

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

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1.1 Introduction

The problem of choosing a suitable occupation has been a matter of great importance not only to the individual who is to enter in it but to all those who are concerned with man and his work. The factors that govern the choice of an occupation are many. Specialists in the field of guidance have extensively studied the processes involved in making a decision for the choice of an occupation. Their work has led to the refinement of concepts of guidance from time to time. Matching of men with jobs was once considered to be a valid procedure for determining an occupation for the individual. The subsequent development in the field of guidance was, therefore, in the direction of preparing instruments of diagnosis of traits, interests, aptitudes, etc., of the individual. This approach, however, ignores some of the more important factors which are crucial to the selection of and adjustment to the occupation.

1.2 Self-Concept in Modern Research

Current researches have developed some important concepts like self-concept and identification in vocational choice and adjustment. Vocational choice

has been viewed as an implementation of the individual's self-concept. Super has even redefined vocational guidance in terms of self-concept:

Vocational guidance is the process of helping a person to accept an integral and adequate picture of himself and of his role in the world of work, to test this concept against reality and to convert it into a reality, with satisfaction to himself and benefit to society.¹

Bordin has suggested that:

In answering a Strong Vocational Interest Test, an individual is expressing his acceptance of a particular view or concept of himself in term of occupational stereotypes.²

These two quotations clearly point to the fact that selecting a vocation is not a matter of simply matching the scores of an individual on interests, aptitudes and personality tests with job requirements. The process of selecting a vocation takes place within a person. Stated in different words, it means that the

1 Super, D.E., The Psychology of Careers, (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1956), p. 197.

2 Bordin, E.S., "A Theory of Vocational Interests as Dynamic Phenomena", Educ. Psychol. Measmt., 1943, 3, 49-66.

proper selection of the occupation depends upon the congruence between the self-concept and occupational role requirements.

The above mentioned view is consistent with behaviour when it is interpreted within the context of self-psychology. Accordingly, every individual behaves in certain situations in order to verify, preserve and enhance the self-concept. One of the situations in which a person tries to do this is the selection of a vocation which is perceived as being consistent with the self-concept. The individual thus tries to match the occupational roles with his self-concept. This process of matching self and occupational roles is seen by super to be central to goal setting and decision making.

The self is the result of interaction between growth processes and personal social development - the interaction of the person with others around him. As the individual takes roles in his daily living and plays roles in fantasy or play, as he identifies with role models and strives to emulate idealized persons, some of the roles are internalized as self-percepts and the concept of self-develops.

1.3 The Need for Research

There is a great variation in the opportunities for the development of adolescents in the Western and Indian culture. Adolescents in Western countries find ample of diverse opportunities, for the development of self-concept at home, in the neighbourhood, in schools, in part-time or vacation employment, in church, in community activities and in clubs. In India, the situation is quite different. Most of the adolescents are completely dependent upon their parents and guardians even in late pubescence. The authoritarian structure of many families, inadequate industrialization, school atmosphere where the child is spoon fed and not allowed to express himself freely, and the joint family system where the individual's identity is not recognized as separate, are some of the important reasons for the dependence of the adolescents upon their parents and guardians.

The concept of self has been studied not only by counselling psychologists but by social psychologists, clinical psychologists and personality theorists, as well. But there is a big gap between clinical, social and personality psychologists on the one hand and

counselling psychologists on the other. The importance of self-concept in vocational development has not yet been fully recognized by many psychologists. Many different aspects of self-concept have been studied but the vocational manifestations of self-hood seem to have been neglected. Thus, there is a need to study vocational choices and adjustment in relation to the concept of self. The present investigation is just an additional attempt in that direction.

1.4 The Plan of This Investigation

The self-concept approach to the choice of an occupation has been studied in this investigation by formulating three hypotheses. The first hypothesis deals with the relation between the perceptions of the self and the perceptions of the roles in the preferred field or occupation. It can reasonably be assumed that the congruence between the perceptions of the self and the perceptions of the roles in the preferred field or occupation will be greater than that between the perceptions of the self and the perceptions of the roles in the non-preferred field or occupation. The second hypothesis is formulated to study self-ideal congruence in relation to satisfaction in the field or occupation preferred. The third hypothesis directly follows from

the second hypothesis. It is hypothesized that self-ideal discrepancy will reveal greater dissatisfaction with the field or occupation selected. This hypothesis is studied by making case studies of some selected cases. These three hypotheses are tested in four occupations namely, teaching, law, social work and medicine by using both students and employed persons as subjects.

In this investigation the aspect of the self-concept namely, personal characteristics, is studied in relation to the perceptions by the subjects of the roles in the selected fields or occupations. The second hypothesis is studied by correlating the self-ideal congruency scores of subjects with the satisfaction scores. The latter scores are obtained by administering the job satisfaction questionnaire. In the third hypothesis, some selected cases are studied in details, so as to gather the information regarding their vocational development.

1.5 Summary

The problem of choosing the suitable occupation has been the subject of many researches during the past several years. Traditionally, mechanical matching of men with jobs was thought to be a better procedure for

predicting the occupation for the individual. Super's self-concept theory has brought about a significant change in the field of guidance. According to this approach, an individual is trying to implement his concept of self while selecting an occupation. The self-concept theory has generated many testable hypotheses some of which have been tested and, as a result, the theory has found some support. The self-concept theory is, at present, in the initial stage of its development, and therefore, some more efforts are needed to study certain hypotheses which the theory is capable to generate.