CAREER CHOICE FACTORS OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

By

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Abstract

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Many factors affect career choices of high school students. Identifying these

factors would give parents, educators, and industry an idea as to where students place

most of their trust in the career selection process. It would also allow students to examine

processes they use for career selection. The literature review has provided recommended

models in career choices. The review of the literature showed that three areas of a

student's life affect the career choices they make: environment, opportunity, and

personality. All three played varying roles in career outcomes. This study attempted to

identify to what extent these factors played a role in career choice and which were most

important. Data was collected from seniors at Germantown High School, using a survey

form. Specific objectives of the study were the following:

1) How influential were factors of personality in making career choices?

2) How influential were factors of the environment in making career choices?

3) How influential were the factors of opportunities in career choice?

4) Which areas of personality, environment, or opportunity were most important to the students?

The study's significance of the study includes the following:

1) Some students do not begin to explore 'real' career possibilities until after high school graduation. Technical colleges might more aggressively inform students earlier in their schooling, of information, knowledge, and skills they could apply to their daily studies.

2) Some students do not seriously consider many alternative choices in career selection. Sources of influence, such as parents or mentors, could be brought into a circle of counseling and discussion to help the student form a comprehensive career plan or outline.

3) Industry could see where, why, and when it could be beneficial for them to invest resources for the purpose of training, while still in technical schools.

4) If career planning were done in an efficient manner, students would at the very least be following a career plan of informed decision-making, rather than one of happenstance.

The researcher will analyze the collected information and identify any existing trends. In addition, he will suggest and explore implications and recommendations.

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Community has given another student a lifelong friend.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Career selection is one of many important choices students will make in determining future plans. This decision will impact them throughout their lives. The essence of who the student is will revolve around what the student wants to do with their life-long work. Basavage (1996, p.1) in her thesis asked, "What is it that influences children one way or another?" Over the school's front door at Rindge School of Technical Arts is the saying, "Work is one of our greatest blessings. Everyone should have an honest occupation" (Rosenstock & Steinberg, cited in O'Brien, 1996, p. 3). Every student carries the unique history of their past and this determines how they view the world. That history created, in part by the student's environment, personality, and opportunity, will determine how students make career choices. It then follows that how the student perceives their environment, personality, and opportunity also will determine the career choices students make.

Factors in Career Choice

The first factor in career choice, environment, may influence the career students choose. For example, students who have lived on an island may choose a career dealing with the water, or they may choose to leave the island behind, never to have anything to do with water again. Maybe someone in the student's life has made a significant impact or impression, leading to a definite career choice. Parents' educational background may influence student views on whether or not to continue their education. Someone they saw on television may have influenced the student, or parents may have demanded that they

assume a family business. These are various environmental factors that would lead a student to a chosen career.

How students have seen themselves in a role in which personality is a determining factor may influence a chosen career. Some careers demand that you have the personality to match the qualities of the occupation. For example, sales people have to be outgoing. Splaver (1977) said "personality" plays an important role in the choosing of the right career. A student's personality must be a self-motivated type, as to investigate career possibilities from early on in their lives, and not the procrastinating type that waits until they are compelled to decide. Students must take seriously the role grades play in limiting opportunities in the future. Splaver went on to say, "It is important for you to have a good understanding of yourself, your personality, if you are to make intelligent career plans" (Splaver, 1977, p.12).

Opportunity is the third factor that has shaped career choices for students. Opportunity may influence how students have perceived their future in terms of the reasonable probability of a future in particular career fields. The issue of poverty has played an important determining role in the opportunities available to all. The income level of high school families may determine what career a student chooses during a specific time in the student's life; choices that will determine a large part of that student's future. Some students will have to budget education according to their personal income. Thout (1969) addressed those in desperate need, "Where necessary, these persons [Individuals described as living under the poverty level] must be assisted through special training programs to overcome educational and social handicaps so that minimum job standards can be met" (p. 1). Students in many cases will need the proper mentoring

opportunities to succeed. These support groups will be another opportunity that if

properly implemented, can help a student in the career choice process. The support

system must have been in place and readily available for the student to utilize. The

creation of support groups will have to be in place to sustain the student through times of

financial, emotional, and educational need.

In a dissertation by Thomas O'Brien (1996), the subjects were based on case

studies of six different high school students 'interested' in enrolling into a program titled

Workbound. Workbound is considered an opportunity only available to some students

during their high school experience. The perceptions of these students upon entering a

structured cooperative work program varied from "eager" to "skeptical and suspicious" to

"a resume´ builder." Students see the world in many different ways according to O'Brien.

The various views were described in the interviews that took place during

implementation of that Workbound program. Opportunities that students pointed out in

these interviews motivated students to pursue future career choices with every one of

theses students. These motivational values will affect them for the rest of their lives. The

perceptions and eventual decisions these students made were based on the microcosm of

the previous opportunities during the first seventeen to eighteen years of their lives.

These formative years include the history from which students draw, to make decisions

concerning the rest of their lives. That is not to say there isn't a time later on in life for

modifying and re-grouping; however, this will not come without cost.

In an attempt to see how students took advantage and followed through on

opportunities, the researcher interviewed University Wisconsin-Stout's Assistant Director

of Admissions, Barbara Tuchel, who indicated that students take the path of least

resistance to enter the University. If a parent had exerted enough pressure on the student to enter a particular career field and the student had no current plans, then students followed their parents' suggestion. Tuchel thought that students should be thinking about career decisions in their senior year of high school. It should become apparent at that time that the student will have to do something. Tuchel stated that the environment plays a large part in a student's career choice. Students traditionally stay at home to either obtain education or start employment. Tuchel mentioned that marriage also played a large part in career decisions. She stated that the economics of marriage either solidified the commitment to go on to higher education or stopped career plans short, depending on the stability of the marriage (B.J.Tuchel, personal communication, June 18, 2002). Examples such as these are opportunities that can play a large determining factor in student's career choice.

The researcher chose Germantown High School (GHS) as the research study area.. GHS is located in a suburb northwest of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. There are 1,250 students attending GHS, grades nine through twelve (Germantown, 2002). High school seniors of this school should already have started to make decisions on career choices. These choices will be based on perceptions of their environment, their opportunities, and their perceived personalities.

Environmental determinants in Germantown have included the economics of the student's neighborhood. Germantown's students have access to academic, technical, public and private colleges in the area. Other environmental determinants would include recreational facilities and articles the student has seen in local papers or on the television.

The student's support sytem made up of parents, relatives, siblings, peers, teachers, and counselors may be the most environmental factor.

Industry provided many opportunities for the students of GHS in the local area. In an interview with the researcher, Mr. Kenneth Heines, president of KLH Industries in Germantown, stated that he wished there would be a more ongoing effort to motivate, educate, and direct students in the direction of the machine trades. He felt that students were not being told on an equal basis, by career counselors, the success stories of those in the trade at present; compared to those that pursued a traditional four year college profession. Some of his employees had at one time floundered in a previous career. Eventually frustration took these students down the path of investigating the technical trades more thoroughly. With the education they received at the technical college, along with the support of business, they then attained a much better quality of life than before (K.L. Heines, personal communications, May, 2002).

Educational opportunities for high school seniors at Germantown High School include the Wisconsin State College system, many private colleges, and three technical colleges, including Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC), Waukesha County Technical College (WCTC), and Moraine Park Technical College (MPTC). There is a rich diversity of jobs available, from manufacturing, service, health, military, and the full gamut of professional positions. MATC is the technical college that students from Germantown High School would most likely attend upon graduation. MATC boasts a curriculum that offers 150 associate degrees, and that students could benefit from career planning, counseling, and employment development through career counseling at (Milwaukee Area Technical College, 2002). The students at Germantown High School

are likely to have considered MATC in their exploration to determine a career path.
MATC should be considering GHS students as potential students, getting information to
the high school students ready to graduate. As we can see, there are many opportunities
or paths to be explored by high school students. High school seniors will have
accomplished choosing a career choice if a complete, thoughtful, educated decision was
made evaluating all of the factors possible in career choice process.

Statement of the problem

There is no clear process that students at Germantown High School have used to
make career choices. Students at Germantown High School should have the opportunity
to explore all of the choices available in order to make a logical, educated plan when
choosing a career.

Purpose of the study

The three major areas affecting career choice were environment, opportunity and
personality. The purpose of the study was to identify the most important factor within
these three factors that 2002 Germantown High School senior students used in deciding
upon career choices. Identification of these factors obtained through a survey instrument
will assist in the dissemination of information to Germantown High School students
utilizing factors that students have chosen.

Research questions

The questions of the research were the following:

1) How significant were factors of the environment in making career choices?

2) How significant were factors of opportunity in making career choices?

3) How significant were factors of personality in making career choices?

4)   Which factor, environment, opportunity, or personality, was most significant

to students at Germantown High School?

Significance of the study

The significance of the study was as follows:

1) Some students did not begin to explore 'real' career possibilities until after

graduation. Academic colleges, technical colleges, industry, and armed forces could

provide students with relevant information earlier in their schooling. They could be more

aggressive, giving students information they could test and use in their daily studies and

apply to their career choice.

2) Before graduating, some students have not considered enough alternative

choices in career selection to justify making an informed decision. Sources of influence

such as parents or mentors could be brought into a circle of counseling and discussion, to

help the student form a comprehensive career plan or outline.

3) Industry could examine where, why, and when it could be beneficial for them

to invest resources to train and educate students.

4)   If career planning were implemented in an efficient manner, students would at

the very least be following a career plan of informed decision-making, rather than one of

happenstance.

Assumptions

Assumptions of the study were as follows:

1) That students want to have control over their career choices.

2) That at any level of endeavor, students have taken the issue of career choice, to

be one of the most important facts determining the quality of life.

3) When answering the surveys, students have given honest answers.

<u>Limitations</u>

Limitations of the study included the following:

1) While the size of the study was large enough to conclude reasonable assumptions, the sample data was obtained from one senior class in one high school in a particular geographic location and may not have been indicative of the larger population. Validity of the survey has relied on the students' genuine and thoughtful response.

<u>Definitions</u>

For clarity the terms used in the study were defined as follows:

<u>Career choice</u> – The broad opportunities that exists for life long vocations. These vocations are set out in a framework of strategies moving toward personal goals. Fields of vocational, academic, and sociological endeavors are explored for the purpose of satisfying personal, economic, and intellectual goals.

<u>Environment</u> – The complex physical factors that make up our surroundings (Britannica, 2002), and in turn act upon us. For the purposes of this study they would include the forces of family, political, social, and economic issues that both typical and non-typical students may deal with on a day-to-day basis.

<u>Motivation</u> – Forces acting on or within a person causing an initiation of behavior (Britannica 2002) or what it is that moves us. In this study we will deal with the issues that help or hinder students in making career choices.

<u>Opportunity</u> – Those choices in one's life which are exposed either in a subtle or obvious manner. These choices or paths give the individual a selection between two or

more outcomes. The outcomes of one's choosing may or may not exceed one's present abilities.

Personality – A characteristic way of thinking, feeling and behaving (Britannica, 2002). The personality is the collection of impressions in the appearance of the student's body and the impressions believed to have been made on others, good or bad. One's personality may embrace attitudes and opinions that affect the way we deal with interactions of people and, in particular to this study, the situations of choosing a career.

Quality of life – The depth in the content of richness and fullness in our day-to-day existence. This includes observed and unobserved criteria that contribute to the fulfillment with our expectations and aspirations.

Summary

Exploration of career choices should be a positive endeavor for high school students. A thoughtfully constructed career choice process will provide a meaningful, productive, satisfying quality of career choices. A career choice process or outline might provide better answers than making life decisions based upon 18 years of experience. This study has explored how and when input into the career decision process could make a positive impact.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature that described the student career choice process. The body of literature available for review encompassed many volumes. Therefore, this review of the literature focused on 1) how environments in which students find themselves have lead them in a particular direction, 2) how opportunities might have influenced a student's career choice, and 3) why the perceptions of one's personality may have determined the route they took in their career choice process.

Environment

Throughout a career, an individual seeks to accommodate the environment with one's goals, while at the same time being incorporated into the environment (Kroll, Dinklage, Lee, Morley, & Wilson, 1970). Career development is the balancing of recognizing and meeting needs of the individual while at the same time responding to the outer forces and realities of life. Career decision factors involve two sets of input: the self and the world of work. The individual in a career has constantly balanced one's aspirations and how they have fitted into the reality of the workplace. "Man's occupation determines the kind of person he becomes since, through his waking hours, his cognitions about himself, his wants and goals, and his interpersonal response traits are molded" (Kroll et al., 1970, p. 19). Kroll went on to say that much of the informal and formal knowledge provided through our society and our environment has focused on the acquisition, retention, and utilization of information pertaining to the world. We have observed that both the self and the world emerge as important factors in the constructs

that we have attained, in that they have become the important features in the acquisition, retention, and translation of information about one's self (Kroll et al., 1970).

Environment plays a significant role in the career position the student attains in many ways. The environment that is spoken about here is a factor that is used to nurture decisions in career choice. Gender, for example has played a significant role in this environment. In a statement released to the press on the thirtieth anniversary of the Title IX barring of the sex discrimination, Marcia Greenberger (2002) of the National Women's Law Center stated that boys are still being steered toward the traditional 'male' jobs, which are higher paying. Girls are still expected to cluster into the traditional fields of cosmetology, childcare, and other similar jobs. In Florida for example, "99% of the students in cosmetology are female, while 100% of the students taking plumbing are male" (Greenberger, 2002, p. 2). While it should be noted that lawsuits were filed in these cases, not all states were guilty of gross failure on the part of technical school to desegregate the jobs to both of the genders.

Schools in some states have been able to do a better job in creating a better environment for students who want to cross gender lines while choosing a career. Skills present in males and females alike have been indicative of their vocational interests. Grace Laleger, in her Ph.D. dissertation, set out to ascertain the skill levels of girls as they applied to interests that the girls had. The conclusion showed that there was a disappointingly low correlation of skills to interest (Laleger, 1942). These types of studies have shown how difficult it is to break the code of motivation that students may possess. The fact that Laleger's study was done in 1942 shows that gender bias, and the

study of it, is nothing new, and may continue to be an always-present part of the career choice process.

One means of prompting students to participate in the career choice planning is a mandate to require Southern California's San Fernando Valley, District C's students to submit a description of their plans for some postsecondary education or training to school officials; or at least explain their future career paths in detail. Under this first-year trial policy, the graduates have to spell out those goals, which could include college, trade school, the military, or other options, even if they have not met the requirement to graduate (Cavanagh, 2002). The intent of the career explanation was to have students with low expectations talk with counselors about options for advancing their careers in the future.

However it has been shown that counselors cannot 'do it all.' In a chapter titled "Career counseling realities" (Weiler, 1977, p. 50), Weiler discussed what counselors can and cannot do. Counselors can draw career preferences to the forefront, in reflecting of student preferences, clarifying career preferences, summarizing, and encouraging student career preferences. Counselors should not be engaged with the evaluation for example, telling the student what they are or are not capable of doing. Counselors should not moralize or tell the student what they should do, what their motives should be, or persuade the student to adopt a different point of view. Career counselors are ineffective if they try to dictate, judge, or decide the student's values. And finally, counselors should not make predictions that go beyond the capability of their training (Weiler, 1977).

For students to provide themselves with answers to career choice questions, decision-making has become a tool to form career choices. Kroll (Kroll et al., 1970) cited

Super's own research, which indicates that the decision making process concerning one's

career is not so much a function of the information amassed to the individual, but more

the process of maturity and planning. Kroll cites Clarke, Gelatt, and Levine in which they

stressed that good decision-making relied upon adequate information and effective

strategies for making choice.

Students can help themselves in to decide myth from reality, communication, and

learning to operate autonomously, are fundamental building blocks used in effective

career planning. In order to succeed in obtaining their goals, students must know what

they want. "Too many of us have been taught to suppress what we want and instead

concentrate on meeting other people's expectations. In doing this we end up spending

most of our time marching to other people's drums" (Weiler, 1977, p. 57).

Kroll has provided models of the decision making process. John Dewey's model

(Kroll et al., 1970) describes five noticeable steps described: the preflective state,

suggestions, intellectualization, hypothesis, and then reasoning. Along the same lines as

Dewey's description is another from Poyla. Poyla (cited in Kroll et al., 1970) described

four basic areas in the decision making process 1) understanding the problem, 2) seeing

how various items of the problem are linked in order to formulate a plan, 3) carrying out

the plan, and 4) reviewing and discussing the completed solution. Brim, Glass, Lavin, and

Goodman work from different points of view utilizing a basic scientific method exploring

how people make decisions. Their decision making model includes problem

identification, information acquisition, solution production, solution evaluation, strategy

selection, and actual performance with subsequent learning and revision (cited in Kroll et.

al., 1970). Tiedman and O'Hara have stated their process in phases (cited in Kroll et. al.,

1970). The phases have dealt with anticipation, crystallization, decision, clarification, implementation or adjustment. Decision making in career choices stated Kroll (et al., 1970) "is a constant, continuing process even though some decisions are required now that can be changed later only at great emotional, time, or financial costs to the decider" (p. 137).

Personal values and desires have seldom been realized without the active and conscious efforts on the part of the student. The student must be motivated to orchestrate the outcome. If the student wants to work in the career choice process, the student must know and understand the realities of that process. Only when the student has developed awareness, can they begin to avoid dealing with the myths within the process as a whole. It is at that point the student develops a practical plan of action to get what they want from the decisions of their career choice. Most students have built career plans on the myths of what we think should be rather on the reality of what is, so stated Weiler (1977).

Opportunities

Careers and education do not always synchronize the abilities to the opportunities." Recent studies show that one in three college graduates could not find employment requiring a college degree" (National Commission's website, 1989). Usually the opposite is true. This is shown to be a new twist on an old line. The study also stated that relevant work experience has given students an upper hand in building a career. Experience rather than education seemed to carry more value in some career choices. A statement from the National Commission on Cooperative Education went on to say that cooperative education combined educational, financial, and career building opportunities. High school students (and parents of those students) should be aware of

opportunities such as cooperative education. The commission stated that cooperative education, which has existed for over 90 years should be an important criterion for selecting the right college.

Many times the career that the student may have finally settled on, after much anguish, may no longer exist when the student is ready. Olsten Corporation, a temporary hiring agency, stated that as a result of the downsizing and reorganization of the past decade, many organizations have pared down to "core groups of full-time employees complemented by part-timers and networks for flexible staffing" (Kerka, 1997, p. 1). Kerka stated that training to be portfolio workers, managing our skills as if we were our own job entity, may be the opportunities students will be faced with in the future. He stated that individuals should consider themselves a collection of attributes and skills, not a job. The key skills of the portfolio worker are versatility, flexibility, creativity, self-direction, interpersonal and communication skills, a facility with computer and information technology, the ability to learn continuously, and the ability to manage work, time, and money (cited in Kerka, 1997). This would be quite different from the traditional view as is known today. Lemke says fundamental changes of attitude and identity will have to be made.

In sharp contrast to the opportunities that students were presented with in the past was the following example:

Important events occurred in the 17 years separating the class of '55 and the class of '72, including the Vietnam War, the student unrest of the 1960s, a dramatic increase in the number of service-rendering jobs, and a corresponding decline in the number of goods producing jobs, a significant increase in low cost, easily

accessible post-high school educational opportunities in New York State, and

changes in the minimum wage law which place young, inexperienced work

seekers at a disadvantage in competing for jobs with older, more experienced

workers. (Heyde & Jordaan, 1979, p. XV)

Timing and location as opportunities are very important in fulfilling aspirations. Students

have shown all the ambition, talent, and skill needed for a particular careers, but if the

student has not capitalized on the right locale at the right point in time, his hopes for that

productive career are reduced or nil.

Students have only developed acceptable concepts of career patterns, or life

strategies, if occupational opportunities are present after high school graduation. After

graduation, opportunities must present themselves in order to make the most of students'

abilities. Spangler presented two completely different scenarios in his thesis concerning

the opportunities of two hypothetical students. In the first example, 'Carl' struggled to

make ends meet while supporting a family and finishing an education in a skilled trade.

The second example was a student who made an "uninterrupted" move from high school

to college, just three months after graduation (Spangler, 2000). All students have seen

themselves somewhere on this continuum. In commenting on opportunity, Weiler stated,

"No one wants to feel that they lack power over their own lives" (Weiler, 1977, p. viii).

Students must honestly evaluate where their best opportunities lie and which ones they

can use to the students' best advantage.

Finding those opportunities may involve many different strategies. J. Rawe

reported that mechanical-engineering student Elisabeth Rareshide, 22, who graduated

with an 'A' average from Rice University in Houston (class of 2002), had to scramble to

get work. Her suggestion? After 30 on-campus interviews, she had to *broaden* [italics added] her search immediately (cited in Time.com, 2002). If she had not changed strategies, her career opportunities would have been limited substantially.

What are some opportunity factors considered important for obtaining a job? Opportunities in career choice would include academic settings, technical schools, entry-level job openings, job shadowing, vocational guidance, job placement, and industry contacts. Super (Super, 1957) stated, surprisingly enough, that intelligence has little to do with getting entry-level positions; rather, maturity, as in physical size and manner, is valued more by the employer than intelligence. An academic background that closely meets the desired qualifications for a job is a critical factor. Likewise shop skills are essential for some jobs in that they would benefit someone pursuing a machine trades career.

Extracurricular activities are beneficial to a job hunt. A record of clubs and activities provides evidence of leadership and the ability to work in groups. The careers most suited for someone with many extracurricular activities on her/his resume´ are sales, junior executive positions, and an educational career. Work experience has been seen as the way a student demonstrates responsibility and dependability. Those that are in the position to have the best contacts are students with parents who hold supervisory or executive positions. Super stated that can be a hard fact to face, sometimes it is not what you know, but who you know (Super, 1957). Schools and employment services have played a huge role, therefore, in the social mobility of students entering the workforce. Schools and employment agencies have matched the qualifications of the job to the

education level of the career seeker, using computers, and eliminating barriers of distance quite easily.

Vocational guidance is a final factor in getting a job. Vocational counseling could reduce the number of changing vocational choices early in one's life. Psychological testing, one means of helping a student focus on an appropriate career choice, resulted in better employment records, as shown for example in the stability, promotions earnings, and employer ratings throughout the student's career (Super, 1957).

The researcher has shown that many opportunities to help students make career choices, but students must be made aware of the existing resources. During the 1994/1995-project year, only four secondary-school sites in Wisconsin were selected to participate in an integrating vocational/ learning program (Thuli & Roush/Phelps, 1994). How many students were aware that vocational/ learning programs existed? A student might have been lucky enough to have had their school be one of the four that participated in the 'High Schools that Work' program, and the student might have taken advantage of that program. Opportunities are not always equal across the state and country. These four high schools were ones that did away with generalizing academic courses and exposed students to a curriculum that provided the challenging academic content traditionally taught in college-prep schools (Wonacott, 2002).

Issues of 'Tech Prep', a national program, have been: whom 'Tech Preps' should serve, how should employers contribute, and what kind of articulation agreements should exist between high schools and technical colleges (Imel, 1996)? Again, the researcher has seen great variety from district to district in the administration of educational programs to vary from district to district.

Tech Prep, a program started in the 1980's with the work of Dale Parnell, is another opportunity that may or may not have been a part of a high school student's thought process. This articulated secondary-postsecondary program provides technical preparation in an occupational field. Tech Prep integrates academic and vocational education, usually leading to placement in employment. Scruggs explained that it did not become widespread until the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Act of 1990 provided federal funds for Tech Prep in every state (cited in Imel, 1996). In 1995, Silverberg and Hershey evaluated Tech Prep nationally:

- Only half of the nation's school districts are involved in Tech Prep consortia, and of those that are, only a small fraction of the students in these districts are actually participating.

- Participation in Tech Prep is not reflective of the general school population. Tech Prep students are concentrated in the Southern United States and suburban areas, even though urban areas have the ability to concentrate and serve more students.

- Racial and ethnic make-up of Tech Prep students differs from the general population. Tech Prep students are more likely not to be members of a minority group.

- The secondary or high school level is affected the most, due to curriculum changes that must be made. (cited in Imel, 1996)

Also noted in Imel's work was a study done by Hersshey, Silverberg, and Owens in 1995, concerning how tech prep programs differentiated from state to state. Some states considered it a high tech form of vocational education applicable to only particular

students and particular occupations. In other states it was an upgrading of vocational

programs via supplementation of applied academic courses (Imel, 1996).

Different interpretations have also lead to varying implementations, especially

when the programs themselves are governed by the state's department of public

instruction and the vocational school board simultaneously. For example, the state may

have mandated high school initiatives while a vocational school board regulated the tech

school initiatives. It is then clear that students are not exposed to the same opportunities

statewide. Students might not have understood what opportunities were available to

them, unless presented on a student-to-student basis. The opportunities, education, and

training may have been presented to some students. If the programs have not been

implemented in a standard, consistent, and timely manner, rather than in a haphazard

approach, the students might see as prejudice, or a weakness in the program to avoid, a

lost opportunity. Students do not want their cohorts given more or less benefits when it

comes to educational opportunities. Students want to be treated as the adults they are

expected to become, on an equal opportunity basis, so that they can make the best

possible career choices.

The loss of any opportunity, for whatever reasons, will result in the student not

building the successful history needed to realize goals. There has been research dealing

with the student's inability to focus their career choosing abilities. Super stated,

> The term *floundering* has been used by some sociologists to describe the
>
> experiences of young workers who try one job, then another, and then another,
>
> sometimes for a succession of five or ten short-lived jobs, each job having little or
>
> no relationship to the others… there is no sequence or progression, nothing in one

job that draws experience in the preceding job or that leads logically to the next (Davidson & Anderson, cited in Super, 1957, p. 112).

Joann Deml, career advisor for the University of Wisconsin-Stout and Lia Reich (2001), graduate student in counseling, discussed the factors that enrich students' potential for career success. Work internships and work experience provide students the chance to explore while also providing valuable experience along the way. Deml stated that students need to learn how to sell themselves, a valuable asset to getting in the door. Maturity may be the result of these types of career experiences, which should be included in a plan to insure career choice success.

Much of the literature concerning career choice discusses the need for students to investigate. The student must have investigated, brainstormed, and tried alternate methods, rather than giving in to first opportunity available. The student must not have been satisfied with the easiest opportunity that comes along. In fact, the constant career exploration could be adopted as a lifelong strategy throughout one's life (J. Deml & L. Reich, personal communication, June 18, 2000).

During the 2001 recession, the Bush Administration had funding for federal job-training programs for young adults, even though independent studies have shown that every dollar spent on programs for disadvantaged youth, such as Job Corps, saves about two dollars through increased productivity and lower costs related to crime and welfare (Time.com, 2002). Opportunities can depend upon economic cycles. The student must be aware of such factors and their implications regarding opportunities.

While employers need some skill level in order to attain entry level positions, many companies have developed career development programs to support and motivate

employees to continuous and life long learning. Filpszak and Hequet are cited in Lankard/Brown's article (1996b) stating that companies like Hewlett-Packard have a career center at some sites where employees "research jobs that interest them or take assessments to help them discover potential interests"(Filipczak, 1995, p. 34, cited in Lankard/Brown, 1996b ¶ 11). TRW, Inc. in Cleveland suggests is that workers should consider lateral moves, to areas of the organization poised for expansion. Amoco Corporation has initiated a career management process to assist workers in looking beyond their jobs to reflect on the marketability of their skills inside and outside of the company. These are opportunities that entry-level students should consider when choosing a career path.

The School-to-Work Opportunities Act authorized money to help students make the move from high school to work. There have been varying models of this successful program, reflecting the settings in which they have been implemented. Lewis (cited in Lankard/Brown, 1996a) stated that there are opportunities to highlight successful programs. These successful programs have included employer partnership with schools. Commitment and support are required from schools, businesses, postsecondary institutions, community partners and parents. Adequate financial support must be insured. Integration of academic and vocational learning must be supported. The program must have appropriate sequences of learning experiences along with career information in the development of the student's own interests, goals, and abilities. Programs of this nature have shown their worth and warrant further investigation by students involved in the career choice process.

People who have been in the job market for over ten years, are well aware of economic trends or swings. Some have been mild, others protracted. Some of these trends have affected areas of the local economy; some are worldwide. Time.com stated that a student's B.A. in psychology wouldn't get them very far with the class of 2002, but two years ago a liberal arts majors could have expected multiple offers from dotcoms along with a signing bonus. Students may have decided their major area of study during the "internet bubble" and continue to do most of their job search online (Time.com, 2002). The student must base their career choice not on a fleeting opportunity, rather an opportunity that implies real potential. The effects of September 11, 2001, have compounded the downward spiral in the economy. Students might have chosen a career based upon a skewed but realistic view of industry at that point in time. Students might also be pressured to take whatever is available, rather than wait for their real choice to become favorable again.

At the end of some job lines, behind many college students are the high school students who may have lacked either money, or the grades, or the inclination, for higher education. This line suggests an example of yet another set of opportunities that present themselves as the result of many economic factors in combination. Northeastern University economist Andrew Sum pointed out that one in ten teenagers lost a job during the onset of the 2000 recession (Time.com, 2002). It is not easy for the student to sort out what is a long-term career choice factor, and what is just a blip in the economy.

Change itself in the workplace has affected careers and career development. Mergers, acquisitions, reengineering, and downsizing have influenced employment patterns and altered the career directions of many. "Resilience" is the term Bettina

Lankard/Brown has used in her article concerning the temporary nature of all jobs

(1996b, p.1). This concept can be applied to high school students starting out their career,

and seasoned veterans alike. Brown cited Waterman, Waterman, and Collard

(Lankard/Brown, 1996a) and emphasized self-management and self-development. During

the 1960's, the employer/employee relationship was characterized as a parent/child

relationship. Industry provided jobs that were narrowly defined, along with status in

community and job security. The employee provided hard work, loyalty, and good

performance. Thirty years later the relationship between employer and employee has

become a partnership. The worker must be employable rather than loyal today.

Employable has come to mean that the employee has developed and maintained skills, is

reliable, has a plan for enhancing her performance and long-term employability. High

school students should capitalize on this lesson. Fox (cited in Lankard/Brown, 1998) said

attitude is a key in the ability to become career resilient. Fox said employees must be

either growing or decaying. They must learn to live with chaos, be selective about what

they learn, and be unique while pushing to the outer limits.

Sometimes opportunities are not worth the resources invested in them.

Opportunities that seem to lead nowhere should be shelved in lieu of those that provide a

better return. Some opportunities have detoured the paths of some career choices. Alex

Sowma, 18 stated, "At the end of four years, I don't want to owe an institution upwards

of $50,000 and not have a *guaranteed* [italics added] job" (Time.com, 2002, p3).

Commenting on a California mandate that required career plans as a requirement of

graduation, Melody Separzadeh, vice president of Taft High School's senior class, told

the *Los Angeles Times*, "They feel like it's none of the district's business" (Cavanagh, 2002, p2).

In one of three surveys between May 2001 and January 2002 more than 90% of adults said they encouraged high school graduates to attend a four-year college or university as a first choice. In the second survey, more than 80% have supported attending a two-year college or vocational school, while in the third survey more than 57% encouraged enlistment in the military, about the same number who would have encouraged their high school graduates to work full time. Previous polls have indicated that parents prefer that their children attend college rather than serving in the military. Parents have indicated they'd like to have had more access to information on opportunities and benefits in the military (Maze, 2002).

Personality

Splaver stated (1977) it is important for students to have a good understanding of themselves, their personality, if they are to make intelligent career plans. What they would like to be, and what they are like, are determining factors in their career. The personality factors to be considered include their mental abilities, special abilities, and interests. Splaver (1977, p.13) considered factors of mental abilities to be "verbal comprehension, word fluency ability, spatial ability, numerical ability, reasoning ability, and memory." Splaver matched careers with abilities in backing up her reasoning. She urged students to become familiar with their personality in order to guide their career choice. A developed career plan included evaluation of personality through self-assessment, and communication with others, another trait that depended heavily on personality, according to Harris and Jones (1997). Self-knowledge is shown to be a

domain with many pathways (Anderson, 1995). In this domain, self-knowledge is the
first of three integral competency areas stated in the National Career Development
Guideline (National Commission Site, 1989). There have been many examples to
describe the process of self-knowledge. One example would be a student's critical look at
life's experiences to enhance their self-knowledge. Another example would be students
using problem-based learning to gain insight into self-knowledge (Lankard/Brown,
1996a). Self -knowledge has been pivotal in career development.

There have been numerous career clusters, as well as career clashers, that coincide
with abilities. The student should become knowledgeable in these areas while searching
for career interests. Once a career has been narrowed down, personality has played a role
in obtaining and keeping employment in the field of choice. Attitudes used in interviews,
along with compatible methods of working within teams and along side co-workers have
depended upon the right personality. Once a career has been secured, ambition and
sincerity, along with promotions may determine an employee's future.

Personality, the need for the student to have left a favorable impression, is an
important issue during the interview process, prior to being offered a career position.
Personality has been a tough quality for parents and teachers to mold into the individual
especially if the career in question is not in agreement with the student. In addition
contacts are a major job seeking method. The student's personality must match the
criteria for their chosen career.

It is helpful to consider the attitudes people hold about themselves when choosing
a career (Kroll et al., 1970). Attitudes about personality have been organized into
consistent modes of thinking, feeling and reacting to evaluation of our environment.

Personality is defined as the collection or impressions in the appearance of the student's body and the impressions believed to have been made on others, good or bad. These impressions form the cognition or the understanding in dealing with persons and things. What makes up the cognitive map or personality may never be fully known.

Everyone shares some factors or constructs. These constructs are personality traits that become valuable when choosing a career. The environment, such as our formal education has played a major role in the formation of constructs. Organizations of personality constructs are evident in three situations. First, the individual sees the factors that could potentially change personality. Second, only certain environmental factors impinge upon the individual. These environmental factors enter into the ideas that the individual has had about themselves. Third, of all the factors that enter into the cognizance, only a few are perceived, and even those may be distorted or altered to fit the requirements needed to fulfill the comfort limits of our reality.

The process choice is affected by experience and purpose. One's experience is limited by the ability to perceive only what the individual is prepared to perceive. Our purpose also limits our ability to perceive. Thus experience and purpose have translated to self and situation, or personality and environment (Kroll et al., 1970). What are personal determinants? Personal determinants include the entire cluster of our biological and psychological attributes, as well as behavioral and physical features with genetic origins. The genetic determinants include sex, physical structures, neurological and endocrine systems and, to some extent, intellectual and nonintellectual abilities and aptitudes. Physical appearance such as height, weight, body proportions, structure of the

face, etc. exert influences on others' reactions toward us and in turn on our self-evaluations. Rate of maturity is also a determinant (Kroll et al., 1970).

Berne, as described by Weiler (1977, p. 72) stated that there are "coherent systems of thought and feelings manifested by corresponding patterns of behavior." Berne went on to identify three ego states that individuals exhibit. The first, called the 'Parent' ego, derives from parental figures, figures of authority. The second state, the 'Adult' ego, appraises the environment objectively and then calculates possibilities and probabilities on the basis of experience. And third, each individual carries within a little boy or girl who feels, acts, talks, and responds just the way he or she did when a child of a certain age. This ego state is called the 'child.' Individuals always operate in one of the three ego states during any time of the day. Each of the ego states has its importance. People need all three in order to operate as a complete human being. The important key to effective and autonomous operation is becoming aware of all the ego states, knowing which one an individual is operating under at any given moment, and consciously switching to the ego state that will serve the individual most effectively in specific situations. Students must realize that there are many voices influencing behavior. Weiler (1977, p. 86) described it, as "the human condition." Similarly, Levinson and associates (cited in Weiler, 1977) talk about mentors:

> Throughout his twenties and well into his thirties, a man's life can be influenced strongly by his mentors. . . .The mentor serves in a role similar to that of master in the old master-apprentice system. . . . The young man must in time reject this relationship, but this is largely because it has served its purpose.

Super said adolescence is the time for testing the realities of life. It is the movement from the society of youth to that of adulthood (1957). That change has been described as one from a majority at school to a minority at work. The student is no longer included in a group as at school. In the adult world no one will claim the new employee. This definitely will become a culture change, and that, Super stated is very difficult. In times of full employment, a job may be promised. In times of economic hardship, the student may flounder for months or even years. Super stated, that the most common method of obtaining a job is through someone the student knows, such as a neighbor, the student's father or brother, mother or sister, or a teacher at school has taken an interest in a recent dropout or graduate. Secondly, Super said the process most commonly used for obtaining a job is through direct application. Making the rounds can be a hit or miss proposition. The job selection method leaves the student in the same socioeconomic realm as their contact person, for example, their father (Super, 1957). The types of jobs a young person may expect to find are based on varying economic conditions and social trends, and localities (Super, 1957). The personality of the student, whether the student is determined or not, may depend more on the career outcome, than factors such as education, skill and ability.

Jobs are sometimes rooted in family tradition and expectations. Many jobs that young people want do not compare to the job they actually get. Super states that it is better to treat this as the discrepancy between aspiration and achievement. In that arena parents tend to try and influence their children to get a better job and have a better life than they have. This would be especially true among semi-skilled and unskilled workers and their children. The self-improvement tradition goes back to the Fifteenth Century that

immigrants would leave their homes in order to seek a better life. An important manifestation of that era meant leaving home, or having to move to another community and leave one's kin. In today's world, one leaves one's home to attend school, and then to pursue career opportunities which are better than those found at home. When one moves up in the socioeconomic world today, it is only human to expect others to value that which one values themselves. Our parents feel their career goals worthy, and in most cases will expect their children to follow suit. Thus a student, who has no value in education, in order to raise themselves above their parent's level, will likely be viewed as ungrateful by their parents (Super, 1957). In those cases the student needs to have found a job/career that started where their parent's level of ability has left off. When education, skill, abilities, and interests have not lead to the same level of income producing jobs, the discrepancy between aspiration and achievement has become a sore issue.

Another discrepancy between aspirations and achievement, is when the admissions bar has been raised so that the qualifications of the past no longer guarantee the future. This has become an issue with education and diplomas. Changes in industry have also been closely related to change in qualifications. The ladder that was the model for success no longer applies or is restructured so that achievement may not be possible. Students entering the workforce will have to consider these issues. Planning for such issues will be essential for success.

Summary

This literary review creates the impression that there are a lot of perspectives from which career choice has been approached. This review pointed out the many factors that high school students might face as they attempt to construct a career plan and then act

upon that plan. The purpose of this study is to identify the factors that students have used in identifying career choices so that the support teams of those students may better aid in the decision making process. The next chapter will explain the methodology used in the research method.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

Introduction

This chapter discusses the research design, the research sample, the instrumentation procedures, data collection and data analysis procedures. Methodological assumptions and limitations will also be discussed.

Description of Methodology

An anonymous survey was used to collect data for use in the research portion of the study. It was an anonymous survey. The first part of the survey established demographic information. The survey used an ordinal ranked series of factors such as those established in the literature review, which affect career choice. The survey was designed to be completed in five-minutes or less.

Research Design

The research design used the statistical information to see if dependant variables relating to environment, opportunity, and personality were significant factors influencing the career choices of high school students. The senior class of approximately 325 students was chosen to comprise the population. The control group consisted of subject-based students intending to graduate within the year. Internal validity was not guaranteed, however the subjects surveyed were unaffected by environmental qualities that may skew results. The external validity in general terms was applicable to other seniors of similar school populations.

Pilot Studies

A pilot run of the survey was conducted in four different settings. The researcher used high school seniors outside of the Germantown school district in four different trials. The students were asked to comment on the survey as a whole; they were asked to keep track of their time and mark the two questions that resulted in the most confusion. Each trial resulted in revision until the end of August 2002 when the researcher felt that ambiguous questions had been eliminated. During the 2002 summer session at UW-Stout statistical experts, Dr. Amy Gillett and Ms. Christine Ness provided feedback as to the appropriateness of the surveys. The survey was edited for grammar, and a time range of three to five minutes was established for completing the survey instrument.

Description and Selection of Subjects

The entire senior class of Germantown High School was chosen for this study based on the belief that they should have the greatest reason to be interested in career choice. The Germantown School District is comprised of students from several areas: Village of Germantown, Towns of Germantown, Jackson, Polk, Richfield, Hubertus, Colgate, and part of Cedarburg. Germantown High School is located approximately 15 miles northwest of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Four elementary schools feed Kennedy Middle School and then Germantown High School. The high school is comprised of a total of approximately 1250 students, 325 of which are seniors. The staff at the high school is comprised of one principal, two assistant principals, an athletic advisor, a full time librarian, four school counselors, and a multitude of academic support staff personnel (Germantown, 2002).

Instrumentation

A survey was the selected instrumentation device. The agreed setting for distribution of the survey was the senior class meeting during the first week of school. The survey was intended to be answered without any verbal instructions. It was understood and distinctly directed that this was an elective and voluntary survey on the part of the students. The introduction of the instrument at the senior class meeting was intentionally worded so that students might be challenged to answer the survey in an honest, respectful manner. Therefore the survey was easy to complete, easy to understand, and had been written to give the students a stimulus to reflect upon after the survey was completed. The format mirrored those objectives.

Data Collection

Permission from the high school principal, Mrs. Janet Barnes, was obtained. Mrs. Barnes directed Ms. Susan Wolff to serve as a liaison during the survey process. The distribution process was established and the surveys were passed out during the week of September 6, 2002. All students were given a parental permission slip, not only as an issue of legality from UW-Stout Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, but also from an introduction standpoint to reduce apprehension and to streamline the process on the day of the survey. Parental consent forms were issued in tandem with the survey. Only those surveys that accompanied a signed parental consent form could be accepted from students. The survey proceeded as described under the 'Instructions to Subjects' heading.

Instructions to Subjects

Minor consent forms were only referenced when the students returned the survey. Once the consent form was established, the survey was then considered valid, and the two forms separated. Students were instructed not to identify themselves on the survey. Only those students who specifically asked questions were given additional instructions.

Data Analysis

The information collected in this survey contains ordinal data. The measure of central tendency used with ordinal data is mode and median. The range is the only appropriate measure of dispersion for ordinal data. Later when the data is combined to form a composite, then standard deviation will be used as the data will then be measured one composite score against another composite score, all data then being of equal value. The hope is to draw areas of significance from a parametric test of significance, namely the Anova and T-tests for significance. The surveys were sent to the University of Wisconsin-Stout Computer Education and User Services for tabulation and statistical analysis.

Summary

The introduction and literature review has shown that there are many motivations for career choice. This was reinforced by the many studies, models and examples used in career choice studies today. Do the students at Germantown High School feel the impact of environment, opportunity, and personality are the same? This question is the guiding force behind the construction of the research. The analysis of the results in the next chapter will attempt to develop an understanding of these motivations and place the criteria in a hierarchy based on the survey results.

CHAPTER FOUR

Introduction

This chapter deals with the data returned from the Germantown Senior High

School student survey (see Appendix). The first section of the chapter will introduce

demographics. The second section will describe the dependant variables or descriptors.

These dependant variables, or descriptors of environment, opportunity, and personality

were given a composite score. For example, all of the descriptors that related to

environment were put together to see if students thought their environment was a

significant factor in determining their career choice. The process was repeated with

opportunity and personality. Measures of dispersion will be used to answer research

questions one through three:

1) How influential were factors of the environment in making career choices?

2) How influential were factors of opportunity in making career choices?

3) How influential were factors of personality in making career choices?

The third section deals with the dependant variables in their composite form tested for

significance using the demographics and descriptive statistics students provided. To find

out specifically which variables of environment, opportunity, or personality were 'most'

important to the students of Germantown High School, each descriptor was answered in a

Likert scale format and tested for significance. This testing for significance was done to

answer the fourth research question:

4) Which factor, environment, opportunity, or personality, was most important to

students?

The fourth and last section lists the responses from the open question on the survey, "If I graduated tomorrow, my career choice would be: _____."

Demographics

There are 320 senior students attending Germantown High School. Of those students 265 accepted or elected to keep a survey to look at. A total of 79 students had their parents sign the required Human Research Subjects Consent Form (see appendix) and returned the survey. This resulted in a 29.8% return rate or almost one-third of the class voluntarily responded. The gender of students responding consisted of 40.5% males and 58.2% females (See table 1). Gender has been long thought of as an opportunity issue. Research shows that while barriers for both male and female are diminishing statistically, it may not reflect the underlying affective valuing that must go with equal opportunity.

Table 1: GENDER

	MALE	FEMALE
FREQUENCY	32	46
PERCENT	40.5	58.2
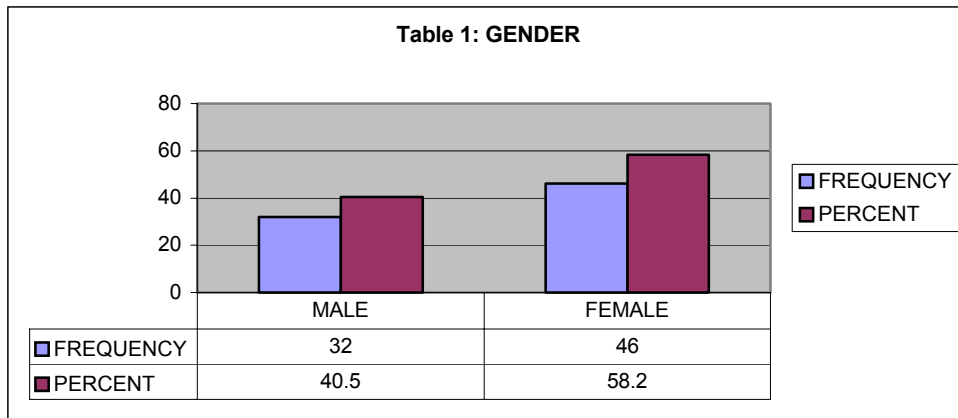
Feedback from the environment in the form of watching older siblings may enhance a student's successes. Forty eight point one per cent (See table 2) of the responding students were the oldest, 3.8% were the only child. This group of 48.1% was over represented and may not have had the experience of an older sibling to reflect upon when making career choices.

Table 2: BIRTH ORDER WITHIN FAMILY

	YOUNGEST CHILD	MIDDLE CHILD	OLDEST CHILD	ONLY CHILD
FREQUENCY	19	18	38	3
PERCENTAGE	24.1	22.8	48.1	3.8
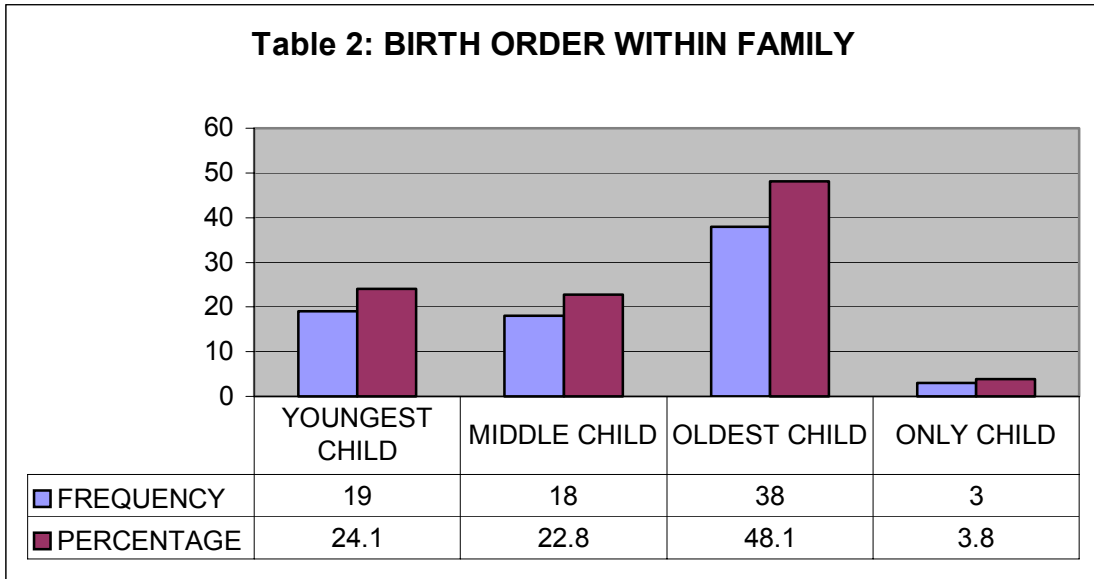
Literature stated that while career choice planning is the primary responsibility of the student, education level of parents might lead students in a particular direction. Parental educational level may increase student's perception of the value of education. The "educational levels achieved by parents" question was re-distributed after the surveys to better reflect the groups that were discovered. These five groups were re-distributed among three groups, which included those that had 'some high school,' 'finished high school,' and 'some college.' The three new categories included both mother and father combined. The group 'some high school' comprised 34.2% (See table 3) of the new combined parent's education. The second group, made up of 'finished college' comprised 30.4% (See table 3) of the parent's combined education. The 'after college' made up 30.4% (See table 3) of the parent's combined education.

Table 3: HIGHEST EDUCATION LEVEL OF BOTH PARENTS

	FINISHED HIGH SCHOOL	SOME COLLEGE	FINISHED COLLEGE/MORE
FREQUENCY	27	24	24
PERCENTAGE	34.2	30.4	30.4
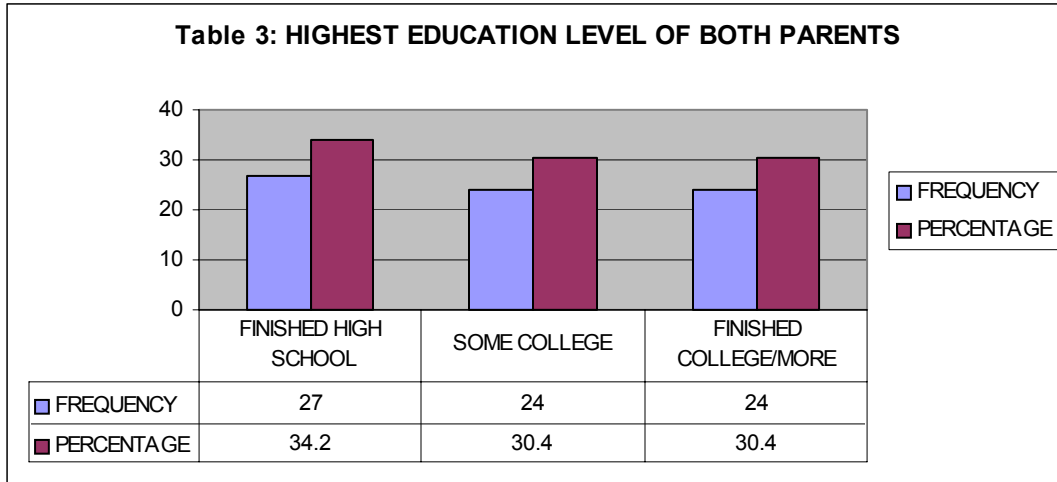
In demographic question five, 'Approximate time researching career choices' students showed the time they felt they had spent researching their career choice demographic question no.5. The answers were scattered from 0-365 days (See table 4). 58.8% of students answered with research of five days or less. Twelve point seven per cent of the seniors responded with a 365-day answer, which was interpreted to mean that they felt deeply enough about career choice to go beyond an occasional interest.

Table 4: TIME SPENT RESEARCHING CAREER CHOICES
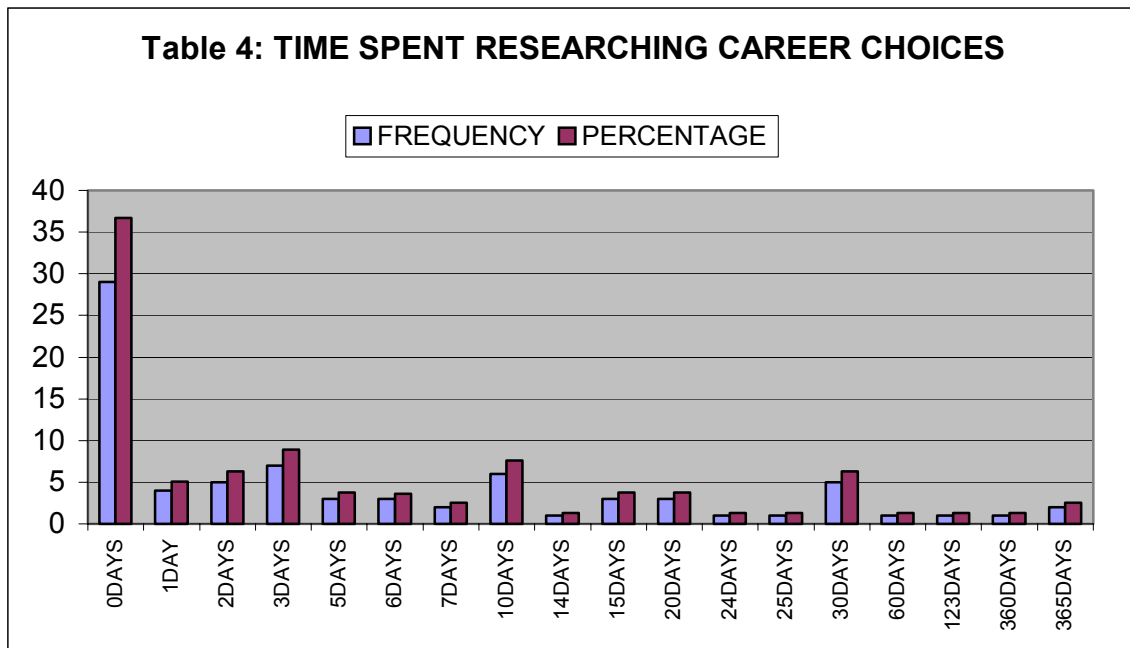
Question number six, referred to the grade in which 'I started to think about career choice.' The responses in this category were evenly distributed from fifth grade or sooner to the twelfth grade. Nineteen point five percent (See table 5) of the students had an idea during their grade school years. Early role-playing and discovery is important for career choice as pointed out in the literature review.

Table 5:GRADE STARTED THINKING ABOUT CAREER CHOICES

	5th GRAD	6TH GRAD	7TH GRAD	8TH GRAD	9TH GRAD	10TH GRAD	11TH GRAD	12TH GRAD
FREQUENCY	15	9	10	5	13	11	11	3
PERCENTAGE	19	11.4	12.7	6.3	16.5	13.9	13.9	3.8
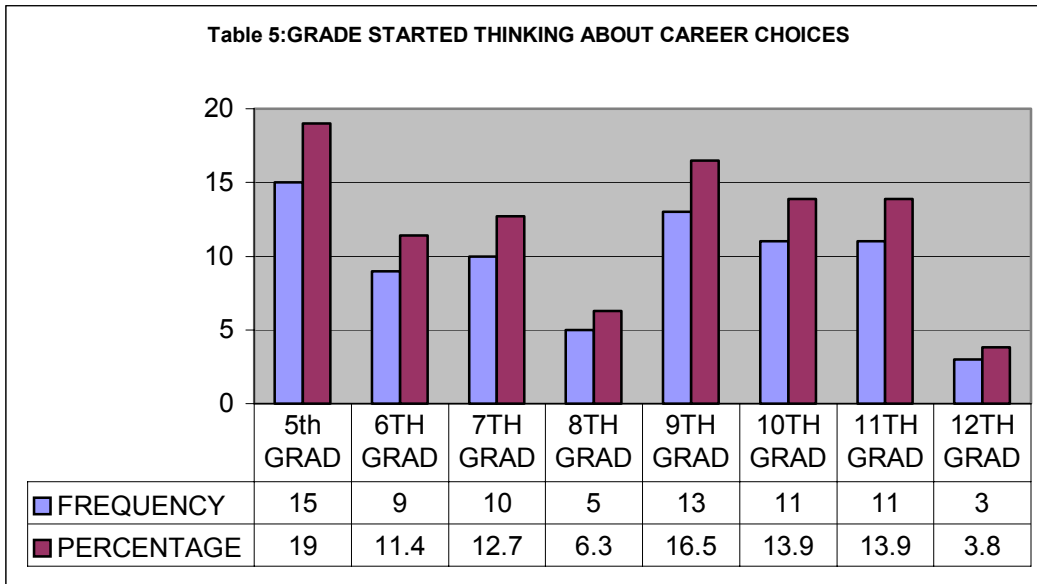
Grade point average, while not in itself the determining factor of many career choices, could be an indicator of the nature or personality of students. A student who values academics may also have a particular career goal in mind. Grade point average can be a determining factor in continuing education. The organizational skills and discipline needed to attain higher grade point averages may sustain students while undertaking the challenge of career training. This category may have been an indicator of the type of student willing to take the time and effort to return a non-mandatory educational survey, like the one in this study. Sixty-two percent (See table 6) of students responding answered that their grade point average was in the 3.0 - 4.0 range. Thirty-one per cent reported that their grade point average was 2.0 – 3.0, while 5.1% were 1.0 – 2.0. Since

this survey was anonymous, students should have felt comfortable enough to reply to the survey questions honestly.

Table 6: GRADE POINT AVERAGE			
	1.000-1.999	2.000- 2.999	3.000-4.000
FREQUENCY	4	25	49
PERCENTAGE	5.1	31.6	62
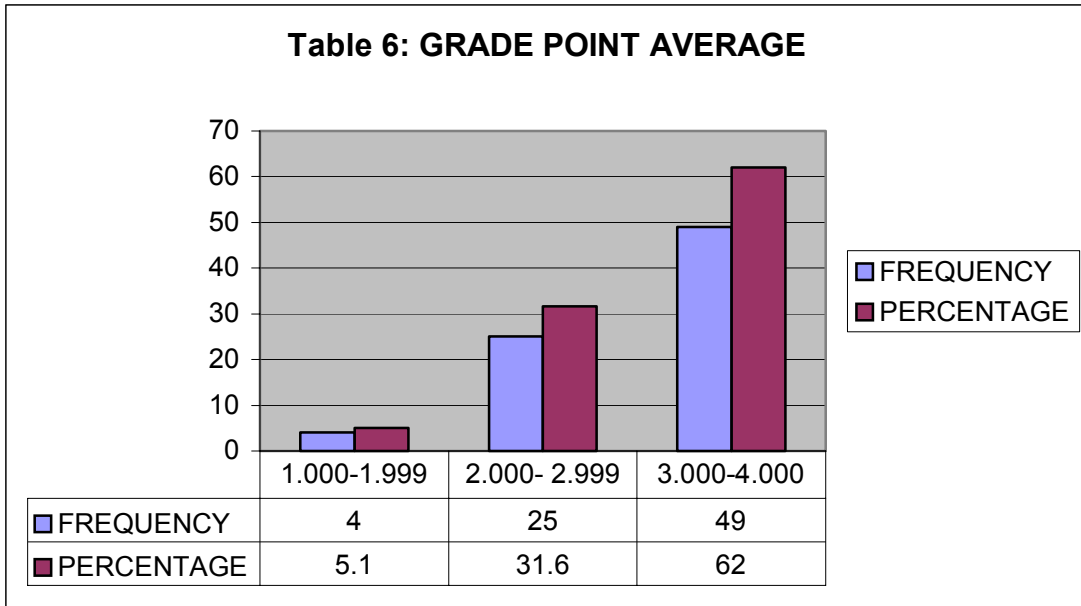
Students who work and receive a paycheck might indicate that they have already started exploring a possible career, with positive or negative feedback. It also might indicate a need for economic assistance. In either case the research tends to support a part-time job can be beneficial for the feedback it provides. Whether this feedback is negative or positive is not important. What seems to be important is that the student is taking responsibility to experience first hand what qualities every job has to offer. 83.5% (See table 7) of students responding stated that they did receive a paycheck. Parents of students who work either object to or confirm the wishes of that student to work while in high school. It is important to understand the relationship of why the student is working. The career world may invite opportunity, and to some, expose them to an environment not known before. Part-time work may invite further investigation and prove beneficial to students.

Table 7: STUDENTS RECEIVEING A PAYCHECK

	YES	NO
FREQUENCY	66	11
PERCENTAGE	83.5	13.9
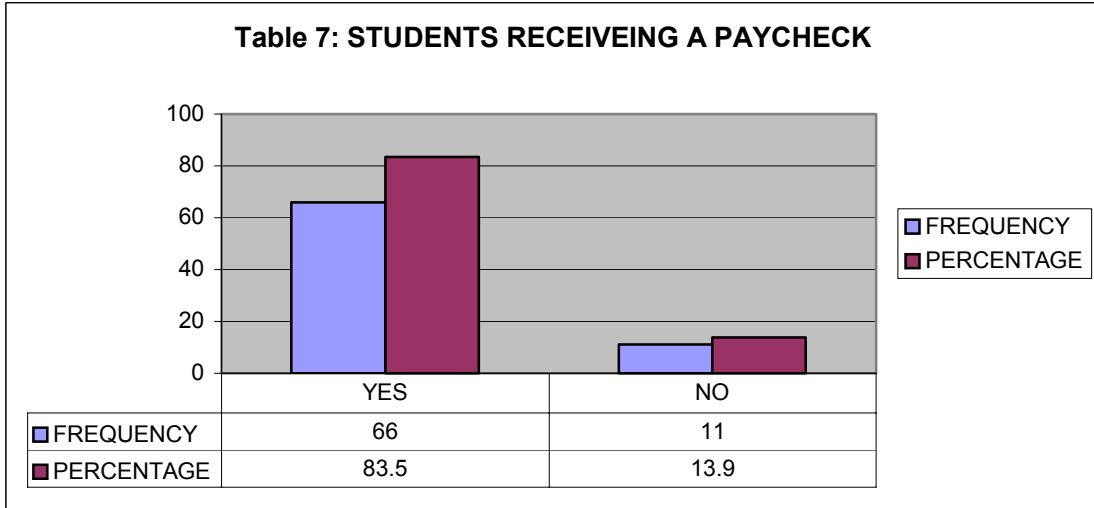
Survey question number nine 'I have traveled outside of Wisconsin' asked students if they had traveled outside of their home in Wisconsin. Wisconsin would be the home state of Germantown students. The results of this question showed one large group of students where significance could not be shown. Ninety-six point two percent of responding students have traveled outside of Wisconsin. This question was eliminated from further analysis.

The survey question number ten asking seniors if 'they had definitely made a career choice,' or survey question eleven 'I had no career plans at present' was a question that was not in the demographic portion of the survey. Though it did not appear as a 'yes' or 'no' demographic question, the responses were later grouped into two sets: a 'no' group made up of combined 'strongly disagree' and 'mildly disagree' and a 'yes' group made up of combined 'mildly agree' and 'strongly agree.' One set being that a strongly disagree and a mildly disagree would be interpreted as a 'no' the other group would take the 'Likert' scale rating of mildly agree and strongly agree to mean a 'yes'. The researcher felt that question ten and eleven were better used as demographics, rather than descriptors of career choice. Those that felt strongly that they had made a career choice

Twenty-two point eight percent (See table 8) were not that far ahead of those who felt

strongly that they had not decided or, fifteen per cent. Fifty point eight per cent could not

commit to a career choice definitely. There was a majority of students who acknowledged

having an idea about their career choice, 64.6%.

Table 8: I HAVE DEFINITELY MADE A CAREER CHOICE

	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE MILDLY	AGREE MILDLY	STRONGLY AGREE
FREQUENCY	12	15	33	18
PERCENTAGE	15.2	19	41.8	22.8
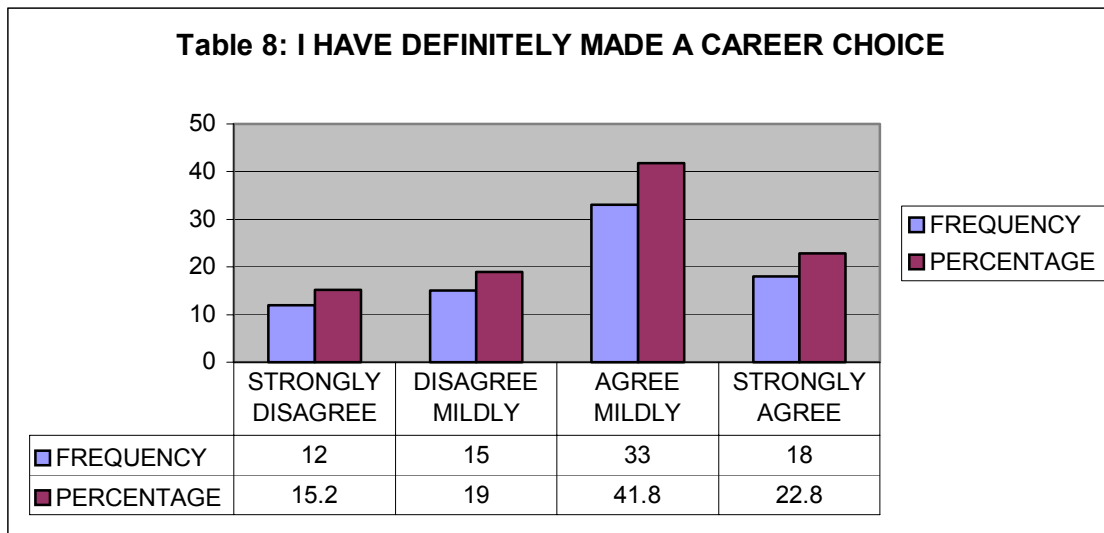
The second half of the survey dealt with responses or descriptors that students

gave when questioned about qualities the researcher would equate with the career choice

environment, career choice opportunities, and personality factors in career choices.

Research Question One

How significant were factors of the environment in making career choices?

Responses were run as a composite and scored as the 'environment' group. For

composite scores reflecting the student's view of how the environment influences career

choices, refer to table 9.

The survey was designed so that students who thought the environment had

impacted their career choice would tend to answer 'agree mildly' or 'strongly agree.'

These answers would be scored in the 3.0 - 4.0 range. A score of 1.0 would equal

strongly disagree. The survey questions that made up the composite 'environmental'

group asked if parents, friends, teachers, counselors, or other family members had been an influence in the career choice process. Another question asked if a parent, counselor, or someone else had chosen the student's high school courses. The research question was trying to ascertain the amount of outside personal influence that had been important to the student in making a career choice. When responding to statements regarding the environment, students on average actually disagreed mildly. As seen in table 9 almost 8% of students, in fact, 'strongly disagreed.' The highest recorded student was a 3.33, on a scale of 1-4,showing a level of only 'mildly agreeing.' The results show that the influence of people in the closer circle of friends, family, and academia did not particularly sway, influence, or lead students when it came to the career choice process. Individual questions did not show any significance by themselves. No single survey question in the environment section was particularly important to the student. Particular questions pique students' interests, indicating that there are factors that students see as important in the career choice process.

TABLE 9:ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS DO AFFECT CAREER CHOICES

	DIS-AGREE	1	1.17	1.33	1.5	1.67	1.83	2	2.17	2.33	2.4	2.5	2.67	2.83	3	3.17	3.33	AGREE
FREQUENCY		6	3	5	5	6	12	13	8	6	1	4	3	1	4	1	1	
PERCENTAGE		7.6	3.8	6.3	6.3	7.6	15.2	16.5	10.1	7.6	1.3	5.1	3.8	1.3	5.1	1.3	1.3	
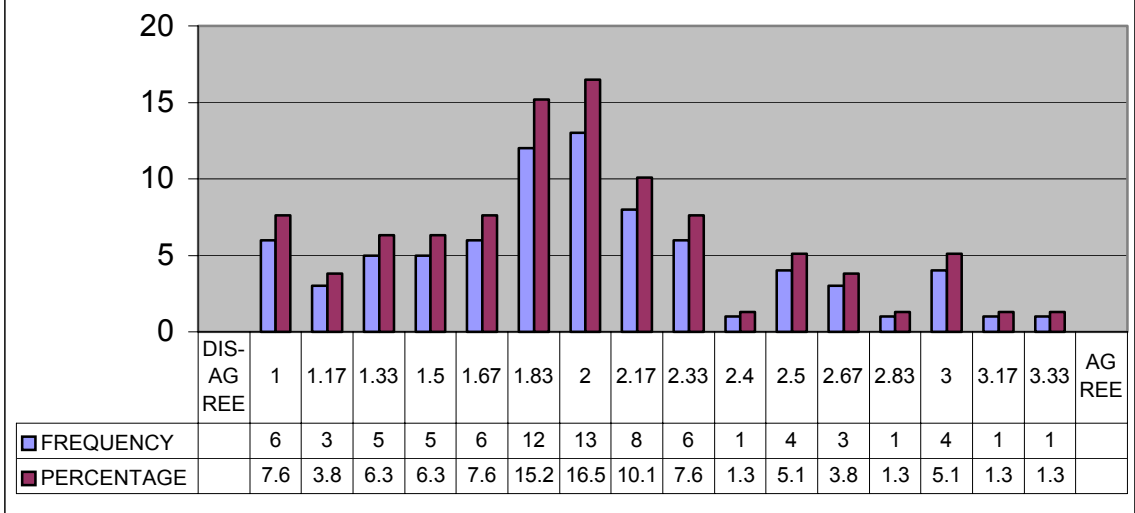
Research Question Two

How significant were the factors of opportunity in making career choices? Nine descriptive or 'descriptor' statements that students again answered on a Likert-like scale rating represented opportunity. These statements dealt with questions such as money, availability of schooling in the area, availability of industry in the area, awareness of the military as an educational resource, awareness of the technical school system, awareness of four year academic colleges, the option to work a while before attending any training, and the option of working in a family business. These responses were grouped together into a composite score and treated as the 'opportunity group.' Composite scores reflecting the student's view of how opportunity influences career choices are shown on table 10.

The responses on a scale of 1 – 4 were quite a bit higher than those in the environment section (See table 10). A score of 1.0 would equal 'strongly disagree'; a score of 4.0 would equal 'strongly agree.' This time the responses ranged from only 1.3% 'mildly disagreeing' (2.00) to a 2.5% in the 'strongly agree' (3.56). There was a definite shift of students agreeing that opportunity had affected their career choice

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TABLE 10: OPPORTUNITY FACTORS DO AFFECT CAREER CHOICES

	DIS-AGREE	2	2.11	2.22	2.33	2.44	2.5	2.56	2.67	2.78	2.89	3	3.11	3.22	3.33	3.44	3.56	AGREE
FREQUENCY		1	3	5	4	7	2	10	6	3	10	5	6	7	5	3	2	
PERCENTAGE		1.3	3.8	6.3	5.1	8.9	2.5	12.7	7.6	3.8	12.7	6.3	7.6	8.9	6.3	3.8	2.5	
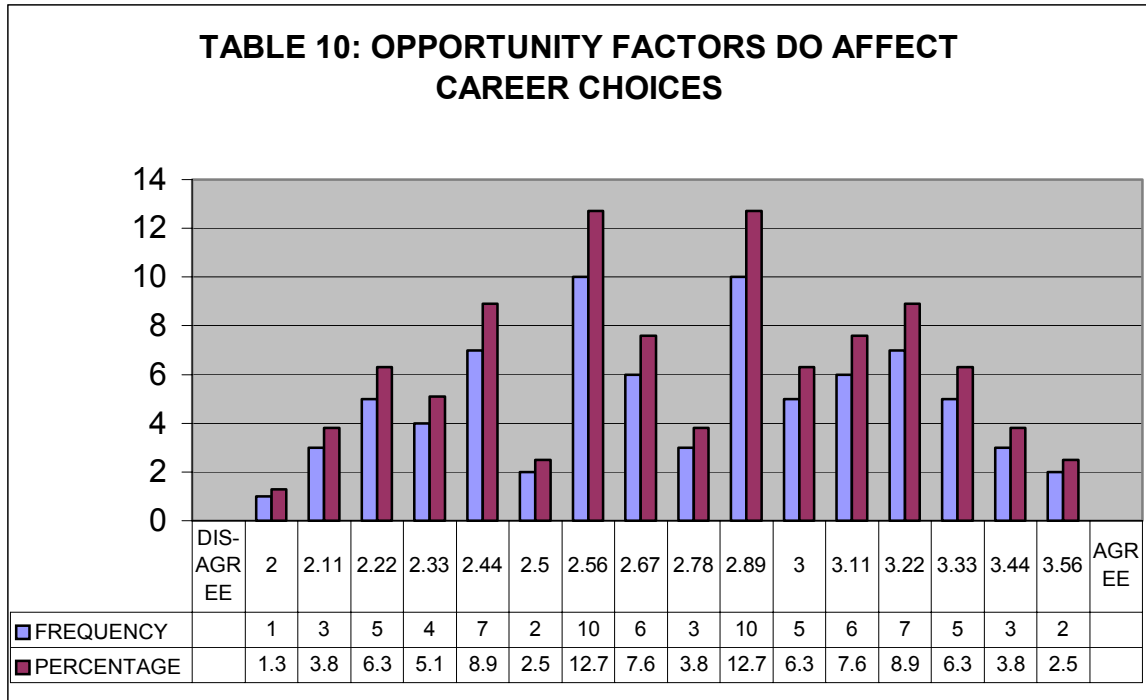
The demographic data showed significance when tested against the opportunity composite factors. Significance is shown in the ANOVA test in table 11, regarding the 'parent's combined education' independent variable. Since this is a two-tailed test, it shows that students whose parents have advanced education see that as a determining factor; just as students who see their parents as under average, in education, having a limiting factor.

Table 11 ANOVA	SIG. 2-TAILED	F calculated	degrees of freedom
ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS	0.472	0.759	74
OPPORTUNITY FACTORS	0.025	3.899	74
PERSONALITY FACTORS	0.533	0.597	74

The statement, 'I am receiving a paycheck now' in survey question eight was tested against 'opportunity' for significance and significance was found. (See table 12). This demographic was found to have significance when tested with the composite category opportunity, which had been created. The significance shows that students concerned with financial responsibility might already be working in order to acquire the needs they feel important. These needs may include saving for an educational future.

Table 12	SIG. 2-TAILED	F calculated	degrees of freedom
ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS	0.6	-0.526	75
OPPORTUNITY FACTORS	0	4.12	75
PERSONALITY FACTORS	0.387	0.87	75

As for individual factors of the 'opportunity composite,' students found 5 significant areas of significance as shown in table 13. The question or descriptor asking if students ' planned to work for awhile, then attend school' showed significance when tested against the demographic showing 'parental education.'

Table 13   ANOVA

		SUM OF THE SQUARES	df	MEAN SQUARE	F	SIGNIFICANCE
"I plan to work in a job for a while then attend school"	BETWEEN GROUPS	12.636	2	6.318	7.42	0.001
	WITHIN GROUPS	61.31	72	0.852		
	TOTAL	73.947	74			

The results of this data point to the concern that students of lower income families due to lower parental education have in regards to the possibilities of higher education. Another area that showed significance or concern for students was the demographic of 'parental education' being tested against the descriptor ' I will have to work for the money needed to attend training' (See table 14).

Table 14   ANOVA

		SUM OF THE SQUARES	df	MEAN SQUARE	F	SIGNIFICANCE
"I will have to work for the money needed to attend training"	BETWEEN GROUPS	8.634	2	4.317	3.699	0.03
	WITHIN GROUPS	84.032	72	1.167		
	TOTAL	92.667	74			

The statement or descriptor, ' I am receiving a paycheck now' was tested for significance against 'I am/was fully aware of what the military offers' and significance was found. (See table 15). These were both descriptors but offer insight into the career choice process. Students who are working might well be aware that the military may offer them the best promise as far as education and a career choice is concerned.

Table 15		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
I am/was fully aware of what the military offers	EQUAL VARIANCES ASSUMED	2.915	74	0.005
	EQUAL VARIANCES NOT ASSUMED	1.771	12.96	0.017

The statement or descriptor, 'I am receiving a paycheck now' was tested for significance against 'I am/was limited to career choice by schooling in the area' and significance was found. This significance is very similar to the 'military' descriptor, showing that students with budget concerns, i.e. 'working and receiving a paycheck', have checked their options when it comes to alternatives in educational opportunities. (See table 16).

Table 16		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
I am/was limited to career choice by schooling in the area	EQUAL VARIANCES ASSUMED	3.067	74	0.003
	EQUAL VARIANCES NOT ASSUMED	2.215	10.145	0.051

Research Question Three

How significant were factors of 'personality' in making career choices? The last area to be addressed was the 'personality' descriptors. These responses reflected attitudes that might be indicative of certain attitudes discussed in the literature review. These four personality descriptive statement dealt with grades, doing career research on their own, being willing to work in a job traditionally held by the opposite sex, and being the type of student who would choose her own high school courses. For the composite scores reflecting the student's view of how 'personality' influences career choices, refer to table 17. A score of 1.0 would equal strongly disagree; a score of 4.0 would equal strongly agree. Student's response to statements regarding 'personality' showed a higher range in

responses. These responses ranged from1.3% disagreeing mildly to 7.6% agreeing strongly.

TABLE 17: PERSONALITY FACTORS DO AFFECT CAREER CHIOCES

	DIS-AG	1.75	2	2.25	2.5	2.75	3	3.25	3.5	3.67	3.75	4	AG RE
FREQUENCY		1	3	3	6	11	13	10	13	1	12	6	
PERCENTAGE		1.3	3.8	3.8	7.6	13.9	16.5	12.7	16.5	1.3	15.2	7.6	
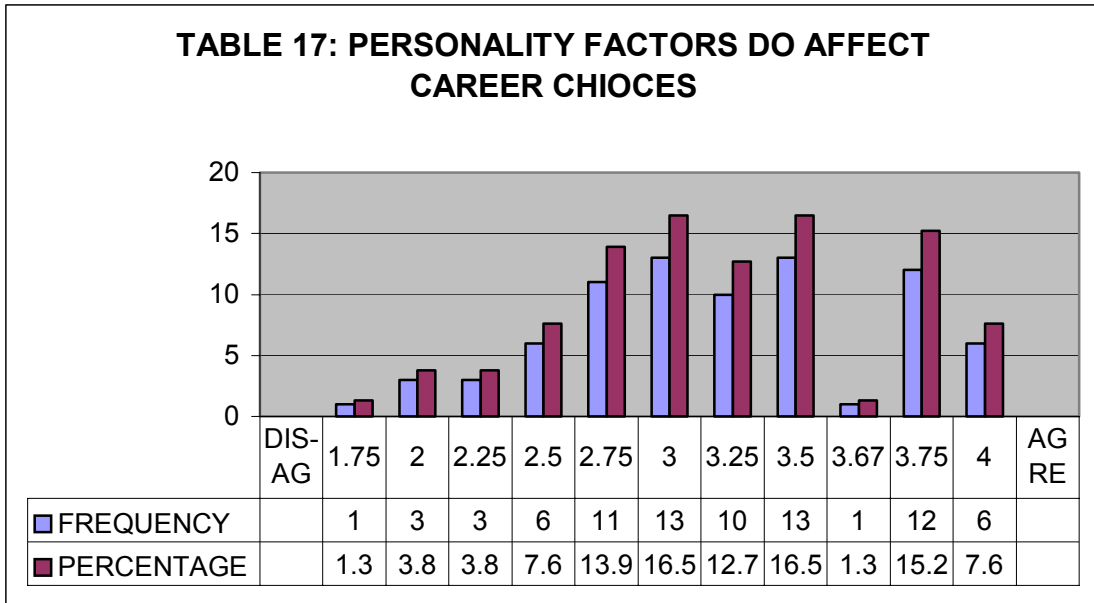
As in the 'opportunity' research question, two descriptors that showed significance when tested against the composite factor of 'personality.' The researcher considered whether students demonstrated a definite 'personality' quality by showing their interest or lack of it in a two-tailed test, when answering the demographic question 'the grade I started thinking about career choices.' Table 18 shows that students who thought about careers early on in life and those who also waited until a decision was required, showed significance The .001 factor shows this is considered by students a very significant factor in choosing a career.

Table 18	SIG. 2-TAILED	F calculated	degrees of freedom
ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS	0.161	-1.415	75
OPPORTUNITY FACTORS	0.412	-0.825	75
PERSONALITY FACTORS	0.013	2.555	75

Not too surprisingly, students who 'have definitely made a career choice' scored significantly in the personality factors as a composite. This two-tailed test showed that both those who have and those who have not made a career choice scored significance in the personality end of the survey. The significance factor of .013 shows there are enough students in this demographic to warrant further discussion (See table 19).

Table 19	SIG. 2-TAILED	F calculated	degrees of freedom
ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS	0.288	1.07	76
OPPORTUNITY FACTORS	0.679	-0.415	76
PERSONALITY FACTORS	0.001	-3.428	76

Three factors or descriptors contributed to the significance in the personality composite. The 'time I started thinking about career choices' tested significant against two other descriptors. One factor or descriptor, 'I am/ was limited to career choices by my grades (See table 20) showed significance in the personality factor. The other descriptor 'I plan to work for awhile then attend training' also tested significant. This might be expected but is confirmed by a significance factor of .006 and .007 respectively.

Table 20		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
I am/was limited to career choice by my grades	EQUAL VARIANCES ASSUMED	2.824	75	0.006
	EQUAL VARIANCES NOT ASSUMED	2.814	69.252	0.006

Table 21

		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
"I plan to work in a job for awhile then attend training"	EQUAL VARIANCES ASSUMED	-2.749	75	0.007
	EQUAL VARIANCES NOT ASSUMED	-2.74	70.051	0.008

The type of student who might 'do career research on their own' tested significant against 'I have definitely made a career choice' (See table 22). This was one of the most exciting finds of the research, that is, students whose personality shows a significant amount of inquiry actually tended to make more definite career choices. The factor of 0.0 leaves no doubt as to the extent of significance.

Table 22		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
"I did /have done career research on my own"	EQUAL VARIANCES ASSUMED	-3.71	75	0
	EQUAL VARIANCES NOT ASSUMED	-3.535	46.426	0.001

Research Question Four

Which factor, environment, opportunity, or personality, was 'most' significant to students at Germantown High School? To determine if indeed there was a 'most' significant factor affecting career choice, the composite scores of environment,

opportunity, and personality were grouped statistically according to the descriptors the students provided. See table 23 for the composite of student's responses.

TABLE 23: STUDENT'S COMPARISON OF THE CAREER CHOICE FACTORS - ENVIRONMENT, OPPORTUNITY, AND PERSONALITY

	ENVIRONMENT	OPPORTUNITY	PERSONALITY
■ MEAN	1.9586	2.7848	3.1572
■ MEDIAN	2	2.7778	3.25
□ STANDARD DEVIATION	0.5505	0.3967	0.5495
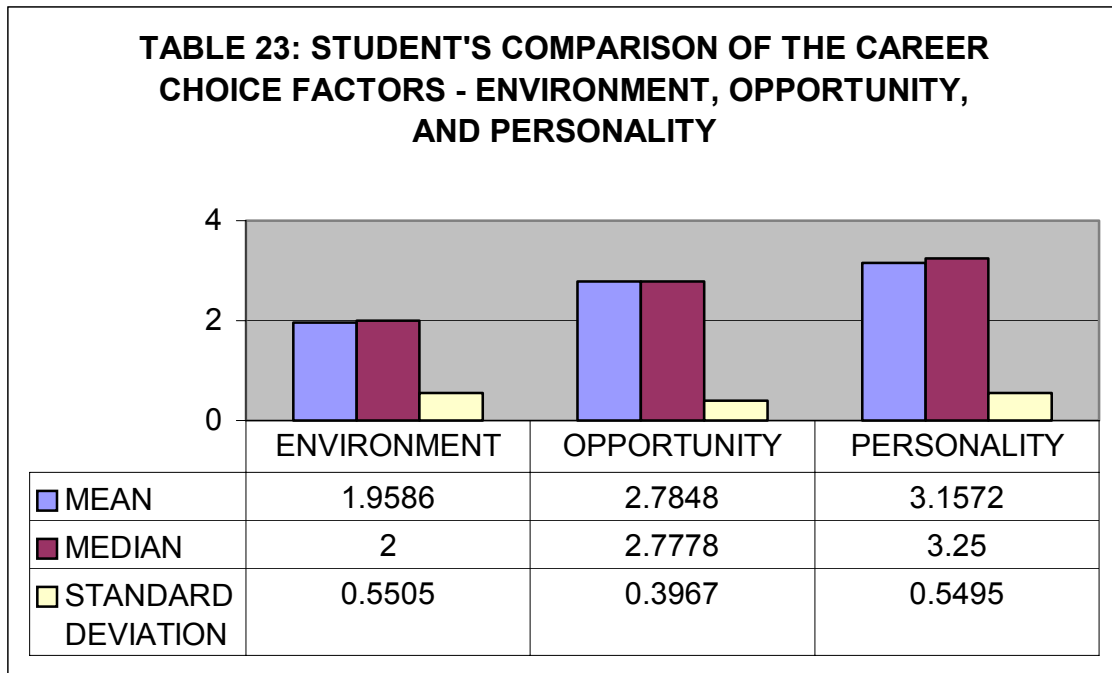
Responses to the individual statements, which made up the composite scores, were tested for significance against the demographics and descriptors of environment, opportunity, and personality. Analysis of the composite scores of environment, opportunity, and personality shows that students believe personality affects their career choice the 'most.' The average 'personality' composite yielded a 3.1572 score, compared to 2.7848 in the opportunity factor and 1.9586 in the 'environment' factor. The 3.1572 score was interpreted as slightly higher than a 'mildly agree,' while the 2.7848 score found in the opportunity score lends itself to a slightly lower than a 'mildly agree.' The 1.9586 in the environmental score actually relates to a 'disagrees mildly,' showing that students do not think 'environment' is a factor in career choice. There is more than a full one-point difference in the factor of 'environment' versus the factor of 'personality.' The

students show in their choice in agreeing to 'personality' type descriptors that

'personality' is their important career choice factor.

Responses to the Survey's Open Question

The researcher thought that providing a place in the survey for personal input

would give some insight into the extent to which these Germantown High School

students were addressing careers. While the answers in themselves do not convey any

statistical results, one can see that environment, opportunity, and personality will interact

if these careers are to be realized. The following list consists of some of the careers

student respondents gave as their intended job:

doctor	vet	something in sales or business
teacher	accountant	orthodontics
elementary school teacher	something in fashion	child care/ child care therapist
social worker	music	nursing
heating and air conditioning,	U.S Air Force	marketing or public relations,
business/finance	international relations	graphic design,
business management	German teacher	human resources
nurse	photographer	early childhood care
pediatrician	business/marketing	marketing/psychology
social worker	web designer	something with kids
certified public accountant	inner city art teacher	engineering
creative director within	advertising agency	forensic science
FBI agent	musical therapist	military
take over my dad's construction company		law

pharmaceuticals   a chef   television news anchor man

military/police   pharmacist   the medical field

education – middle or high school   janitor

nuclear physicist   DNR (Department of Natural Resources)

nursing in childrens hospital   owning a coffee shop   a painter

pilot (commercial or military).

Comments concerning the career choice list are included in chapter 5.

CHAPTER FIVE

Introduction

This study has dealt with factors concerning career choice. This chapter will discuss some of the data, the conclusions, and the recommendations for each of the four research questions that have driven this study. A brief look at the answers that students provided in the open question regarding their particular career goals is discussed next. Conclusions and recommendations for future study of the career choice subject itself are then discussed. The goal is to better understand the process that has many implications throughout the student's life.

Research Question One

Data

How significant were factors of the environment in making career choices? In the area of environment, there were no significant demographics or descriptors. The composite of descriptors as a whole did not show significance. The individual demographics and descriptors were tested against each other for significance, and none was found.

Conclusions

While students do not feel environmental factors are important, they did not show out right disregard for them. There is some interest, just not significant interest. I believe that students do listen to the people around them; and that those people are going to have similar, not significant ideas. The students may unknowingly define their thinking by based on the ideas and suggestions of the people in their support group.

Recommendations

If resources are to be budgeted, environment shows not to have a huge impact on students; therefore, institutions might not choose as a primary benefactor, to invest resources in environmental factors. Students are saying that while environment is important, it is not the most important issue when defining career choices. I believe students can live within a host of environmental factors and survive rather well. That is not to say, that people, places, and things surrounding students as they grow up do not affect their outlook on careers; rather, if industry, government, and the educational system in particular are going to impact our high school students, there are areas other than environment that students feel are more important.

Research Question Two

Data

How significant were factors of opportunity in making career choices? In the area of 'opportunity,' the statements dealing with 'parents combined level of education' (See table 11, chapter 4) and 'I am receiving a paycheck now' (See table 12, chapter 4) were significant factors in career choice. Both the statements relate to the economic area of the student's career development. The student's further response stating that they 'plan to work in a job for awhile, then attend school' (See table 13, chapter 4), and 'I will have to work for the money needed to attend training' is the basis for concluding that economics is an important issue for student's educational foundation regarding career choice (See tables 14, chapter 4). Students aware of any economic hardships may be looking for or could be aided by benefits provided in the military (See table 15, chapter 4). Based on the descriptors 'I am receiving a paycheck now' and 'I am/was limited to career choice by

schooling in the area' (See table 16, chapter 4), students facing economic realities are also could also be looking at limiting themselves to hometown post high school training

Conclusions

Students show their awareness of the economic issues and some solutions or answers by the way they responded to these questions. Since the career process is ever evolving, it is important for students to learn just what their opportunities are, capitalize on them, and then move on. When it comes to predicting costs versus benefits of education, this is where students can make a mistake in either overestimating or under estimating their economic situations. Students should not confine themselves to just one opportunity, nor should they stop trying if the one possible opportunity dries up. If opportunity is not present they have to make their own opportunities or move on.

Recommendations

There are many opportunities for educational facilities, industry, and community to capitalize in cases where students find themselves intellectually qualified for a certain area but economically short of the money needed to complete the training. If business is the primary benefactor of the efforts of our educational system, then industry must support and energize in any way it can, the furthering and promoting of high school career choices. Business could be accomplished in a variety of ways. The literature suggests mentoring and role modeling as positive forces. Business could subsidize the primary grades as well as pre-college programs to insure students that they are acquiring the needed skills and work habits to succeed later in the work world. Schools and businesses could partner to provide real-life scenarios and problem-solving situations from which students could benefit, both from practice and experience. Government could

use schools and business to incubate new ideas and new technology. Students could provide the ready-made labor to work as researchers, while learning in the process. The idea is for students to trade their youthful energy and time for experience and making a success from otherwise unprofitable ventures. Students need to see education, not in terms of economic roadblocks, rather experiential opportunities.

Research Question Three

Data

How significant were factors of personality in making career choices? When the composite was run, the students chose 'personality' as the most important in career choice factors (See table17, chapter 4). Survey questions examined factors concerning researching their career, choosing their own high school courses, grades, and moving into non-traditional areas of work when it came to gender. There were several descriptors that showed significance and added to the overall positive indication that personality was important when choosing careers. A descriptor that showed significance was found in the statement 'the grade I started thinking about career choices' (See table 18, chapter 4). Students who felt strongly about career research saw their personality as an outright factor in choosing a career. The type of student who is serious about a career is one that starts early in their education.

Student grades were also significant. This was a two-tailed test showing that students who did not start thinking about a career early in their education, also felt limited to career choices by their grades. Those students who had thought about their career from early on did not see grades as an obstacle (See table 20, chapter 4). The demographic concerning 'the grade I started thinking about career choices' (See table 21, chapter 4)

when contrasted to 'I plan to work in a job for awhile then attend training' also shows that the time someone starts to think about career choice may not influence that person as to actually attaining that career. The descriptor 'have definitely made a career choice' (See table 19, chapter 4) was significant when tested in the personality area. This is good news. It shows that students who believe in the value of their personality have the faith to make a career choice. That statement is further bolstered by the next significant descriptor 'I did/have done career research on my own' (See table 22, chapter 4).

Conclusions

The students choosing personality as their 'most' significant career choice factor, and then 'definitely making a career choice' because 'they did career choice on their own' lend credence to what the literature is saying all along. Students must know themselves and make their own career decisions based on that self-confidence in their decision-making process. As far as personality being important in the career choice process, I believe that individuals must know themselves and use that self-knowledge as a tool when making a career choice.

Recommendations

The overwhelming recommendation from experts in the field is for students to get involved at any age, at any stage of interest, in any way they feel comfortable. Students should always be testing their ideas concerning possible careers. Career research is a process not a final answer; thus it does not end after high school or college. The more students hone their skills, the better students become at the career choice process. Career research means knowing ourselves, our personality. We can know ourselves better by asking questions like, what is it that we do when we really don't have to do anything?

Where in life do we feel most comfortable? What are we good at even if we are not sure we like doing it? The earlier we begin cataloguing our views on life, the earlier we can either build upon them or discard them and move on. Since career research is a process, the student must develop a system the works for them.

An example of a system I like, use, and recommend would be a portfolio. One of the many things a portfolio does is allow the individual to see in a nutshell, the progress one has made through the years. In this instance it has more value for the owner that for say a potential employer or counselor. Portfolios show areas of concentration that mark areas of interest shown by the owner. Portfolios can take many shapes. A portfolio, for example, could be in diary form or a computer file complete with digital pictures and text or sound. The portfolio can be an evolving collection, always replacing when we feel it appropriate. Sections of the portfolio may include examples of what we have already accomplished, but also notes, newspaper clippings, articles of interests we would like to investigate in the future. This portfolio then becomes something we can show counselors, instructors, and possible employers in the future. Portfolios can help us remember something we had accomplished a long time ago. A skill that we forgot we had. The portfolio should be a reflection of who we are.

<u>Research Question Four</u>

Data

Which factor, environment, opportunity, or personality, was 'most' significant to students at Germantown High School? Looking at the responses in this survey at Germantown High School, I think the students characterize their personality factors as being most important when choosing a career (See table 23, chapter 4).

Conclusions

There are multiple ways to approach our interests; everyone is an individual with their own way of doing things. This brings into the discussion the statement made in the literature that only the student can decide what is best for them. Students must remember that while there are an infinite number of resources available for research, they must decide for themselves what works for them. The student can use all the tools available, but it is the make-up of the student's personality, drive, ambition, and creativity that synthesizes the effort into success.

Recommendations

Students must sort out recommendations wherever they come from. How can students handle well-intentioned advice givers? Evaluating decisions will help students sort out the answers. Again, no one is perfect. The more experienced we become in our decision-making process the more intuitive the process becomes. Experience does not hurt; which is why students must start the process at an early age. The more practice the better. Making small mistakes at an earlier age is not disastrous. That is not to say students should ignore advice; they can save themselves a lot of trouble when they heed good advice. In the end, no one knows oneself better than they know themselves. They are the ones who must make the decisions and then live with those decisions, able to learn and move on.

Students and instructors should always be aware of the potential for integrating academic as well as life experiences into their portfolios. One of the primary reasons why people go to school is to become productive members of society. They can always apply math, English, and history as well as computer, auto mechanics, and consumer education,

to a career. When they find a roadblock in a particular area or interest, students should analyze or isolate what it is in particular that they don't like. If they need help, getting a different prospective from someone they trust may help them move on. They need to ask many questions form parents, instructors, business people, and counselors.

Parents, instructors, business people, counselors, must not follow the urge to preach. Since the student is searching for pros and cons, it is the pros and cons that should be provide when asked for advice. As explained in the literature, it would be wrong to pretend to know what is best for the student. The student must come to a realization in his or her own way, in order for it to be meaningful. Schools, industry, and family must provide an environment that fosters the student's own realization and act as mentors, facilitators, or helpers. The student must build some kind of process that will work for them. Again, the earlier the student starts this process, the smaller and less painful are the failures. There can be failures in order for there to be success.

Student's Career Choice Options

This section deals with the open-ended question "If I graduated tomorrow, my career choice would be_____." Germantown High School students made multiple references to 'teachers, nurses, and marketing. This reflects the interest that is present in high school students in the coming years. There many professionals in those areas now, as well as a need for many teachers, nurses, and business majors in the future. I am amazed at the variety of professions listed. Of the seventy-eight respondents there were over fifty different professions. The fact that students listed a large variety of professions, leads the researcher to believe that students are exploring career choices. Where else would the diversity come from? Students have also stated very specifically

the area within some career choices. This also leads the researcher to believe that unless students were asking questions and taking an interest in the career choice process, the answers would be more superficial.

<u>Conclusions and Recommendations for Further Study</u>

Of 265 surveys distributed, 79 were returned or roughly 30%. This statistic in itself reflects attitude. The researcher understands that surveys in general are looked upon as an intrusion into our free time. Considering that a 100% return rate using a survey instrument is unlikely, there are factors that can raise or lower return percentages. The return rate for this survey was not bad relative to most voluntary surveys. The audience was not a captive one; return was voluntary. What can be concluded from the interest shown? I believe those 30% that felt the subject important to them and had done some research in the career choice process returned surveys without giving it a second thought. These students are involved and feel comfortable relaying their thoughts. Those who are confused with the process, who have not given the subject any thought, or who do not think career choice important, did not return a survey. I believe that there are as many intimately involved in career choice as those who up to this point do not see the importance. Then there are those in the middle who probably would have thought about it more if they would have been led and aided through the process.

It was with great interest that I approached this study. My career choice path is not unlike many people whom I have been privileged to talk with. In doing the research, I was reminded again and again of how complicated the process of choosing a career is. Factors of career choice seemed like a good place to start, but, once I started the research, I realized there are other approaches that could be considered in the process of choosing

our life's work. Students all have some idea what they should be doing to choose a career. A few ideas for future research might include:

1) To study the reasons why some students travel down the same dead end road time and time again.

2) In regards to the system of career choice, a comparison study of the existing process or processes that exist now, and what we could change to better meet the needs of students wishing to develop their career choices.

3) A study determining what parents and business could do to aid in the discovery process could give answers in the mentoring and advising area. An important source of feedback would be those who are post high school and feel they could have done better choosing their career and what it is they would do different. We could evaluate the changes they propose and judge their true effectiveness.

Career choice must be brought into a clearer focus, starting with students in elementary school and continuing beyond. Students seem to make high school a watershed for making the big decision. Career choice is an ever-evolving process. Career choice is a process that includes experimentation, trial and error, decision-making and eventually judgment. Students must be made aware of this process; it has yet to be perfected.

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Permission for Minors to Take Part in Research Survey

I understand that my participation in this study is strictly voluntary and I may discontinue my participation at any time without prejudice. I understand that the purpose of this study is to investigate the career choices that Germantown High School students make. I further understand that any information about me that is collected during this study will be anonymously processed. Students will be asked not to provide a name with the survey. This permission slip will accompany the survey, only to assure parental consent has been given for minors. Surveys received without consent forms cannot be used. Any association of surveys to particular students will be held in the strictest of confidence and will not be a part of permanent school records. The results and interpretations of the study will be made public. I understand that at the conclusion of this study all records, which identify individual participants, will be destroyed.

Signature of student: _____Date: _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____ Date: _____

Note: Questions or concerns about the research study should be addressed to **Michael Borchert, 262-628-4098**, the researcher or **Dr. Michael Galloy, 715-232-2163,** the research advisor. Questions about the rights of research subjects can be addressed to **Sue Foxwell, Human Protections Administrator, U.W.-Stout Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research, 11 Harvey Hall, Menomonie, WI. 54751 phone (715) 232-1126.**

Reprinted in part from samples of the Human Subjects consent forms found: www.uwstout.edu/rps/humnsubjform.doc

Career Choice Survey

Please **do not** write your name on the survey. Before this survey is started, a parent or legal guardian **must** sign a minor consent form. Your participation **is** strictly voluntary and may be discontinued at any time.

<u>Please circle ONE for each item</u>

1. Male   Female

2. I am a: Youngest child   Middle Child   Oldest Child   Only Child

3. Highest education level achieved by Father:
    some high school   high school   some college   finished college   after college

4. Highest education level achieved by Mother:
    some high school   high school   some college   finished college   after college

5. Approximate time researching career choices: _____   day(s)

6. The grade that I started thinking about career choices: <6   6   7   8   9   10   11   12

7. My grade point average has been: 0.000-0.999   1.000-1.999   2.000-2.999   3.000-4.000

8. I am receiving a paycheck now.   Yes   No

9. I have traveled outside of Wisconsin   Yes   No

On a scale of one to four, please circle <u>ONE</u> answer that best describes your response.

1 = Strongly Disagree	2 = Disagree Mildly	3 = Agree Mildly	4 = Strongly Agree

	SD	DM	AM	SA
10. I have <u>definitely</u> made a career choice.	1	2	3	4
11. I have <u>no</u> career plans at present	1	2	3	4
12. My parents had/will have the <u>greatest</u> influence in my career choice.	1	2	3	4
13. Friends are/have been the <u>greatest</u> influence in my career choice	1	2	3	4
14. Teachers are/have been the <u>greatest</u> influence in my career choice	1	2	3	4

Please Continue On Other Side →

	SD	DM	AM	SA
15. Counselors are/have been the <u>greatest</u> influence in my career choice	1	2	3	4
16. Other family members are/have been the <u>greatest</u> influence in my career choice.	1	2	3	4
17. Money has been an issue in choosing a career.	1	2	3	4
18. I am/was <u>limited</u> to my career choice by my grades	1	2	3	4
19. I am/was <u>limited</u> to a career choice by what is schooling is in my area.	1	2	3	4
20. I am/ was <u>limited</u> to a career choice by the industry in the my area.	1	2	3	4
21. I did/ have done career research on my own.	1	2	3	4
22. I am/was fully aware of what the military has to offer.	1	2	3	4
23. I am/was fully aware of what technical colleges have to offer.	1	2	3	4
24. I am/was fully aware of what the four-year colleges have to offer.	1	2	3	4
25. I plan to work in a job for a while, then attend a school or get training.	1	2	3	4
26. I will have to work for the money needed to attend any training after high school.	1	2	3	4
27. I would consider a job held traditionally by the opposite sex.	1	2	3	4
28. I have access to employment in a family business.	1	2	3	4
29. I made the decisions choosing my high school courses.	1	2	3	4
30. My parents, educators, someone else chose my high school courses.	1	2	3	4

31. If I graduated tomorrow, my career choice would be: _____