

Choice of Career Gap Among Adolescents with Disabilities

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ABSTRACT: *Various initiatives have been implemented to enhance the circumstances of adolescents with disabilities in their chosen professions. These efforts encompass the development of policies to direct Nigeria's educational system in supporting students with disabilities in pursuing jobs that align with their specific impairments. Furthermore, in order to successfully overcome the hurdles related to selecting a career. Several seminars and conferences were held in Nigeria to discuss the importance of career education in promoting the participation of adolescents with disabilities in career development. The discussion explicitly focused on theories of career choice and the challenges that adolescents with disabilities face in their chosen career paths. These challenges include teachers' lack of knowledge and skills in planning and utilizing career education experiences, a shortage of teachers, and inadequate resources for implementation. When making decisions about Career Education for teenagers with disabilities, it is important to carefully explore suitable techniques that take into account the specific obstacles they face.*

KEYWORDS: Career Education, Career choice, Adolescents with physical challenges

INTRODUCTION

Choosing a career is a crucial decision that has significant weight in one's life. It encompasses an individual's talents, mental faculties, and social interactions, along with a capacity for adjustment. This is a display of an individual's comprehension of oneself and abilities in searching for employment, accompanied with a strong understanding of the necessary skills for the job. A career transcends the notion of a temporary employment, profession, or vocation, as it necessitates extensive training and is pursued for a significant duration. Early career decision-making has a

beneficial impact on an individual's performance, educational attainment, and professional growth. The selection of a profession may either greatly benefit or severely hinder an individual, therefore, the act of choosing a vocation is one of the utmost significant choices that one must make in their lifetime. Choosing an inappropriate professional trajectory might result in feelings of dissatisfaction and sadness among adolescents with impairments. According to Alutu (2001), it is important to start considering career choices for students with disabilities from the early years of nursery school and continue throughout primary, secondary, and higher education. Put simply, an individual's profession selection significantly impacts their whole life. Therefore, selecting a profession is a challenging endeavor that individuals inevitably encounter at some point in their lives. This involves the process of picking a vocation, training for it, commencing it, and advancing within it (Getange and Sagwe 2016).

A career may be defined as the trajectory and endeavors pursued by an individual across their lifetime, particularly in relation to their chosen professions (Olaosebikan & Olusakin, 2014). A career often encompasses the many positions held, titles obtained, and achievements done over an extended duration, rather than only referring to one's current employment. A career encompasses all the events in one's life, which might include both paid and unpaid labor, community involvement, volunteer activities, and family responsibilities (Newton and Grayson, 2003). Likewise, it refers to a sequence of personal perceptions, actions, and interconnected job-related tasks that occur throughout an individual's lifetime. Some researchers interpret it as the chronological progression of jobs, responsibilities, activities, and experiences that an individual encounters during their career, or as a collection of occupational events and roles that constitute a person's working life (Mcoetzee and Schreuder, 2002). A career is a professional occupation that provides opportunities for self-discovery, creative expression, and assertiveness. As previously said, selecting a vocation is the most significant occurrence in an individual's life. An individual's success and subsequent fulfillment and pleasure are solely contingent upon the precise selection of their vocation. The detrimental impact on an individual's psychological well-being, particularly for those with disabilities, is significant when they make poor job choices or often change careers (Alkheilil, 2016).

According to research conducted by Navin (2009), it has been shown that engaging in job exploration prior to making a professional choice might enhance one's future desire in life. Possible career paths encompass entrepreneurial endeavors, sales and marketing roles, managerial positions, administrative tasks, mining occupations, diverse engineering fields, education professions, health and medical services, agricultural pursuits, transportation services, and clergy work, among other alternatives. These factors are contingent upon financial resources and the capacity to achieve the necessary grade point average, as well as emotional stability within the household and the availability of school support programs. Individuals with learning difficulties require substantial help in order to successfully pursue any of the aforementioned areas and achieve satisfaction and productivity. Hence, selecting a career is a progressive procedure that spans

beyond one's lifetime; it encompasses not just one option, but a sequence of choices. The selection of a career holds significant importance for an individual as it determines their methods of earning revenue, work happiness, stability, respect, and success (Kochung & Migunde, 2011).

In addition, individuals must engage in both comprehensive career planning and intensive career study prior to making a professional decision, in order to adapt to the changing socio-economic circumstances (Edwards and Quinter, 2011). Selecting a profession is sometimes regarded as a significant milestone in the life of an adolescent with disabilities. This one decision has the capacity to either facilitate success or hinder the availability of opportunities. Therefore, choosing a career is a crucial decision that students must make while deciding their future plans (Borchert, 2002). A young individual may only aspire to a profession that they perceive as accessible and achievable (CHE, 2005).

Adolescents with impairments worldwide sometimes have a predicament when it comes to selecting a job path for their future. Adolescents with disabilities often struggle to determine their job interests, making it challenging for them to choose a vocation, topics, courses of study, and future career routes. Positive student accomplishment has been associated with career preferences (Lehmann & Konstam, 2011). Choosing the incorrect job path might result in frustration, unmet ambitions, waning interest, a lack of motivation to reach desired goals, and overall reduced productivity. The majority of contemporary students prioritize their earning potential. Nevertheless, a small number of students actively strive to achieve their aspirations (Mcglynn, 2007). Opting for the appropriate combination of subjects that align with a desired job might significantly impact one's future work satisfaction.

Adolescents with impairments who lack guidance on job aspirations and the process of making decisions become a cause for concern. These nascent students with impairments seem directionless and lacking in concentration when it comes to determining their career and post-secondary choices. They portray themselves as ill-equipped to make life-altering decisions and consistently make subpar and homogeneous choices (Arnett, 2007). In 2004, the Canadian Benchmarking (Office for Disability) released statistics indicating that 82% of individuals surveyed believed that individuals with disabilities were at a disadvantage when it came to employment opportunities, even if they were equally competent. According to reports, individuals with disabilities earned \$10.4, which was \$1 less than their counterparts in regular education (Newman, 2011). Similarly, Plata and Bone (1989) discovered differences between those with impairments and those without disabilities. Their research shown that individuals with impairments, aged between fifteen and eighteen, prioritized skilled, semiskilled, and unskilled vocations over professional and management jobs when provided with a selection of twenty-three different occupations. Individuals without disabilities rated professional professions as more significant than individuals with impairments.

Akhuemonkhan (2014) defines career education as a targeted approach to enhance the learning experience by fostering the growth of technical expertise, personal aptitudes, cognitive comprehension, behavior, and work ethics. Its primary objective is to provide trainees with the necessary skills to satisfy the demands of the industry. Formal and non-formal education units should ensure that career education effectively translates industrial demands into a modern management system. According to Hopkins (2001), the tactics used to manage an efficient education system should be capable of recognizing the correlation between the abilities required by the industry and the skills provided by career education units. Subsequently, it is transformed into the implementation of educational administration that promotes efficient, non-bureaucratic, and contemporary career education management.

In order to enhance the effectiveness of education units, Hopkins (2007) suggests several management policies that Career education units can implement. These include a commitment to consistently improving capabilities, establishing a cohesive system for trainees that aligns with the organization's strategic vision, and enhancing teaching skills and the quality of human resources to meet the demands of the business and industrial sectors. Catts (2011) supports this perspective by offering their viewpoint derived from the study's findings. They assert that a well-functioning education management system, which effectively and efficiently supports the potential workforce and the demand for HR qualifications in the business and industrial sectors, is crucial in serving as a benchmark for enhancing the quality of career education outcomes.

Holland's Theory and the right career path

Holland's Theory assists individuals in identifying a job or vocation that aligns with their personality and interests. Success is characterized by a sense of well-being and enhanced performance in one's professional and academic endeavors. John Holland's Theory, commonly referred to as Holland's theory of occupational choice, is a highly renowned and extensively studied concept about professional advancement. Professionals in the field of career development extensively utilize it. Gaining comprehension of the idea enables you to discern suitable occupations and educational programs that align with your own characteristics and guide you towards a state of career satisfaction and prosperity.

Theoretical Framework refers to the conceptual foundation that guides the development and interpretation of a study or research. It provides a framework of concepts, theories, and principles that help to explain and understand the phenomena being.

Theoretical Framework

The idea of person-environment fit posits that individuals actively seek out surroundings that align with their personal qualities and possess a strong desire to assimilate into these contexts (van Vianen, 2018). Person-vocation fit refers to the alignment between an individual's vocational interests and the features of a particular profession (Holland, 1985; van Vianen, 2018). Holland

(1985) posited that individuals are attracted to work situations that align with their vocational personality types, allowing them to express their interests. Holland (1997) established a theory to comprehend and forecast an individual's selection of fields of study, careers, or jobs. This study was based on Holland's idea of occupational personalities and environment. John Holland's idea of occupational personalities and settings is widely regarded as one of the most successful models for career development to this day (Gottfredson & Johnston, 2009; Nauta, 2010). This idea unveiled that personalities and professional contexts may be categorized into six distinct classifications, namely Realistic (R), Investigative (I), Artistic (A), Social (S), Enterprising (E), and Conventional (C). Consequently, people frequently seek out a setting where they may freely showcase their interests, skills, and principles (Holland, 1985). The Holland's model encompasses six distinct categories, including Realistic (R), which pertains to those with mechanical and athletic aptitudes, a preference for outside labor, and an inclination towards using tools and machinery. The R type exhibits a preference for engaging in tasks involving tangible objects or practical matters. • Investigative (I) is suitable for those who possess strong mathematics and scientific skills, prefer working independently, and derive satisfaction from problem-solving. I prefer dealing with data. • Artistic (A) is for those who derive pleasure from producing unique pieces of art and possess a vivid imagination. The A type derives satisfaction from engaging with concepts and objects. Social (S) is for individuals who possess a keen interest in human interactions and derive satisfaction from assisting others. The S type like collaborating with individuals. • Enterprising (E) is for individuals who possess strong leadership and public speaking skills and enjoy exerting influence over others. The E type like collaborating with individuals and analyzing facts. • Conventional (C) is suitable for those with strong organizational skills and proficiency in mathematics. The C type finds satisfaction in manipulating data. It has been suggested that individuals often gravitate towards personality types that closely mirror their own, and that surroundings tend to promote the values associated with the dominant personality type present in that context (Gottfredson & Johnston, 2009). For instance, a Realistic atmosphere will appeal to and keep Realistic personalities (Gottfredson & Johnston, 2009).



Source: Boland (1984) Person–Organization Model

Person–organization fit theory

The aforementioned hypothesis posits that individuals select jobs and work situations that most aptly align with their beliefs, requirements, and personality. Judge and Bretz (1992) discovered that the perception of alignment between a job seeker's values and the values promoted by the business had an impact on how appealing the organization is regarded to be. Cable and Judge (1996) found that job seekers' judgments of how well they fit with an organization are determined by how closely their beliefs align with the business's principles, rather than by similarities in demographics between themselves and the organization's representatives. Moreover, the alignment between an individual and an organization predicts the level of work satisfaction, the likelihood of leaving the job, the inclination to promote the organization to others, and the level of commitment to the organization after being hired (Cable and Judge, 1996).

CHALLENGES OF CHOOSING A CAREER AMONG ADOLESCENTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

Lack of guidance

Insufficient provision of counseling and career assistance is seen for certain students with impairments. Students with impairments may have difficulty in selecting a suitable job path that would enable them to achieve success in life. Insufficient career guidance in schools deprives children with disabilities of the crucial opportunity to explore a wide range of possibilities aligned with their interests.

Financial Constraint

Financial constraint refers to a limitation or restriction on the availability of financial resources. Many students with impairments sometimes face the challenge of selecting their vocations while experiencing financial hardship. Enrolling or registering for college entails many fees that all students must manage. Numerous families of children with disabilities lack the capacity to contribute to their education, regardless of their desire to do so. Although there are scholarships and choices available to mitigate the expenses of school, not all students are aware of them, and others may not meet the eligibility criteria.

Lack of Proper Decisions

A significant number of teenagers with disabilities lack adequate career advice, resulting in a tendency to make ill-informed judgments due to their independent decision-making. During the course of their education, students often choose a certain subject as their professional goal solely based on the fact that they are acquainted with someone who is pursuing it. Oftentimes, individuals with impairments may not fully comprehend the significance of the degree they want to pursue and its direct correlation to their desired future career. They have a profound sense of disorientation in the throng and tend to conform to the actions of others, without considering the potential consequences until it is too late.

Anxiety

By altering their mentality, students with disabilities might view failures as opportunities for growth and progress, so enhancing their road to success. Many financially disadvantaged students with disabilities are concerned that if they choose a profession solely based on their interests or fail to obtain a suitable job shortly after completing their studies, they would forego any future opportunities. This might induce a sense of urgency in them to expedite their job decision. Individuals must either secure immediate employment upon completing their education, irrespective of personal preferences, or choose a lucrative profession to avoid perpetual indebtedness.

Stigmatization

Stigmatization refers to the act of attaching a negative social label or perception to an individual or group, often resulting in discrimination or exclusion. The prevailing societal notion that teenagers with impairments may face difficulties in competing with their non-disabled counterparts poses a significant obstacle to these individuals. Despite possessing talents and expertise, individuals nonetheless face skepticism regarding their ability.

Factors to be Considered When Choosing a Career for an adolescent with disabilities

Job availability: When selecting a job or career path, it is crucial to conduct thorough study and stay informed about job sectors that are not subject to seasonal fluctuations or at risk of being replaced by technological improvements in the long run. Obtaining employment with a finite duration and lacking in work fulfillment can be tiring. Despite the ongoing displacement of workers by machines in the labor market, there are still opportunities for individuals to get gainful employment and advance in their professional trajectory.

Interest and passion: When considering a job route, it is essential to inquire about one's interests and passions. A crucial question to ask oneself is: What activities do I derive the greatest enjoyment from? What occupation can I pursue that would provide me satisfaction and contentment, even in the absence of financial compensation? What are the areas or subjects that I find most engaging or enjoyable? There are several individuals who do not experience work satisfaction due to their dissatisfaction with their careers and occupations. Hence, it is crucial to ascertain your interests and passions and harmonize them with your professional choice in order to get job happiness.

Skills

Skills refer to the specific abilities and proficiencies that enable someone to effectively perform their work duties. During an interview, companies often inquire about your talents, which refers to the specific abilities you possess that may contribute to the company's advancement. To acquire a decent job, it is essential to possess qualities such as time efficiency, excellent management

abilities, and the ability to work well in a team. If you possess the ability to effectively interact with individuals from various age demographics, you may excel in the healthcare industry or the field of education. Primarily, make a conscious effort to observe and assess your abilities, and thereafter strategize your professional trajectory accordingly.

Talent and strength: Your aptitudes enable you to excel in all your endeavors. Each individual possesses one or two aptitudes, and it is important to ascertain your own before determining your professional trajectory. Your strengths may also be referred to as your talents, and possessing strong skills can greatly increase your professional trajectory.

Level of education: The level or degree of education you have is crucial for progressing in your profession. Even if you were hired without a degree, it is still required and vital to earn one. Having a degree will offer you an advantage over competitors when promotion opportunities occur. Certain occupations necessitate the acquisition of a formal degree, but others may only require on-the-job learning supplemented with provided training. Regardless, having some type of education is really significant.

Attitude to work: individuals exhibit varying responses when placed in same work settings. The way you approach work plays a vital role in selecting a career path. If you possess a positive mindset towards work and can handle high-pressure situations, you have the opportunity to pursue more demanding and rewarding positions or careers. If you are prone to have difficulty in managing excessive stress, whether it is caused by familial circumstances or personal disposition, it would be advisable to go for a professional trajectory that is both less demanding and still personally satisfying.

Salary structure: Salary structure is a crucial factor to consider when choosing a career path, despite it not being the sole determinant. It becomes particularly significant when you take into account the financial investment you made in obtaining your university degree. Conducting research on the compensation framework in your selected profession will provide you with valuable knowledge and enable you to perform your job effectively. If you are someone who utilized student loans to finance your school, obtaining a high-paying career may be your primary objective.

Work experience: Your pertinent professional experience might serve as a determining factor in securing your ideal position within your chosen field. Large corporations and institutions often prefer to hire persons with a certain degree of expertise since they believe these individuals possess the necessary skills to perform their roles efficiently. To get experience in your preferred career field, you can engage in unpaid work such as volunteering, internships, or other employment opportunities. Although these positions may not offer monetary compensation, they provide the necessary degree of experience needed to secure your ideal job.

Course availability: Course availability varies among schools, since they may not all offer the same courses or teach them in the same manner. It is advisable to verify whether your chosen career path is being taught at your preferred college. Oftentimes, individuals are compelled to alter their desired professional paths as a result of the absence of corresponding courses offered at the university or institution they have been admitted to. Prior to applying to any school, it is crucial to thoroughly research and identify courses that are directly relevant to your future work prospects. This will help prevent the need to switch professional fields after graduation.

Course relevance: Course relevance is a crucial criterion while selecting a professional path. Many occupations and jobs are becoming less significant and outdated as they are being supplanted by emerging technology and advancements in science. Hence, it is crucial to consider the course's relevance in the labor market while selecting your professional path. An illustration may be seen in the scenario where ATMs are substituting some positions held by bankers, while manufacturing machines are displacing the majority of employment in the manufacturing sector. It is important to be aware that a career that is currently relevant may become outdated in the future. Therefore, it is advisable to seek for careers that have long-term relevance.

Your personality: Your personality is of utmost importance in defining your identity. Your personality is an indicator of your cognitive, emotional, and behavioral patterns. When selecting a job route, it is important to take your personality into account.

Market availability: Ensure to verify if your chosen career path is advantageous in the job market, whether there are many work opportunities, and if it is sustainable in the long run. Discover comprehensive information on your career trajectory inside the employment market.

Your lifestyle about your career: The nature of human existence is characterized by a perpetual state of change, particularly in relation to one's work and lifestyle. When making these judgments, it is probable that your perception of obstacles may undergo transformation, and your lifestyle may also be impacted. When selecting a job that you want to pursue for a significant duration, it is crucial to find a vocation that brings you enjoyment as you age. For instance, if you are averse to exercising and adhering to a rigid dietary regimen, you may discover that occupations that demand constant physical fitness are not conducive to your long-term well-being. The trajectory of your professional journey should have a significant influence on your manner of living, and the two should consistently harmonize to provide a fulfilling existence.

Availability of funds: When selecting your profession, it is crucial to align your desires and aspirations with your professional path. Each individual has aspirations that they aspire to accomplish in the far future; they may encompass professional contentment, economic independence, or renown. Regardless of the specific scenario, it is imperative that your chosen

career trajectories align with your objectives and aspirations. Ideally, your occupation should provide you with the fulfillment you desire. It is not just about the financial aspect, but rather about finding contentment in your work and personal happiness.

Financial resources: this factor is crucial when selecting a professional path as it is necessary to assess your monetary situation when deciding on a course of study. Unless you are receiving funding from a scholarship or other types of assistance, it would not be prudent to select a course that would significantly deplete your financial resources. As a medical student, it is necessary to acquire numerous textbooks and learning materials for effective studying. It is well-known that medical books are quite expensive. Therefore, if you are unable to afford the costs associated with studying medicine, you may opt for a more affordable course within the medical field. Additional options for courses include biochemistry or microbiology.

CONCLUSION

The aim is to align the characteristics of disabled adolescents in schools with the requirements of the industry and the job market, and promote the adoption of international competition that can be successfully participated in by disabled adolescents in Nigeria. The industry is anticipated to contribute recommendations to the Government about the alignment of employment requirements with the necessary skill set. The development of this system is projected to bridge the gap between the education sector and the industry, therefore creating mutual success and providing additional value to both parties.

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