



## Psychological Assessment and Five Years Follow up of a Client under Vocational Guidance: A Case Study

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### **Author's contribution**

The sole author designed, analyzed and interpreted and prepared the manuscript.

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**Case Study**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This case study was carried out to undertake a psychological assessment and follow up of an undecided client who needed vocational guidance and counseling to make an appropriate and correct career choice. The case study was a one sample study which employed a quasi-experimental design. The psychological instruments used for the study were Hall Jones Occupational Prestige Scale, [1] Index of Self Esteem Scale, [2] personality questionnaire [3] Vocational Interest Inventory and Peraform Integrated Aptitude Test form B [4]. In addition, four questionnaires that tapped information on Demographic Attributes, Family Background, Academic Background and Social Relationships were used. Data was analyzed based on the statistical norm provided for the interpretation of the scores obtained by the respondent on the tests. The case study was able to match client's expressed vocational interest with his personality and other characteristics as well as with the actual result of all the psychological tests administered to arrive at a career appropriate and in agreement with his inclinations, potentials and strengths. The case study revealed that client was extroverted, had high self esteem, and adequate/above average aptitude and intelligence. Furthermore, the study revealed that client interests and potentials were matched and in congruence with careers such as administrative/ professional, computational,

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clerical, social service / persuasive. This study also helped to make client understand his weaknesses and limitations. Psychotherapy, guidance and counseling were used to erase client's fears, doubts, indecision and anxiety. Follow up after five years showed that client is happily settled down to a successful career as an administrator/ manager according to the predictions of the results of the psychological assessment and the guidance and counseling received.

*Keywords: Vocational guidance; career guidance; psychological assessment.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION: AIMS

All over the world of work, organizations are keenly interested in ensuring that the right persons are employed in the right positions in order to guarantee high performance and productivity. In other words, putting the round pegs in the round holes and the square pegs, in the square holes for maximum performance. In order to achieve this, vocational guidance and choice which is based on the use of appropriate psychological tests become imperative. Vocational guidance therefore is the process of helping individuals to identify their potentials and matching their potentials to the most appropriate job in which they would experience absolute success, accomplishment and satisfaction. [5] observed that vocational tests are psychometric instruments designed to predict how successful the respondent is likely to be in a particular occupation.

Furthermore, [6] in his Trait theory pointed out that if individuals were employed in the line of work to which they could best adapt, owing to the compatibility between personality characteristics of the person and the chosen job, the job and the society stands the chance of benefiting from each other in the course of the right matching process.

Super DE [7] in an attempt to emphasize the indispensability of career choice in human existence maintained that career determines social class and class consciousness, moulds values and attitudes and sets patterns of social behaviour.

Abel Thomas [8] investigated the impact of gender, personality and motivation on the choice of career specialty among 522 4<sup>th</sup> year medical students. Data on personality traits and self esteem and gender were collected at the first assessment 4 years earlier. Data analyses were conducted by analysis of variance and covariance. Results showed that gender had the strongest influence on choice i.e more females chose gynecology, pediatrics and anaesthology while more males chose surgery. Gender was

followed by motivation, personality traits and life goals.

Garcia-Sede et al. [9] investigated the relationship between occupational preferences and personality traits with a random sample of 732 students using Cattell's personality questionnaire and [3] professional Tendencies Questionnaire. Initial hierarchical cluster analysis showed that one group had a predirection for scientific and technological careers and the other a bias for humanities and social sciences. Identified personality traits of the groups were (warmth, dominance, and sensitivity) and (extroversion, control and independence). The data indicated that there was congruency between personality profiles and vocational interests.

Gunkel and Schlaegel [10] studied the influence of personality on career decisions of 406 Chinese and German students, using the Big five personality traits as a bases. The result showed that personality traits affect career decisiveness and its determinants. [11] examined how personal strategies for career advancement and leadership skills can be developed by drawing from the trait theories of leadership and charismatic theories of leadership. Some challenges to the future leadership were examined in order to develop some personal career strategies that may be applicable for future careers. Five strategies (personal vision, personal development, mentoring, team building, and learning and change of future leadership career) were suggested.

Manasseh and Edidiong [12] investigated the impact of personality characteristics, gender, and self esteem on career choice among 230 adolescent students. Hall Jones scale of occupational prestige, Index of self esteem and [2] personality questionnaire were used to collect data and analysis was done with the 2x2x2 ANOVA. The results showed statistically significant differences in career choice between introverts and extroverts, males and females, and low self esteem versus high self esteem students.

Onoyase and Onoyase [13] studied the relationship between personality characteristics and career choice with a sample of 616 students. Cluster and random sampling were used while students personality questionnaire and career choice questionnaire were employed to obtain data. The results revealed that there were significant positive relationships between neuroticism, extroversion and introversion on one hand and career choice on the other.

Almisky et al. [14] carried out a research to determine the career choice of university undergraduates based on gender, self concept, self efficacy and personality characteristics. The sample consisted of 101 males and 137 females, a total of 238 subjects. The results indicated that there were gender differences in career choice. Apart from gender, self concept, self efficacy, personality characteristics and even the environment also found to be potent variables that influenced career choice.

In order to carry out vocational guidance effectively, several steps are involved and several tools are required. [15] observed that the process involved a 7 point plan of systematic gathering of information and materials to form a working image of the person's occupational assets and liabilities, as well as to form a matching model of vocational guidance that allows for the use of tests.

Rodgers [15], the 7 point plan included: 1. Physical makeup, 2. Attainments, 3. General intelligence, 4. Special aptitude, 5. Interests, 6. Dispositional and 7. Circumstances.

He observed that except these various aspects are taken into consideration, vocational guidance aimed at helping a confused client make an appropriate career choice will not be achievable and successful.

Furthermore, any attempt to arrive at conclusions, deductions and correct decisions about a client's vocational inclinations and tendencies requires another six steps or approaches as pointed out by [16]. These six steps or approaches included: 1. Analysis, 2. Synthesis, 3. Diagnosis, 4. Prognosis, 5. Counseling treatment and 6. Follow up.

The aim of this case study therefore was to help an undecided client go through these processes of psychological assessment, leading to adequate diagnosis of the strengths and weaknesses, as a basis for providing guidance and counseling treatment that will successfully

lead client into an appropriate career choice and a successful career. This will no doubt translate to efficiency, high performance, increased productivity, great accomplishments and job satisfaction.

## **2. METHODOLOGY: PRESENTATION OF CASE**

### **2.1 Participant**

Only one participant was employed in this study, The problem was a case of indecision as to the career to pursue which had generated anxieties, doubts, and fears of failure in life and profession if a mistake was made and the right decisions/choice not followed. This is a one sample study because the study is client centered, involving not only psychological assessment, but diagnosis, guidance, counseling, treatment and follow up. Client is male, single, 25 years old, dark, 1.6 m, 60 kg and a stammerer. Highest qualification is B.Sc (2<sup>nd</sup> class upper division.), poor family background, and low socio economic status, resident in a lower class environment. Social relationships include secretary general of students union and class monitor.

### **2.2 Ethical Issues**

Client consented to this publication without his identity for the purpose of advancement of knowledge and help to others who might find themselves in similar predicaments.

### **2.3 Instruments**

The instruments used for the study were chosen because they had been tested and standardized on Nigerian samples and so their validity and reliability were guaranteed. Newer instrument or versions could not be used because they would have to undergo standardization to be valid for Nigerian Samples.

1. Hall Jones Occupational Prestige Scale. It has 55 items and it is scored on a five point Likert format.  
1 = skilled manual work, 2 = Non Manual work, 3 = Inspectional, supervisory, (low grade), 4 = Inspectional, Supervisory (high grade), 5 = professional, Qualified, High administrative. The test retest reliability is  $r=0.89$  (Offiong 2004).
2. [1] Index of self esteem. It has 25 items, scored in a 5 point Likert format either direct or reverse order. Directly scored items are (1,2,8 to 13,16,17,19,20,24,) and

reversely scored items are (3 to 7, 14, 15, 18, 21 to 23, 25). The direct and reverse scores are added together, and 25 subtracted to obtain a respondent's index of self esteem. Scores  $\leq 30.89$  (high self esteem) and  $> 30.89$  (low self esteem) for males. Scores  $\leq 32.04$  (high self esteem) and  $> 32.04$  (low self esteem) for females. The reliability of the scale on two different administrations are:  $r=0.93$  and  $0.92$  [1].

3. [2] Personality Questionnaire. It has 21 items scored either "yes" =1 or "no" = 0. All items are "yes" items except items (7,20,21) which are "no: items. Scores 13.32 (males) and 14.48 (females) indicate extroversion while lower scores indicate introversion. The reliability of the scale on two different administrations on Nigerian samples:  $r= 0.60$  (males),  $0.68$  (females) and  $0.60$  (Eynseck et al. 1978).
4. [3] Vocational Interest Inventory. It measures vocational interest in 10 areas; it has 100 items scored in a 5 point Likert format. 5 = if you would like very much to engage in the activity, 4 = if you would like to engage in it, 3 = if you would be indifferent to it, 2 = if you would dislike engaging in the activity, 1 = if you would very much dislike engaging in it. In each of the areas, the highest possible score is 50, while the lowest possible score is 10. Norms of the test suggest that males tend to score higher on the mechanical, computational, scientific and persuasive scales, while females tend to score higher on the artistic, literary, musical, social service and clerical scales. Higher scores suggest vocational interest in such areas while low scores suggest lack of interest in those areas. The reliability of the scale was  $r = .81$
5. Peraform Integrated Aptitude Test Form B. Developed by [4] to measure (a) General Aptitude, (b) General Intelligence (c) Screen candidates for vocational placement. It is a 40 item scale of four areas: abstract reasoning, quantitative reasoning, verbal ability and spiritual ability. The test time is 30 minutes and provides an answer sheet, and the respondent has to shade the answer from options A to E. The norms of the test for males ( $n=50$ ) = 10.48 and for females ( $n=50$ ) = 7.92. The norms and mean scores are the basis for interpretation of the scores. Scores equal to or higher than the norm indicate adequate aptitude and

above average intelligence, while scores lower than the norm indicate below average aptitude and intelligence. The test retest reliability were given as  $r = 0.34$  &  $0.39$  (Omoluabi 2002b)

6. 4 Questionnaires developed to tap information on Demographic Data, Physical Attributes, Academic Attainments, Social Relationships and Family Background.

## 2.4 Procedure

The psychological assessment was carried out in six sessions with each session lasting from 30 minutes to 1 hour. It covered a period of six days. The undecided client was brought into the psychotherapy clinic, rapport, confidentiality and trust was first established before the commencement of the study. The psychotherapy clinic is a quiet, noise free, tension free environment which is air conditioned to have a conducive temperature, lighting, relaxation settee, writing table and chair. Three extra days were used for diagnosis, guidance, counseling and treatment. The following are the breakdown of the assessments in six days.

Days 1 (Sessions) – Establishment of rapport and administration of Questionnaire on Demographic attributes.

Day 2 (Session 2) - Administration of Questionnaire on Family Background and interactions.

Day 3 (Session 3) - Administration of Questionnaire on Academic Background and attainments and further interactions.

Day 4 (Session 4) - Administration of Questionnaire on Social Relations and more interactions.

Day 5 (Session 5) - Administration of Hall Jones Scale, ISE Scale, EPQ Scale, and Kuder Vocational Interest Scale.

Day 6 (Session 6) - Administration of PIAT B Scale.

Day 7: Two sessions of psychotherapy, 1 hour intervals with 30 minutes break in between sessions. Cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) was used to identify the source of the client's fears and anxiety which was negative thought of failure arising from not being able to choose an appropriate career.

Day 8: Two sessions of psychotherapy with 30 minute in between sessions challenging those negative thoughts through Exposure therapy by showing client that based on his scores in the vocational tests, there are several careers he is fitted for and bound to succeed in.

Day 9: One session of counseling, one hour duration: negative thought were replaced by positive thoughts of having the potentials to succeed in vocations he scored high in. That ended the fears, doubts, and anxiety.

2 weeks Follow up: Initial follow up after two weeks showed that client became elated, confident, ambitious, eager to show case his potentials and happy with himself, looking forward to the future as very bright and promising.

**2.5 Design and Statistics**

This was a quasi-experimental design, and the analysis was based on the interpretation of the scores in accordance with the statistically established norms of the various psychological test instruments.

**3. RESULTS**

After the administration of the tests, the tests were scored and based on the norms of the tests, an interpretation of the scores/results were made (see Table 1).

**4. HALL JONES OCCUPATIONAL PRESTIGE SCALE**

Client chose occupation with serial number 2 i.e. Administrator. From the occupational prestige scale manual/norms, this choice falls into category 5 which is the highest class of occupational prestige i.e. (Professional Qualified/High Administrative).

**5. INDEX OF SELF ESTEEM SCALE**

Therefore, judging from the result of client on the ISE scale which is a score of 21, the interpretation is that client has a high self esteem.

**6. EYSENCK PERSONALITY QUESTIONNAIRE**

Therefore, client having scored a total of 17 points on the EPQ scale, and being a male, implies that he is an extrovert.

**7. KUDER VOCATIONAL INTEREST INVENTORY**

The following are the scores of client in the 10 vocational areas.

Outdoor	-	35
Mechanical	-	40
Computational	-	42
Scientific	-	41
Persuasive	-	42
Artistic	-	36
Literary	-	47
Musical	-	40
Social service	-	45
Clerical	-	42

From the result, client has high scores and as such high vocational interest in computational, persuasive, literary, social service and clerical. This could be interpreted to mean that client has interest in jobs related to these areas such as administrative jobs (clerical), management of people at work (persuasive), lecturing/teaching (literary) politics and leadership (social service persuasive) analytical and numerically based jobs i.e. banking, management, accounting (computational) and social service jobs, social welfare, local government, community work.

**Table 1. Summary of the results**

<b>Summary of results of the psychological assessment</b>		
1.	Occupational choice	Score = 5 (Professional, qualified, high administrative)
2.	Self esteem	Score = 21 (high self esteem)
3.	Personality	Score = 17 ( Extrovert)
4.	Vocational interest	Score = 47 (literary) 42 (computational) 42 (persuasive) 45 (social service) 42 (clerical).
5.	Aptitude/Intelligence quotient.	Score = 12 (adequate and above average aptitude and intelligence).
6.	Psychotherapy	Indecision resolved. Change in behaviour and location of right career.
7.	Counseling	Fear, anxiety and doubts seized.
8.	Follow up	Client is elated, confident and eager to showcase his potentials

## **8. PERAFORM INTEGRATED APTITUDE TEST FORM B [4]**

Client scores are as follows –

Abstract reasoning = 3/10, quantitative ability 5/10, verbal ability 2/10, and spatial ability 2/10, thus yielding a total score of 12.0 on the test. The norms of the test for males (n=50) =10.48, and that of female (n=50) =7.92. The norms and mean scores are the basis for interpreting the scores of client.

Scores equal to or higher than the norm indicate that the client has adequate aptitude and above average intelligence, while scores lower than the norms indicate below average aptitude and intelligence. Therefore, client having obtained a score of 12 has adequate and above average aptitude as well as above average intelligence.

## **9. COUNSELING SESSION**

Client was given vocational guidance and counseled to understand the areas of his strength and weaknesses. Based on that, client was advised on the career choices/vocational areas where he will excel and obtain maximum satisfaction and attain high performance.

## **10. PSYCHOTHERAPY SESSION**

Psychotherapy carried out was able to resolve client's indecision, unrest, fear and anxieties over the right career choice that will not lead to being a failure in life and profession.

## **11. FOLLOW UP**

Initial follow up after two weeks showed that client was elated, confident and ready to approach a promising and great future. Client was followed up within a period of five years. Client became employed in the first year in the National Peace Corps of Nigeria as an administrator in line with the predictions of the Hall Jones Occupational Prestige Scale. After three years, client changed job to become a banker with one of the Nigerian banks in line with the computational career choice as predicted by the Kuder Vocational Interest Inventory.

## **12. DISCUSSION**

The findings of this case study are in agreement with previous studies that found that gender,

personality, interest, family background and self esteem were related to vocational choice. [8,12,14,10].

Often times, individuals get confused as to the kind of career to pursue and what profession they wish to end up with in life. These challenges are as a result of the inability of the client to psychologically understand his potentials, strengths and weaknesses and be able to align himself to the trade or profession where he has maximum advantage. This challenge is often worsened by the refusal of the client to face realities in terms of occupations where the expressed interests are not congruent with the client's aptitudes, esteem, personality, intelligence and other psychological attributes.

This study therefore was able to address these problems by assessing a confused client with several psychological tests and questionnaire instruments in a bid to establish the client's interests, psychophysical characteristics, personality, self esteem, aptitude, and intelligence. This led to the findings that the client was an extrovert, had high self esteem, of above average aptitude and intelligence.

The predictions of the Kuder Vocational Interest Inventory and the Hall Jones Occupational Scale revealed that the client's vocational inclination is in the area of administrative, professional, computational, clerical and persuasive.

Thus, this study was able to resolve the confusions of the client and successfully matched client's potentials, aptitudes, self esteem, personality and intelligence with the appropriate career where he will obtain full satisfaction and high performance/accomplishments. This finding is in line with [6] observation that individuals should be employed in the line of work to which they could best adapt owing to the compatibility between personality characteristics and the chosen job.

## **13. IMPLICATIONS**

This study has revealed that these same instruments can be applied to help anyone faced with the problem of making the right career choice in his life. Secondly, the use of a battery of tests is more revealing, more productive and more rewarding in order to make a correct and appropriate diagnosis, before guidance and counseling, instead of a one-step psychological instrument which may lead to wrong judgments.

#### 14. LIMITATION / SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

No case study using this number of battery of tests was located to give a direct comparison and reference to this particular study. Therefore further studies of this nature are needed in this area.

Secondly, most studies only studied the expressed interests of respondent. No follow up was done to link research findings to reality. Further studies on follow up are needed.

#### 15. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Awareness should be created for individuals going through career indecisions and resultant anxieties to know and seek psychological help.
2. Institutions should mount programmes on career enlightenment for graduating students entering the world of work.
3. Individuals should be encouraged to see psychologists for guidance and resolving of their psychological problems instead of dieing in silence.
4. Government should enact laws for the establishment of psychology clinics and psychotherapy services centre's.

#### 16. CONCLUSION

This study has revealed the ability of psychological test instrument to predict client's career inline with his dispositions and potentials, and thus bring to an end his anxieties, confusion, doubts, and fears. Above all this study has shown that the battery of tests used were effective and successful in predicting vocational choice.

#### COMPETING INTERESTS

Author has declared that no competing interests exist.

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