

*Full Length Research Paper*

# **Career decision making among young adults in Ghanaian secondary schools using super's career choice theory as a lens**

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Received 1 May, 2021; Accepted 25 June, 2021

**This study focused on analysis of Donald Super's Theory of Career Choice among young adults in Ghanaian Secondary Schools. This study indicates that, decisions made at tender age may relate to nothing but fantasy because they are likely to learn more on needs and wants of self rather than reality factor and also the inability of young adults to choose a good career for their lives is lack of career information and inconsistency of information, several researches viewed Donald Super's career theory as the foremost career researcher of his time. Concept of vocational choice theory, self-concept theory, career indecision and coping strategies, five life stages, life career rainbow, life roles and span, life space were discussed, implications for and consequently a critique of the theory which among other things were, more theory segments that should be evaluated empirically, particularly in life span of teenagers.**

**Key words:** Young adults, career choice, career indecision, career development.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Career development is a life-long journey that starts at mid adolescence and ends at retirement (Bozgeyikli et al., 2009). Super (1990) opines career as a lifetime development not an event. There are many factors that affect the career development process all over the world. These factors are classified along psychosocial, social, emotional and physical factors (Bozgeyikli et al., 2009). These factors mutually interlink, affect each other and either enhance or limit occupational status of a person. People develop sense of career aspiration through integration and interplay of life-roles and events that

happen in the entire journey of life (Gysbers et al., 2003). Aside the views of these authors on career development all over the world including Ghana, factors that affect the career development process are many interlinked personality factors such as gender, interest, abilities, values, self-concept, intelligence, ethnicity and sexual orientation of the individual, and young adults in Ghanaian Secondary Schools are not an exception. Societal and cultural factors such as ethnicity or race, socio-economic status, social class, religion, family setup, relationships and culture, all have some among of

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influence on career development process in the lives of young adults in Ghana as experienced elsewhere.

Super (1990) highlights impact of interactive role of life-stages and life-roles depicted in his life-space-life-span theory" and how crucial it is in the process of occupational choice and development. For example, super contends that interplay of life roles such as being a worker, a student, a parent, a citizen, a leisurite and a homemaker informs the process of career development. Swanson and Gore (2015), Alluded that pursuing satisfying work-role contributes immensely in leading to productive and satisfactory life which is essential in attaining psychological wellbeing.

This study was intended to examine the interrelations of literature in career development and decision-making among young adults in Ghanaian Secondary Schools. Conclusions of this study will contribute to the increasing research, examining the dynamics of career development of population from adolescence to adulthood in Ghana and elsewhere.

### **Rationale of the study**

The rationale for this study was to review literature on Donald Super's Theory of career choice to see the relevance of the theory and how it correlates with the determinants of career decision making process among young adults in Ghanaian Senior High Schools. This study is therefore considered as a conceptual study without methodology whereby the determinants of career decision making process among young adults in Ghanaian Senior High Schools as discussed below are correlated in the literature in respect of Super's Theory. Literature reveals that Donald Super's Theory of career choice is one of the foundation theories of career development, so this has become necessary because the researchers want to find out whether what is perceived by young adults and practiced in Ghanaian Senior High Schools is in consonance with Super's theory. The findings from this will in turn inform counselors Ghanaian schools how they can support students in their career decisions.

It is usual in Ghanaian Senior High Schools for a person's intellectual ability to lead to a high academic level, which in turn decides the individual's professional decision. The subjects in which a student excels in school influence the type of professional decision he or she will make after graduation. Using super's theory of career choice as a lens, the study sought to find out how this relates with the theory.

The importance of learning experience may be attributed to the fact that students study about and explore many vocations in schools before deciding on a

career path and subject combinations that will eventually lead to that career path as perceived by students in Ghanaian Senior High Schools. Those students also pick what they want to do in the future in terms of their careers based on their learning experiences while in school. These parallels show that when students choose a career, their choices are affected far more by their own experiences and what a particular career is likely to offer in return.

At selecting vocational choices, young adults in Ghanaian Senior High Schools believe that personal characteristics such as abilities, resources, personality, and others should be matched with employment aspects such as wages, possibilities for future development, prestige, job stability, and environment. This emphasizes the need of recognizing one's own self-concept before pursuing a vocation.

Personal ambitions or preferences in life, academic standards, personal characteristics (age, sex, strength), interest, parental influence, peer group influence, the dominant occupation in the community, the career of significant others in society, job security in the career, job satisfaction, and the prestige are all factors that young adults in Ghanaian Senior High Schools consider.

### **Meaning of career from different perspectives**

According to the National Career Development Association (Sears, 1982), the whole work and leisure of a person's life is a job. The term 'career' included different roles, circumstances and places that you encounter in your lifetime, Gysbers and Moore (1981) suggested. It is advisable that the term 'career' is replaced by the phrase 'life career' in order to reflect the nature of such comprehensive and complex self-development throughout the lives of the person. McDaniels (1978) argues that while a job or job is part of a career, the whole spectrum of that broad concept does not exist. Career means a life-long lifestyle consisting of an array of work or recreational activities. Raynor and Entin (1982) stressed that the term career combines the concepts of phenomenology and behavior. In regard to past and present experiences, as well as future plans, it reflected their own self-perception in our social context. When the meaning of career is expanded to a wide range of roles integration in life experiences, factors such as work, education, family and life play an active role in the career choice and the career development process of the individual (Hansen and Keierleber, 1978). The career can be acknowledged according to Super (1976) as:

*the course of life events; the sequence of professions and other roles in life which combine the commitment to*

*work in its overall pattern of development;; The pay-as-you-go series includes, from youth to pension, the role of students, the staff or pensioners and their complementary professional, family and civic duties, and the role of employees and pensioners. Careers only exist when people pursue them; they are centered on people. This later notion of careers, "they exist only as people pursue them," sums up a good deal of the rationale for career guidance. (p. 3) (p. 5)*

When looking at the many perspectives based on meaning of Careers, according to Herr and Cramer (1992), are (a) unique to each individual, (b) produced by the person's choice and decision, (c) dynamic and unfold during one's life journey, and (d) interwoven entities of work and life such as pre-vocational and post-vocational considerations, and (e) intertwined with other aspects of one's life, such as family, community, and leisure.

Although the definitions tend to differ slightly in terms of emphasis and terminology when it comes to the concept of career, they seem to have many of the same fundamental features and elements. That is, rather than considering one's profession as a discrete, separate work-related aspect of one's life, one's career is viewed as an integrated, active, and necessary component of one's life. While one's professional experiences are always intertwined with other life experiences, one's life experiences can provide a good image of one's career progress. In this sense, life is synonymous with career, and vice versa. This appears to be in line with Miller's (1988) view of the link between life and work, albeit her notion of "life-is-work" is highly influenced by phenomenological and existential philosophical perspectives (Sharf, 1997). "A career is a person's life, and in this usage, there is one career for every person" (Cochran, 1991:7).

### **Career maturity and decision making process**

Young adults who appreciate their job roles and commit to actively participating in them quickly realize that they must prepare themselves to be productive workers in general, and eventually train for a specific occupation. The adolescent and young adult years, which Super (1990) referred to as the Exploration Stage of career development, are characterized by this preparatory process. Exploratory behavior, or action and thinking that increases self-knowledge about work values, vocational interests, and occupational abilities, as well as provides a vast fund of occupation, is the main coping behavior of this stage. The young adults in Ghanaian Secondary Schools who are transitioning from adolescence to adulthood have similar characteristics with young adults

in the exploratory stage of career development. Super, (1963) indicated that the exploratory behavior is influenced by a person's views toward planning and investigating the future, or, as Super frequently put it, "looking ahead" and "looking around".

Super (1974b) created the term "planfulness" to describe attitudes toward future planning. It refers to an understanding that educational and vocational decisions must be made at some point in the future, as well as a willingness to prepare for these decisions. Exploration attitudes refer to a desire to actively use environmental chances and resources to learn more about the world of work in general, and certain jobs in particular.

Career maturity is a metric for determining an individual's level of affective and cognitive career growth. There is no doubt that Donald Super is one of the career developmental theories whose concerted effort yielded a positive contribution to the scientific field of career development. Accordingly, the concept of career decision making cannot be over emphasized, the researchers tried to relate relevant literatures to this concept, Super (1953) as cited in Mamman (1992) in the concept of career decision making viewed that the term choice/decision making has different meanings at various stages and age levels. Decisions made at tender age may relate to nothing but fantasy because they are likely to learn more on needs and wants of self rather than reality factor and are not necessarily worked upon as it would be later on in life. He suggested that preference be consider as an unimplemented course of action which does not designate entering into a job. Basically, what this researcher said mostly happens to our nursery and primary school pupils, sometimes they may choose a career at their tender age because they might have watched a film, see things that interest them within their immediate environment, actually it amounts to nothing until when they mature enough. Oladele (1986) as cited by Mburza (2011) considers a person's career to be the series of important roles he or she has held throughout his or her life, which includes home, school, and community experience related to an individual's life idea and its execution in daily life.

Similarly, Super (1953) as cited in Bojuwoye (1986) stressed that, The irreversible nature of the choice process calls for greater care in selecting an occupation since final stage of the decision making process is related when the person enters an occupation. As we have seen from this researcher, the reality is that choosing a career may not be necessarily irreversible because many individuals change their careers or reverse it; recent researcher proves that, an individual may wish to change his or her career as a result of knowledge and time.

In addition, Super (1962) as cited in Momberg (2004) did not view his contributions to career psychology as a

theory, he preferred to view it as a range of different constructs that he used to enrich, extend, and elaborate career theory and practice his original ten propositions, according to a study of the relationship between personality trait and vocational interest in a South African context.

The above researchers have advocated that school counselors should be conscious of students' vocational preference, competences and also their interest, abilities and personalities, which necessitate their differences. Meanwhile, Momberg (2004) have the same stand with Bojuwoye where they said, people have different abilities, personalities, requirements, and value interest, trait, self-concept, vocational preferences and competence as such counselors should note these as cornerstones of their clients concern and put into consideration at the counseling sessions for proper counseling to help young adults make informed career choices. The degree to which people have been able to incorporate their self-concept in their professions is related to job satisfaction.

Super (1953) as cited in Machina (n.d.) sees vocational choice having different meaning at different age levels; this opinion coincided with Mamman (1992) who views that vocational development has different meaning at different stages. While Super 1953, also acknowledged the fact that career decisions are conceived at a tender age, he contended that such decisions are not highly related. Youngsters, according to Super 1953 are not likely to consider important variables to consider while considering a career choice such as psychological and non-psychological factors that might affect their choices. Super 1953 therefore suggest that preference should be considered as an unimplemented course of action.

In a study of parents' socioeconomic status and its impact on students' educational values and vocational choices, Osa-Edoh and Alutu (2011) stated, "the period culminates in a compromise between interest, capacities, value, and opportunities, and that the process can be divided into three stages, viz. fantasy dominating choice, tentative (around primary school age), when choice is influenced by interest, and final (around secondary school age), when choice is influenced by interest, then by capacities and values and the realistic choice. The realistic choice stage is faced with realistic factors which need to be guided carefully to make a successful life. It could therefore be implied that vocational adjustment is a developmental process. A choice has to be made but in a process where many factors such as the peculiarities and potentialities of the individual have to be considered. These influences could be intrinsic and extrinsic in nature." These are some of super's impressions about the prepositions which make the basis of his theory.

Mburza, (1992) in a study of motivation and interest in relation to occupational choice referred to this stage as

(Tentative) which is described by Greg as sub stage in exploration stage as period of self-examination, the period that the adolescent can ascertain whether or not he/she is vocationally mature. Year later, this same child will have a completely different view of what he would be in life. The choice now becomes more realistic as the child becomes more aware of his ability. Exposure and interaction among other factors eventually after the child's occupational choice as these experiences become more realistic. Also, Mburza (1992:20) said that "career development support the concept of career choice being developmental in nature". For the purpose of guidance and counseling super rightly claimed that, "we need an elaboration of the variable and the routes by which people arrived at, and enter an occupation. He further stressed that, interaction efforts of personal and social factors and the part they play in forcing a self-concept. They later have a crucial influence on the choice, entry maintenance and satisfaction geared from work. Another point in Super's emphasis in career development as a continuous process following a sequence of different stage is only loosely connected to chronological age. As individuals change constantly he/she encounters new experience, therefore occupational choice is subject to change to meet these needs.

The Exploration stage, which lasts from 14 to 24 years, is marked by a tentative period during which professional options are limited but not finalized. The career development challenges of crystallizing, clarifying, and implementing a job decision are encountered by individuals. When a person's work ethic, achievement, and foresight come together, they start thinking about the different selves they could create. These professional daydreams eventually crystallize into a publicly acknowledged career identity, complete with a preference for a specific group of occupations at a specific ability level. In the same vein Super (1957) as cited in Greg (1995) maintained the exploration period, which lasts from 15 to 24 years, is marked by self-examination, role-playing, and occupational exploration in school, leisure activities, and part-time job by persons who have established interests and abilities through school activities or practice work experience. This stage has three sub stages as follows;

- 1) Tentative sub stage 15-17 years: is characterized by tentative choices made after due consideration of individual's needs, values, interests, abilities, and opportunities available.
- 2) Transition sub stage 18-21 years in an attempt to implement self-concept through the choice of career, or course of training/education, individual's action is based on reality factors.
- 3) Trial sub stage 22-24 years the individual having made

seemingly appropriate choice, secured his first job and therefore is on the entry or trial sub stage that is to say the beginning job is tried out.

Themba (2010) identifies the following dimensions of career maturity as comprising his model in a study of career maturity across career stages in the South African military: orientation to career choice, information and planning, consistency of career preferences, crystallization of traits, and wisdom of career preferences. What's crucial to note about these dimensions is that he recognizes that they're better suited to the early (exploratory) stages of a career. When it comes to job choice, the presumption is that someone who is more concerned with making decisions is more likely to be ready and able to choose an acceptable vocation when the time comes than someone who is less concerned with making decisions (Super, 1957). One of the main reasons why teenagers can be immature is a lack of awareness of, or care for, the decisions they will face. As a result, this dimension can be measured by looking at how concerned an individual is about career obstacles and how well he or she uses existing resources to deal with decision-making duties.

According to Hargreaves (2006), one of the foremost career researchers of our time, Donald Super, has had a significant impact on the field of career psychology, particularly in the area of career development, as discovered in a longitudinal study of the occupational aspirations and perceptions of nine to thirteen year-old South African children. Super's goal, however, was never to create a single, well-integrated theory, but rather a collection of segmented theories that covered job growth, self-concept development, and life roles. Over the course of 40 years of research, Super established his career development theory, which is viewed as a lifelong process spanning five developmental stages from childhood to retirement. His approach has shifted the area of career psychology to see employment as one of many roles that people play in their lives, and as a role that varies with time.

### **Super's self-concept (self-awareness)**

Self-Awareness theory is one of the enormous contributions made by Donald Super in the development of career stages. Super was greatly influenced by the phenomenological trend of the social sciences. He awarded a certain importance to subjectivity in career development. The creation of the concept of 'self' or 'self-concept' is one of the decisive aspects of professional growth. The 'self', according to Super, can be defined as being what the person 'is'. The concept of the 'vocational self' is seen as diverse experiences related to the individual's career. As the self-concept gradually

develops, the individual tries to actualize it in a concrete manner by comparing it to the reality around them. However, as positive and negative experiences occur, the self-concept can be transformed this evolution is meant to help the individual adapt to professional changes. The more the individual advances in their career, the more their self-concept will be static. Today's reality can provoke the evolution of the self-concept (Samson, 2009).

On the other hand, Zunker (1998) is of the view that Physical and mental development, observations of work, identification with working adults, and general contextual experiences all contribute to the development of career self-concepts. A better developed career self-concept emerges from increased understanding and experiences in the workplace. Career self-concepts are just one aspect of a larger self-concept. They are the motivating factors that determine a person's job path and provide a form of self-expression.

Mamman (1992) opined that self-concept theory of vocational choice views vocational choice as a developmental process in which an individual implement his self-Concept. According to him, individual goes through series of life stages that are linked with the self-concept which is elaborated upon and clarified as he moves from childhood to maturity. This self-concept is then translated into aspiration preferences and work values the individuals vocational maturity depends on how successful he or she was able to deal with developmental challenges during the life stage of growth. He proposed five major life stages from growth to decline which are further divided into sub-stages.

- 1) Growth stage 0-15 is divided into fantasy, interest and capacity sub-stages.
- 2) Exploration stages 15-25 are sub-divided into tentative, transition and trial sub-stages.
- 3) Establishment stages 25-45 has the trial and specification sub-stages,
- 4) The maintenance stage begins around 45-65 years of age, while
- 5) The last stage Decline is divided into deceleration and retirement begins this stage last over a period of 65 years.

The five stages of development described by Super (1990) as referenced in Salami (2008) include growth (childhood), exploration (adolescence), establishing (young adulthood), maintenance, and withdrawal. Super proposed that certain vocational tasks are completed in identifiable and predictable sequences during each of the several stages.

Also, according to Van-Reenen (2010), a career theorist of career development highlighted on the changes that

people go through as they mature in a study of Career Indecision Amongst Prospective University Students. According to Super, socioeconomic variables, mental and physical abilities, personal attributes, and opportunities to which persons are exposed impact career trends. The concept of self-concept was one of Super's most important contributions to career advancement. According to Super (quoted in Tien, 2005), one's self-concept evolves and develops through time as a result of experience. In line with this, Zunker (2001:30) claims that in Super's paradigm, self-concept is an underlying element, "...vocational self-concept develops through physical and mental growth, observations of work, identification with working adults, general environment, and general experiences...."

A more sophisticated vocational self-concept is established as experiences broaden in relation to awareness of the world of work." In other words, people seek job fulfillment through employment roles that allow them to express, apply, and develop their self-concepts.

Vocational development may be regarded as the process of forming and applying a self-concept, according to Mamman (2002:112), and this process is projected from infancy to maturity as an individual continues to adjust to changing roles throughout his life cycle. As a result, when a person expresses a vocational preference, he or she is putting into occupational terms his or her own beliefs about the type of person he is and the type of person he or she would like to be. To press home his point, super argues that, understanding of the process of vocational development must begin with an understanding of the process of self-concept formation. Super (1963) states that self-concept formation begins when an individual recognizes himself as a distinct person, being both similar to and yet different from others; Super therefore categories the developmental process of career decision into various parts namely:

- 1) Crystallization Stage 14 to 18 years.
- 2) Specification stage 19 to 20 years
- 3) Implementation Stage 21 to 25 years.
- 4) Consolidation Stage 35 years and above.

Also, according to Super (1953), as cited in Dukku (1988), the process of vocational development is fundamentally the creation and implementation of self-concept, with the social component and reality playing a role, as well as a vocational decision. Crystallization (14 to 18 years), specification (18 to 21 years), implementation (21 to 25 years), and adolescence (35 years) are the stages, according to him. Meanwhile, some researches have the stand that Growth stage is going with crystallization stage while exploration stage is going with specification stage, implementation stage is moving with

establishment stage, and stabilization stage is moving with maintenance stage and Consolidation stage and above is moving with decline stage. These are the stages of self-concept theory developed by Donald Super which cannot be obtainable somewhere in Ghana because of the external forces, accident, and chance theory by some parents for their children at the age of 8-10 have to start their careers at the tender age.

According to Hargreaves (2006), in a study of nine to thirteen year-old South African children's occupational aspirations and perceptions, super's lifespan, life-space theory, where he views career development as the formation and implementation of self-concepts in occupational contexts and the synthesis of these self-concepts within the context of social, economic and cultural factors. Super considers the self-concept to be the most important construct in the career development process, and sees it as a continuous process of improving the fit between self and environmental determinants, as well as a process of integrating the individual's social, economic, and cultural reality with his own characteristics.

Super (1953) as cited in Olutola (1986) has presented two principal themes upon which career behavior can be analysed: Self-concept theory and developmental psychology, on the self-concept theory Super (1953) proposed that vocational self-concept develop on the basis of children's observation and identifications with adults in work. Self-concept theory requires a person to recognize himself as an individual and to realize his similarities with others. As an individual matures, he tests himself in many ways that have educational and vocational implications. As a result, as the process of distinguishing oneself from others progresses, so does the process of identification. Partly facilitating the differentiation and partly facilitate through life stages each of which calls for different vocational behaviours. Consequently, an individual passes through adolescent, young adult and adult life stages that demand vocational behaviours appropriate to each phase of his development Super then conclude that a person's mode of adjustment at one period of his life is likely to be predictive of his ability to adjust at a later period.

### **Career indecision and coping strategies**

Career decisions have a greater impact on people's life than few other decisions. As a result, it's not unexpected that understanding career hesitation is still one of vocational psychology's key concerns (Brown and Rector, 2008). One of the first tasks in career counseling is to identify particular obstacles that are preventing people from making career decisions (Osipow, 1999). Gati et al.

(1996) devised and validated taxonomy of challenges in career decision making to attain this purpose. According to the proposed taxonomy, there are ten types of difficulties divided into two groups, indicating a temporal distinction between difficulties that frequently arise before one begins the decision-making process (Lack of Readiness) and difficulties that typically arise only after the process has begun (Difficulties) (Lack of Information and Inconsistent Information). Young adults in Ghanaian Secondary Schools are no exception; they sometimes lack the readiness to make a professional selection because they are still in the teenage stage of life, moving to adulthood. Appropriate and consistent career information for them to make a sound career selection may be difficult to come by, as this information is often offered in bits and pieces by subject teachers who may have different perspectives.

The concept of Career Maturity is intertwined with the concept of career indecision. The ability "to make socially essential career decisions," according to Super et al; (1973), is one facet of Career Maturity (p. 4). As a result, career hesitation is regarded as a developmental issue during the job maturation process "that emerges from a lack of understanding about oneself or the workplace" (Chartrand and Bargh, 1994:55). The Career Indecision Assessment provides details on the specific issues that inhibit young adults from making career decisions.

Individuals make some of the most critical decisions of their lives when it comes to their careers (Lancaster, et al., 1999). Making such selections, on the other hand, is not only difficult, but also stressful and complicated. Although some young individuals make job decisions without apparent difficulty, many others confront challenges along the process (Amir et al; 2006). Such issues can cause the process to start late, stop in the middle, or lead to a less-than-optimal decision.

Understanding the roots of career hesitation is critical because it allows career counselors to better match their counseling tactics to the key drivers of their clients' decision-making challenges, resulting in more effective coping (Brown and Rector, 2008).

Making decisions can be difficult for a variety of reasons. Individuals are concerned not only about having to make a decision, but also about making the correct option and the potential negative consequences of making the wrong one (Frydenberg, 2008).

Naturally, most young adults who are having trouble selecting a professional selection try to deal with their problems in some way. Some people may feel immobilized or worried and resort to poor coping techniques like escape-avoidance behaviors, whilst others are more inclined to engage in problem-focused coping activities like planning, taking direct action, or seeking help. Indeed, coping strategies have been

thoroughly researched in a variety of circumstances, and a great deal is known about coping ways that are deemed more or less effective (Compas et al., 2001; Skinner et al., 2003). However, according to academics, the use and efficiency of coping methods varies depending on the type of stressor (DeLongis et al; 2005). What may be common among the young adults in Ghanaian Secondary Schools when they faced with stressors in career decision making process in their youthful exuberance is to deny their own interest and take after their close friends, forgetting that each individual is unique with different career interest. Career counselors are interested in how young adults tackle the problem of career pressures in order to help their client's better deal with the challenge of making more effective career decisions.

Skinner et al. (2003) conducted a review of stress and coping studies and identified over 400 coping strategies. Skinner et al. presented a motivational theory of coping based on this review, categorizing coping responses typically described in the literature into 12 categories of methods evolved to deal with a wide range of challenges. Self-reliance/regulation, support seeking, problem solving, information seeking, accommodation, and negotiation are six of these methods that are considered adaptive responses to stress (Zimmer-Gembeck and Locke, 2011). These six coping methods are frequently included in active and approach-oriented coping measures, which are typically linked to favorable outcomes after a stressful incident (Compas et al., 2001). The other six strategies (delegation, isolation, helplessness, escape, submission, and opposition) are frequently linked to discomfort and are frequently included in assessments of maladaptive coping.

### **Life span or life roles concept**

The concept of "Life Roles" helps us understand two important life concepts: First, career development covers all ages and is not limited to a remunerated activity associated to the workforce. A career plays a number of roles that evolve and develop based on the person's age and their situation. A career takes on multiples forms; this variety is desired and healthy for individuals (Samson, 2009). Equally, the life span vocational choice theory, which encompasses six stages of life and professional growth, was presented by Donald Super. These are the six stages. (1) Crystallization, years 14 to 18; (2) specification, ages 18 to 21; (3) implementation, ages 21 to 24; (4) stabilization, ages 24 to 35; (5) consolidation, age 35; and (6) retirement readiness, age 55. He later realized that they cycle and recycle throughout their lives as a result of changes in their selves as well as changes

in the workplace.

Super (1987) and Gross (1994) as cited in Adeoye and Bukoye (2010) have observed that career has become a necessity not only as a means of consistent sets of problems confronting young adults in choosing a vocation. The taste of choosing a life career has become a thorn in the flesh of many adolescents and many fall by the way side in an attempt to choose a vocation. The researcher therefore, argues that, it is very necessary to guide young adults to aspire for jobs of their interest and ability.

### Life-space

Everybody has his own style of life as such. The roles that people perform throughout their lives are referred to as life-space. Super emphasizes the importance of context in one's life, as it influences life roles and career behaviors such as exploration.

Super's paper on career theory (2012) According to Nevill (1987), Super's perspective on professions is not just academic, but also research-based and practical. As mentioned in Super's Career Theory (2012), Osipow and Fitzgerald (1996) described the theory as well-ordered, systematic, particular, relevant, and empirically substantiated.

Furthermore, it is founded on differential, developmental, phenomenological, and contextual methods, and it has not remained static, but has been continuously enhanced. By labeling his theory "differential-developmental-social-phenomenological psychology," Super (1994:64) claims that it encompasses multiple theoretical perspectives. Although his theory covers a wide range of topics, his earlier work is mostly based on person-environment theory, and his later work is focused on life span development theory (Super, 1994). Sharf (1995) discovered that, aside from the Theory of Work Adjustment and the Myers-Briggs theories, other career development theories, such as theories of traits and factor, Holland, Tiedeman, sequential elimination, and social learning, only include Super's growth and exploration stages, demonstrating the broad nature of Super's work.

Super (1990; Super et al., 1996), as mentioned in Dullabh (2004), considers profession decision to be a lifelong process. Different developmental activities must be completed at different periods of life in order to achieve career maturity. Super's thesis contains two fundamental tenets: career growth is life long and the self-concept is developed as each stage of life has an impact on human behavior (Savickas and Walsh, 1996). Furthermore, according to Super (1990; Super et al., 1996), careers develop as individuals master challenges, which are typically in the form of demands to change, and

which can be triggered by predictable developmental tasks loosely associated with chronological age or by unpredictable adaptive tasks that bear no relation to age or do not occur in a linear progression.

### FINDINGS

Generally, the results of the paper came out with the following career choice tips as;

- 1) When it comes to career choice, the presumption is that someone who is more preoccupied with making decisions is more likely to be ready and able to make the right decision when the time comes.
- 2) It is revealed that decisions made at tender age may relate to nothing but fantasy because they are likely to learn more on needs and wants of self rather than reality factor and are not necessarily worked upon as it would be later on in life.
- 3) The inability of young adults to choose a good vocation in life is lack of awareness of the particular vocation, and it can be examined by the interest of an individual challenge to that vocational choice or development.
- 4) It is discovered that Super has developmental stages from childhood to retirement and above.
- 5) Career decisions are among the most crucial decisions people make throughout their lives, according to the survey. Making such selections, on the other hand, is not only difficult, but also stressful and complicated. Although some young individuals make professional decisions without obvious obstacles, many others have difficulty making decisions. This can be due to a lack of career knowledge or information that is inconsistent.
- 6) Coping strategies for choosing a career path include; problem-focused or approach coping, emotion-focused coping, avoidant coping, and support seeking
- 7) Super's concepts of self-concept, life stages, life space, life career rainbow and life span are related and they shared some common features on the stages of a person's career
- 8) Super's theoretical formulations have been considered as one of the most significant ideas in the subject of career development, and his work incorporates a larger perspective of career development across the life cycle.
- 9) It turned out that Super's theory is still a very effective model for understanding career development and managing vocational education and counseling today.
- 10) The rainbow's life-span dimension depicts and demarcates life stages, which correspond to childhood, adolescence, maturity, middlelence, and senescence.

### Super's theory questioned

Super's Professional Development Theory is a



cornerstone in the field of career development; however it does not cover all.

Although empirical research has been difficult to achieve because of the broad scope of Super's theory, recent evaluations of the theory have been mostly positive, according to Geyer (2010) in a study of the occupational aspirations and gender stereotypes of South African and Australian senior primary school learners. Borgen (1991), as reported in Geyer (2010), sees Super's theory as one that has proven useful in that it is compatible with new notions and trends. Super's hypothesis, according to Savickas (2001), is still applicable in today's shifting employment setting and may be applied to a wide range of cultures and populations. Super's theory, on the other hand, has been criticized;

1) Super's life cycles aren't necessarily applicable to women, especially with the shift in gender roles over the last few decades. More segments of the theory, particularly the life space of teenagers and the life-span research of adults, should be empirically tested, according to Geyer (2010).

2) As Super correctly pointed out, career choice will not be significant to children under the age of 14 until they reach maturity; nevertheless, this cannot be recognized in certain parts of Ghana simply because some parents teach their children to begin a career at such a young age.

3) Super hasn't provided any testable hypotheses for his theory's many claims. Work satisfaction, professional maturity, and career progress, according to Salomone (1996), are not easily measurable, either because they are conceptually unclear or because tools to measure such constructs were not readily available at the time. Super's expansion of the notion of career (child, leisure, and citizen), according to the study, has grown overly inclusive, lacking definition, specificity, and exclusivity. Concepts that are vague and non-specific lose their utility.

4) It also fails to handle the intricacies of the evolving job economy, particularly in terms of numerous jobs. According to Coetzee (2006), Super's life-span structure is critiqued for its seeming rigidity in terms of life stages.

## SUMMARY OF LITERATURE REVIEWED

The purpose of this paper was to review literature on Donald Super's Vocational Choice Theory. This study's theoretical framework is based on Donald Super's Vocational Choice Theory. Literatures on the option for a career, Self-concept of Donald super's theory, life stages, life span and roles, life space, career rainbow were reviewed, results of the related literatures, implications for counseling and the last but not the least the critique of

the theory were also discussed. Bases in support of the study on the concept of Vocational choice were discussed (Mamman, 1992; Bojuwoye, 1986; Momberg, 2004; Machine,"n.d" Hunter, 2009; Mburza, 1992; Themba, 2010). Supers self-concept was also considered. (Mamman, 1992; Mamman, 2002; Dukku, 1988; Hargreaves, 2006). This study is unique because it specifically determines the literatures on Donald super's theory of vocational choice the implications of this theory to were outlined.

## Career implications

The findings have several implications for designing and developing career development programmes and guidance. In doing this, individual differences such as gender, interests, and socio-economic factors should be considered. Also, should note the following;

1) Should note that vocational preferences of an adolescent are subject to continual change.

2) Career guidance should know that Vocational development has different meaning at different stages.

3) Should take into cognizance the inability of youth adults to choose a good vocation for their life as a result of lack of awareness of the particular vocation.

4) Should note that decisions made at tender age may relate to nothing but fantasy because they are likely to learn more on needs and wants as they grow from one stage to another.

## CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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