



ASHESI UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

“GOOD JOBS vs. HAPPY JOBS”:

The Role of “Self-Concept” in Shaping Career Choices

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is a result of my own work and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

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I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis were supervised in accordance with guidance on supervision of thesis laid down by Ashesi University College.

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ABSTRACT

As the Ghanaian graduate labor market is increasingly becoming more competitive to keep up with tertiary institutions churning out 10,000's of students annually, it has become essential for workers to not only find job roles, but to be retained in those job roles. In order to do this, one must consider the factors that influence the career choices of the graduate labor pool. This research studies "self-concept" specifically as a key factor in determining career choices made by the average graduate worker. Beyond this, the study seeks to explore a possible relationship between career personality alignment and job satisfaction. Through the use of online questionnaires, the study sampled data from 80 respondents, representing the graduate workforce of Ghana. Secondary data obtained from journals, books, scholarly and news articles were also used to guide the research methodology and data collection and analysis. The theoretical framework adopted for the purpose of this research was Holland's Theory of Career Choice and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. From data findings obtained, income was the motivator most highly ranked by respondents, whilst career personality alignment was lowly ranked. Career personality alignment was however the main theme underlining job satisfaction levels for respondents. Age played a significant role in determining the job characteristics prioritized by the graduate workforce, with the older sample population placing emphasis on the need for career personality alignment as their main source of satisfaction, whilst younger respondents identified income as the most valuable intrinsic job characteristic.

KEYWORDS: Self-Concept, Self –Actualization, Good Jobs, Happy Jobs, Job Satisfaction

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background

Career choices have an impact on the future roles a person will occupy in life. Careers are generally associated with professions that generate substantial profit margins; however prevailing trends in recent times depict a new appreciation of the workplace beyond the monetary value it offers to members of the workforce. The average employee finds him or herself hopping from one job to another in the quest for a more fulfilling career. The aftermath of such 'job-hopping' is a colossal waste of time and effort on both the part of the 'career-hopper' and employer. Employers must fill the vacant positions that arise, resulting in incurred costs; time-wise and monetary-wise. What factor(s) account for the existence of dissatisfied workers? There are both intrinsic and extrinsic factors that play a key role in job motivation and satisfaction. Certain career experts testify that at the core of career choice is the intrinsic factor that is knowledge of oneself. This brings to light the theory of "self-concept" in career choices.

Self-concept is defined, as a person's personal assessment of himself or herself or what they think of themselves, be it positive or negative. Prescott (Prescott, 2006) defines self-concept as mental awareness, pre-conception and constant interest of oneself. Rogers (Rogers, 1951) an experienced theorist on this concept looked at it from a more holistic perspective of the totality of a complex, organized and dynamic system of learned beliefs, attitudes and opinions that each person holds to be true about his or her personal existence. In his view, there is a constant need for consistency in relation with oneself and a tendency for self-actualization once a

stimulating environment is created. Self-concept is interlinked with an individual's perceived skill-set, experiences and future prospects and their view of themselves through the world's eyes. This notion of self-concept is sometimes used interchangeably with self-actualization and is relevant for this study in defining career awareness, development and job satisfaction.

According to Forbes magazine, about 2 million Americans quit their jobs every month (Hall, 2013). These startling figures of voluntary exits continue to persist regardless of economic uncertainty and an unemployment rate of 7.8% in the US. 'Quits' as referred to by the US Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics continue to show an upward trend, which raises a matter of concern for the US and other countries. In Ghana, it is estimated that almost four million people out of the 14 million people within the age group of 15-64, regarded as active or working population, are without employment, i.e., those who do not receive any kind of earnings, whether as wage payment or as compensation in self-employment (Ghana Web, 2011). There are thus a large number of employees who settle for job roles without considering the role of self-concept due to the very competitive job market.

The problem this quest poses is a large proportion of the populations' workforce are in jobs that pay the bills, but are not aligned with their personal interests (self-concept). There is thus limited room for self-development and growth which is essential to job satisfaction and the success of any individual. This deters workers from maximizing their potential on the job. How many people in the labor force actually get to achieve self- fulfillment; thereby growing and developing their skills and talents in the workplace?

1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT

According to Gallup Polls (as cited in Crabtree, 2013), there are three main classifications of workers; engaged workers, non-engaged workers and actively disengaged workers. *Engaged workers* (“ants”) have passion and a profound connection to their organizational culture underlying all their work activities. Such employees thus boost innovation and productivity in their respective firms. *Non-engaged employees* (“sleepwalkers”) refer to employees that put in their hours at work, sans passion and commitment; they are “checked out” in the workplace. The tendency for non-engaged employees to become actively disengaged is high. *Actively disengaged employees* however deliberately vent out their unhappiness in the workplace and take away rather than adding on to productivity (as cited in Crabtree, 2013).

According to Gallup’s statistics, 13% of employees worldwide are engaged at work; representing one in eight workers and approximately 180 million employees in a 142-country study, in 2011-2012 time frame. Out of the remaining 87%, a whopping 63% of the workforce is not engaged at work whilst 24% are actively disengaged (as cited in Crabtree, 2013). The latter group of employees; non-engaged and actively disengaged can be classified under the “good jobs” category.

“Good jobs” for the purpose of this research are those jobs that typically satisfy an individual’s basic, security, and social needs without necessarily being aligned with their passions. The assumption here is that a rational individual would accept such jobs because of the convenience factor in terms of providing for his or her needs and

not necessarily for the sake of fulfilling their career-oriented passion. “Happy jobs” on the other hand, in this context refer to career choices that are fuelled primarily by passion and drive and less by the need to meet one’s basic needs. Such jobs thrive on self-concept and the need to align knowledge of oneself with one’s career in order to attain self-actualization in the long run. *Engaged employees*, who tend to be innovative, highly productive and who easily identify with organizational culture and vision typically occupy happy jobs. This is not to say that happy jobs do not aim at satisfying one’s physiological, safety and income needs but rather seek to do so by aligning one’s career with one’s self-concept. Happy employees in the U.S are said to have 31%, 37% and 3 times higher productivity, sales and creativity respectively (Achor, 2011). These statistics pose the question why are happy jobs not equivalent to good jobs?’

One major characteristic of the Ghana labor market is the presence of university and other tertiary graduates who are churned out annually to seek for jobs with the formal sector, capable of absorbing just a small percentage of them (Robert, 2014). A survey by the Ghana Statistical Service (2006) reveals that holders of analogous qualifications (comparable to Level 11 in CA, Ghana, ACCA, CIMA and CIM) are the most sought after in the Ghanaian labor market constituting about 25.2%, closely followed by first degree holders who constitute 24.6% of those with entry requirements for job positions (GSS, 2007). In spite of these seemingly favorable statistics, degree holders still struggle to find jobs in the highly saturated Ghanaian job market. According to the Ghana Graduate Business Support Scheme (2012), only 5000 of these graduates are able to secure jobs in the formal sector. What

implication does this have on the graduate workforce? Most graduates are forced to either start their own businesses or to settle for jobs that at least meet their basic needs and work requirements. Most of these graduates thus give very little recognition to the need for career personality fit when making career choices.

This research paper looks at the level of recognition given to self-concept by members of the graduate workforce of Ghana, when they make career choices. It assesses the impact of career personality alignment with job satisfaction in the workplace. What emphasis does the typical member of the labor force in Ghana place on self-concept and actualization in career choices?

This research paper tests the assumption that by aligning one's self-concept with one's career, job satisfaction is likely to increase, which would positively impact performance and output in any organization. Workers can be transformed from being 'non-engaged' and 'actively disengaged' to being proactive and 'engaged' in the workplace. Organizations can thus experience real bottom-line benefits in terms of reduced 'job-hopping' as workers find themselves fulfilled in their work roles, which in turn reflects positively on output levels. Such positive benefits are in line with the outcome of 'happy jobs'. This indeed supports theories such as Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs that recognizes self-actualization as one of the needs that serve as a motivating factor for employees to maximize their potential in the workplace. Holland's Theory of Career Choice is explored to ascertain the extent to which personality types (self-concept) are matched to the working environment in which one finds him or herself.

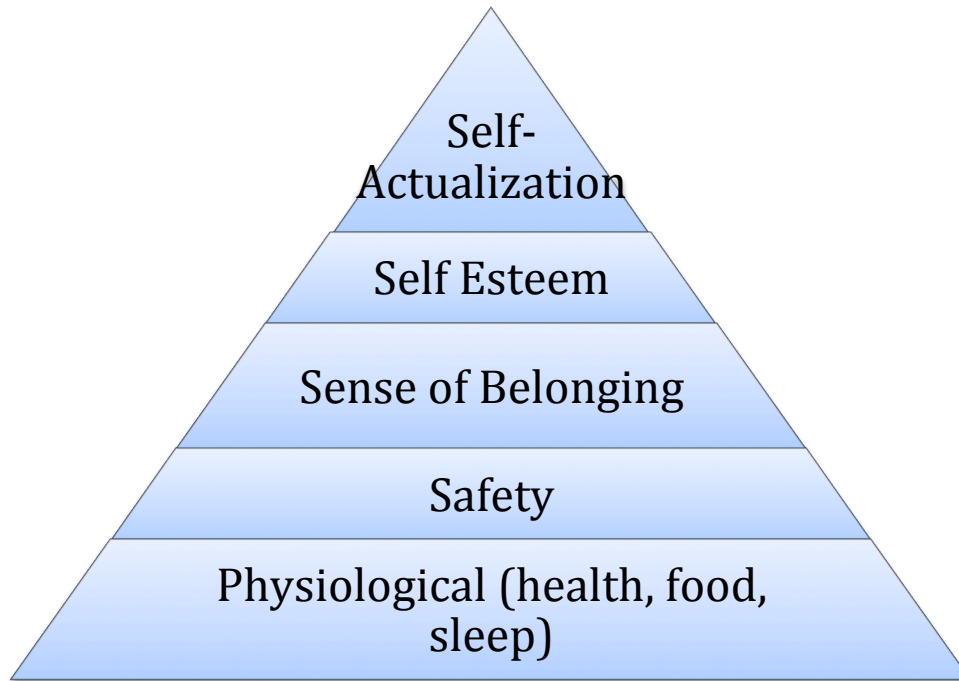
1.2 Theoretical Framework

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs:

This is a needs based theory, which aligns the root of an individual's motivation to the willingness and ability to attain a specific need. Motivation, occupation-wise simply refers to factors, be they internal or external, financial or non-financial that stimulate desire and drive in an individual to remain committed to a job. Abraham Maslow's 1943 Theory of Motivation defines needs in terms of their significance to an individual, thus claiming that some needs are more of a priority than others. This was well depicted in Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs consisting of five sets of needs, apportioned between basic needs and higher-order needs. The most significant needs are represented by the broadest category. According to Whittington and Evans (2005), each of these needs operates at all times, although one deficient set dominates the individual at any one time and circumstance.

For the purpose of this research, this theory was used to ascertain the level of significance employees attach to their basic and higher-order needs when making career choices. Emphasis was placed on self-concept and its role in shaping career choices and influencing job satisfaction. Self-concept in this theory is manifested through self-actualization. This theory enabled the researcher to developing the link between self-concept and self-actualization and its impact on career choices and satisfaction amongst the Ghanaian workforce.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



Holland's Theory of Career Choice

Holland's Theory of Career Choice was the main theory used to guide the methodology and content of the surveys that were administered. This is one of the most recognized and researched theories, widely used by most professionals. Holland classifies people under six personality types, sometimes referred to as Holland Codes, namely; Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising and Conventional. In the same way, working environments can be classified under the distinct aforementioned categories. John Holland's theory emphasizes the need for people to be employed in occupations where they can showcase their skills and abilities; an enterprising individual would thus seek an enterprising environment in their career choice. "People of the same personality working together in a job create

a work environment that fits their type” and rewards their unique skills (Career Key Organization, 2014). Such individuals who align their interests with their career choices are more likely to be satisfied and ‘happy’ on the job. This would allow success and fulfillment on the job and allow employees to maximize their potential.



The personality types closest to each other are more similar than those further apart. This is evident when the personalities opposite each other are compared. This hexagon also applies for working environments and mirrors introversion and extroversion (Jones, 2002).

1.3 Research Questions

Main Question (s)

- What is the role of self-concept in shaping the career choices of members of the Ghanaian graduate workforce?

Sub Question (s)

- Does the Ghanaian graduate workforce acknowledge their individual personality types (Holland's Codes) when making career choices?
- Is there a relationship between career personality alignment and the level of job satisfaction in the workplace?

1.4 Research Objectives

Main Objective (s)

- To explore the role of self-concept in shaping the career choices of members of the Ghanaian graduate workforce.

Sub Objective (s)

- To assess the level of acknowledgement placed on personality types when members of the Ghana Graduate workforce make career choices, as influenced by Holland's theory of Career Choice.
- To determine whether a relationship exists between career personality alignment and the level of job-satisfaction for Graduate workers on the job.

1.5 Significance Of Study

It is becoming increasingly essential for countries to invest in boosting human capital in order to positively influence productivity and welfare along the various sectors in the economy and compete effectively on the global market. As at 2012, the labor force of Ghana generated about \$38.56billion, which was ranked 77th out of 176 countries (NationMaster, 2012). Investing in human capital involves improving worker productivity by exploring factors that incentivize workers to maximize their potential and efficiency, which in turn has positive effects on organizational output. Do people perform better on the job when they can boast of being self-actualized in their roles?

In the U.S alone, an estimated annual amount of \$450billion to \$550 billion is lost due to the actions of *actively disengaged* employees. In the UK government's recent Foresight Programme *Study on Mental Capital and Wellbeing*, sickness absence, 'presenteeism' (disengaged workers) and labor turnover cost the country about £26 billion a year (Cooper, 2011). These numbers are threatening, as they do not even account for non-engaged workers. This thus makes it necessary to explore such parameters as self-actualization and its effects on job satisfaction and labor productivity.

A proportion of the Ghanaian skilled labor force can be classified as being in merely 'good' job roles. This is caused by the fact that due to high unemployment and limited jobs, most workers are either non-engaged or actively disengaged at work. This poses a threat to the objective of the Ghanaian government to promote economic development and growth within the economy, which would in turn boost social welfare. The effect of high graduate unemployment poses a threat to government's ability to cater for the employment needs of its citizens and boost economic development. The study in question is thus significant to the government to help streamline the measures that would improve worker productivity by placing emphasis on work roles being aligned with self-concept to stimulate satisfaction. Government can also revise bureaucratic administrative barriers that inhibit new startups.

This research is relevant in helping to revise the educational curriculum in Ghana. Educational systems can explore measures that would incentivize students to increase awareness of who they are and what roles they would want to occupy in future; allowing self-concept to be paramount in career selection. The implementation

of career services at early stages in education would help shape student career choices. This is essential considering the fact that one's career has a considerable influence on the future roles they would occupy and would serve as a framework to help aspiring undergraduates to be more career-conscious. Students can explore their talents and interests and tailor their career paths to suit these interests, boosting critical thinking and innovation. Frequent participation in personality tests would help students know themselves and know the right work environment that would be most rewarding and would best suit their needs. An investment into career alignment with employee passion would reflect on self-actualization and satisfaction, affecting performance in the economy as a whole. It is thus essential for educational institutions; from nursery to tertiary levels to structure their curricula to include personality tests and career counseling, in a manner that reinforces the need for individuals to be 'happy' in their jobs and to let this reflect in output.

This study is additionally relevant to employers, specifically the Human Resource Department in organizations. An estimated 46% of new hires fail within 18 months of employment (Leadership IQ, 2014). Such statistics reflect on the costs incurred by organization in having to train or re-hire employees. It is thus in the best interest of Human Resource departments under the mandate of their leaders to explore the need for career counseling in helping individuals to discover their personalities and interests and to use these as a framework for making informed decisions in light of career opportunities. Efficient career counseling programs would also help to manage the expectations of individuals, motivate them and make it easier for them to embrace the working world or even join the entrepreneurship movement. This is

because most companies fail to recognize the enormity of the adverse effects on a firm due to *disengaged employees*. *Disengaged employees* have a huge influence on the organizational culture and productivity of a firm. Such employees fail to maximize their potential, boost the entrepreneurial energy and may cause a domino effect of unhappy workers in the work place.

1.6 Outcomes

- The analysis and findings from this research portrays to professionals the degree to which they recognize the need for self-concept in shaping career choices.
- Results from this study provides direction to the research audience, helping them to weigh the outcomes of self-actualization and to steer their career paths in the direction that best emphasizes their talents and maximizes job satisfaction. Employers can take lessons from this and invest in more career counseling and employee-job role compatibility measures to ensure that effort is maximized to generate positive returns.
- Research done around the factors that motivate employees in the workplace in Ghana typically focus on financial sources of motivation or where the focus is on intrinsic job characteristics, research sample tends to be skewed towards the educational or health sector. This specific research thus fills the gap in existing literature by giving a more holistic view of the value of intrinsic motivators like career personality alignment across a wider sample size, the Ghanaian graduate workforce. Industries covered are not limited to health and

education alone, but to engineering, finance, public administration amongst many others.

Outline Of Dissertation

This study is presented in five chapters.

- ❖ **Chapter One-** this chapter introduces readers to the research topic at hand: *‘Good Jobs vs. Happy Jobs: The Role of Self-Concept in Career Choices.* Chapter One studies the background of this topic and how it translates in the workplace in the Ghanaian context. Definition of concepts such as; ‘good jobs’ and ‘happy jobs’ and self-concept were explored. Chapter One also looks at how the key variable; self-concept affects one’s career choice and development, thereby reflecting on one’s job satisfaction and has led to a rise in entrepreneurship. The aforementioned variables are used to present research findings, the objective of this paper, questions it hopes to resolve and the significance of the study for its target audience.
- ❖ **Chapter Two-** this is the theoretical framework of the study. Existing theories such as Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs and Holland’s Theory of Career Choice are focused on and scholarly articles by renowned scholars that are aligned with these theories or contradict them are analyzed. This chapter thus involves a thorough analysis and review of existing literature related to the impact of self-concept on career awareness and job satisfaction. Maslow’s hierarchy of needs and Holland’s Theory of Career Choice is used as the underlying

theories to review and analyze scholarly articles to buttress or present opposing views to the study at hand.

- ❖ **Chapter Three-** this chapter describes the design of the research, the sampling techniques used, the data collection tools and the order of significance. This data is analyzed to evaluate the consistency and relevance of the chosen research topic. The Methodology is guided by theories explored in the literature review and the methods adopted by different scholars.
- ❖ **Chapter Four-** this section outlines the findings; providing any discrepancies between findings and expectations and linking these findings to the theoretical framework in Chapter 3. Graphical illustrations are used to help depict findings obtained after data collection.
- ❖ **Chapter Five-** this chapter presents a summary of the data from the study and also discusses constraints of the study. Practical recommendations, general remarks and conclusions are made in this chapter to aid future research in the significance career personality fit.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE ANALYSIS

2.0 Introduction

Labor is a key component of most businesses. Even highly industrialized companies such as; the manufacturing and automobile industries still require human resources to operate successfully. The graduate labor market in Ghana today is increasingly becoming dynamic and competitive. Most university students are of the impression that after obtaining their degree, they will be entitled to jobs with hefty salaries for successful companies. They are however starting to embrace the fact that a university degree does not guarantee job success in the labor market. Out of the 250,000 youth that join the labor force every year in Ghana, 70,000 of this population are graduates. According to the Ghana Graduate Business Support Scheme (as cited in Boateng & Ofori-Sarpong, 2002), only 5000 of these graduates are able to secure jobs. What implication does this have on the graduate workforce? Most graduates are forced to either start their own businesses or to settle for jobs that at least meet their basic needs and work requirements. Most of these graduates thus give very little recognition to the need for career personality fit when making career choices.

As at 2010, the Ghanaian labor force was made up of an estimated 10.56 million people, ranked 42nd out of 116 countries (NationMaster, 2010). According to the Business and Financial Times, the waiting period for fresh graduates to get a job has now risen from five (5) months to a record three (3) years over a fourteen (14) year time frame (Afful, 2014). Graduates are exposed to a vast array of opportunities to explore. This thus means that due to the surplus number of graduates chasing a limited number of jobs, most graduates are forced to settle for jobs that pay the bills,

without necessarily considering the incompatibility implications with their interests or personality types. This according to Holland would not produce success and satisfaction in the workplace.

2.1 Definition Of Self-Concept

Self-concept is the main variable used in this research to explain factors affecting career choices. This concept explains the career choices decisions of members of the Ghana graduate workforce. The study thus looks at the extent to which graduates acknowledge their personality types and their interests in making career decisions. Holland greatly adopts the concept of 'the self' in his Theory of Career Choice and in defining the various roles present in the workplace; Realistic, Investigative, Conventional, Enterprising, Social and Artistic, essential for career success and satisfaction.

Maslow likewise uses self-concept in a broader sense in his Hierarchy of Needs with reference to self-actualization. This he identifies as a higher-order need present as a factor that motivates employees in the workplace. This analysis explores the meaning of self-concept, how it relates to Holland's Theory of Career Choice and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, the impact on job satisfaction and what other scholars have said concerning the subject matter.

Self-concept is the personal assessment of oneself, with regard to both one's negative and positive traits. Prescott (2006) defines self-concept as mental awareness, pre-conception and constant interest of oneself. Rogers (1951) a well-versed theorist on this concept looked at it from a more holistic perspective of "the

totality of a complex, organized and dynamic system of learned beliefs, attitudes and opinions that each person holds to be true about his or her personal existence”. In Nasir and Lin’s ***The Relationship between Self-Concept and Career Awareness***, a survey is employed to assess a possible causal relationship between self-concept and career awareness, using Piers-Harris Children’s Self-Concept Scale and the Career Awareness Inventory respectively. This study in particular defines self-concept in terms of how an individual feels about his or her ability, their experiences and how others view them. The end results of this survey of 165 12-year old students at the secondary school level depicted a positive relationship between self-concept and career awareness; the higher the self-concept, the greater the student’s awareness of their career. Students tend to associate self-concept with their careers as a way of self-expression and as such the development of self-concept tends to have a direct correlation with career development. This study buttresses the assumption made by the research at hand that self-concept is key in making career choices (Nasir & Lin, 2012). This research by Nasir and Lin (2012) is in agreement with Holland’s theory on career choice.

According to Holland, ‘people who choose to work in an environment similar to their personal orientations are more likely to be satisfied and successful’ (Jones, 2002). This theory of career choice emphasizes the need for knowledge of oneself in order for individual’s to be career conscious and align their careers with their unique interests. Self-concept typically translates into self-actualization or self-fulfillment for most individuals. This is highest-order factor identified by Abraham Maslow in the Hierarchy of Needs.

2.2 Self-Actualization And Career Choice

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs is one of the earliest Need-Based theories concerned with factors that motivate employees in the workplace. This theory studies the "content" rather than processes that motivate people. Maslow uses two main parameters to describe his content theory, firstly; human beings, by nature, want things and are motivated to acquire things that they do not have and once one set of needs are satisfied, those needs are no longer a motivator (Greene & Burke, 2007). Maslow's theory ranks needs from the lowest needs; basic needs to the highest needs; self-esteem needs. It is at the very top of the pyramid that Maslow identifies the growth need, that is self-actualization.

Greene and Burke (2007) in ***Beyond Self-Actualization*** agree with the ideology presented by Maslow in his hierarchy but go further to transcend the boundaries set by Maslow's theory. This article is based on Maslow's ***Farther Reaches of Human Nature*** that claims that there is a definition and process that transcends the self in self-actualization characterized by such terms as selfless, devoted, working at a calling and "being-values" (Greene & Burke, 2007). The underlying belief in this scholarly article is that in order for individuals to attain actualization, they must move beyond the self, this orientation being characterized by transformative thinking and performance. Such people are typically involved in some vocation or calling 'outside of themselves'; selfless-actualization.

Gratton (1980) in the ***Analysis of Maslow's Need Hierarchy With Three Social Class Groups*** attempts to assess the individual's 'Quality of life'. This entails an in depth understanding of the individual's needs and preference requirements.

Maslow's theory is used in this analysis to explain the degree of significance attached to each need by an individual and how they go about satisfying those identified needs. In order to perform this test, a stratified sample is used with three categories; lower class, working class and middle class. Through the use of a test that evaluates 'need level importance', Gratton concludes that the need levels lower than the proponent need having been satisfied by the individual's experience should no longer be of importance and the individual should be unaware of aspects of higher needs until the lower needs have been satisfied (Gratton, 1980). Maslow's Hierarchy however provides limitations in terms of its practicality due to the fact that various researchers have varying interpretations of the theory.

The Q theory used by Gratton, allows the grouping and defining of variables, which makes it easier for readers to interpret the results as compared to most research work done on Maslow's hierarchy which uses factor analysis and makes it difficult to analyze the five-independent need motivators as identified in Maslow's hierarchy.

Cotgrove and Fuller (1972) in ***Occupational Socialization and Choice*** present varying perspectives of the concept of self-actualization and its role in career choices and development. The choice of occupation is one of the symbolic points of a person's life where they are allowed to explicitly define themselves. According to these scholars, in choosing an occupation one is, in effect, choosing a means of implementing a self-concept (Cotgrove & Fuller, 1972). This allows the implementation of self-concept through one's chosen career path. This assertion is aligned with that idea that self-actualization has a key role to play in individual career choices.

Cotgrove and Fuller however present a counter argument with regard to the essence of using self-actualization to guide individual career choices. Cotgrove and Fuller imply that career choice is truly the preserve of a few in societies and as such, not considered as an avenue for self-actualization by the majority in society. This is expressed by the statement, “it is only for a minority that embracing an occupational role is likely to provide a solution... for whom work is expressive and a major avenue for self-actualization” (Cotgrove & Fuller, 1972). Most people thus seek significant roles and express their self-concept elsewhere; for instance in leisure or family life. Occupation hence becomes not so much ‘chosen’ but ‘entered’ for instrumental reasons devoid of commitment or engagement. This perspective presents an opposing view to that posed by this study that self-concept, translates into self-actualization, which is key for career choice and success. This notion of choice may be applied in the Ghana graduate market where tertiary institutions churn out thousands of graduates yearly, heightening the saturated job market and making the prospects of finding new, fulfilling jobs disheartening.

2.3 The Effects of Self-Concept on Job Satisfaction & Performance

According to Holland, an employee’s job satisfaction and turnover are dependent on the compatibility of the employee’s personality and occupation. In ***Determinants of Job Satisfaction among Ghanaian Teachers***, a study is conducted among 270 Ghanaian teachers randomly selected from five public Senior High Schools in the Asuogyaman District of Ghana. This journal article explores motivational factors that create not just job satisfaction amongst the focus group but job retention as well. The article states that determinants of job satisfaction for teachers relate, to whether

teachers perceive teaching as their ideal profession and whether teachers want to change their profession (Appiah-Agyekum, Suapim & Peprah, 2013).

This study discovered that only 51% of the participants were satisfied with their jobs. Amongst the key determinants of satisfaction amongst the identified respondents were factors intrinsic to their profession such as; opportunities for further development in the areas in which they found themselves and self-growth (Appiah-Agyekum et al., 2013). The outcomes and conclusions of this study are in accordance with the relevance of self-actualization in shaping career choices. Teachers in this case study prioritize self-growth and development as essential determinants of job satisfaction. Poor performance in West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examinations (WASSCE) results and Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) as identified by the article are also attributed to not just a lack of facilities but teacher dissatisfaction, helping to buttress the notion that there is a positive correlation between job satisfaction and performance.

Lopez in an article titled ***A Test of the Self-Consistency Theory of the Job Performance-Job Satisfaction Relationship*** adopts parameters to measure self-esteem, job performance and job satisfaction on different samples of employees, both male and female. Results depicted that self-esteem has an effect, both adverse and positive on the relationship between job satisfaction and job performance. Parallels can be drawn between this article and Maslow's claims that his need based motivators; self-esteem included would have an effect on the individual's performance on the job and ability to maximize his or her potential. High self-esteem individuals can be classified under persons who find themselves in the 'happy jobs'

category and as such the positive correlation Lopez draws between job satisfaction and job performance of such individuals applies to happy jobs as well (Lopez, 1982).

Additionally, Holland emphasizes on the need for individuals to be employed in job roles that allow them to express their individuality and strong personality traits. Individuals employed in such roles are more likely to have high levels of self-esteem. It can thus be concluded that all other things being equal, such individuals have a high propensity to enjoy a positive relationship between job satisfaction and performance.

In ***Where Intrinsic Job Satisfaction Fails to Work: National Moderators of Intrinsic Motivation***, Huang and Vliert (2003) seek national characteristics that either strengthen or weaken the relationship between intrinsic job characteristics and job satisfaction. This journal is based on a study of 107,292 employees in 49 countries. Results from this study indicated that the link between intrinsic job characteristics such as challenge, recognition and job satisfaction is stronger in richer countries than in poorer countries. The rationale behind this is that richer or more individualistic countries tend to attach more value to higher-order needs, such as self-actualization and empowerment in the workplace. Extrinsic job characteristics such as income, job security are more closely linked to job satisfaction in poorer countries. This journal entry poses the assertion that in a developing country like Ghana, intrinsic job characteristics would be less relevant to the average graduate employee. (Huang & Vliert, 2003)

Agyepong, Anafi et. al (2004) in ***Health Worker (internal customer) satisfaction and motivation in the public sector in Ghana*** describe factors affecting health worker motivation and satisfaction in the public sector in Ghana. The main obstacle identified, as the cause of dissatisfaction and de-motivation for these health workers were low salaries such that obtaining basic necessities of daily living poses a major problem. This motivator was the most frequently mentioned workplace obstacle with over 95% of staff across the districts making reference to it. This research finding is in line with Maslow's theory, which indicates that there is a hierarchy that exists with workplace needs. Evidently workers in the health sector first acknowledge their basic needs before making reference to other work place motivators. In this journal entry, high emphasis is placed on the role of income in shaping career choices, rather than job personality fit, as identified by Holland. This journal entry corresponds with the results of Huang and Vliert (2003) that less rich countries tend to have a stronger link between extrinsic job characteristics like income and job satisfaction, than intrinsic job characteristics.

Job Satisfaction, Job Performance, and Effort: A Reexamination Using Agency Theory by Christen, Iyer and Soberman (2006), draws parallels between effort, job performance and job satisfaction to assess the influence of these work relationships on each other. The Agency Theory assumes that 'effort is costly to an agent and therefore reduces the agent's utility (or job satisfaction)' (Christen, Iyer & Soberman, 2006). This article tests the notion that effort poses a cost for employees and as such should have a negative direct effect on job satisfaction. However despite the fact that people are said to derive value from work and being happy on the job, the

relationship between job satisfaction and job performance has been found by some researchers to be weak and depicts signs of inconsistencies.

This research highlights the role of self-actualization, influenced by self-concept on career choice. The important question becomes, to what end however? The study of ***Good Jobs vs. Happy Jobs*** assesses the effects of happy jobs on performance and satisfaction. Boehm and Lyubomirsky (2008) make references to happy jobs and the effect of happiness on career success in their article, ***Does Happiness Promote Career Success?*** This article studies the relationship between happiness and workplace outcomes through the use of three types of studies; cross-sectional, longitudinal, and experimental. This went to prove that happiness is positively correlated with work success. The key factor necessary for the work success described by this article is the infusion of self-actualization in one's career making this article relevant to the research study. This article concludes that happy people are more satisfied in the job roles they occupy and have greater autonomy in their duties. Such people are not disengaged at work and less likely to leave their jobs for more fulfilling career options in comparison to less happy people in the work place. A constraint of this study is however that it was conducted with participants outside Africa and success in the workplace may be defined differently by different cultures. (Boehm & Lyubomirsky, 2008)

From the local context, ***Job Satisfaction of Professionals Within the Ghanaian Construction Industry*** by Yirenkyi-Fianko and Chileshe (2012) focuses on job characteristics that create satisfaction for construction workers. The construction industry is chosen for the purpose of this research because this industry plays a

crucial role in the Ghanaian economy, contributing an estimated 10% of Gross Domestic Product. Respondents rank their relationship with their supervisors and workmates as the most relevant contributor job satisfaction and personal development as the 4th most important on a scale of 1-6. The low ranking of personal development contradicts the studies of Hameed (1972) which ranked personal development as one of the most important factors to workplace happiness and satisfaction.(Yirenkyi- Fianko & Chileshe, 2012)

Hameed in ***A Theory of Hours of Work and Non-Work*** seeks answers to factors that serve as motivators for people in their career roles. Integrating the institutional, economic and behavioral dimensions of work helps to address this. The theoretical framework of this paper assumes that “an employee does not want to work unless there is self-actualization on the job” first and foremost (Hameed, 1972). This article is thus clearly aligned with the proposition made by this research concerning the relevance of self-actualization in the workplace. This thus implies that self-actualization has a direct effect and relationship with job performance. Workers who are happy and fulfilled on the job are more likely to maximize their potential and positively influence productivity.

Most of the scholarly articles analyzed by the researcher support the significance of self-concept in the career choices of professionals, including teachers and health workers, especially in the Ghanaian context. This is in line with Holland’s Theory of Career Choice, advocating for alignment of one’s self with one’s career for success and satisfaction. Literary works used would be used to inform the researcher’s

methodology and findings to draw parallels between the results obtained from the articles reviewed and the data findings of this research.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the instruments, research design, data collection and data analysis methods used to gather information from the sample population, for the purpose of this study.

3.0 Operational Definitions

Self-Concept: - Self-concept for the purpose of this study refers to an individual's personal assessment of him or herself, be it positive or negative; with regard to their work interests and personality type.

Self-Actualization: - Self-actualization is the realization of one's potential and talents, considered as a drive or incentive present in everyone.

'Happy Jobs': - For the purpose of this research, happy jobs are jobs that are primarily fuelled by an individual's passion. These jobs imply that individuals are at the higher-order needs of Maslow's Hierarchy; attaining self-actualization and career alignment with their personality and interests.

'Good jobs': - For the purpose of this research, good jobs are jobs that typically satisfy an individual's basic, security and social needs without being aligned with their passion or personality type as identified by Holland. This individual is at the base of the pyramid, attaining their lower level needs.

Job Satisfaction: - Job satisfaction is the extent to which an individual's expectations and desires about their career or job roles are fulfilled.

Graduate: - For the purpose of this research, a graduate refers to a person who has successfully completed a course of study or training in any tertiary institution in Ghana.

3.1 Research Proposition

The research at hand looks at the role of self-concept in shaping career choices of the graduate labor market in Ghana; prospective, recent and seasoned graduates and its effect on job satisfaction in the workplace. This research assesses the emphasis the graduate force places on the need to align their careers with self-concept in career decision making and the effect of this on job satisfaction. From the Literature Analysis, most scholars imply a positive correlation between job satisfaction and job performance, thus data gathered was used to make inferences. It was tested whether most of the respondents have job roles that are aligned with their knowledge of themselves as identified by Holland's Codes using his Theory of Career Choice. Respondents were thus asked to select their personality type, according to Holland's Codes and their industry type. This was assessed against Holland's career clusters, which displays the suitable career type for each personality. The notion that individuals with a greater self-awareness make more informed career decisions and are more satisfied in the workplace was analyzed and the implications of this on job performance were concluded upon. Inferences were made from this study for both the graduate labor force and existing and potential employers on the essence of self-concept and actualization.

3.2 Research Design

This research seeks to assess the role of self-concept in the career choice decisions of the Ghanaian graduate workforce and its impact on the level of job satisfaction. The online questionnaires are structured to enable respondents to easily comprehend what information is required of them. This made the questionnaire more

conducive for the purpose of the research considering the fact that the researcher was not present when respondents filled the survey. High emphasis was placed on the confidentiality of responses received and the inability of even the researcher to determine the identity of respondents to enable authentic responses from the target market. The online survey was in 3 parts elaborated below;

Part A; This section is on self-concept and career choices. It looked at the extent to which respondents are aware of themselves, their interests and personality types and the influence this has on their career choices. This section was based on Holland's Theory of Career Choice and his six (6) identified Codes. Respondents were thus asked to identify themselves with one of the given codes or personality types and then to determine the category in which their jobs fell.

Part B; This section was intended ascertain the level of job satisfaction of respondents. It thus allowed respondents to rank a given number of motivators on a scale of 1 (lowest motivator) -5 (highest motivator) including; income, job security and career alignment according to their level of significance to the respondent. Respondents were also required to measure their level of satisfaction on the job and their likelihood to leave their current job roles. This section of the questionnaire gave room to respondents to give their detailed opinions. This allowed the researcher to analyze themes underlining respondents' opinions and to test the existence of a relationship between career personality alignment and the level of job satisfaction. According to Holland, individuals who had an alignment of their career with their personality were likely to experience success and satisfaction on the job. This section thus allowed the researcher to test this notion by assessing the job satisfaction level

and likelihood to switch current job roles of respondents with a career personality alignment.

Part C; This section was focused on generating demographic data such as the age range and gender of respondents. Such personal questions were brought at the very end of the survey to allow respondents to be more comfortable answering them. Inferences were also made from basic demographic data of respondents to test Maslow's theory that self-actualization becomes relevant only after lower-level needs are attained, using age as the determining factor.

Questionnaires were administered through an online survey using email, web and social media channels. This allowed a relatively large amount of people to be reached within the limited time allotted for data collection and made it easy for the survey to be snowballed.

3.2.1 Sampling Procedure

WHO	SOURCES	SURVEY TOOLS	SAMPLE SIZE	FINDINGS EXPECTED
Ghana Graduate	Ashesi University Alumni	Online Survey:	80 people	The level of acknowledgement

Workforce	Ashesi University Faculty	Facebook (posting on group pages and sending personal messages to the sample population)		given to self-concept when career choices are made.
	Vodafone Ghana			A possible relationship between career personality alignment and job satisfaction.
	Oxford and Beaumont Solicitors			
		Email		
		Linked In (personal messages)		
	DHL			
	Contacts acquired through Snowballing in various industries; Finance, Engineering and Public Administration.	WhatsApp (broadcast message)		

The audience of this research was the graduate labor market of Ghana. This segment consisted of both recent and seasoned graduate labor force in various industries in Ghana. No specific industry was chosen because employees from any given industry can relate to issues of career choices and job satisfaction and as such would be able to respond to questions posed in the survey to be administered. The rationale for the selected sample group (the graduate workforce) was the fact that administered surveys would require a certain level of literacy in order to generate the required responses, in the absence of the researcher (surveys are online). Information generated from this selected group was used to draw a possible

correlation between self-concept and its impact on self-actualization, career choices and job satisfaction.

Purposive sampling methods were adopted for the purpose of this research. This non-probability sampling method was used because only a select group of the labor force of Ghana; graduates were targeted. For the purpose of this research, the graduate labor force had the necessary information the research demanded. Data was generated from employees across various industries in Ghana from Law, to Health services to Media to Telecommunications. The implications of this were that to a large extent, quality and well-varied data was obtained from a wide array of industries and individuals with different work experiences were represented.

Snowball sampling techniques was also adopted for data collection purposes. This non-probability sampling technique was key and allowed existing subjects of the study to recruit future subjects amongst their contacts or acquaintances. This was helpful as it led the researcher to other subjects with similar characteristics as existing subjects, who may otherwise have been difficult to access. This was applied to the graduate workforce for employees who find themselves in various work roles.

3.3 Data Collection Procedures

Online surveys were the main survey tool used to generate information from respondents for the purpose of this study. This tool was convenient, saved time for both respondents and the researcher and was relatively cheaper in comparison to interviews or focus groups. This is because a large proportion of the Ghanaian workforce can be found on one social media site or the other. This especially applies

for the graduate workforces who like to build and maintain strong networks beyond the workplace through social media channels. The specific online survey tool used was a Google form. This was sent through email, web and social media services. The Google form provided a link by which respondents could easily follow up and fill the questionnaire. Information from questionnaires filled was then stored in a folder for the researcher to view and analyze.

The main social media channels used were Facebook, WhatsApp and LinkedIn. The link was posted on group pages on Facebook. Personal messages also had to be used in forwarding these messages to individual contacts on Facebook and LinkedIn. This is because due to the wide level of coverage on such social platforms, people tended to disregard such links and even treated it as spam. The use of personalized messages thus attached an emotional connection to forwarded messages and increased the likelihood of potential respondents following up on the survey. On WhatsApp, messages were forwarded to contacts currently in jobs and these contacts were encouraged to forward the survey link to their workforce counterparts (snowballing technique) in order to generate more responses. This gave the researcher access to employees in the engineering, medical and public sectors among many others who would have otherwise been difficult to access.

This survey method of data collection was quick, easy to use and understand. The online survey comprised both close-ended and open-ended questions. The open-ended questions enabled the generation of more detailed, opinionated answers, whilst the close-ended questions generated simpler, straightforward and easy-to-

analyze data. The online survey was both structured and non-structured to allow room for discretion on both the part of the researcher and the respondents.

Ideally, the online surveys generated responses from 86 respondents. This was accounted for by large proportions of the graduate workforce, both recent and seasoned who patronize social media services and constantly find themselves online, be it on twitter, WhatsApp or Facebook. Online surveys were a useful medium to reach a large number of the graduate population and to take advantage of snowballing techniques to recruit further respondents.

3.4 Data Analysis Tools

Data collected through the online survey was screened for qualified respondents. Individuals who did not meet the requirements of a 'graduate' as defined by the research were not considered when data gathered was analyzed. The main aim of the research was to determine the role self-concept and career personality alignment played in career choices and in determining job satisfaction. Qualitative data was obtained through the open-end questions used in the online survey, which allowed respondents to share their opinions and even present views not considered by the researcher. Such qualitative data allowed the researcher to explore the relationship between career personality alignment and job satisfaction and the level of acknowledgement placed by employees on self-concept. Content analysis was thus used to identify themes present in responses and how many times they occurred. This was then used to make inferences or draw correlations between factors like age and the level of job satisfaction of respondents. Microsoft excel was additionally used and graphical illustrations helped to represent some of the responses generated.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.0 Analysis and Findings

A total number of 86 people responded to this survey and data for the purpose of this study was obtained from 80 members from the sample of graduate Ghanaian workforce members employed across various industries. This was because the other 6 responses were invalid. The survey was administered by posting the link to the researcher's Facebook and LinkedIn pages as well as to the respondents' email addresses. LinkedIn was selected because it is a networking site for the working population and Facebook because it allows access to a wide range of people from varying backgrounds. Respondents were then asked to kindly forward the link (snowball) to others as this would help lead the researcher to other subjects with similar characteristics as existing subjects, who may otherwise have been difficult to access.

4.01 Main Objective

The main objective of this research was to explore the role of self-concept in shaping the career choices of members of the Ghanaian graduate workforce.

4.02 Research Questions

- Does the Ghanaian Graduate workforce acknowledge their individual personality types (Holland's Codes) when making career choices?

- Is there a relationship between career personality alignment and the level of job satisfaction in the workplace?

4.1 Demographic Data for Respondents

There were a total of 86 responses received from the questionnaires administered online but 80 of these were valid. These respondents comprised members of the Ghanaian graduate workforce. Respondents were both male and female, aged 16 years and above.

Gender and Age Distribution of Respondents

Fig 4.2 and Fig 4.3 below show the gender and age distribution of the respondents to this survey respectively.

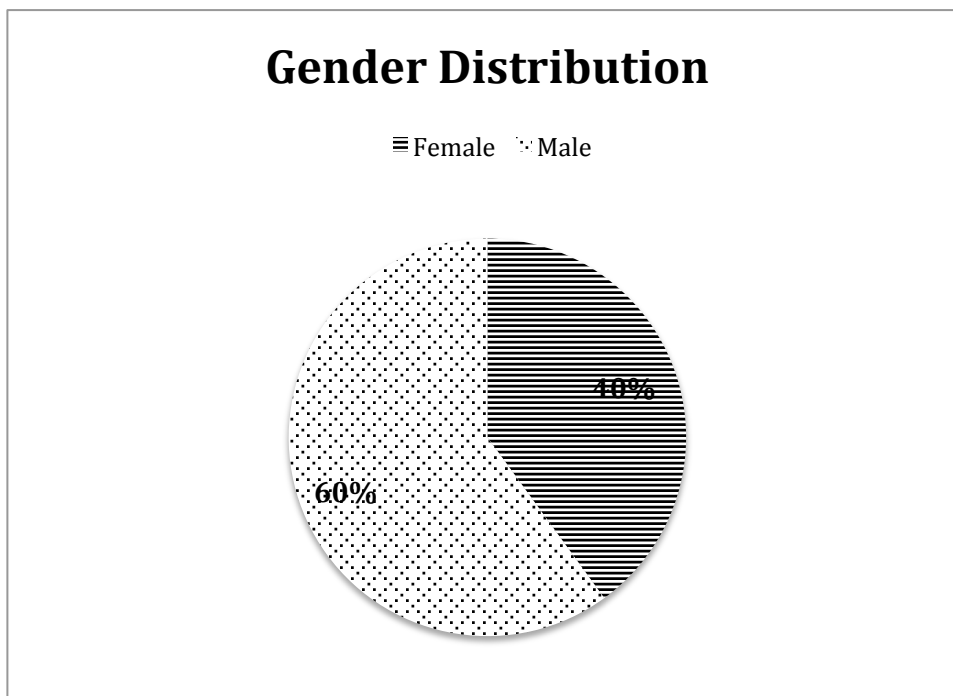


Fig 4.2

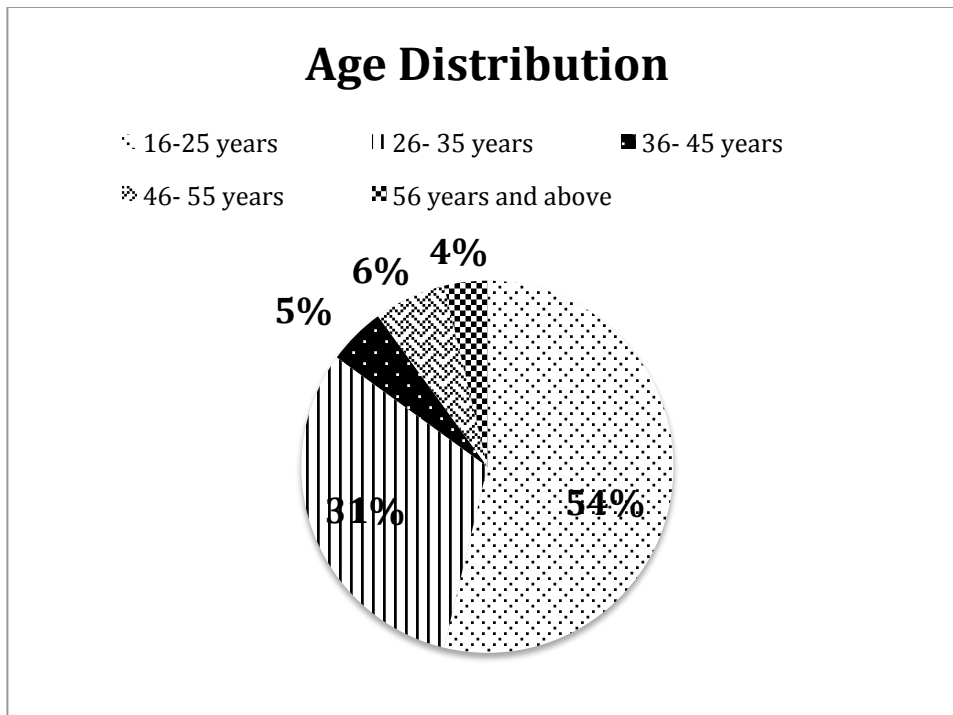


Fig 4.3

From Fig 4.3, the majority of respondents fall within the younger age bracket. This constitutes 54% of the age distribution of respondents. Recent graduates, who have been working for less than five (5) years in their respective industries fall within this proportion. The lowest proportion under age distribution is occupied by those aged 56 years and above, with a 4% proportion of the sample population.

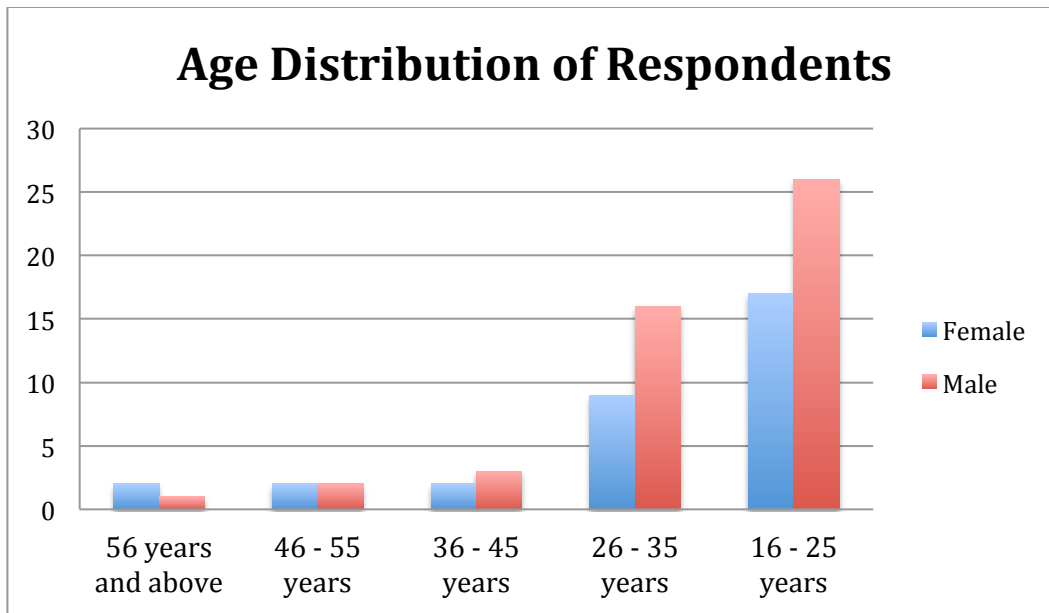


Fig 4.4

Career Categories

The respondents to the administered survey cut across various industries in Ghana.

This is shown in the diagram below.

Agriculture	Arts
Hospitality & Tourism	Government, Public Administration
Architecture & Construction	Human Services & Human Resources
Health Science	Marketing, Sales
Law, Public Safety, Security	Information Technology
Manufacturing	Business- Management, Administration
Engineering, Mathematics	Education & Training
Transport, Distribution, Logistics	Finance

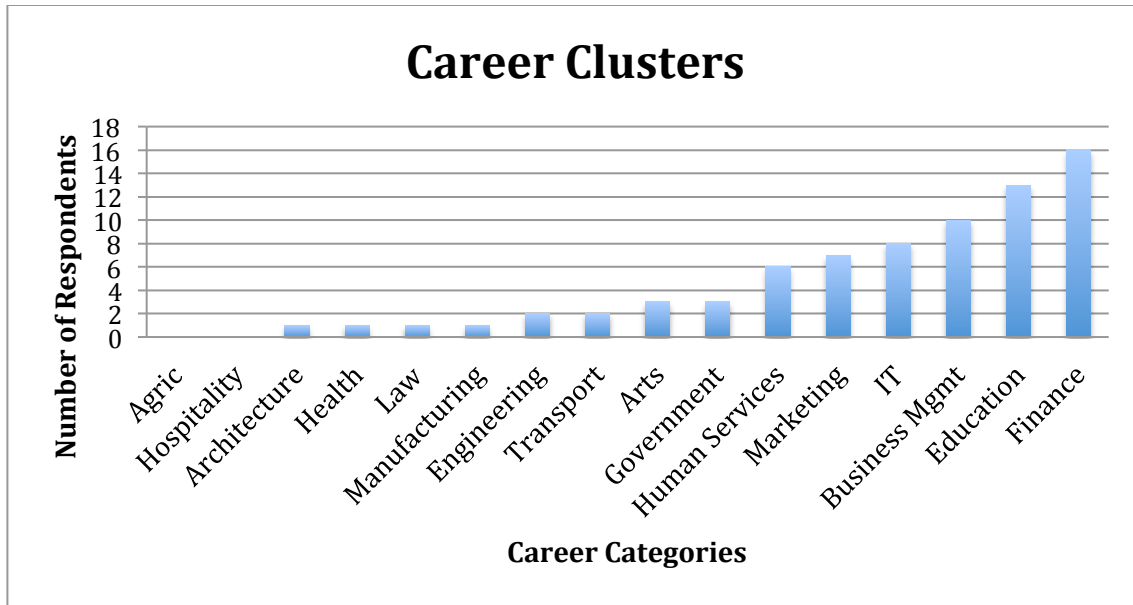


Fig 4.5

The first (1st) and second (2nd) industry categories most represented by the obtained data were Finance and Education & Training at 20% and 16.3% respectively. Industries like Agriculture and Hospitality were however not represented according to the data generated from respondents. In spite of the fact that agriculture is a key sector in the Ghanaian economy, contributing an estimated 44% of Gross Domestic Product and employing almost 60% of the workforce of Ghana, it is poorly represented by this data observation. This may be as a result of a large proportion of the workforce employed in agriculture being illiterate and as such unable to access the media by which the questionnaire was administered. Hospitality in Ghana typically does not serve as an exclusive career, but usually supplements other job categories such as customer service in the finance industry.

Other categories specifically mentioned by respondents included, marketing, media and management consulting.

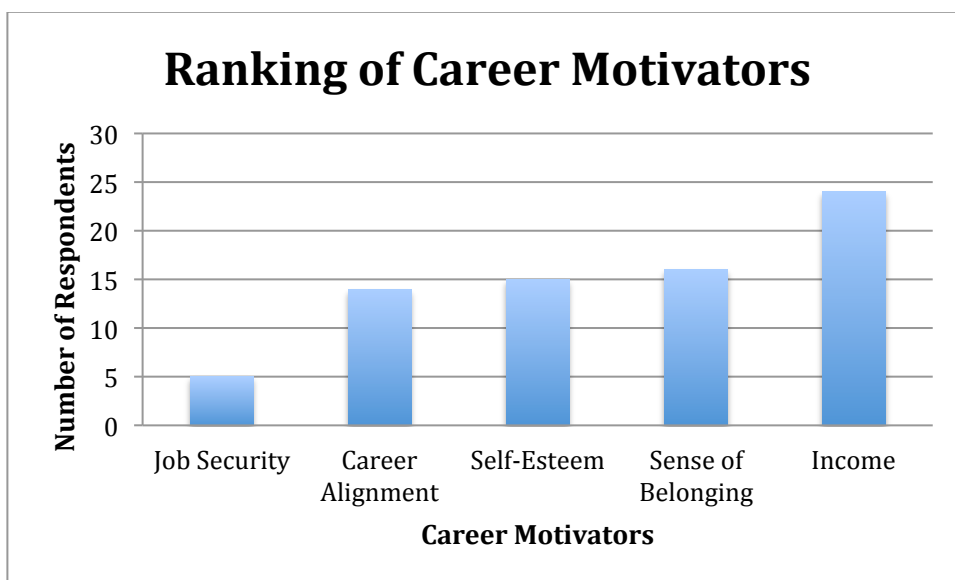


Fig 4.6

Fig 4.6 was drawn based on the question, “ Rank each of the following motivators based on their significance to you in your career selection (by ticking from 1- lowest motivator to 5- highest motivator)”. Notably, career alignment with personality type was assigned the second lowest ranking from respondents, with only 14 respondents selecting this option as their highest motivator. Income on the other hand was given the highest ranking, with about 32.4% of respondents ranking this motivator as the most significant to them in their careers. The most lowly ranked career motivator from respondents was job security. With regards to the research question, it is evident from this low ranking that there is little acknowledgement given to career personality alignment when graduates are making career choices.

Ranking of Job Satisfaction

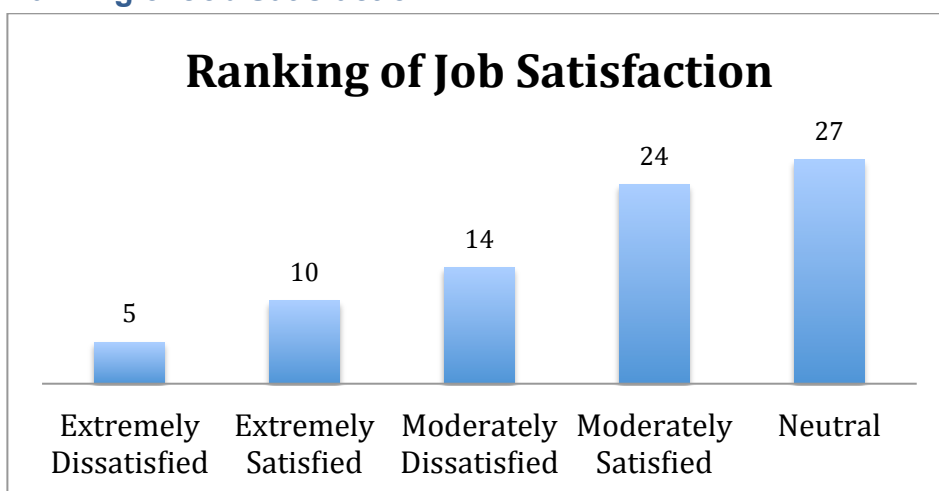


Fig 4.7

Likelihood to Switch Current Job Roles

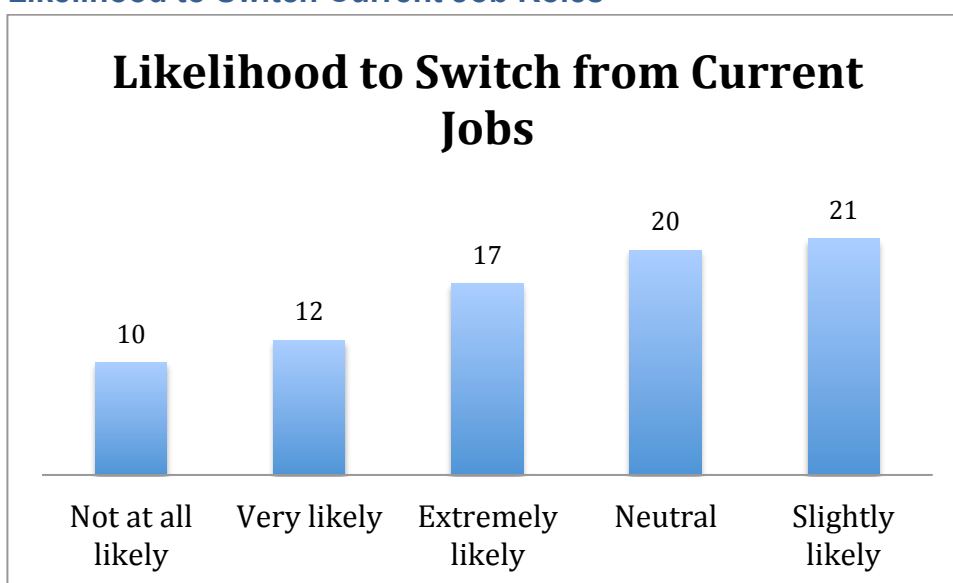


Fig 4.8

In the table below, the themes were generated from the questions, 'how likely are you to look for another job outside of your current job?' and 'how satisfied are you with your job?' Respondents were asked to not only assign a rank in response to

each question but to give detailed feedback to explain their selected responses. The numbers shown thus represent how many times a specific theme showed up in respondent's feedback to the given question. Thus, 30 out of all respondents who gave feedback, related their likelihood to switch job roles or not to career alignment whilst the number of times this theme recurred in response to the level of job satisfaction of respondents was 19 times. This table was drawn by sifting individually through feedback given by respondents in order to identify themes and to take note of how many times they occurred.

THEMES	Likelihood to Switch Jobs	Level of Job Satisfaction
Career Alignment	30	19
Growth	5	10
Working Conditions	8	15
Income	4	4
Safety Net	5	5
Opportunities to Explore	6	5

Respondents were asked the likelihood of them switching from their current job roles and their level of job satisfaction in their respective job roles. For both answers, there

were recurring themes that run through the responses of those respondents who provided their views. There were 58 of such respondents in all. Their responses included their level of comfort in their job role, opportunities to explore, income, career alignment, growth and working conditions. The table above displays the number of respondents representing each theme under the posed questions. Evidently, the most recurring theme in respondent's feedback was career alignment or job personality fit. Respondents who ranked satisfaction lowly and stated that they were likely to switch current roles stated this as the case due to factors such as "NSS Placement; Not in line with my interests" and " I am not excited about what I do". Those with a high level of job satisfaction and happy in their current roles gave reasons like; "I am very satisfied with my job because it is helping me acquire the requisite skills needed for my long term career goals", "My role has my personal interest and motivates me to do more ". This contradicts with the ranking of career motivators by respondents where they actually identified

Interestingly income, which was ranked highest as the motivator with 32.4% of respondents giving it the highest ratings, was the least mentioned theme amongst responses for the level of satisfaction of respondents or their likelihood to change their current job roles with approximately 7% of ratings.

Word Association

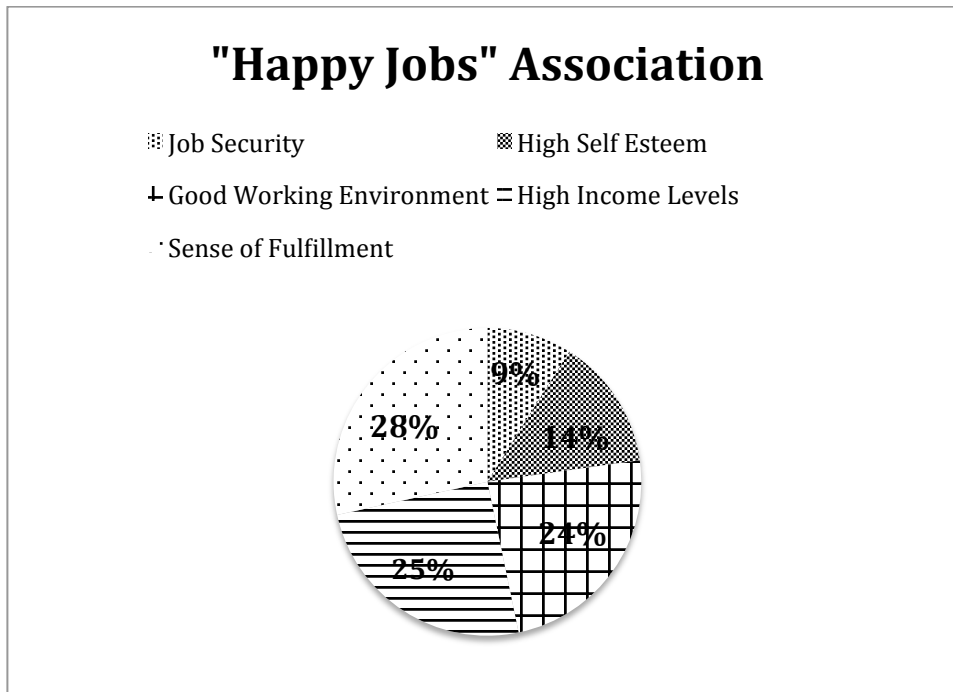


Fig 4.9

The factor that most respondents associate “happy jobs” with is “sense of fulfillment”, closely followed by Income.

4.2 Comparing Findings to Literature & Theoretical Framework

With regard to the research proposition that is based on Holland’s Theory of Career Choice, it was presumed that self-concept of an individual has a great influence on their career decisions. To a large extent, most the data findings coincide with this assertion. When asked to rank career motivators in terms of their relevance, income was the highest ranked motivator, whilst career alignment ranked low. This affirms Huang and Vliert’s (2003) work, which claims that there are national characteristics that moderate the individual-level relationship between job characteristics and job satisfaction. Employees in developing countries are said to have intrinsic job

characteristics that tend to be less closely related to job satisfaction. This observation is evident in the ranking of career motivators by respondents representing the Ghanaian workforce. In determining the factors that matter the most when making career decisions, workers rank income as the highest factor, supporting the notion that extrinsic job characteristics like income are more closely linked to job satisfaction in such countries. This is tied to the fact that lower needs for example, shelter and money are still more salient than higher needs like are self-actualization. Maslow's hierarchy thus comes to play here, depicting that certain needs (in this case, basic needs) must be attained before higher-order needs become essential to the average worker.

Regardless of the fact that income is highly ranked by respondents as the key job characteristic that motivates them in the workplace, this factor is the least recurring theme in explaining worker satisfaction. Be it high or low level of worker satisfaction, income as a motivation or demotivation factor was hardly given any recognition by respondents. Career alignment on the other hand, which was ranked lowly in terms of its significance in the workplace, was the most recurring theme amongst respondents' views. This makes career personality fit a 'must have' in the workplace regardless of whether employees recognize it or not. When asked whether or not they were likely to change their current job roles, most respondents made references to job personality fit and personal development or a lack thereof as the rationale behind their selected responses. Inferences can be made from this that career personality fit may not be the first thing employees or employers consider as a key motivator for employees on the face-value, but is essential in order to retain

employees. Personal development and opportunities to utilize one's interests, complimented by remuneration would thus help workers maximize their efforts more and stay in their roles longer. Income may be recognized as a key factor when making career choices however it is not enough, employees who value income alone would simply switch to the next job that offers higher remuneration. As identified by Appiah-Agyekum, Suapim (2013) et al in ***Determinants of Job Satisfaction among Ghanaian Teachers***, all the teaching respondents identified that their level of satisfaction is positively influenced by more opportunities for professional development. Career personality fit evidently influences not just motivation but job satisfaction and retention. This also agrees with Holland's theory that states that careers that emphasize on personality type tend to be more rewarding and satisfying.

It was also observed that the age of respondents influenced their level of acknowledgement of self-concept and job satisfaction in the workplace. Respondents below the 35 year age band, tended to place a lot of emphasis on income or and job security as significant motivators in their career choice selection. This observation ties in with Maslow's hierarchy of needs, as most of these graduates are new on the job market, they are more concerned with meeting their lower-end needs such as food and income than higher-order needs like self-actualization. From further analysis, respondents aged 46 years and above ranked career alignment with personality type highly, assigning either a 4 or 5, with 5 being the highest motivator when asked to rank job motivators based on their significance in the workplace. This is in accordance with Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, which says that each need operates at all times, but one deficient set dominates the individual at any one time

and circumstance. The circumstance factor in this case is age and the assumption made is that by the time the average employee is above 45 years, they would have satisfied their lower level needs and can thus focus on higher order needs such as attaining self-actualization. Most of respondents within this age group found themselves highly satisfied in their career roles and unlikely to switch from these current roles. Reasons given touched on them gaining personal development on the job and being employed in roles that allowed them to express their sense of self and interests.

Nasir and Lin's (2013) work looks at the relationship between self-concept and career awareness amongst 162 high-school students. A positive relationship is established between self-concept and career awareness. In the same manner, about 68% of respondents said that they had undertaken personality tests with regard to making their career choices. These respondents tended to place a high emphasis on the role of their personality and had job roles that were correspondent with their personality type according to Holland's Career Clusters. People who described themselves as Creators, Persuaders or Helpers, thus found themselves in Arts, Finance and Education & Training respectively. Evidently, through participation in personality tests, higher self-concept implied higher levels of career awareness.

According to career clusters and Holland's Codes there are certain interests that match certain career roles and as such the personality types identified by Holland, namely; Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising and Conventional fit perfectly into certain career paths. The purpose of the career categories and personality types (according to Holland's Codes) in the survey were thus to identify if

there was a clear alignment between selected personality types of respondents and their chosen careers. Further inferences were thus made on the impact of career alignment or a lack thereof on job satisfaction or the likelihood of respondents to leave their current job roles.

It was observed that for respondents who had undertaken personality tests, there was a good linkage between their personality types and their existing careers. Respondents, who therefore classified themselves as 'helpers', according to Holland's Career Codes were mostly found in the education sector, which was in line with Holland's placement for suitable careers for this personality type. Respondents who had undertaken personality tests and could clearly classify themselves according to Holland's Codes additionally testified that they were more satisfied due to the ability to grow and develop their skills and personalities in their job roles.

4.3 Comparing Findings to Research Objectives and Questions

The main objective of this research was to determine the role of self-concept in shaping career choices of members of the Ghana graduate workforce. Data collected and findings obtained indicate that indeed self-concept plays a key role in shaping career choices of respondents. Self-concept is key to job motivation, especially in the educational sector. With regards to what respondents associate with 'happy jobs', self-concept in the form of career personality alignment is the most highly ranked motivator.

The question was asked if the typical graduate acknowledges self-concept when making career choices. On the face value, most respondents seem to rank income highly in comparison to self-concept when making career choices. Respondents seem to value extrinsic factors such as pay on the job over intrinsic factors like job security and career alignment. However when asked to relay factors that account for satisfaction or dissatisfaction in the workplace, the most recurring theme in responses is directly related to self-concept. Reasons given by respondents in explaining levels of job satisfaction, mainly center on the need for career personality fit. This answers the last research question and helps establish a relationship between career personality alignment and job satisfaction. The more aligned one's career is with their personality type and interests, the more likely they are to be satisfied in their job role.

CHAPTER 5: LIMITATIONS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Limitations

In spite of the fact that there was a method of preventing unqualified respondents from filling the online questionnaire, there is no guarantee that respondents who indeed filled the questionnaire were all eligible to do so. This is because due to the online nature of the questionnaire the researcher could not verify data given and had to trust information generated from respondents.

The limited amount of time allotted to data collection posed a threat to the successful completion of this research. This is because due to the online nature of questionnaires, the researcher could not track respondents to ensure that they had filled the surveys and as such, constant reminders had to be sent out to remind potential respondents to fill the form. This resulted in the researcher obtaining 86 responses as opposed to the target of 100 responses.

There was also very limited scholarly data available on the workforce of Ghana with regards to the research topic at hand. This meant the researcher had to rely on news articles and non-Ghanaian articles in order to create a foundation for the research.

The snowball technique had pros, but proved to be a limitation at certain points in time. This is because the researcher to some extent had to rely on respondents to forward the survey link to others and as respondents were not obligated to do so, this sometimes seemed to lag and proved a challenge, as time was very limited.

5.2 Conclusions

This research required respondents to be recruited from the graduate workforce, across various industries in Ghana. Industries represented included finance, engineering, law, information technology and public administration. The purpose of this selection was to explore the emphasis the typical graduate worker places on the need to align his/her career with his personality type or interests when making career choices. From data collected, it is evident that gender had no direct influence on career personality alignment for respondents. Factors like age however influenced the level of recognition respondents gave to career personality fit. Whilst respondents aged 15-25 years ranked income as the most significant career motivator, the older generations, (46 years and above) ranked intrinsic values like career alignment as the most important motivator in the workplace. The older respondents were evidently more aware of themselves and therefore more career aware. This corresponds with Nasir and Lin's (2012) work, which establishes a positive relationship between self-concept and career awareness.

It was observed that regardless of the fact that income was highly ranked as a key motivator to the graduate workforce, career personality alignment was the main factor that determined the level of job satisfaction or likelihood of employees to switch or maintain job roles between all age groups. This depicts a relationship between career personality alignment and job satisfaction in the workplace and goes to show that income may attract employees but personal development is essential to retain employees in their work roles. This observation buttresses Holland's theory that

identifying one's personality type and aligning this personality with one's career would improve success and satisfaction in the workplace.

Most respondents who had undertaken personality tests were employed in careers that were compatible with their personality types and testified that they were happier in their job roles. This reflected on their level of self-actualization and job satisfaction in their occupational roles.

5.3 Recommendations

The implementation of career services at early stages in education will help shape student career choices. This is essential considering the fact that one's career has a considerable influence on the future roles they will occupy and will serve as a framework to help aspiring undergraduates to be more career-conscious. Students who are introduced to personality tests early on are more likely to embrace the idea of self-concept and therefore be more career-aware as conveyed by Nasir and Lin (2012). Such students can explore their talents and interests and tailor their career paths to suit these interests, boosting critical thinking and innovation. Frequent participation in personality tests will help students know themselves and know the right work environment that will be most rewarding and will best suit their needs.

Efficient career counseling programs employed by companies and Human Resource professionals of various organizations will also help to manage the expectations of individuals, motivate them and make it easier for them to succeed in the working world. This is because most companies fail to recognize the enormity of the adverse effects on a firm due to 'disengaged' employees. An investment into career alignment

with employee passion will reflect on self-actualization of employees and job satisfaction, affecting performance in the organization as a whole, positively. If companies place emphasis on career personality fit for its employees, employees are likely to be happier, thereby increasing satisfaction, employee turnover and retention in the workplace (Appiah-Agyekum et. al, 2013).

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Appendix A

RESEARCH TOOLS

Sample Questionnaire: Ghana Graduate Workforce

The purpose of this questionnaire is to gather data for a research on the role of self-concept in shaping career choices amongst the Ghanaian workforce.

Information obtained from respondents for this research would be

- **Confidential**
- **Solely used for the academic purposes.**

Your participation in this study is very much appreciated.

“This research protocol has been reviewed and approved by the Ashesi University Human Subjects Review Committee. If you have questions about the approval process,

Contact: Chair, Ashesi University HSCR, (irb@ashesi.edu.gh).”

PART A: Self-Concept & Career Choice

Please tick the most accurate response

1) Are you a worker?

☐ Yes

☐ No

2) How long have you been working for?

☐ 5 years and below

☐ 6 – 10 years

☐ Above 10 years

‘Happy Jobs’: - For the purpose of this research, happy jobs are jobs that are primarily fuelled by an individual’s passion.

‘Good jobs’: - For the purpose of this research, good jobs are jobs that typically satisfy an individual’s basic, security and social needs without being aligned with their passion.>>>move upwards

3) What 3 things come to mind when you think of a ‘happy job’?

☐ High Income Levels

☐ Self Esteem

☐ Sense of Fulfillment in Your job

- ☐ Opportunity to Rise through the Ranks
- ☐ Working Environment
- 4) Have you ever undertaken any personality tests with regard to making your career choice?
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- 5) What category does your career fall within?
- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Agriculture | <input type="radio"/> Education & Training |
| <input type="radio"/> Architecture & Construction | <input type="radio"/> Human Services |
| <input type="radio"/> Health Science | <input type="radio"/> Marketing, Sales |
| <input type="radio"/> Hospitality & Tourism | <input type="radio"/> Government, Administration Public |
| <input type="radio"/> Information Technology | <input type="radio"/> Business-management, Administration |
| <input type="radio"/> Arts | <input type="radio"/> Finance |
| <input type="radio"/> Law, Public Safety, Security | <input type="radio"/> Other:..... |
| <input type="radio"/> Manufacturing | |
| <input type="radio"/> Transport, Distribution, Logistics | |
| <input type="radio"/> Engineering, Mathematics | |

Consent Form

I would like to ask your permission to be part of the respondents for my Thesis research topic: ***“Good Jobs vs Happy Jobs”: The Role of Self-Actualization in Shaping Career Choices***. The purpose of this study is to ascertain the emphasis the typical or aspiring member of the graduate labour force in Ghana places on self-concept and actualization when making career choice decisions. This study would also look at the new movement of entrepreneurs in Ghana and the role of self-actualization in fuelling this movement.

Your participation as a respondent will be confidential and would be used for academic purposes only. Generic terms like, ‘respondents’ would be used to make any references to subjects of the research to guarantee anonymity. It should however be noted that you are free to be a part of this research activity and you are free to stop at any moment during the process of responding to posed research questions. Your action to respond to this research is completely voluntary and would attract no penalties whatsoever should you opt out at any point in time. If you agree to be a part of this study, your response would be treated with utmost respect and highly valued. The confidentiality of your response would be prioritized at all times.

The risk of being a part of this study is the cost, in terms of time to you as a respondent. The benefit of being a respondent of this research is that you would facilitate the ability of the researcher to generate information on the research topic and you can take pride in adding to a pool of knowledge on the subject-matter. If you have any question at any point in time whilst partaking in this research you may address it to me, the principal investigator and I would respond to your posed question.

For further information, you can contact my supervisor Dr. Esi Ansah by

➤ email: eansah@ashesi.edu.gh

“This research protocol has been reviewed and approved by the Ashesi University Human Subjects Review Committee. If you have questions about the approval process, please contact Chair, Ashesi University HSCR, (irb@ashesi.edu.gh).”

Signature:.....

Date:.....