

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE PAST LITERATURE

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2.1 Introduction

In the preceding chapter, it was shown, how gradually the attention of guidance workers, counsellors and vocational psychologists was shifted from measuring interests, aptitudes and personality factors to the understanding of self-concept in vocational development. In this chapter, some of the relevant and significant studies are discussed. These studies can be classified as under:

- (1) Studies concerning the relation between interest and self-concept.
- (2) Studies concerning the relation between self-concept and occupational concept.
- (3) Studies concerning the relation between self-concept and occupational role requirements.
- (4) Studies concerning the relation between self-ideal congruence and adjustment.

2.2 Studies Concerning the Relation Between Interest and Self-Concept

As explained in the preceding chapter, Super¹ has maintained that in preferring an occupation a person is expressing the knowledge of himself in occupational terminology; while getting into the occupation a person tries to see whether the occupation will allow him to play the roles which are consistent with his self-concept; while stabilizing in the occupation the individual is trying to implement the concept of himself. The theoretical position of Super outlined above is the direct outgrowth of the work of Carter², Bordin³ and Allport⁴. Soon after the publication of the remarkable research of Strong on vocational interest, investigators picked up the problem and began to study the nature of interests as well as the role played by them in vocational development. Carter and Bordin have used self-concept

1 Super, D.E., "The Self-Concept in Vocational Development", Journal of Vocational and Educational Guidance, Vol.8, No.1, 1961, 13-27.

2 Carter, H.D., "The Development of Vocational Attitudes", J. of Consult. Psychol., 1940, 4, 185-191.

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

4 Allport, G.W., "The Ego in Contemporary Psychology", Psychol., Rev., 1943, 50, 451-478.

theory to explain their findings with Strong's Vocational Interest Blank.

Self-concept theory of vocational choice was also used by Tyler¹ to account for her findings on the relationships of aptitudes and interests in first grade children. It may be argued here that the interest score is not a measure of self-concept. Essentially, self-concept is the organization of various percepts. This organization takes place within a person, i.e. a person by selecting and rejecting the various experiences organizes them by himself. In the case of an interest inventory the organization of various percepts is done by another person. The self-concept in this sense is not revealed by the individual himself but it is inferred from the self-description by the statistical procedure. This is, however, not to deny the critical significance of self-concept.

Carter² has proposed that an individual

1 Tyler, L.E., "The Relation of Interests to Abilities and Reputation Among First-Grade Children"; Educ. Psychol. Measmt., 1951, 11, 255-264.

2 Carter, H.D., "Vocational Interests and Job Orientation", Appl. Psychol. Monog., 2, 1944.

during the course of his adjustment comes across a number of experiences which are the basis for the integration of personality. The development and patterning of vocational interest is a gradual process. The various interest patterns formed are organized around the concept of self. Carter was the first person who attempted to synthesize the various research findings on the nature and development of interests. Carter himself has developed the theory of vocational interests. At various points in his theory he has tried to relate vocational interests to self-concept. He maintained that an individual identifies himself with some group and thereby achieves satisfaction and status. The presence of unavoidable obstacles or inability to overcome them will cause the self-concept to change and identification to take place with some other group. This will give rise to a new pattern of interests which may be more in accordance with his aptitudes. Thus, Carter explains the development of interest patterns in terms of the individual's identification with some groups. Failure to get satisfaction or status will cause identification to shift to some other groups. This formulation may be regarded as a good testable hypothesis, but experimental data are

not available to support this contention.

Bordin¹ also maintained that the concept of self is reflected in the inventoried interests. He believed that interests develop as a result of the interaction between the endowments of the individual and the environment in which he lives. One of the hypotheses which Bordin developed is that the self-concept and the occupational stereotypes determine inventoried interests. He further stated that preferences and interests will correlate very highly in the case of an occupation which is known in terms of well-defined stereotypes. He also hypothesized that preferences tend to change with the changes in the inventoried interests. Some of these hypotheses can be tested. The hypothesis concerning the relationship between preference and interest in the case of an occupation which is known in terms of well defined stereotypes is difficult to test. It has been shown in one study by Henderson (1958) as reported by Super² that boys who see themselves as resembling their fathers tend to have interest patterns which are

1 Bordin, E.S., Op. Cit., pp. 49-66.

2 Super, D.E., Appraising Vocational Fitness, New York, Harper & Brothers, 1960, p. 401.

similar to those of their fathers. It can be assumed, as suggested by Bordin, that each individual possesses the knowledge of stereotypes about persons in various occupations. It is possible to study the relationships if any, between the self-concept and the occupational stereotypes. This kind of study will certainly throw light on Bordin's theoretical position.

One such study was carried out by Blocher and Schutz¹. The following hypothesis was tested: There will be a positive relationship between the vocational self-concept of an individual and the occupational stereotypes of a particular occupation which is preferred by him in terms of his interests. To test this hypothesis, each subject was asked to describe himself, his ideal self and occupational stereotypes for various occupations. The significance of the difference between the mean score which represented the degree of similarity between self-concept and stereotypic descriptions in the high interest group and the mean score which represented the degree of similarity between self-concept and

1 Blocher, D.H. and Schutz, R.A., "Relation Among Self-Descriptions, Occupational Stereotypes and Vocational Preferences", J. Counsel. Psychol., 1961.

stereotypic descriptions in low interest group, was tested. The results confirmed the hypothesis, i.e., the mean similarity score in the high interest group was greater than the mean similarity score in the low interest group. It is, thus, quite possible to consider all researches pertaining to vocational interests as researches of self-concept in relation to interests. The review of such researches will reveal the nature of vocational interests. It is known that interests are the product of the interaction between hereditary factors and environmental factors. An individual gets satisfaction of some of his social needs by doing some work well and this results in the development of interests. By identifying with others, he plans his own actions and goals or future aspirations after them. If there are insurmountable obstacles, an individual may identify himself with other groups and this may result in the development of new interests. Interest patterns once emerged, remain more or less stable in the years before adolescence. The exploratory activities continue even after adolescence but the experiences during this time merely verify what has happened to the individual in the past.

2.3 Studies Concerning the Relation Between Self-Concept and Occupational Concept

The term occupational concept refers to the individual's perception of the roles in a particular occupation. In the studies to be discussed below, it is hypothesized that the perception of the roles in a given occupation will be in accordance with the self-concept, when the choice is adequate. From the various studies conducted to test the afore-mentioned hypothesis, only four are selected.

Brophy¹ had conducted a study, in which a group of nurses ~~were~~ asked, to describe their self-concept, ideal self-concept and the kind of person their jobs required them to be. They were asked to fill up an adjective check list. A job satisfaction questionnaire was also administered to them. It was hypothesized that the congruency between the self-description and the perception of the roles in the job would be positively correlated with job satisfaction. The results confirmed this hypothesis. Another hypothesis concerning the relationship of real and ideal self-concept to general life satisfaction was also supported.

1 Brophy, A. L. "Self, Role and Satisfaction", Genet. Psychol., Monogr., 1959, 59, 263-308.

In a similar study Englander¹ used college major field as a criterion for defining occupational choice. In all, one hundred and twenty six women participated in the study. They were divided into three groups on the basis of their acceptance or rejection of elementary teaching as a vocation. Group one, consisted of subjects with stated interest in elementary teaching, as indexed by their selection of elementary teaching as a college major field. The other groups were used to reject the choice of the elementary teaching. The subjects were asked to describe their self-concept and teachers in terms of desirable personal characteristics. It was found that those persons who had selected elementary teaching as a vocation do see themselves as possessing personal qualities characteristic of elementary teachers to a greater degree than do persons who had not chosen elementary teaching.

Tageson² also tried to study the relation between self-concept and occupational role concept. One hundred and twenty seminary students were asked to

1 Englander, M., "A Psychological Analysis of Vocational Choice: Teaching," J. Counsel. Psychol., 1960, 7, 257-264.

2 Tageson, C.F., "The Relation of Self-Perceptions to Realism of Vocational Preference", (Washington, D.C., Catholic University of America Press, 1960.

describe their self-concept, ideal self-concept, ideal seminarian and the average seminarian. The familiar 'Q' technique developed by Stephenson¹ was used. It was hypothesized that, there will be a significant positive relationship between compatibility of self and occupational role concepts on the one hand and realism of vocational choice on the other. This hypothesis was confirmed by the results.

According to Super's theory, every individual attempts to select those fields which, he thinks, would allow him to play the roles which would be consistent with his self-concept. This line of argument was followed by Warren². It was thought by him that college students would tend to specialize in those fields which would lead them to occupational roles consistent with their self-concept. Inconsistency or discrepancy between a student's self-concept and the expected occupational roles could be avoided by changing the field of specialization. It is thus, quite reasonable to hypothesize that changes in college field of specialization, or college major field, are likely to

1 Stephenson, W., The Study of Behaviour - Q Technique and its Methodology, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953),

2 Warren, J.R., "Self-Concept, Occupational Role Expectation and Change in College Major", J. Counsel. Psychol., 1961, 8, 164-169.

occur when a discrepancy exists between the self-concept and expected occupational roles. This hypothesis was tested by Warren in his study. In this investigation, the self-concept was measured by using the personality inventory and the measure of occupational role expectations was obtained from the ratings of the sources of job satisfaction in the preferred occupation. Typical combinations of personality traits and expected job satisfactions were used as a measure of self-concept role-concept agreement; while a typical combinations of traits and expected job satisfactions were treated as discrepancy between self-concept and occupational role concept. It was predicted that the self-concept role-concept discrepant group will change the college major field. When the criterion defining the change in the major field was not very sensitive, it was found that the self-concept role-concept discrepant group did not change significantly more often than the self-concept role-concept compatible group.

These four studies were concerned with establishing relation between self-concept and occupational role-concept. This relationship was studied in relation to number of internal and external criteria

such as realism of vocational choice, occupational goal, stability of such goals and satisfaction in the job. The results in the various studies reported above have clearly indicated that the relationship between the compatibility of self-concept and occupational role-concept on the one hand and various internal and external criteria on the other, is close and consistent. These studies, though they have produced results in the expected direction, are still subject to criticism. In all these studies, for example, no consideration was given to tolerance of the discrepancy between the self-concept and occupational role-concept. If the criterion of occupational choice is defined in terms of college major field, a student with a high degree of tolerance might experience a considerable amount of tension, but it is not certain that he will change the college major field. Sometimes the change is not permissible. Under these circumstances, he might put in a great effort and become successful. Such cases should be detected and studied in details so as to gather more accurate information about them. Secondly, it has been recognized that the social desirability of items may account for the part of the correlation between self-concept and occupational role-concept. It was thought by many that social desirability is

controlled by the discrepancies between real self and ideal self but this expectation is not confirmed by subsequent researches.

2.4 Studies Concerning the Relation Between Self-Concept and Occupational Role Requirements

In the two studies to be described presently, the self-concept described by the subjects is compared with the perception of the role requirements by others. In the study conducted by Kibrick and Tiedman¹ nurses were asked to describe their self-concept or ideal self-concept by using an adjective check list. The actual self or the ideal self was then compared with the occupational role expectations checked by supervisors. The dependent variable was withdrawal from or continuation of the nursing course. It was found that the correlation between self-concept or ideal self-concept and the occupational role requirements was not very high and significant. This lack of relationship may partly be due to the criterion which was of six months duration, to study withdrawal. Secondly, the subject may withdraw himself from training for any reason. All such reasons cannot be treated alike. It should be

¹ Kibrick, Anne and Tiedman, D.V., "Conception of Self and Perception of Role in Schools of Nursing", J. Counsel. Psychol., 1961, 8, 62-69.

emphasized here that the congruency between the self-concept and the perception of the roles by the subjects in the preferred occupation is an important variable psychologically and not the congruency between self-concept and the perception of the roles in the preferred occupation by others. This, however, does not mean that the hypothesis is not consistent with the self-concept theory but it means that behaviourally and not psychologically the hypothesis is sound.

In a study conducted by Morrison¹ the problem was to determine whether self-descriptions and occupational descriptions done with 'Q' sorts are valid representations of the subjective process postulated by the self-concept implementation theory. For this purpose, students in nursing were asked to describe their self-concept, their perceptions of a nurse and their perceptions of a teacher. The hypothesis tested was that the perceptions of a nurse would be more similar to their perceptions of self than would their perceptions of a teacher. In other words, if a subject has chosen nursing because her perception of the role is felt to be compatible with her self-concept,

1 Morrison Richard L., "Self-Concept Implementation in Occupational Choices", J. Counsel. Psychol., Vol.9, No. 3, 1962.

then, the descriptions of herself and the occupational role to which she has committed herself should resemble each other more closely than her self-description would resemble some other occupational role which she had not chosen. This hypothesis was confirmed and the self-concept implementation theory was tentatively supported.

2.5 Studies Concerning the Relation Between Self-Ideal Congruency and Adjustment

The studies to be described presently deal with the relation between self-concept and ideal self-concept on the one hand and various indices of adjustment on the other.

Self-ideal congruency was measured by Butler and Haigh¹ in a group of 25 clients using 'Q' sorts. The congruence comprised the range from $-.47$ to $-.59$ with a mean of $-.01$. The same congruence was also measured in a group of 16 adjusted people. The range of congruence in this case was from $-.01$ to $.86$ with a mean of $.58$. Later on in a follow-up study six months after the completion of counselling, the self-ideal congruence was again measured in the case of 17 clients

1 Fuster, J.M. "The Self-Concept Approach to Personal Adjustment", The Journal of Social Psychology, 1963, 59, 239-246.

who were judged to have improved. This congruence comprised the range from $-.20$ to $.78$ with a mean of $.44$. This study indicates that low self ideal congruence is based on the low level of adjustment.

Hanlon¹ had asked 78 subjects to describe their self-concept and ideal self-concept by using 100 self-referent statements. The self-ideal congruence was then correlated with the subjects' percentile rankings on the California Test of Personality. The correlation was found to be $.78$ which is quite high.

In a more recent study, Fuster² has tried to study self-ideal congruence in relation to adjustment in a group of 52 Indian college students. To determine adjustment, the California Test of Personality was given. Masani's test was also administered to detect neurotic tendencies. It was found that self-ideal congruence is related to personal adjustment.

has
Self-concept/also been studied, in relation to identification with parents. One of the hypotheses which

1 Hanlon, T.E., Hofstaetter, P.R. and O'Connor, J.P., "Congruence of Self and Ideal Self in Relation to Personality Adjustment", J. Counsel. Psychol., 1954, 18, 215-218.

2 Fuster, J.M., Op.Cit., pp.239-246.

was tested by Stewart¹, was that the similarity of the child's actual child and ideal child concepts with the parents' actual child and ideal child concepts is related to the vocational interests of the child. It was found that there is no relationship between any of the son-mother identification measures and agreement of measured interests with the preference of an occupation. This study, however, revealed that boys lacking in primary interest patterns did accept the mother's image of the ideal child. White² followed up this study and found that girls with higher motivation for career showed greater discrepancy between actual self and ideal self. They also showed less tendency to identify with their parents.

2.6 Summary

The studies reviewed above, have revealed the fact that self-concept theory of vocational choice has generated important hypotheses. Most of these hypotheses, have been tested and the theory has gained some support from all these. The various studies discussed

1 Stewart, L.H. "Mother-Son Identification and Vocational Interest", Genet. Psychol. Monogr., 1959, 60, 31-63.

2 White, B.J., "The Relation of Self-Concept and Parental Identification to Women's Vocational Interests, J. Counsel. Psychol., 1959, 6, 202-206.

above, were conducted with a variety of methods and criteria. Subsequent researches might modify some of the agreements already reached. On the whole, it appears that the self-concept theory needs to be supported by further research.

The present investigation is just an additional attempt in that direction.