises the individual makes between his wishes and his possibilities. Thus, as children grow or mature they gain knowledge and exposure to alternatives. They thus understand themselves and their environment and are better able to make rational choices (Ginzberg & Associates, 1939; Thornburg, 1975).

The career life of the individual then is viewed as a developmental process which involves different periods, phases of life which when taken cumulatively results in his or her career development (London, 2003; Osipow, 2003). Thus when properly motivated, prepared and an adequate encouragement given to make the needed effort the individual will succeed equally well in any given career on this ability level. In developing their theory, Ginzberg and associates used the medium of case study and interview techniques and arrived at what might be summed up as follows:

- (a) Career choice is not a single decision. It is a developmental process that takes place over a period of years;
- (b) The process is largely irreversible as a decision made cannot be erased and time could not be reversed.

(c) The final choice of career comprises interests, capacities, values and the opportunities and limitations in the real world.

Their theory identifies three phases of the career decision making process. These are fantasy (i) tentative and (ii) realistic stages. The fantasy stage occurs up to age 11. The period reflects the idealized career choice of the individual influenced by what is observed in the immediate environment. Thus they want to be teachers, nurses, doctors, truck drivers and so forth. The “choices” are without regard to needs, ability, training or any other realistic considerations.

The tentative stage (11 – 18 years) is further subdivided into four: interest, capacity, value and transition periods. During this stage, children begin their career consideration by asking themselves what their interests are and what they would like to do.

The first of these sub-stages is around ages 11 and 12 years. This is the age entry point to our Junior High School (J.H.S.); it is the time when children begin to recognize the need to indicate the direction of their career decision. A show of concern occurs here as liked, and disliked activities are identified. Career choices are made on the basis of that career’s potential for intrinsic enjoyment. It has been observed that often career choices are reflections of strong identification with the mother even though this identification shows signs of ambivalence (Osipow, 2003). That is, the child recognizes his/her instability and accepts in him/herself the need to postpone final career selection until he/she was a bit older. Osipow (2003), pointed out that this is a developmental phenomena which manifests itself with onset of adolescence with its physical and emotional changes.

At the second stage (12-15 years), individuals begin to introduce the notion of ability into their career considerations. Having focused on interests, they question themselves as to their ability to perform well in those areas. Identification with the father decreases while the influence of significant others increase. This occurs when individuals realize that there are things about the father's work not suitable for them.

The third stage (value stage) occurs at age 15 to 16 years. A new concept enters the student's career considerations – that of service to society (Pecku, 1988). Individuals seem to become aware that “work offers more than the potential for satisfying their own needs, and for the first time shows sign of choosing careers such as medicine for humanitarian reasons rather than because of its status or intrinsic work activities (Osipow, 2003). A few things become clear to the individual at this stage. For example, a clearer picture of the life style offered by different careers emerge. Also emerging is the ability to take into consideration how best to utilize one's special ability. Lastly, individuals develop a sense of urgency in matters concerning career choice as the end of time in school draws near.

The last sub-stage which closes the tentative period occurs about age 17 or 18. This is when in the Ghanaian context; the adolescent is in the Senior High School (S.H.S.). During this sub-stage, the individual feels the mounting pressure to face the necessity of making concrete and realistic decisions about the future career. Occurring at this stage also is the awareness of the externals of work – the amount of preparation necessary for various careers, the varying financial rewards and the different life circumstances. In effect as they grow older they discover their skills at certain tasks, that some activities have more

intrinsic value than others and therefore begins to integrate the four periods of this stage and hold tentatively to choice.

The realistic stage (age 18+) years also has sub-divisions which are exploration, crystallizations and specification. This stage involves career entry or early years in the University (Osipow, 2003; London, 1873; Hansen, 1977). Individuals tend to evaluate career-related experiences in a realistic manner.

From their studies up to the theory formulation, the authors of the theory concluded that four important ingredients contributed to the adequacy of an individual's career choice process during early adulthood. These are reality, the ability to defer gratifications and the ability to accept and implement compromises in their career plans (Osipow, 2003).

Research studies by O'Hawa and Tiederman (1990), Osipow (2003), Davis (2000), and Tucci (2005) in the United States of America have yielded the conclusions that support the general tenets of Ginzberg's theory though some question the age sequence. Generally however, the findings indicate that some boys made relative stable career choices before Junior High School whereas others had not made up their minds even after Senior High School (Osipow, 2003; Gostein, 1990).

### **The Developmental or Dynamic Theory of Career Interests**

Carter (1940) held a developmental view of career interests. In his theory, he suggested that an individual's career interests are capable of developing along any direction conditioned by circumstances. According to Carter, the individual derives satisfaction from identifying him/herself with some groups by which he/she means to attain his/her status in life. The process

of this identification is enhanced or thwarted by the individual's ability to overcome any intervening obstacles on the way.

If the obstacles are insurmountable to the individual, his or her self concept changes and he/she tends to form a new pattern of interest which is more compatible with his/her aptitudes. This identification process or concept resembles the so called hero-worship concept of career interest (Onwugbenu, 1988).

Carter (1940) stated that, with the interest patterns, adolescents tend to become increasingly practical. That is, in the beginning many adolescents' interest patterns provide very unsatisfactory solutions to the problem of adjusting their aspirations to their personal abilities and social demands. He said that "in this process of trying to adjust the individual finds experiences which offer some basis for the interaction of personality" (p. 233). The pattern of career interest which gradually forms becomes closely identified with the self. Carter maintains that career interests are patterned and changed in a significant developmental manner with age maturity. Carter was supported by Darley (2004) who also pointed out that occupational interests of youth emerge as chronological age phenomena. While critical of Carter in some parts, Huslander (2006) agreed that interest goes through a developmental process and offers three sub-hypotheses considered as part of the developmental theory of career interest. These are:

- (a) Adjustment involves interest,
- (b) Interest develops early, and
- (c) Crystallisation of interest.

Adjustment involves interest. Onwugbenu, (1988) sees adjustment as consistent with the developmental theories of Ginzberg, Havighurst and Super. In all, career adjustment is a process of identification of satisfiers and annoyers in which individuals perceive for themselves values in objects, persons or ideas (Huslander, 2006).

In the second sub-hypothesis, interest develops early. Huslander (2006) was of the opinion that career interest is part of the general interest development of the individual. It is only a phase which becomes individuated to the extent that certain perceivable relationships to occupational fields are identifiable.

Lastly, Huslander (2006) held that crystallization on interest comes later. The thesis here is that any career interest identification of an individual of a particular chronological age represents a degree of refinement within his/her total growth pattern. Thus the crystallization of interest is only the manifestation of the refined stage of interest development.

All said, Carter (1940) and Huslander's (2006) point is career interest must be considered as an integral aspect of the total make up of an individual's personality and not a unique entity developing in isolation from the various interacting components of personality as suggested by Taylor (2011).

### **Holland's Career Environment Theory**

Holland's (1959, 1973) theory of career choice was built around four tenets which are that:

- i. Most people can be categorized as one of six personality types: realistic, investigative (intellectual), social, conventional, enterprising and artistic

- ii. There also exist six kinds of environment, realistic, investigative, social, conventional, enterprising and artistic,
- iii. People search for environments that would allow them to express or exercise their skills and abilities, attitudes and values and take agreeable problems and roles.
- iv. A person's behaviour is determined by an interaction between his personality and the characteristics of his environment (Osipow, 2003; Shertzer & Stone, 1976; Pietrofesa, 1980).

The personality types and environments are modal orientations. Holland's idea is that career choice is made to satisfy personality needs as well as skills and abilities. It is therefore an expression of an aspect of personality. Certain career categories would therefore attract specific personality types, which then produce identifiable atmosphere or environment (Pietrofesa, 1980) on the basis of his theory, Holland developed two inventories – the Career Preference Inventory (V.P.I) and Self Directed search. The two inventories imply that individual could belong to more than one type of personality category (Pietrofesa, 1980). As it were, if one modal orientation is clearly over others, then the individual will seek an occupational environment that corresponds to his orientation, (Osipow, 2003). Moses (2002) had the opinion that if two people are the same or nearly the same in strength, then the individual will vacillate in the selection of an occupational environment. On the other hand, if environmental factors interfere with the implementation of the first clear-cut-orientation, the individual will seek an occupational environment appropriate to his second strongest orientation (James, 2010).



To make a wise decision of a career, the individual in Holland's scheme of things needs help on self-knowledge. He states that adequacy of career choice is largely a function of the depth of self-knowledge and career knowledge. The greater the amount of and accuracy of information the individual has about each, the more realistic and adequate the career choice would be (Osipow, 1973).

### **Ann Roe's Theory of Needs**

In Roe's (1956) theory of career choice, personality influences career choice. For her, career choice is made in response to needs acquired during childhood, which needs are hierarchical. The hierarchy is based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs which specified that the satisfaction of needs could be pictured as a hierarchy in which lower needs are to be met before higher ones could be satisfied (Maslow, 1954).

Maslow's logical needs were:

- i) Physiological needs
- ii) Safety needs
- iii) Need for belongingness and love
- iv) Need for importance respect, self esteem, independence.
- v) Need for information
- vi) Need for understanding
- vii) Need for beauty
- viii) Need for self actualization

Using this pattern, Roe hypothesized that the pattern of the development of abilities determined by the expenditure of psychic energy in people's attending behaviours were related to needs satisfaction. Further, Roe

hypothesized that unsatisfied needs become motivators for further behaviour and that needs that delayed satisfaction will also become unconscious motivators for future behaviour (Pietrofesa, 1980). She suggested that in order to understand the role of occupation in the life of an individual, the individual must first have some understanding of the individual and his needs (Roe, 1956).

Roe's (1956) hypothesis have parenting as its foundation and have therefore developed a need of parent-child relationship which contained a series of continuation of parental behaviour, from over protecting to over demanding, and from avoidance to acceptance. Pietrofesa (1980) posited that over protecting for Roe (1956), implies encouraging dependency and discouraging exploratory behaviour. Over demanding behaviour implies demands in terms of protection and success. Avoidance is either neglect or actual rejection. Rejection implies actual or conscious refusal to engage in any positive behaviour while neglect carries the added burden of lack of physical contact or care. A parent however may be emotionally rejecting and yet provide physical care.

Acceptance on the other hand means a child is seen as a member of the family, is neither concentrated upon nor over-looked. Parents are non-restrictive and encourage independence. Roe's theory suggest that those feelings of acceptance rejection, protection, excessive demands lead to a style of moving towards person or non-person oriented which in turn forms a career orientation that leads people to choose particular types of careers. It also influences social interaction and may be related to verbal abilities.

Roe (1956)'s theory suggests then that, one's feeling of acceptance or rejection leads to a choice of a particular type of career. This puts careers into categories as person and non-person. Person categories are services, business contacts, general culture, and arts and entertainment. Non-person categories are technology, science and outdoor.

In effect, Roe's position is two-fold. In the first place, individuals raised in a warm and accepting family atmosphere get attracted to occupational fields in which there is a constant contact with people and in which there is a high need for affection and belongingness. In the second place, the individual trained in a neglect and rejecting home environment gets attracted to occupational fields in which there is no constant contact with people but rather machines and equipments. People who were rejected and neglected had no need for affection and belongingness.

### **Accident Theory of Career Choice**

This theory is based on the assumption that chance factors resulting from unforeseen circumstances -or events influence an individual's choice of a career. Caplow (1954) states that when an individual finds him or herself in a career position he or she had no intention of entering but circumstances made it so for him/she, it is termed an "accident". Some of the debilitating influences are given as place of birth, family's socio-economic status, relation and educational attainment.

Gesinde (as cited in Ipaye, 1986) reports that since 1977, over 70% of his Master of Education Degree students in Ibadan had each year reported that they were in their current professions by accident. Gesinde further posited that, while it is generally accepted that the accident choice of a career is

weaving in the developed countries, it shows no sign of letting down in the developing countries where career opportunities are few and the opportunities of having insight into who one is, what one wants to be are almost non-existent.

### **Trait and Factor Theory**

This theory deemed the oldest of career development theories actually began with the history of guidance with Frank Parsons (Parsons, 1909). Parsons formulated a three-step process that would lead to the best career fit (Cadle, 1969; Patterson, 1980). The three steps were :

1. Self understanding aptitudes, abilities, interests, limitations and resources.
2. Knowledge of the requirements and conditions on success, advantages and disadvantages compensation, opportunities and prospects in different lines of work.
3. True reasoning on the relations of the two groups of factors above.

The trait and factor theory of career choice stresses the fact that choices made with regard to a career are an attempt by an individual to find a career environment which is conducive to his personality. For instance an artistic person gravitates around musical dramatic careers – careers that are creative in nature. The degree of success however is dependent on the degree of compatibility between the career and the person. As it were, though persons seek careers, careers look for people. Parsons (1909) therefore believed that where individuals were employed in the line of work which they could best fit because of compatibility both the individual and the career and society at large benefits.

## **Empirical Review**

The section presents review of prior studies concerning the topic under study. It covers parents, family, peer, gender, education, intelligence, aptitude, interest, values and socio economic status.

### **Parents and Career Choice**

Gostein (2000) said parents influence their children's choice of career in a number of ways which include direct inheritance, the provision of apprenticeship and role models. Sometimes the "influence" is an order to enroll in particular courses or predetermined action.

The first of the influences identified by Gostein (2000) is "direct inheritance". By this Gostein meant that the adolescent is brought up on the idea that the family business is his inheritance. When this happens the child finds it easier and even wiser to continue the family business than to go off on his ore her own. Gostein uses the findings of Gofflich and Moses (2003) as the basis of his statement that 95 per cent of boys who choose farming as a career were sons of farmers (Gostein, 2000). Secondly, he asserted that parent influence comes through apprenticeship training". That is a parent who is a plumber takes his child with him on careers or actually apprentices the child to a friend. This however occurs more in low socio-economic circles where the child may not have any other choice.

A third influence from parents is the "development of interest." From the time they are young parents cultivate certain career interests in their children. This is done through the play materials they provide, "the encouragement or discouragement of hobbies and interest, by the activities they encourage their children to participate in and by the total experiences they

provide in the family” (Gostein 2000, p. 532). For example a musician mother encourages her child to take music lessons. In the U.S., an estimated 44% of physicians sons take to medicine, 28% of lawyers sons choose law (Yao, 1999).

A fourth type of parental influence on the choice of careers by the youth is “role model”. This Gostein (2003) says, works well where the child identifies closely with the parent (Bell, as as cited in Gostein, 2000). Mortimer (2005) is reported to have found a confirmation for this when he said that a combination of prestigious paternal role model and a close father-son relationship footered a very effective parent’s “transfer” of career values and influence on children’s career choice. Gostein (2003) opines that parents of low socio-economic status are not able to influence their children’s choice of careers that much. Gostein gives reasons for this. That is: (a) they are not close to their children who are young adults nor are they very actively involved in their care (b) their careers are less prestigious and because of the lack of career prestige there is also a lack of admiration from their children and therefore no encouragement to emulate.

A study by King (1993) in Kenya, specifically linked parental behaviour to the career choice of teaching. In King's study, 53% of the participants identified mothers as very encouraging in their choice of teaching. Additionally, mothers in the study created a desire in their children to work with individuals of diverse family backgrounds, to be creative, and to feel that their abilities were well suited for teaching.

In a study by Natalie (2006) in North Africa young adults through interaction with the context of family, school and community learn about and

explore careers which ultimately lead to their career choice. One consistent finding in research suggests that adolescents' own aspirations are influenced by their parent's aspirations or expectations. Parental support and encouragement are important factors that have been found to influence career choice. Children may choose what their parents desire simply to please them (Taylor, 2004). According to Oyamo and Amoth (2008), studies in Kenya show that rural students tend to seek help from parents more than urban students and that parents more than teachers play a major role in the career choice of students.

Lastly, Gostein (2003) sees parental influence in choice of career showing in direct order. That is parents insist on the choice of school and even the courses they concentrate on. This is in itself a setting off on a predetermined career. Most often this happens regardless of the child's talents, interests and desires. Where the youth have no strong objection to the choice being made for him/her, he/she gets condemned to a life's work to which he is not suited. One of the motives of parent's action is to get the child to take up the career, that the parents were always interested in but never got to do (Gostein, 2000). Thus parents live vicandously through their children. The children accede to the parental wishes or order most often not only from a desire not to offend them but from not knowing what else to do with themselves (Gostein, 2000).

Gregory (1998) has the opinion that sometimes the choice made by parents for their children are on the same status category or one above theirs. For example, while a parent who was a physician would encourage the child to choose the same career or one of comparable status a skilled worker may

encourage the child to follow him or urge him to seek a higher grade – managerial work. Gostein (2000) reports that an estimated 67% of all boys choose a career in either their father’s career category or the next higher one.

According to Holland (1973) the most significance in career behaviour or choice is that of parental influence. Using the national sample of 1959 in Virginia, Holland administered his Parental Attitude Research Instrument (PARI) to mothers of respondents. The findings indicated that the students personal orientation were related to some of the attitudes held by their mothers. An example given where through parental upbringing, children take to the values of parents and almost move in the same direction as their parents (Osipow, 2003). Holland’s approach to the influence of fathers was a bit different. Each of the fathers was asked to rank nine goals he had for his child. He also ranked his hopes for his child’s eventual income. The results indicated that fathers of sons in the realistic category valued ambition in their sons and hope their income would be considerable (Osipow, 2003).

Jackson (1993) suggested that women who enter male-dominated fields such as science often come from families where mothers are working, both parents are highly educated, and success is considered critical. Mothers with four-year degrees are more likely to influence career choices than mothers without such qualifications (Smith, 2000). Although college educated mothers influence both traditional and non-traditional career choices, women choosing non-traditional careers indicate that their fathers have a stronger, more direct bearing on careers choices in non traditional environments (Gates, 2002; Trauth, 2002; Dryler, 1998; Leslie; 1998; Scandura & Ragins, 1993). One of the subjects interviewed in Trauth (2002,) reflects on the role of her father:



If I didn't have my father who sat down, and you know, helped me choose the subjects, then I might have chosen the wrong subjects. I might have chosen the ones that I could get good grades in or that wouldn't have led to anything (p. 106).

Turner (2002) in Liberia found that 73 percent of working women indicated their fathers as strongly influencing their career choice. Osipow (2003) after considering the literature on parental influences on career choice of their children, concluded that parents' behaviour creates environments which exert a powerful influence on the personal characteristics of their offspring. He went on to say that, the consequence of the influence is the particular career environment the child selects.

Gensinde (1993) in Kenya wanted to know why students choose their careers. After studying 400 students in teacher training colleges and in technical colleges, he reported that 66% of students in teacher training colleges and 56% of those in technical colleges were influenced by parents and significant others to enter the career programmes. Okeke (2000) and Aghamehi (1998) in East Africa studied the relationship between parental careers and their children's career choice. Okeke in his study found 60% of the children willing to take their father's career and that 25% were willing to follow their mother's career.

Olando (2010) used 320 respondents in Liberia to study the factors that influence the career choice of undergraduate students. After the research, it was found that, 65% of the students chose careers because their parents wanted them to be in that career and nothing else.

Family is one of the most influential contexts of socialization in childhood and adolescence (Dryler, 1998). While the impact of parental guidance is felt unequivocally in the choice of traditional and non-traditional careers, it is most strongly observed in the choice of non-traditional careers. Direct forms of parental influence, such as the degree to which students see their parents choosing IT careers or having contact with technology, are strong motivators to train for technical jobs (Breakwell., 1988; Dryler, 1998). Family members can also motivate career choices indirectly equally persuasively. For instance, a parent may not be an IT professional but may encourage girls to pursue or actively compete in careers perceived to be “masculine”. These parents may still be acting as role models of perseverance and achievement without being IT professionals.

Literature is unequivocal regarding the positive influence of parents, particularly fathers, on career choices. Siblings can have some influence on career choices. In particular for girls, older brothers can influence the entry of girls into traditionally “masculine” careers (Banks, 1995). On the other hand, girls who have only sisters tend to choose careers that are more traditionally “feminine”. Similar sibling influence is found for boys with male sibling (Brown, 2002).

### **Peers and Career Choice**

Peers may possibly influence careers (Kram & Isabella, 1985). Findings that discuss teen peer influence on career choice are meagre. Consequently, I extrapolate from findings at college and post-graduate level, where there is some mixed evidence of peer influence on career choices. Such peer influences were shown to have both positive and detrimental effects on career

choices. Smith (2000) in Accra finds that male peers often play an important part in choice of career for some women.

Gostein (2003) stated that, on the impart of peer influence in the career choice of students in Gambia, which showed that student's career choices are always and mostly influenced by their peers. Harriot (2001) in Zimbabwe, used students' perceptions held by 11 different types of people and found a high correlation between the student's aspiration and perceived expectations of same age friends. In a study of occupational aspirations of students, Simpson (2002) found that both middle and lower class boy's choice of career were influenced by friends and close pals. Lessor (2005) after studying 200 students in Kenya on how they choose their careers found that 65% of the students were strongly influenced by their peers in their career choice.

Duodu (2000) in Ghana wanted to find out if peers influence the career choice of students. With a sample size of 375 in the Sunyani municipality, he reported that, 40% of the respondents chose careers their friends applauded to. He went on to say that, students discuss their future careers with their friends and listen to their comments about their choice. If it is favorable, they go by it. If not they choose careers that are more appropriate in the sight of their friends.

Kendel and Lesser (2005) in Johannesburg found that the majority of adolescents (i.e. 57%) held plans in agreement with those of their mothers and friends. Of those who agreed with parents, 76% also agreed with peers and that of those who disagreed with their parents, 59% agreed with peers. Kendel and Lesser therefore concluded that friends reinforced parental aspirations because adolescents associated with peers whose goals are consistent with

parental goals” (Gostein, 2000). Gostein substantiates this conclusion by saying that when parents for instance, have college aspirations for their children, 67% of their children’s best school friends also have college aspirations. Kelly (2002) concluded from his studies in Kenya that peer approvals often reinforced one’s career decision. Picon (1999) also in Kenya found that among urban or rural residents peers influence on behaviour was of great magnitude.

### **Education and Career Choice**

In 1998, a study was conducted at University of Maine in Maine (as as cited by Moro, 2000) to find out the extent to which school personnel influence student’s career plans. Thirty-nine percent (39%) of respondents indicated their high school teachers and the programmes read at the senior high school had been most influential in their decision, while 20% indicated that their university influences their career choice.

Johnson (2004) in Kumasi Ghana, studied determiners of career choice of students. With a sample size of 300, he concluded from his studies that school personnel influences are more pronounced on students in the boarding school. This is because the boarders have a much closer rapport with teachers than other students. He found that as many as 41% of entering freshmen to have known one or two teachers well enough to be very friends with them and to be able to talk over such matters as future careers with them. Twenty-six percent (26%) knew three or four teachers that well and 24% knew five or more teachers on this basis.

Research findings lean towards the negative regarding the role of teachers and counsellors on Math, Science, and Technology (MST) career

choices. Dick and Rallis (1991) examined 2,000 high school students in the United States of America, and found that teachers had a strong influence on girls' choices of career in mathematics. Other empirical evidence has not been as encouraging. Teacher or counsellor advising tends to reflect a gender bias when directing girls towards traditional careers and boys to non-traditional careers (Gates, 2002). Women in Information Technology (IT) are most discouraged by teachers, guidance counsellors, and male professors (Turner, 2002), although women who moved from non-IT to IT careers often indicated male professors to be a strong influence in that move (Canes & Rosen, 1995). An issue in the United States of America is also the fact that most full-time counsellors devote a small percentage of their time on occupational and job counselling. The National Centre for Education Statistics (NCES) of America found that career and occupational counselling ranked fifth out of eight functions typically performed by high school counsellors (National Centre for Education Statistics, 2003). Considering that only about 29 percent of girls receive support from career counsellors, this directly impacts the amount of counselling provided to girls. Moreover, middle and high school teachers and counsellors tend to feel comfortable advising in more traditional fields, possibly because they do not have sufficient IT backgrounds to be aware of its career paths (Freeman & Aspray, 1999).

A study on education and its influence on students career choice by Arudo (2008) in Northern Nigeria, found that students believe that their certificate can greatly influence the type of career they find themselves in. So even though they have their choice of career made already, they believe their certificate has the potential of changing their choice of career. With 300

respondents, 75% shared this view while only 25% thought that the certificate cannot change their choice of career.

### **Gender and Career Choice**

Adolescents are generally influenced by social expectations with regards to the type of careers male and females pursue. Sanders (2003) in Maryland, United States of America found that in spite of the gains of sex equalization efforts, women still outnumber men 1.7 to 1 in-service careers, 3 to 1 in clerical careers and 5 to 1 in elementary school teaching. Sanders (2003) in Maryland, United States of America again found that, 80% of librarians are women while 61% of social and recreational workers are women. Yet only 10% of lawyers and judges and 12% of medical doctors were women. By 1985, 79% of males were in the labour force while only 44% of women were in the labour force.

Gesindo (1997) explained that as a result of the different socializing experiences boys and girls undergo (i.e. that is the sex role activities that goes on in the homes in the communities), they learn different sex roles and behaviour patterns and therefore different interests which manifest themselves in career choices. Citing the students of Young (1990) and Osuagwu (1990), Gesindo concluded that while Nigerian males preferred realistic investigative, outdoor and mechanized careers, girls were significantly more interested in persuasive artistic, literacy social services and clerical activities (Duodu, 2000).

Patterson (2003), concluded from his study in England of the effects of sex differences on career choice that sex alone was the reasons for the choices made by Maria Montiny high school students. Patterson was careful to control

for age and environmental differences by the selection of subjects from 14-16 age group environment and from the same academic discipline. Homer (2001), has concluded that high ability women in Liberia have chosen careers below their levels either because they do not want to spend the rest of their lives working or were afraid of career success because it was considered masculine or rather unfeminine. This fear that having a career and succeeding in it is considered masculine has led Margaret Mead an anthropologist to remark that in the American culture boys are never to fail and girls never to succeed.

According to Arthur (1992), the actual physical sex differences appear not to be very important as a factor in the choice of a career. Taylor (2003) however, was of the opinion that the career and social aspects of sex differences is important in career development and the decision-making process. Taylor believed that in spite of the fact that much larger percentage of women are working today than before, there is still resistance to the entrance of women into the labour force. This resistance is subtly applied through the encouragement given to women to enter fields designated for men. He as cited a study by Cecil (1990), who investigated in America the extent to which the career interest of 125 male and 138 female ninth – grade students differed as a function of sex and aptitude. The investigator found significant differences between males and females in the choice of careers. In studies by Olive (2003) and Fortner (2004) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia with teenagers from 15-18 years, it was reported that females choose significantly higher status careers than did the same male group though they clustered in typically “feminine” occupational areas like secretarial work and teaching.

Ginzberg et al (1951) observed that the career behaviour of girls during the early stages of development correspond closely to the behaviour observed with boys. However, by the transition period (16-18 years) as in Ginzberg's theory, girls are heavily thinking of the possibility of marriage with all its implications for careers outside the home. Thus girls' career decisions are tentative depending on their marital future (Osipow, 2003). On the whole, the Ginzberg's group was of the opinion that girls are much more influenced by their fathers in their educational and career plans. Whatever influences their mothers have are negative. And that is the desire to avoid what they considered to be their mothers' mistakes career-wise. However, women who successfully combine being wives, mothers and career are often found to be higher in social class (Osipow, 2003).

Beliefs about the role-appropriate behaviour of others, especially women, often restrict choice of careers in college despite there being no differences between men and women in career decision making styles (Harriot, 2001). Francis (2000) is of the view that, up to age ten, girls have similar subject interests as boys and are perceived to be better at all or most subjects than boys. Dilley (1965) finds in her evaluation of elementary school students in England that neither boys nor girls chose IT as their most favorite subject. As career choices form, students begin taking courses that reflect their choice of college education, narrowing their career options (Miller and Budd, 1999). Examining Scholastic Aptitude Test scores, Sadker and Sadker (1995) found that most girls decided to pursue social science careers rather than careers in the natural sciences.



Teachers' influence gender stereotyping of roles and choices through their interaction with students. Studies have found that teachers often give students the impression that boys are inherently better at working with computers than girls (Sanders & Stone, 1986). Culley (1988) found that teachers in primary schools often considered boys to be more interested in computers and these teachers tended to enjoy teaching computer-related subjects to boys more than girls. Teachers in such situations often attribute certain expertise to boys and let them have priority over girls in computer use (Volman & van Eck, 2001). This often holds true for both male and female teachers. Possibly the enthusiasm of boys, their spontaneous questions and responses, and their overwhelming presence in computer labs discourages girls (Lipinsk , 1986; Lockheed, 1986).

### **Intelligence and Career Choice**

Dilley (1965) and Elder (1968) recognized mental ability as important in career choice in several ways. In the first place, bright adolescents are more likely to make career choices that are more consistent with their intellectual abilities, interests, capacities and opportunities to receive appropriate trading. On the other hand the less bright are more likely to make unrealistic choices.

This is manifested in the choices of high-prestige careers for which the individual lack the intellectual capacity or interest to succeed in. Gribsons and Lohnes (1966) interviewed 111 students from the 8<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grades in America, to ascertain their occupational preferences. The Otis Mental Ability Test was used to classify them into ability to do college work. Lohnes (1966) reported that a high percentage preferred professional and administrative work. Some

in the lowest aptitude group however, indicated unrealistically high aspirations (Gostein, 2000).

Secondly, intelligence has been shown to relate to the level of students aspirations. Picou and Curry (2003) found that students who exhibited high academic ability and performance also aspired to higher levels of the occupational hierarchy while the less able preferred lower levels.

### **Aptitude and Career Choice**

In studies carried out by Mihalki (1974), Graham (1995) and Droege (1968), aptitude was recognized as likely factors in an individual's decision for a particular career. This is because some careers require special talents. Possession or lack of certain aptitudes may be crucial in immediate career success or in the possibility of success with training (Droege, 1968). Okoh (1988) in Accra, Ghana with 450 students as his sample in four senior high school in the Accra metropolis, found that aptitude tends to extend a lot of influence on the career level an individual is likely to attain and the quality of work he/she is likely to perform.

### **Interest and Career Choice**

Interest is recognized by scholars to be of great significance as a factor in the choice of a career. The assumption is that the more interested people are in their work the more likely they will succeed. Career interest tests work on this assumption. They therefore measure cluster of interests deemed similar to those successful people in the field to predict the possibility of success. Factor analysis of the Strong interest blank indicates that interest may be sub-divided and grouped to some degree by levels (Gostein, 2000). On the whole research findings had confirmed that interests that are based on abilities are stronger

and more realistic than those influenced primarily by such factors as prestige (Evans, 1976). In a study in Australia by Evans (1976) with college students he found that the 50 computer personnel used as respondents were in computer because of computational and literacy interest about target showed up low on mechanical persuasive and social services interest.

Johnson (1971) used the 22 basic interest categories on the Strong career interest blank for men to classify the interest of men in 62 occupations in London. He concluded that individuals need to consider a variety of interest factors in determining their educational and career plans. According to Tolbert (1980) however, research indicated only a slight relationship between interest and aptitude or ability. That is just because an individual has interest in a particular career, does not necessarily mean he has the ability needed for it on the other hand. Corey (1986) and Super and Bahn (1970) believed that interest is a moderately effective predictor of career success. It is therefore suggested that for any one to succeed in a given career one has to:

- (a) First identify areas of career interest.
- (b) Identify careers for which one's interest are appropriate and then
- (c) Determine the career for which one has the required abilities for satisfactory career performance.

Interest is very important in career choice. That interest is crucial in career choice is evidenced by the existence and extensive use of tests like Strong career interest blank, Kospers preference record and Clark's career interest of non-professional men.

## Values and Career Choice

Values can be described as general evaluative standards that serve to influence an individual's behaviour so as to reach a desired end state (Rokeach, 1979). The availability of values-based information, specifying which values are likely to be reinforced in the workplace, has been shown to be influential in the career choice process (Judge & Bretz, 1992). Research by Okonkwo (2002) in Nigeria with University undergraduate students where he used 400 students as his sample, indicated that values among young workers may be shifting away from those of their predecessors. Okonkwo stated that predecessors would always think of their career first in all they do whilst the youth of today always think of the monetary gains and the opportunities that comes with that particular career.

In a study of values among young people in four European countries, Lewis, Smithson, and Kugelberg (2002) found evidence that achieving work-life balance was of high importance to the participants. A study conducted in the USA found that young people were less likely to identify work as an important part of life than those of the same age a generation earlier (Smola & Sutton, 2002). Research by Smithson (1999) suggests that young people's occupational choices are influenced by the way in which they prioritize their work and family roles, and that they tend to place a high value on both work and family rather than on one or the other. This generational shift in values may, however, be limited to Western nations.

Some research conducted suggests that the Chinese are more concerned than Westerners with choosing an occupation that allows sufficient time for non-work activities and interests (Shenkar & Ronen, 1987; Bu & McKeen,

2001). This might have accounted for the high economic growth of China in a couple of years. This may be attributable to the Confucian tradition, which places duty above enjoyment and which sees work as a vital contribution towards the well-being of the family, and or to the standard of living currently experienced by the mainland Chinese. Bu and McKeen (2001) suggest that having seen their predecessors lack the opportunity to excel due to economic and political restrictions, today's business students in China are determined to pursue career success and financial wealth even if it may be at the expense of their personal or family lives. This explanation is supported by research by Hui and Tan (1996) who report that university graduates in Taiwan, a more developed and prosperous society, expect their work life to adjust to their personal and family interests echoing the changing generational values revealed in research on Western populations.

Corey (1986) couples interest with values. He stated that it is extremely important to identify, clarify and assess one's value so as to match them with preferred career. Corey, like Super and Bahn (1971) recognizes the fact of individual value-orientation and stated that if areas centered values are economic, career decision are likely to be based on a desire for some type of financial and psychological security. Career security is a legitimate consideration for most people though security alone is not enough to reach career satisfaction. On the other hand, if one's central value were social career preference would be in areas where one works with people or help people.

Super and Bahn (1971) had earlier concluded that, there is good evidence that values are important in career decision. This includes the choice of the occupational programmes, or courses in institutions of higher learning.

They found that theoretical values were frequently reported as high in students of education, engineering medicine, natural sciences and social studies while economic values tend to be high in business students.

The work of Rosemberg (as cited in Super & Bahn, 1971) reported on over 4,500 college students whose values were expressed in their reasons for selecting their educational objectives. The students valued working with others in a helping manner, earning large amounts of money, social status and prestige and finally been creative and to use their talents.

Mornile (1967) compared the work-values of different occupational groups. It was found that, priests were highest on altruism and lowest on economic returns, a result consistent with some expectations of men in the priesthood. On the other hand, psychiatrists, lawyers and engineers were found to place higher values on intellectual stimulation than did teachers. Teachers however valued security more than psychiatrists or psychologists.

Super and Bahn (1971) concluded that, though value as a concept in career decision-making has not been researched as much as interest and other variables desired to be determinants of career choice, different studies were consistent in their conclusions that values were important, appear before any occupational experience and seem to affect attitudes towards particular careers.

### **Socio Economic Factors and Career Choice**

An individual's career choice has been found to be influenced by his/her socio-economic background, prestige and value factors. Ann (1957) in her work on occupational preference and family background came up with the conclusion that individual preferences are very much affected by parent's

social class in society. Lipsete (1961) has summarized the role of social varieties in career development and concluded that social class membership influenced the particular choices of career that adolescents make (Osipow, 1973). Lipsete's conclusion is emphasized by the study of Blau and Duncan (1967). They concluded that father's occupation, family income, place of residence and family status helps individuals to gain opportunities in their pursuit of careers. Rosenbergs (1957) conclusion on the matter was that in proportion to their numbers, families with high incomes produces more than their fair share of physicians and lawyers. This is because the high cost of training is affordable by such families.

According to Mario (2011), socio-economic status also influences the knowledge and understanding the adolescents have of different careers. As it were, middle class parents are more able than working parents to develop broad career interests and awareness of opportunities beyond the local communities. Socially disadvantaged adolescents have seen less, read less, heard less about and experienced less variety in their environment in general and have fewer opportunities than the socially privileged (Bernard, 1971; & Gostein 1984). Davis (1964), Sandborn (1965) and Crogg and Middleton (1968) have also concluded that low socio-economic status youths are inclined to take the only career they know about at the time they enter the labour market.

In Nigeria, Ugebore (1979) found that children from low socio-economic background, more often than not, preferred nursing, teaching and engineering while those with high socio-economic background preferred medicine and business administration. Coupled with socio-economic

background is the issue of prestige. Adolescents may want to go into certain occupations because of the high prestige society accords it, (Burow, 1976).

Richardson (2000) asserted that most youth choose their careers because of what they will gain. In terms of huge salaries, huge allowances and so many nice things associated with that particular career. He studied 350 students on what influenced their career choice and 85% of the students viewed financial gains as the most important factor that influenced them in their career choice.

### **Summary of Literature Review**

From the studies reviewed, it becomes apparent that factors which influences an individual's career varies. It was found that parents are influential in the career choice of their wards. Review of literature reviewed that, parents practically choose what their children would do in future.

Another factor that this study dealt with is peer. And it was revealed choice of career by their peers. Another factor worth mentioning is education. And literature showed that education is a very influential factor when it comes to choosing their careers.

Gender according to the literature was not so influential in the career choice of students. People chose careers not thinking of their gender but what they felt they could do. Intelligence could be left out when dealing with career choice. And according to literature, intelligence was a real factor that influenced people in their choice of careers. It went to say that, people chose careers that were consistent with their intellectual abilities.

Aptitude was also found to influence people in their choice of career. It was made known that, some careers required special talents and therefore possession or lack of certain talents may be crucial in career success. Interest



was also found to be very important in the career choice of people. Although value was also found to be very crucial in the career choice of people, it was realized that, value had being seen almost as interest and even though people do not really think of value, it was important to them when they chose careers.

Finally, the socio economic factors were also important in the career choice of people. The review of related literature gives factors that are strong in the choice of individuals and among such factors are interest, parents and peers.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

The chapter describes the research design, population, sample and sampling procedure, instrument for data collection, method of data collection and method of data analysis.

#### **Research Design**

Research design refers to the blue print which specifies how data relating to a given problem is collected and analyzed. It provides the procedural outcome for the conduct of any investigation. Gay (1992) remarks that research design indicates the structure of a study, the nature of the hypothesis and the variables involved in the study.

Since the study was directed towards the factors that influence the career choice of University of Cape Coast, the descriptive survey was considered appropriate to be used. A descriptive survey was employed for the study to obtain quantitative data from respondents for analysis since the research is temporal and would be conducted within a limited time frame (Trochim, 2006). This type of design is usually conducted to estimate the prevalence of the outcome of interest for a given population (Gay, 1992). This provides a quick and reliable data for analysis since the research would be conducted within a limited time frame (McBride, 1995).

Descriptive research design is a scientific method which involves observing and describing the behaviour of a subject without influencing it in

any way (Shuttlewortg, 2008). It involves collecting data in order to answer questions concerning the current status of the subject of study (Gay, 1992). It also results in a description of data, whether in words, pictures, charts or tables. Descriptive study is basically designed to find out the existing situation of a particular phenomenon and the issues evolving around it.

One advantage of this type of design is that the subject is observed in a complete natural and unchanged environment. Descriptive research is often used as a pre-cursor to more quantitative research designs, the general overview giving some valuable pointers as to what variables are worth testing qualitatively. Also, the use of descriptive designs allows variables and procedures to be described as accurately and completely as possible so that other researchers can replicate the study (Gay, 1992).

Untruthfulness is a big disadvantage of descriptive research (Gay, 1992). Participants that researchers question may not always be truthful and instead will give answers that they feel the researcher wants to hear. Participants may also refuse to answer any questions that they feel are too personal or difficult.

Descriptive research also carries with it an observer's paradox. If a participant knows that someone is observing them, they may change the way that they act (Gay, 1992). Subjectivity and error also play a disadvantageous role in descriptive research. Questions presented by a researcher are predetermined and prescriptive, while studies can contain errors. A researcher may choose what information to use and ignore data that does not conform to their hypothesis.

## **Population**

The study centered on an accessible population of 16000 students who were the undergraduate students of the University of Cape Coast. Amedahe (2000) defined a population as the entire aggregation of cases that meet a designated set of criteria. The target population for this study comprised all students of the University of Cape Coast.

However, such an all inclusive population would involve a long period of time which in effect would reduce accuracy of measurement. This is because the population might change with regard to the dependent variables (Wiersma, 1980).

## **Sample and Sampling Procedure**

The sample size for the study was 480. In order to get a sample size of the population of undergraduate students in the University, the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table for determining sample size was employed. The quality of a piece of research not only stands or falls by the appropriateness of methodology and instrumentation but also by the suitability of the sampling strategy that has been adopted (Morrison, 1993). Krejcie and Morgan (1970) noted that as the population increases the sample size increases at a diminishing rate and remains constant at slightly more than 380 cases.

The purposive, stratified, quota and the simple random sampling techniques were used to get a sample size of 480. The basis for the purposive selection was to get the programmes to be included in the study. In purposive sampling, researchers handpick the cases to be included in the sample on the basis of his/her judgment. This is also called judgmental sampling. Bachelor of Science (Nursing), Bachelor of commerce, Bachelor of Science

(Agriculture) and Bachelor of Education (Basic Education) were selected. The elements were chosen because they met the purpose of the researcher. The researcher went through the following stages to come up with the sample.

**Stage one of the sampling procedures**

With programmes as the strata, the sample size was divided among the selected programmes proportionately. All programmes were assigned 120 except BSc. Nursing which had 21 Level 100 students. In all the study used four hundred and seventy one (471) students. This is seen in Table 1.

**Table 1: Programmes for the Study, Population and Strata Assigned.**

Programmes	Population	Sample Size
Bachelor of Science (Nursing )	331	111
Bachelor of Commerce	868	120
Bachelor of Science (Agriculture)	523	120
Bachelor of Education (Basic Education)	385	120
<b>Total</b>	<b>2107</b>	<b>471</b>

Secondly, each level of the programmes was given a quota of 30 but since BSc. (Nursing) Level 100 were 21 and not up to 30, all 21 students were used. This is shown in Table 2

**Table 2: Respondents by Programmes and Levels**

	Level 100	Level 200	Level 300	Level 400	<b>Total</b>
Bachelor of Science (Nursing )	21	30	30	30	<b>111</b>
Bachelor of Commerce	30	30	30	30	<b>120</b>
Bachelor of Science (Agriculture)	30	30	30	30	<b>120</b>
Bachelor of Education (Basic Education)	30	30	30	30	<b>120</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>471</b>

**Stage two of the sampling procedures**

This stage dealt with selecting individual respondents to be used in the study. This was done using simple random sampling to get the 30 students, except Nursing Level 100 students who were 21 in number. In using the simple random sampling, 30 students were randomly selected from the University of Cape Coast records system.

**Table 3: Father / Guardians Occupation**

Father's / Guardians occupation	N	%
Civil servant	94	20
Public servant	236	50.1
Trader	70	14.9
Pastor / Imam	47	10
Farmer	24	5.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>471</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 3 shows the results of father/guardians occupation of respondents. It can be seen that, 236 (50.1%) of respondent's fathers were civil servants and only 24 (5.1%) farmers.

**Father / Guardians Educational Level**

Table 4 shows the results for father/guardians educational level of respondents.

**Table 4: Father / Guardians Educational Level**

<b>Item Father's / Guardians educational level</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
University	200	42.5
Polytechnic	100	21.2
Teacher training college	16	3.4
Senior high	50	10.6
Junior high	43	9.1
Primary school	20	4.2
No school Education	14	2.9
Other.....	28	5.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>471</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 4 show the results of father/guardians educational level of respondents. It can be seen in Table 4 that, 200 (42.5%) of fathers of respondents were university graduates. 100 (21.2%) polytechnic graduates and 16 (3.4%) teacher training graduates. However, it was also seen that 14 (2.9) of the fathers had no school education.

### **Mother / Guardians Occupation**

Table 5 shows the results for mother/guardians occupation of respondents.

**Table 5: Mother / Guardians Occupation**

<b>Mother's / Guardians Occupation</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Civil servant	23	4.9
Public servant	95	20.2
Trader	167	35.5
Farmer	115	24.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>471</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 5 shows the results of mother/guardians occupation of respondents. As observed in Table 5, most 165 (35%) of the students had their mothers to be traders. This is typical in the Ghanaian environment. In our communities, most mothers sell in markets and do various kinds of businesses.

### **Mother / Guardians Educational Level**

Table 6 shows the results for mother/guardians educational level of respondent.

**Table 6: Mother / Guardians Educational Level**

<b>Mother's / Guardians educational level</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
University	23	4.9
Polytechnic	35	7.4
Teacher Training College	60	12.7
Senior High	167	35.5
Junior High	115	24.4
Primary School	23	4.9



**Table 6 continued**

No School Education	23	4.9
Other....	25	5.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>471</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 6 shows that, most 167 (35%) of mothers/guardians of respondents completed the senior high school.

### **Instrument**

The main instrument for the study was the questionnaire (Appendix B). The instrument was developed after a thorough review of related literature. A questionnaire to Kerlinger (1973) is widely used for collecting data in educational research because if it is developed to answer research questions, it is very effective for securing factual information about practices and conditions of which the respondents are presumed to have knowledge. It is also used for inquiring into the opinions and attitudes of subjects.

A questionnaire has as part of its merits a high response rate particularly when the questionnaire design is good and appropriate follow up mechanisms are used. It simplifies data analysis when properly understood and implemented. In this study all respondents answered all questions and returned all questionnaires because all questions and statements were easily understood.

This notwithstanding, questionnaire have some weaknesses. It is expensive in terms of time especially if respondents are scattered over a large area. There is also the possibility of respondents not providing the appropriate responses as the method involves structured questions. The other weakness is that there is the likelihood of respondents trying to compare answers given.

This, the researcher resolved by making sure that respondents did individual work when they were filling the questionnaire.

The questionnaire had both open-ended and close-ended items. The open-ended questions consisted of items which elicited specific information from the respondents. The close-ended items with three-point Likert scale, asked respondents to indicate which of the factors were relevant in their career choice.

The questionnaire was made available to supervisors to determine their validity after which they were pilot-tested using a total sample of 20 B.A. Graphic Design students of the University of Education, Winneba. The respondents included 5 students each from Level 100 to Level 400. The responses indicated that wording was appropriate to the respondents concerned.

In addition, the items with three-point Likert scale were subjected to item analysis in order to identify items which removal would enhance the internal consistency of the instrument. An alpha value of 0.72 was obtained. An alpha value exceeding the verge of 0.60 is acceptable for research purposes (Ampiah, 2004). For items whose inter-item reliability were below 0.3 were deleted in order to enhance internal consistency of the instrument. The final questionnaire was then constructed.

The questionnaire was divided into two parts (Part I and the Part II). Part I dealt with the demographic information of the respondents which had six questions in all. Part II was divided into four sections (i.e. Section A, B, C, D). The first section had eight factors and it dealt with inherent factors that influence the career choice of students.

The second section was about social factors and had twelve items in all. The third section was about economic factors and it had eight items and finally the fourth section had eight items as well. The questionnaire had on top of every section three options which showed how every item had to be responded to. The options were: major, minor and not relevant where students were to tick the appropriate one that suited them.

### **Data Collection Procedure**

The data collection took place between March and April, 2012. Letters of introduction were collected from the Department of Educational Foundations to support the identity of the researcher. Discussions were made with regards to what the study is about and the number of respondents needed for the study with the respondents. With the permission of the class, the questionnaires were administered personally after the purpose of the study had been explained. All questionnaires were collected on the same day from each class. All questionnaires distributed to 471 students were completed and collected, constituting 100% response rate.

### **Data Analysis**

The data gathered from the study were analyzed based on the research questions and formulated to guide the study. The returned questionnaires were sorted, categorized, coded and organized into five sections based on research questions such that each section provided answers for each of the research questions. The reasons for choosing the particular factors were coded 1, 2 and 3. To analyse research questions one to four, Z for proportion test of significance was used. To analyse research question five, regression analysis was used.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The chapter deals with the results and the discussions of the data collected. The findings from the factors that influence the career choice of University of Cape Coast students are presented and discussed in relation to the five research questions that were formulated for the study.

#### **Research Question One**

#### **What Educational Factors Influence the Career Choice of University of Cape Coast Students?**

Research question one was formulated to find out which educational factors influence the career choice of students. The items used as educational factors were:

1. it is related to the programme I read in the senior high school
2. that is what my educational level can fetch me
3. my university is noted for training people for this career
4. my university has a lot of alumni who help students step in their shoes
5. my university offers scholarship to performing students in the field
6. My university is linked with corporate bodies so we have the opportunity of working whilst in school and after school
7. i can go back to school to upgrade myself

8. throughout my junior and senior high education
9. my teachers called me by the name of this career

**Table 7: Educational Factors Influencing the Career Choice of University of Cape Coast Students**

Item	Choice as major factor		Z value	Significance for all above 50% response
	N	%		
It is related to the programme I read in the senior high school.	237	50.3	0.027	-
That is what my educational level can fetch me.	117	24.8	5.359	-
My university is noted for training people for this career.	142	30.1	4.659	-
My university has a lot alumni who help student step in their shoes.	142	30.1	4.659	-
My university offers scholarship to performing students in the field.	46	9.8	5.305	-
My university is linked with corporate bodies so we have the opportunity of working whilst in school and after school.	47	10.0	5.339	-
I can go back to school to upgrade myself.	308	65.4	5.348	P<0.05
Throughout my junior and senior high education, my teachers called me by the name of this career.	164	34.8	3.815	-

The results from Table 7 show that the significant educational factor is I can go back to school to upgrade myself with 308 (65.4%) choosing it. It is significant at 5% ( $Z = 5.348, p < 0.05$ )

The students, were, first of all asked if their choice of career was related to the programme they read in the senior high school. Table 7 shows that 237 (50.3%) students indicated that their programme at the senior high school was a major factor that influenced them in their choice of career. This factor was not significant when tested. This finding was in contrast with a study conducted in 1998 at University of Maine where only 39% of the respondents indicated their high school programmes had been most influential in their career choice.

Another issue that students responded to was whether the career chosen gives opportunity for further education to upgrade him / herself. It can be seen that most students chose whatever career they chose because such careers gives chance for people to upgrade themselves. 308 (65.4%) agreed it's a major reason why they chose their career.

However, on the factor that student chose their career because their university offers scholarship to performing students in the field, 46 (9.8%) saw it as a major reason why they chose that career.

After this factor (i.e. university offers scholarship to performing students in the field), students also had to ascertain whether their teachers or other personnel in education influenced them in their choice of career. And with this, 164 (34.8%)

agreed it's a major influential factor in their career choice. In 1998, a study was conducted at University of Maine to find out the extent to which school personnel influence student's career choice. Thirty-nine percent of respondents indicated their high school teachers had been most influential in their decision, 20% indicated that their university influences their career choice. While the remaining 41% were distributed among seven alternatives which included principal, elementary school teacher, high school counsellor. So with regards to the school personnel and the school, it can be concluded that this study is in agreement with the study above where the percentage difference is only about five.

Arudo (2008) as studying Liberian students and factors that influenced their choice of career, found that 75 % of students believe that their certificate can greatly influence the type of career they find themselves in. So even though they have their choice of career made already, they believe their certificate has the potential of changing their choice of career. But the University of Cape Coast students had a different idea about this when only 117 (24.8%) felt their certificate could influence their career choice.

It can be deduced that, I can go back to school to upgrade myself, was the only educational factor that was significant in the career choice of the University of Cape Coast students. Sometimes students have some aspirations which do change in the educational setting. It can be in the Junior High School, Senior High School and even in the university since career choice is a process.



## **Research Question Two**

### **What Economic Factors Influence The Career Choice Of University Of Cape Coast Students?**

Research question two was formulated to find out whether economic factors influenced students in their career choice. The items used as economics factors were,

1. i can make a lot of money
2. it has good working conditions
3. the country needs a lot of workers in that post
4. there is job security (people are not easily sacked)
5. there are emerging job opportunities in the field
6. it motivates its staff by giving free health care and sponsors children of staff's education
7. good record of economic success for old people in the field
8. i can have the opportunity to own a personal business

The results from Table 8 show that the significant economic factors were, there is good historical record of economic success for old people in the field with 164 (59.9%) choosing it. It was significant at 5% ( $Z= 2.458$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) and the final significant factor was I can have the opportunity to own a personal business with 164 (59.9%) choosing it. It is significant at 5% ( $Z= 3.265$ ,  $p<0.05$ ).

**Table 8: Economic Factors Influencing the Career Choice of University of Cape Coast Student**

Item	Choice as major factor		Z value	Significance for all above 50% response
	N	%		
I can make a lot of money.	259	55.0	1.547	-
It has good working conditions (Work on shifts, pays overtime, promotion)	212	45.0	1.387	-
The country needs a lot of workers in that post	142	30.1	4.659	-
There is job security (people are not easily sacked)	212	45.0	1.387	-
There are emerging job opportunities in the field	165	35.0	3.776	-
It motivates its staff by giving free health care and sponsors children of staff's education	95	20.0	5.745	-
There is good historically record of economic success for old people in the field.	164	59.9	2.458	P<0.05
I can have the opportunity to own a personal business	282	59.9	3.265	P<0.05

Taylor (2004) was not wrong when he said that, the upcoming generation would never be satisfied with one career unless with a supplementary career attached. Richardson (2000) also asserted that most youth chose their careers because of what they would gain in terms of huge salaries, huge allowances and so many nice things associated with that particular career. He studied 350 students in England on what influence their career choice and 85% of the students viewed financial gains as the most important factor that influenced them in their career choice. This study is in line with the current study as financial gain is a significant factor that influenced the choice of career of University of Cape Coast students. Considering good conditions of a career as an influential factor in ones career choice, 212 (45%) of students saw this as a major factor.

Job security as a factor of economic factors saw 212 (45%) of students finding it as a major factor. Mario (2003) stated that, the youth will only seek a career where good working conditions are assured. They will seek for that career that will give insurance and most good conditions one can think of. To consider this study with what Mario stated, it is not so much in agreement because 45% of the students saw that as an influential factor whilst the rest did not.

It's been observed in the oil sector in Ghana that, since the country discovered oil, a lot of people are rushing to do courses related to oil so that they can be employed in this suit. But this is different in this study, with the factor the country needs a lot of workers in that post, 142 (30.1%) saw this as a major factor. Most students even though did not see it as a major factor in their career choice, it's a factor they might consider one day since they did not tick it as not

relevant. In conclusion, it can be said that only two items under the economics factors were significant. These are; I can own a personal business and there is a good historical record of economic success for people in the field.

### **Research Question Three**

#### **What Social Factors Influence the Career Choice of University of Cape Coast Students?**

Research question three was formulated to ascertain what social factors influence the students of the University of Cape Coast in their choices of career.

Items used as social factors were,

1. people have a lot of respect for the work
2. i will become important in society
3. it is the same as my father's / guardians career
4. it is the same as my mother's / guardians career
5. friends and classmates recommend it
6. adult relatives and adults friend wish it for me
7. my parents have chosen it for me
8. i find joy in working with children
9. i will have the opportunity to help others
10. i can make different people work together in peace
11. i like helping improve community life
12. i will be able to save plant and animal life

The results are presented in Table 9.

**Table 9: Social Factors Influence the Career Choice University of Cape Coast Students**

Item	Choice as Major Factors		Z value	Significance for % Above 50%
	N	%		
People have a lot of respect for the work.	284	60.3	3.412	P<0.05
I will become important in society (Newspaper, radio, TV etc will feature me)	261	55.4	1.683	-
It is the same as my father's / guardians career.	70	14.9	5.754	-
It is the same as my mother's / guardians career.	116	24.6	5.378	-
Friends and classmates recommend it.	93	19.7	5.740	-
Adult relatives and adults friend wish it for me.	117	24.8	5.359	-

**Table 9 continued**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Choice as Major Factor</b>		<b>Z value</b>	<b>Significance for % Above 50% response</b>
	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>		
My parents have chosen it for me.	47	10.0	5.339	-
I find joy in working with children.	214	45.4	1.277	-
I will have the opportunity to help others.	329	69.9	7.164	P<0.05
I can make different people work together in peace.	401	85.1	14.008	P<0.05
I like helping improve community life.	306	65.0	5.191	P<0.05

The results from Table 9 show that the significant social factors are people have a lot of respect for the work with 284 (60.3%) choosing it. It is significant at 5% ( $Z=3.412$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), I will have the opportunity to help others with 329 (69.9%) choosing it. It is significant with 5% ( $Z= 7.164$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), together in peace with 401 (85.1%) choosing it. It is significant at 5% ( $Z=14.00$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), and finally I like helping improve community life with 306 (65.00%) choosing it. It is significant at 5% ( $Z=5.191$ ,  $p<0.05$ ).

Most people would like to be in the lime light and therefore they consider all these when choosing a career. It is perceived that, most students chose their careers because it is the same as their parents' career. That is either the father or mother's career (Gostein, 2000). But this study refuted this assertion when students who felt their fathers career influenced their choice of career were only 14.9% and those who felt their mothers career influenced their choice of career were also 24.6%. This tells that, parents' careers do not really have influence on the career choice of their wards in this sample. This study went a different direction from Gofflich, and Moses (1999) who stated that 95 per cent of boys who choose farming as a career were sons of farmers (Gostein, 2000). Secondly, they asserted that parental influence comes through apprenticeship training. That is a parent who is a plumber takes his child with him on when and through this, children love and learn the careers of their parents. They were however quick to add that this occurs more in low socio-economic circles where the child may not have any other choice.

On the other hand the study also sought to find out if parents directly chose careers for their wards but table 9 shows that, even though some parents chose careers for their wards, it was a few of them since only 47 (10%) of the students had their parents choosing their careers for them. In this case Gostein (2000) assertion does not hold in this study when he said parents influence their children's choice of career in a number of ways. These include direct inheritance, the provision of apprenticeship and role models. Taylor (2004) points out that, parental support and encouragement are important factors that have been found to influence career choice. Children may choose what their parents desire simply to please them. This statement does not also side with this study since this study produces findings that show that few students have their parents influencing them in their career choices.

After observing Table 9, it is realized that, most students of the University of Cape Coast choose their careers having their community at heart. About 329 (70%) of the students felt they would give them the opportunity to help others. 401 (85.1%) also choose careers that would help make different people work together in peace.

Natalie (2006) asserts that, young adults through interaction with the context community learn about and explore careers which ultimately lead to their career choice. This assertion holds in this study as well since most of the students considered their community in their career choice. Social factors sought to refute so many existing studies and bringing to bear new ideas about how students



choose particular careers so that they can help their society and people around them.

#### **Research Question Four**

#### **What Inherent Factors Influence The Career Choice Of University Of Cape Coast Students?**

Research question four was to find out if inherent factors influenced the University of Cape Coast Students in their choice of career. Items used as inherent factors were,

1. i have personal interest in it,
2. it deals directly with people and I love to see people,
3. it deals with tools and I love working with tools,
4. it will give me the opportunity to use my talent,
5. it will help me to be original and be me,
6. it fits my gender,
7. I have ability in that career
8. it fits my personality.

The results from Table 10 show that the significant inherent factors are, it deals directly with people and I love to see people with 330 (70.1%) choosing it. It is significant at 5% ( $Z= 7.248, p<0.05$ ), it gives me the opportunity to use my talent with 401 (85.1%) choosing it. It is significant at 5% ( $Z= 14.008, p<0.05$ ), I have the ability in that career with 425 (90.0%) choosing it. It is significant at 5% ( $Z= 16.444, p<0.05$ ), and it fits my personality with 330 (70.1%) choosing it. It is significant at 5% ( $Z= 7.248, p<0.05$ )

**Table 10: Inherent Factors Influencing the Career Choice of University of Cape Coast Students**

Item	Choice as Major Factor		Z value	Significance for % Above 50% response
	N	%		
It fits my interest	24	5.1	4.195	-
It deals with people and I love to see people.	330	70.1	7.248	P<0.05
It deals with tools and I love working with tools.	93	19.7	5.740	-
It will give me the opportunity to use my talent.	401	85.1	14.008	P<0.05
It will help me to be original and be me.	259	55.0	1.547	-
It fits my gender.	118	39.9	2.102	-
I have ability in that career.	425	90.0	16.444	P<0.05
It fits my personality.	330	70.1	7.248	P<0.05

From Table 10, most of the students did not choose careers because of their interest. This is because only 24 (5.1%) of the students considered their interest before choosing a career. Quinter (2011) in his study found that interest of a student was considered important in influencing an individual's career choice which was totally different from what was found in this study. This means that interest was a significant factor in Quinter's (2011) and not significant in this study. Osipow (2003), in his study in America with 300 students had similar results as Quinter (2011). In Osipow's study, 80% of his respondents considered interest as the most important factor in their choice of career.

Roe (1956) sees such individuals as those who passed through the acceptance of home climate in her personality theory. Acceptance on the other hand means a child is seen as a member of the family is neither concentrated upon nor over-looked. Parents are non-restrictive and encourage independence. Roe's theory suggest that those feelings of acceptance rejection, protection, and excessive demands lead to a style of moving towards person or non-person which forms a career orientation that leads people to choose particular types of careers. It also influences social interaction and may be related to verbal abilities. Roe's theory suggests then that, ones feeling of acceptance or rejection leads to a choice of a particular type of career. This puts careers into categories as person and non-person. Person categories are services, business contacts, general culture, and arts and entertainment. Non-person categories are technology, science and outdoor.

Students did not consider gender in their choice of career because only 118 (39.9%) thought it could be considered when choosing a career. According to

Arthur (1992), the actual gender differences appear not to be very important as a factor in the choice of a career of the student. This assertion is in line with this study since students did not consider their gender as a factor that influenced their career choice. But Patterson (2003) also saw a different thing in his study when he concluded from his study of the effects of sex differences on career choice that, sex alone was the reasons for the choices made by his respondents. Osipow (2003) also had similar results as Patterson (2003) when he studied 300 students in America and found that 65% of his respondents viewed their gender as an important factor in their choice of careers. Sanders (2003) in a research in USA, also found something similar to that of Patterson when he states that in spite of the gains of sex equalization efforts, women still outnumber men 1.7 to 1 in service careers, 3 to 1 in clerical careers and 5 to 1 in elementary school teaching. Since 80% of librarians are women while 61% of social and recreational workers are women. Yet only 10% of lawyers and judges and 12% of medical doctors were women. By 1985, 79% of males were in the labour force while only 44% of women were in the labour force. Gender, as also found by Quinter (2011) in his study in Kenya, is not an influential factor in their career choice with 20.4% strongly agreeing and 16.4 agreeing. However 49.2% disagreed that gender did not influence their career choice. This shows that most students were not influenced by their gender when choosing their careers.

Inherent factors really influenced the students in their career choice. The students looked at themselves before making any career choice. Osipow (2003)

agreed to this statement when he said that inherent factors are crucial determinants of career choice the youth.

### **Research Question Five**

#### **What factors are the best predictors of the career choice for University of Cape Coast Students?**

Research question five was to find out the best predictors of the career choice of University of Cape Coast students.

**Table 11: Predictors of Career Choices**

Variables	df	Sum of Squares	Mean square	F	Sig.	R	R <sup>2</sup>
Regression	4	254.624	63.656	93.833	.000	.668	.441
Residual	466	316.165	.678				
<b>Total</b>	<b>470</b>	<b>570.790</b>					

Stepwise regression analysis was used to test how social, economic, educational and inherent factors predicted the career choice of the University of Cape Coast students. The results of the regression indicated that the four predictors explained 44.1% of the variance ( $R^2 = .441$ ,  $F = 93.833$ ,  $P < .000$ ).

**Table 12: Factors that are the Best Predictors of the Career Choice for University of Cape Coast Students**

Model	Standardized	Unstandardized		t	Sig.
	Coefficients	Coefficients			
	Beta	B	Std.		
			Error		
(Constant)		-1.259	.479	-2.630	.009
Inherent Factors	.185	.841	.219	3.835	.000
Economic Factors	.008	.022	.111	.198	.843
Social factors	-.674	-2.432	.173	-14.100	.000
Educational factors	.733	3.258	.178	18.276	.000

It was found that educational factors significantly predicted career choice ( $\beta = .733$ ,  $p < .000$ ), as did social factors ( $\beta = -.674$ ,  $p < .000$ ) and finally inherent factors ( $\beta = .185$ ,  $p < .000$ ). The equation for the best predictors of the career choice of University of Cape Coast students is  $Y = -1.259 + 0.841$  Inherent factors +  $3.528$  Educational factors +  $-2.432$  Social factors.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

In this chapter, the most important findings are highlighted. Some recommendations are offered to draw attention to the current factors that influence the career choice of students.

#### **Summary**

##### **Overview of the Study**

The study sought insight into the factors that influence the career choices of University of Cape Coast students. This was done by providing various factors that are believed to influence the career choices of students. Some of these factors were ability, personality and money.

A descriptive survey was employed for the study and a questionnaire was developed to solicit for respondents' view. Respondents were sampled using purposive, stratified, quota and simple random sampling. Respondents used for the study were 471. Z for proportion test of significance was used to analyse the first four research questions. Regression was used to analyse research question five.

## **Key Findings**

1. It was found from the study that the educational factor that influence the career choice of the University of Cape Coast students is going back to school to upgrade him/herself.
2. The study also revealed that economic factors that influenced the career choice of students were the opportunity to own a business and economic success of predecessors.
3. The study indicated that, social factors that influenced the career choice of the University of Cape Coast students were opportunity of the person to use that career to help others, making peoples work together in peace, and improving community life.
4. The study showed that inherent factors that influenced the student's career choice were, career would aid the individual to use his talent, ability, personality and it deals directly with people and I love to see people.

## **Conclusions**

The study brought to the fore the main factors that influenced the career choice of the University of Cape Coast students. Career choice in Ghana was perceived to have been influenced by parents and great or significant others in the lives of the students (Bedu-Addo, 2000) but the study revealed that, parents are not influential factors in the career choice of students.

Students deal with the process of career choice without considering where their interests lie. The findings make it clear since interest was not a significant



factor in the findings. Interest is an important factor which should never be eliminated when passing through the process of choosing a career so that the individual enjoys the career he/ she find himself/herself in.

It is surprising that students do not consider money in their choice of career as thought or guessed by many. University of Cape Coast students rather consider their inner potentials rather than what they would gain at the end.

The study refuted thoughts in the country making new records known. The study indicated one educational factors as influential. It also indicated two economic factors as influential. The study however indicated four factors each under social and inherent factors as influential.

Finally, the study indicated that, inherent, educational and social factors are the best predictors of the career choice of the students of University of Cape Coast.

### **Counselling Implications**

Interest which is one of the most important factors in the choosing of a career was not seen to influence the career choice of University of Cape Coast students therefore counsellors should organize career fairs where students would be made to know the best factors that most influence them in their choice of career.

Another point worth mentioning is that students think of financial gains in their choice of career which might affect their career satisfaction at the long run so counsellors could educate students on the effects of money. It is a good sign that students consider most of the inherent factors in the choosing of their career.

The counsellor still has work to do because he/she can help students prioritize factors and deal with each factor at an appropriate time.

## **Recommendations**

### **Recommendations for Policy and Practice**

Based on the findings and conclusions drawn from the study, below are some recommendations to some key stakeholders such as parents, students and counsellors

1. Career choice should be inculcated in the school curriculum so that right from the start students would know what should go into their choice of careers.
2. More career guidance seminars be held for students in the universities by counsellors so as to help the university student know the right factors to consider when choosing a career.
3. Seeing a counsellor on ones career choice should be a compulsory thing every student must do and it should be monitored counsellors. This would help most students who would not have looked for help in career choice seek help because it is compulsory.
4. Career choice should be added to the compulsory courses in the university so that students would have in depth knowledge about career choice.
5. University students should consider interest in their choice of career. Interest makes an individual put in so much in whatever he/she does becomes the urge is there. When interest is considered, it brings career satisfaction.

6. Parents should not choose careers for their wards but allow them to look within them and choose a career that best fits them. For this to get to parents, education by counsellors of career choice can educate parents through the mass media on the importance of allowing their wards to choose their careers themselves.

### **Suggestion for Further Research**

The following suggestions are made for further research.

1. The present study focused on the factors that influence the career choice of University of Cape Coast students. Further studies will be required from other universities in the country to collaborate the findings of the present study and to ensure their generalisability.
2. The current study focused on factors that influence the career choice of students. Further studies will be required from the working class to find out what influenced their choice of career.

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## **APPENDICE**

**APPENDIX A**

**Introductory Letter**

**UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST**

**CAPE COAST, GHANA**

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS**

Telephone: 32440/4 & 32480/3 Direct: 042-36037

TELEX: 2552, UCC, GH

Telegrams & Cables: University, Cape Coast



University Post Office

Cape Coast, Ghana

Our Ref.:

Your Ref:

*22/03/2012*

**THESIS WORK**

**LETTER OF INTRODUCTION**

We introduce to you Mr./Mrs./Miss *Fabea Ineke Bassman* a student from the University of Cape Coast, Department of Educational Foundations.

He/ She is pursuing a Master of *Philosophy* degree in *Guidance and Counselling*

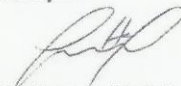
As part of his/her requirements, he/she is expected to work on a thesis entitled:

*Factors that influence the career choice of university of cape coast students*

He/ She has opted to make a study at your institution/establishment for the project.

We would most grateful if you could provide the opportunity for the study. Any information provided will be treated as strictly confidential.

Thank you.

*for*   
(Dr. Emmanuel Kofi Gyimah)  
HEAD

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL  
FOUNDATIONS  
UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST  
CAPE COAST - GHANA

**APPENDIX B**

**UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS  
QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE THE  
CAREER CHOICE OF UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST STUDENTS**

This questionnaire is being used to solicit information on the factors that influence the career choice of University of Cape Coast students. The study is for academic purposes only. I therefore seek your maximum co-operation and assure you that any information provided will be treated as confidential.

**PART I**

**INSTRUCTION:** Please respond by ticking [√] or providing the appropriate responses where necessary. Thank you for your co-operation.

1. Gender

Male

Female

2. Father / guardians’

occupation.....

3. Father/guardians educational level :

University

Polytechnic

Teacher Training College

Diploma

Senior High School

Junior High School

Primary School

No school education  
Other (specify)

4. Mother / guardians’

occupation.....

.....

5. Mother/guardians educational level :

- University
- Polytechnic
- Teacher Training College
- Diploma
- Senior High School
- Junior High School
- Primary School and below
- No school education

Other (specify).....

6. What kind of career would you like to be in when you leave the University of Cape Coast?.....

**PART II**

**INSTRUCTION:** Please respond to the statement by ticking [√] the appropriate cell as to whether it is major, minor or not relevant in making your career choice. Thank you for your co-operation.

**SECTION A  
INHERENT FACTORS**

I have chosen this career because:	This reason is:		
	Major	Minor	Not relevant
1. I have personal interest in it.			
2. It deals directly with people and I love to see people.			
3. It deals with tools and I love working with tools.			
4. It will give me the opportunity to use my talent.			
5. It will help me to be original and be me.			
6. It fits my gender.			

7. I have ability in that career.			
8. It fits my personality.			

**SECTION B  
ECONOMIC FACTORS**

I have chosen this career because:	This reason is:		
	Major	Minor	Not relevant
1. I can make a lot of money.			
2. It has good working conditions (Work on shifts, pays overtime, rapid promotion etc.)			
3. The country needs a lot of workers in that post			
4. There is job security (people are not easily sacked)			
5. There are emerging job opportunities in the field			
6. It motivates its staff by giving free health care and sponsors children of staff's education			
7. There is good historically record of economic success for old people in the field.			
8. I can have the opportunity to own a personal business			

**SECTION C  
SOCIAL FACTORS**

I have chosen this career because:	This reason is:		
	Major	Minor	Not relevant
1. People have a lot of respect for the work.			
2. I will become important in society (Newspaper, radio, TV etc will feature me)			
3. It is the same as my father's / guardians career.			
4. It is the same as my mother's / guardians career.			
5. Friends and classmates recommend it.			

6. Adult relatives and adults friend wish it for me.			
7. My parents have chosen it for me.			
8. I find joy in working with children.			
9. I will have the opportunity to help others.			
10. I can make different people work together in peace.			
11. I like helping improve community life.			
12. I will be able to save plant and animal life.			

**SECTION D  
EDUCATIONAL FACTORS**

I have chosen this career because:	This reason is:		
	Major	Minor	Not relevant
1. It is related to the programme I read in the senior high school.			
2. That is what my educational level can fetch me.			
3. My university is noted for training people for this career.			
4. My university has a lot alumni who help student step in their shoes.			
5. My university offers scholarship to performing students in the field.			
6. My university is linked with corporate bodies so we have the opportunity of working whilst in school and after school.			
7. I can go back to school to upgrade myself.			
8. Throughout my junior and senior high education, my teachers called me by the name of this career.			

## APPENDIX C

### Equation for Testing Significance of Proportion Using Z

$$Z = \frac{|P - P_o| - \frac{1}{2n}}{\frac{\sqrt{P_o(1 - P_o)}}{n}}$$

Where P= .05, P<sub>o</sub>= Observed Value, n= Total Number of Respondents