

*Research Article*

A Study on Factors Influencing the Career Choices of Students in Senior High Schools in Ghana : The Case of SHS Students in the Abuakwa South Municipality

ABSTRACT

The issue of career selection plays an important role in the success of every individual. With the ascendancy of youth unemployment in Ghana, this study seeks to investigate the career choices of students in Senior High Schools (SHS) in Ghana. The study focused on SHS students in the Abuakwa South Municipality in the Eastern Region of Ghana. Using a quantitative approach, questionnaires were distributed to 322 SHS students in four different schools in the area to gather data on how they plan on choosing future careers and the factors that influence their choices. The study also examined the temperament type self-concept theory and the impact on choosing a career. The findings of the study indicated that students consult all relevant persons including counsellors to enable them choose their perceived careers. Also, factors such as personal ambitions in life, academic standards, the possibility of getting jobs after school and level of job security influenced the career choice of students. The study recommended that planning should be done by following the career planning process carefully. The process requires students to plan their careers by consulting all relevant persons including the counsellor.

Keywords: career choice, Senior High School (SHS), career determinants, academic standards.

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INTRODUCTION

One important decision people often make in life is a career choice. Students continually need to choose areas of skilled specialization once they apply to go to college or university. With the introduction of Information Technology as well as post industrial revolution and job competition, career decision has become a complex science.² Therefore, giving students in senior high schools the abilities and knowledge to realistically plan for their future within the world of labor could be a primary goal of education. Schneider and Stevenson argue that career choices and development are typically influenced by factors that determine the selection of careers. These choices are vital - for today's youth, who are more than ever motivated but directionless. The youth around the world over have dreams of becoming highly educated and having professional careers. But a study has it that many young people have no action plan that enables the choice of a desired career coherent with their capabilities, values and opportunities available for attaining these goals.³

Career choice is decided by one or several factors. According to Kerka, career choice is decided by several factors like personality, interests, self-concept, cultural identity, globalization, socialization, role

² F. Mohd, A. M. Salleh, and R. Mustapha, "The influence of contextual aspect on career decision making of Malaysian Technical Students". *Procedia Social and Behavioral Science* (2010) :7,369-375.

³ B. Schneider and D. Stevenson, *The ambitious generation: America's Teenagers, motivated but directionless*. New Haven: Yale University Press, (1999).

model, social support and available resources such as information and finance.⁴ Taylor and Buku, agreed with Kerka on a number of the factors given and added on, their factors including: intellectual ability, aptitudes, the influence of schooling, family, personality, self-concept, sex difference, values, prestige, remuneration, risk factors, security, satisfaction, needs, and interest.⁵

In his book “Choosing a Vocation” Frank Parson provided an abstract framework for helping an individual to pick out a career.⁶ This framework is employed by vocational and/or career counselors in helping people to settle on their careers. This is evidence that assisting students to make good career choices is a dominant practise in Europe and the United States of America and has been so since the era of the career education movement.⁷ In line with Taylor and Buku, the industrial revolution in Europe and the technological breakthrough in Russia in 1957 that led to the launch of sputnik 1 which forced several Western countries, to require a brand new look at vocational guidance in schools.⁸

In Africa, available literature shows that formal vocational guidance was given to final year students in Nigeria in 1957. A study in career choice in Ethiopia by Stebleton, indicated that the student had an enclosed locus of control and believed that various external factors influence their career choices.⁹ Studies in Kenya indicate that rural students tend to seek help from parents more than urban students and that parents more than teachers and career counselors play a major role in the career choice of students.¹⁰ The Ghanaian educational reforms for Senior High School (SHS) requires students to select the programme they hope to offer in SHS once they are in the final year of Junior High School (JHS).¹¹ The career most students choose usually begins from the programme of study they pursue upon entry into the SHS.

These programmes at the SHS level often determine to a large extent the courses students continue to pursue at the University or alternative higher tertiary institutions of learning as well as their future career prospects. A survey done by Asante brought to the fore that determinants of career preference and decision making of technical education students in Accra. 62% of students who choose technical education and selected a career in the field had family influence being the major factor that influence their decision and choice.

With this background, this study seeks to explore factors influencing career choices of SHS students in Ghana. It focused SHS students three SHS in the Abuakwa South Municipality in the Eastern Region of Ghana. The study also examined the temperament type self-concept theories and their impact on choosing a career.

CAREER CHOICES

Challenges that students face in choosing a career

In the bid to settle on a reputable career it is needed that students acquire advanced learning skills and self-management competencies at school to develop their career and in learning throughout their lifetime.¹² Although academic and technical qualifications open doors for employment, career competencies and lifelong learning skills largely determine selection, success and advancement in individual careers.¹³

These competencies should be taught in schools, since many students leave education without the necessary skills to succeed in the adult work world. Colleges are also seen as career centres where students will acquire career competencies, like having the ability to mirror on personal ambitions and motives and to undertake actions and initiatives to direct their own career alternative and development by critically evaluating those factors that confirm their alternative of career.¹⁴

⁴ S. Kerka. Career development, gender, race and class. Eric Clearing house on *adult Career and Vocational Education*. Columbus. ED (2000).

⁵ A. I. Tailor, and D. K.. Buku, *Basics in Guidance and counseling*. (2nd Edition). Winneba: Department of Psychology and

⁶ Frank Parson, “Choosing a Vocation” , accessed April 28, 2020

<https://prezi.com/1fmqxqms4e8/frank-parsons-theory-of-vocational-development/>

⁷ Frank Parson, “Choosing a Vocation”

⁸ A. I. Tailor, & D. K. Buku. *Basics in Guidance and counseling*. (2nd Edition). Winneba: Department of Psychology and Education. (2006).

⁹ Robert Stebleton, Career Choice, accessed April 27, 2020

https://www.google.com/search?rlz=1C1VSNG_enGH647GH795&sxsrf=ALeKk03v_5Gbpcoqo95KS3I2zXqJ6-5KxQ%3A1588590874342&ei=GvmvXqzDFITFgQbgzLjoBQ&q=stebelton+robert&oq=stebelton+robert&gs_lcp=CgZwc3ktYWIQA1CZ5BBY1YARYPygEWgAcAB4AIABAIgBAJIBAJgBAKABAaoBB2d3cy13aXo&scient=psy-ab&ved=0ahUKEwisuliWiprpAhWEYsAKHWAmDI0Q4dUDCAw&uact=5

¹⁰ Robert Stebleton, "Career Choice".

¹¹ The Educational System of Ghana, <http://www.ghana.usembassy.gov/pdf/> accessed March 26, 2020
<http://www.ghanawaec.org/EXAMS/WASSCE.aspx> .

¹² P. Jarvis, and E. S. Keeley. From vocational decision making to career building: blueprint, real games and school counseling. *Professional school counseling*. 6:(2003). 6, 244-251.

¹³ J. D. Krumboltz, and R. L. Worthington. The school-to-work transition from a learning theory perspective. *Career Development Quarterly Special Issues: School-to-Work Transitions*, 47: (1999), 312-325.

¹⁴ M. Kuijpers and F. Meijers. *Leeromgeving voor loopbaanleren. Onderzoek naar relaties tussen de leeromgeving en loopbaancompetenties van vmbo en mbo leerlingen. [Learning environment for career learning. Research on relations between learning environment and career competences of students in (pre) vocational education students]*. Pedagogische Studien, 92, 93109. (2009).

It is supported that the role of the counsellor becomes imperative. The college counsellor's role in career steering and/or substance, similarly as educational substance, will provide students with the obligatory tools to set careers that meet their life goals, stay in it, grow and develop in it.

SELF-CONCEPT THEORY

Trait-Factor Theory

Frank Parsons developed the Trait-Factor Theory of Career development. According to the theory, choosing an occupation involves studying the individual's inherent traits (aptitudes, attitudes, abilities, interests, values, and personality) that are measured through assessment instruments, inventories and techniques; surveying the occupation with its necessities, opportunities for future progress and development, and matching an individual with specific demand of job so their needs will be met and their job performance are satisfactory and later on resolution the career search subsequently.¹⁵ A perfect career selection, in step with Parsons idea relies on matching temperament traits, like abilities, resources, personality, with job factors like wages, environment and so on to form vocational success.¹⁶

When the profile of an individual is matched with the profile of an occupation, the degree of work between the person and the occupation is seen and a career is formed. A career self-concept theory was propounded by Super. The theory emphasizes that individual's self-concept plays a central role in his or her career choice. It is his view that it is throughout adolescence that people first construct a career self-concept. Super mentions crystallization where the adolescents develop ideas about work that mesh with their already existing global self-concept. The next phase is the specification phase. This is when the adolescents narrow down their selections and initiate behaviour that allows them to enter some style of career.¹⁷

The implementation section is when the adults complete their education or training and enter the world of work. The stabilization section is when a particular, appropriate career is made and final phase is named consideration. For Super, a time perspective was forever centrally vital to the career development method. It is forever appeared vital to take care of three times perspective: the past, from that one is moving. All three are of indisputable importance, for the past shapes the present and the present is the basis for the future. However, if I were forced to declare a preference in orientation to time, it would be for the future – even after more than fifty years of work experience.

METHODOLOGY

Research design

The study adopted descriptive survey design. Sample size of 322 students was selected from all the final year students in the three (3) SHS's selected in the Abuakwa South municipality. The three schools were Abuakwa State College - Kibi, St. Stephens Senior High School – Asiakwa, Kibi Senior High Technical School and Apedwa Presbyterian Senior High School. The choice of this sample was based on fact that SHS students in the Abuakwa South Municipality had inadequate guidance saw themselves becoming taxi drivers, store/shop or petrol station attendants in the future. Most of the boys who should have been in a post secondary/ tertiary institution, engage themselves in a cyber fraud popularly known as “*Sakawa*” and other indecent lifestyles and activities which are not influenced by school activities. Whether they were given enough counseling as to the career they enter after mind bogging experience that they do, does not match their ability, personal values, interest, satisfaction and others.

These cohorts of students have had previous workshops organized by counsellors on the need to select a career choice that led them to decide on what programme to select once they entered the university. In choosing the sample size for the study, proportional stratified sampling technique was used. This technique was used for the selection of students because the four different schools had an unequal population and each school had to be equally represented. Questionnaires were distributed to 322 SHS students in four different schools in the area to gather data on how they plan on choosing future careers and the factors that influence their choices. Out of the 322 questionnaires distributed, all were retrieved. Selection is as found in Table 1.

¹⁵ L. K. Mitchell and J. D. Krumboltz. “Krumboltz's Learning Theory of Career Choice and Counselling in D. Brown, L. Brooks, & Associates (eds) (3rd edition)” *Career Choice and Development*. San Francisco, California: Jossey Bass, (1996).

¹⁶ M. K.. Numale,. *Guidance and Counselling Education*. Cape Coast: Yaci Publications (2007).

¹⁷ D. E. Super. *The Psychology of careers*. New York. Harper and Row (1967).

Table 1: Sample Selected from each School

Schools	Accessible Population	Sample
School A	1,053	166
School B	611	96
School C	78	13
School D	300	47
Total	2,042	322

Source: Fieldwork Data, 2019

Results

The Bio-data analysis in table 2 indicated that the majority of the students in all the schools were between the ages on 18-20; 90(54.2%), 70(72.9), 8(61.5%) and 30(63.8) were respectively in schools A, B, C and D. Again, all the schools had more males than the females; 106 (63.9), 60 (62.5%), 8(61.5%) and 32 (60.1%) male female respectively for all the schools. The sex, male: female ratio was about 2.1. Most of the participants were of the adolescent age showing that the SHS schools had more adolescents as students and needed better guidance to enable them make responsible career choices as pointed by Zunder¹⁸.

Table 2: Analysis of Bio-Data

Schools	Ages (years)			Sex		Totals
	15 – 17	18 – 20	21 – 23	F	M	
School A	60(36.1%)	90(54.2%)	16(9.6%)	60(36.1%)	106(63.9%)	166
School B	16(16.7%)	70(77.9%)	10(10.4%)	36(37.5%)	60(62.5%)	96
School C	3(23.1%)	8(61.5%)	2(15.4%)	5(38.5%)	8(61.5%)	13
School D	12(25.5%)	30(63.3%)	5(10.6%)	15(39.9%)	32(60.1%)	47
Total	75	198	33	106	200	322

Source: Fieldwork Data, 2019

Planning career to make a preferred choice

The preferred choices students consider during career planning which are organized using mean and standard deviation. Table 3 presents the results.

Table 3: The means and standard deviations of issues students consider during career planning

Issues Students consider during career planning	Mean	Standard Deviation
Self-Assessment	4.46	900
Life Assessment	4.43	695
Identify steps to take to reach career destination	4.38	673
Identify career options	4.38	773
Choosing relevant subjects and schools	4.36	697
Explored the career options available	4.36	1,245
Childhood dream job	4.09	1,125
Sought for career information	3.95	1,125
Mean of means	34.43	7,126

Source: Data from the field, 2019

Factors influencing career choice

The method of analyzing the mean and standard deviation as explained in the methodology was used. Table 4 presents the results.

¹⁸ V. G. Zunker, *Career Counselling: Applied Concepts of Life Planning* (6th ed). Bruce/Cole, California: Pacific Grove (2002).

Table 4: The means and standard deviation of factors that influence Career Choice

Career Choice Factors	Mean	Standard deviation
Academic standards	4.47	817
Personal ambition	4.39	897
Job satisfaction	4.37	852
Personal internet	4.24	1.069
Subject performance	4.09	1.124
Ease of getting a job	4.02	1.157
Level of job security	4.00	1.082
Significant person	3.84	1.225
Personal characteristics	3.78	1.356
Remuneration	3.77	1.252
Self employment	3.74	1.266
Gender roles	3.20	1.350
Parent’s influence	2.69	1.368
Family line of work	2.36	1.248
Religion	2.18	1.189
Peer influence	2.13	1.140
Mean of means	58.49	18.392

Source: Data from the field, 2019

Table 4 shows the mean and standard deviation of the various factor(s). The results from the table revealed respondents strongly agreeing to the fact that Academic standards (Mean + 4.47); sd=817). Personal ambition (Mean = 4.39; sd=897), Job satisfaction (Mean = 4.37; sd=852), Personal interest (Mean = 4,24; sd=1.069), subject performance (mean=4.09; sd 1.124), the Ease of getting a job (Mean + 4.02; sd=1.157) and level of Job security with a Mean =4.00 and sd=1.082, respectively highly influenced their choice of career.

Table 5: Spearman’s rho Correlation of career planning and career choice among SHS student

Categories		Career choice	Planning career
Planning career	Correlation Coefficient	209**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	-
	N	322	322
Career choice	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	209**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	-
	N	322	322

*Source: Data from the field 2019 *** Correlation is significant at the 0.01level (2-tailed).*

From Table 5. It is evident that there is no relationship between the planning of career of students’ and choosing the desired career was statistically tested using the Spearman’s Rank Order Correction. It can be seen that there was a positive correlation between the variables; the results also show that there was significant relationship (r = 0.209, sig. 0.000, p<0.05). The results also show that there is direct relationship between student’s career planning and their career choice. In other words, when students plan their career well, they are more likely to choose their desired career. This result is in line with Novakovic and Fouad study of background, personal and environmental influence on career planning, of adolescent girls who posited that career planning involving background and personal variables significantly influence career choice (gender traditionally career choice). Further, the result corroborates Hirschi and Lage’s that career planning and career choice are closely correlated and connected.¹⁹

Table 6: The Forced Entry Regression of Career choice on Career Planning and the Role of the Counsellor

¹⁹ A. Novakovic and N. A. Fouad, (2012). Background, Personal, and Environmental influence on Career Planning of adolescent Girls. *Journal of Career Development*. 40(3) 223-244 accessed August 23, 2018 <http://www.sagepub.com>

Variables	B	Beta(B)	R	R2	t	Sig (t)
Step 1	39,612				10.046	000
Constant						
Career planning	59	293			5.298	000
Role of counselor	097	100			1,801	073
				34	11	

Source: Data from the field, 2019

Table 6 displays unstandardized (b) and standardized (beta B) regression coefficients (R), adjusted R2 and the value of t and its associated p-value for each variable entered in to the equation. Generally, though both career planning and the role of the counselor are not good predictors of career choice, however, between the two, career planning is a better predictor of career choice as compared to the role of the counselor. The statistical evidence as found in Table 5 where career planning is presented (beta = 293, t = 5,298, p<0.001) and the role of the counselor presented (beta = 100, t=1.802, p>0.001). Here, the contribution of the role of counsellor to the variance of career choice was not statistically significant at the 9.05 level.

Career planning and the role of the counselor explained 11% of the variance in career choice (adjusted R=11). That is how career planning and the role of the counselor bring out the differences in career choice. This would suggest that the present regression model is not a good predictor of career among SHS students in the Abuakwa South Municipality.

Discussions

The responses in Table 3 further indicate that among the issues students strongly agree that they consider in planning their career is their childhood dream of work. This is exhibited by the Mean of 4.09 and SD of 1.245. the respondents also agreed that they consider seeking of career information with a Mean of 3.95 and SD of 1,125 in their career planning. It is an established fact that any choice one makes is preceded by thoughtful decision making which in turn is preceded by a careful planning taking into consideration the necessary indicators. This presupposes that students need to carefully plan their career so as to make a wise and an informed decision to reduce the mistake of choosing the wrong career, which is not only at variance with their personalities but far away from their interests. This means that students need to carefully plan their career so as to make wise and informed decision to reduce the mistake of choosing a wrong career that is not only at variance with their personalities, but may also lead to reduction of production due to the absence of job satisfaction.

The responses confirm that students thoughtfully and carefully plan their career by following the laid down process of career planning to a greater extent. This confirms Wilko, Barns, Magnusson and Bardick study in Australia,²⁰ which revealed that it is prudent to have a laid down process to assist Senior High School students in planning their careers. However, the responses show that seeking for career information, a very important aspect of career planning was not seen as such and thus ranked last with (means 3.95; and sd=1,125) even though according to interpretation, respondents agreed to it, hence contradicting the findings Wilko et. al which state that SHS students can have an effective plan for their careers when they have needed information from the right sources.²¹ This information in the opinion of Critis and Saviakas and Pinkney and Bozik is very much required to decide such as self-appraisal goal selection, planning and problem solving.²²

It is important to note that, apart from the findings of the current study confirming the results of other research works as indicated above, it also conforms to the underpinning principles of the Trait and Factor theory of career choice. According to the theory, choosing an occupation involves the individual undertaking personal analysis of him/herself, job analysis and then match the individual with the compatible Job. Students in the bid to plan their career, according to the results of the study, undertake self-assessment (personal analysis), explore the career options available (job analysis) before they finally match their traits with the compatible job or career. It can be deduced from the results of the study that the theory is applicable in the real life situation as far as this study is concerned.

The above analysis implies that a person’s intellectual ability that leads to high academic standard, personal ambition in life, his interest, the subject they perform well in school, the ease with which he or she will get a job after training in that career area as well as how secure one will be on job after employment inform the choice of career

²⁰ K. Witko, K. R. Bernes, K.. Magnusson, and A. D. Bardick, Senior high school career planning: what students want. *Journal of educational enquiry*. Vol.6, No. (2005)..

²¹ J. W. Pinkney and C. M. Bozik. Career Development Inventory: A review. In J. Kapes, M. and E. White-field (Eds.). *A counsellors' guide to career assessment instruments* (3rd ed., pp. 263-267), (1994).

²² K. Witko, K. R. Bernes, K.. Magnusson, and A. D. Bardick, Senior high school career planning: what students want. *Journal of educational enquiry*. Vol.6, No. (2005).

among SHS students in the Abuakwa South Municipality. These results are in the agreement that of Witko et al in their study conducted in Kenya, and reported that factors such as those responded strongly agreed to, influence career choice of students in high school.²³ The results also confirm Perrone, Sedlacek, Alexander study which reported that interest provides the main motive or influence for students' career choice.²⁴ Myburgh, reported that the availability of employment as the most influential factor in students' career choices in the era of unavailability of jobs. Diamini, Ngenya and Diamini and Stenbleton also reported economic reasons such as financial status of the individual as the main motives for students' career choice.²⁵

The results also agree with and are similar to those of Diamini et al, Myburgh. The responses displayed in Table 4 show that respondents agreed that significant person (mena=3.84;sd1=.225), Personal characteristics (Mean=3.78;sd=1.356), Remuneration (mean=3.77;sd=1.252), Self employment (Mean=3.74; sd=1.266), and Gender roles (mean=3.20; sd=1.350), influence and have a positive impact on the career choice of SHS students. The results show some semblance and therefore, confirm results of some studies in the literature. It shares some similarity with Perrone et al., (2001 who reported in their findings that anticipated earnings are the most influential factors for males while females were mostly influenced by prestigious positions even though this study did not present remuneration as one of the most influential factors of career choice.²⁶ Witko et al. reported that self-employment, prestige associated with the profession, job security accounted for close to 60% of the respondents responding in the affirmative that their career was influenced by these factors.

The results of the study show some characteristics of the Trait and Factor theory, theory holds that an ideal career choice is based on matching personal traits such as abilities, resources, personality and many others with job factors like wages, opportunities for future development, prestige, job security, environment and so on to create vocational success. This points to the fact that the theory does not deviates from reality in relation to this study.

Concerning gender influence as career choice factor, this study is similar to that of Witko et al., in Kenya whose respondents as in the case of this study were final year form four students. The study showed that most students who took part in the study were not influenced by gender. However, a few of the students still consider their gender when making their choices. These results differ from those of Hall, who reports that individuals career choices are influenced by gender. This difference in the findings could be as a result of the fact that Hall based his research on respondents who are already in the job market while this study is based on final year senior secondary school students. The findings demonstrate that there are other factors that influence students' career choices rather than gender.²⁷

Table 4 further reports that respondents were not certain as to whether Parent's influence with a mean of 2.69 and a standard deviation of 1,368, influenced their career choice. Students in the Abuakwa south Municipality were not sure of Family line of work reporting a mean of 2.36 and a standard deviation of 1,248, ones' faith or religion declaring a mean of 2.18 and a standard deviation of 1,189, peer influence recording a Mean of 2, 13 and a standard deviation of 1,140 respectively influence their choice of career. Witko et al report that religious beliefs and values as well as religious teachings were among the factors that influence students career choice but at a lower rate as is the case of this study. It can be concluded, therefore, that SHS students in the Abuakwa South municipality as in other places as the literature has proven, do choose their careers taking into consideration the following factors: personal ambitions, or preference in life. academic standards, and personal characteristics. example age, sex, strength among others personal interest, parental influence, peer group influence, the dominant occupation in the community, significant person from the society, job security in the career area, job satisfaction, the prestige associated with the career area or profession, the remuneration or huge pay, self-employment opportunities, the possibility of getting job after school, gender in school, all influence career decisions.

There is no correlation between the planning of career one's career and the choice of a desired career among the students in the Abuakwa South Municipality. The purpose of this research hypothesis was to find whether there is no relationship between student's career planning and the choice of a desired career. The relationship between career planning and the choice career was established by computing Spearman's P correction to determine if there was any significant relationship.²⁸

The results in table 5 suggest that since career planning can lead to choosing one's desired career, it would be good for school counselors, parents, heads of schools and all stakeholders in education to put their hands-on deck to help students plan their career well so as to make the desired career choice. This is because if students choose the right career that is congruent to their personalities or characteristics, enter, grow and develop in it, it will help reduce youth

²³ K. Witko, K. R. Bernes, K. Magnusson, and A. D. Bardick, Senior high school career planning: what students want..

²⁴ Perrone, K. M., Sedlacek, E. W. & Alexander, M. C. (2001). Gender and ethnic differences in career goal attainment. *Career Development Quarterly*. 50(2), 168-178.

²⁵ K.. Witko, K. R. Bernes, K. Magnusson, and A. D. Bardick,. Senior high school career planning: what students want.

²⁶ Perrone, K. M., Sedlacek, E. W. & Alexander, M. C. (2001). Gender and ethnic differences in career goal attainment.

²⁷ S. Hall, *The relationship between gender and career choice*, 2010, accessed September 15, 2019. www.ehow.com

²⁸ P. Spearman cited in S. Hall, *The relationship between gender and career choice*, accessed September, 15, 2019. www.ehow.com

unemployment and social vices among the youth.

There is no significant influence of career planning on the choice of student's career Regression analysis using the forced entry method was performed using SPSS to assess the relative contribution of career planning and the role of the counsellor in prediction the extent to which students make career choice. Table 5 presents the finding.

Following from the analysis as presented in Table 6. It can be argued that the role of the counselor does not influence career choice ($p=0.73>0.001$). From the pictorial analysis of Table 6, it is quite clear that the students' choices of career were not mainly influenced by career planning and the role of the counselor. It is important to note that the indication that career choice is not mainly influenced by career planning and the role of the counselor does not defy the earlier assertion that career planning is a better prediction of career choice than the role of the counsellor. This is because though career planning could explain only 11% of the variance of the career choice it was still significant ($p=0.000<0.001$) whereas the role of the counselor which could explain only 11% of the variance of career choice but was statistically not significant at $p=0.73>0.001$. It can therefore be argued that since the adjusted R (R) could only contribute up to 11%, there may be other factors that could potentially explain the remaining 89% of the variance of the career choice among SHS students in the Abuakwa South Municipality.

This finding seems to agree with the studies conducted by Novakovic and Fouad which posit that background, personal and environmental factors have influence on career planning of adolescent girls.²⁹ Furthermore, Novakovic and Fouad found that career planning via background and personal variables significantly influence career choice (gender, traditionality, career choice). Hirschi and Lage's confirm this study when they stated that career planning closely correlates and connects with career choice. However, the study of Watters pointed out that the role of the teacher (counsellor) that sustains the interest of the student right from the early years in school is strong predictor of the student's career choice.³⁰ This seems to contradict the findings of the present study. The reason for the contradiction may be that the counselors in Watters' study as against those in the present study, were well resourced, consulted the parents of the students, did follow ups and as such had some degree of influence on the children with regard to their choice of career.³¹

CONCLUSION

Careful, thoughtful, effective and efficient planning is important in every endeavour in the world including one's career. Thus, for students to succeed in choosing a career, it behoves them to carefully plan it. This is because the career one chooses affects their total life including one's income, standard of living, social status and contacts, emotional health and feeling of self-worth. It would also affect one's use of time, general satisfaction with life, and spiritual well-being. As a result, the study recommends that planning should be done by following the career planning process carefully. The process requires students to plan their career by consulting all relevant persons including the counsellor. Students should also explore various careers and choose schools and courses or programmes that can help them to reach their career goal.

Students choose their careers under the influence of certain factors that are ideal for their occupational lives. This is because making a wrong decision may lead to a choosing a career would not only affect one's psychology but productivity as well. If students in Abuakwa South Municipality choose careers that are congruent with their personality, interest, life goals, careers that are realistic, it could help reduce the number of those who join the "sakawa band". Also, students should consider how much they can contribute to the growth of society and the development of the country in addition to their personal development and well-being. It is therefore recommended that counsellors provide effective conducive environment to support students make well informed choices.

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