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Relationship between vocational guidance and multiple intelligences: an inseparable scientific perspective

Relación entre orientación vocacional e inteligencias múltiples: una perspectiva científica inseparable

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129

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Abstract

The article deals with the relationship between vocational guidance and multiple intelligences. People can experience and explore different career options and paths, which involves conducting research, talking to people working in different industries, doing internships or professional practice, and engaging in personal and professional development activities. It is necessary for the activities and decisions made during this process to be in line with the student's goals and objectives, so as to generate a sense of coherence and purpose in their developmental path. However, most of the time, this responsibility is left in the hands of the students. Teachers, counselors, or career advisors in educational institutions make little effort to develop guidance that promises better achievements for students when choosing their college major. In this sense, the article analyzes vocational guidance from the perspective of different theories and how a better purpose can be achieved if Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences is considered in relation to vocational guidance and choice. Finally, some practical resources for making educational decisions are mentioned.

Keywords: Vocational guidance, vocational choice, substantive theories, multiple intelligences.

Resumen

El artículo trata sobre la relación entre la orientación vocacional y las inteligencias múltiples. Las personas pueden experimentar y probar diferentes opciones y caminos profesionales, lo que implica realizar investigaciones, hablar con personas que trabajan en diferentes industrias, realizar pasantías o prácticas profesionales, y participar en actividades de desarrollo personal y profesional. Es necesario que las actividades y decisiones tomadas durante este proceso estén en consonancia con los objetivos y metas del estudiante, de manera que se genere un sentido de coherencia y propósito en su camino de desarrollo. Sin embargo, la mayoría de las veces esta responsabilidad se deja en manos de los estudiantes. Los docentes, consejeros u orientadores de las instituciones educativas poco esfuerzo hacen por desarrollar una orientación que augure mejores logros en los estudiantes al momento de elegir su carrera universitaria. En este sentido el artículo analiza la orientación vocacional desde la perspectiva de diferentes teorías y como se puede lograr un mejor propósito si se considera la teoría de las inteligencias múltiples de Howard Gardner en relación con la orientación y elección vocacional. Finalmente, se mencionan algunos recursos prácticos para tomar decisiones educativas.



130

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Introduction

Choosing a career is one of the most important decisions a person can make in their life. However, many times this choice is made without considering the skills and abilities of each individual, which can lead to job and personal dissatisfaction. That is why vocational guidance has become a fundamental tool to help individuals discover which activity or profession brings them the greatest satisfaction and personal fulfillment. In this context, Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences has gained great relevance, as it acknowledges that each individual has unique strengths and abilities that should be taken into account when choosing a career. This article will explore the relationship between vocational guidance from various theories such as multiple intelligences and present some practical tools for making informed educational decisions.

Vocational Guidance

Vocational guidance is a fundamental process in every individual's life, as it involves a deep understanding of oneself to discover which activity or profession brings the greatest satisfaction and personal fulfillment. Before delving into this process, it is essential to understand what vocation itself means.

The term *vocation* comes from the Latin word vocare, which means "*alling* or *act of calling* In this sense, vocation refers to an individual's inclination toward a specific action or activity, in which one aspires to achieve a maximum level of fulfillment. This inclination can be artistic, professional, or occupational and constitutes an internal force that drives us toward a specific goal.

D'Egremy (2022, p.7) defines vocation as "la disposición particular de cada individuo para elegir la profesión u oficio que desea estudiar y ejercer, de acuerdo con sus aptitudes, características psicológicas, físicas y motivaciones"¹. In this sense, the process of choosing a career and professional development is crucial in a person's life, as the choice of a career or profession can have a significant impact on job satisfaction, personal development, and overall wellbeing. It is important to choose a career that aligns with the interests, abilities, and values of each individual, as this will contribute to their success and happiness in the workplace.

Vocational guidance plays a key role in this process by providing tools and resources for individuals to explore and know themselves, identify their strengths and weaknesses, and understand their interests, values, and professional goals. Additionally, vocational guidance provides information about different career options, job trends, educational requirements, and professional development opportunities.



¹ The particular disposition of each individual to choose the profession or trade they wish to study and pursue, based on their aptitudes, psychological and physical characteristics, and motivations.

Vocational guidance also helps individuals overcome doubts, indecision, or fears that may arise during the career choice process. It provides a safe and confidential space for individuals to express and explore their concerns and receive support and guidance.

However, according to Vidales (2013), there are other perspectives that focus on the well-being associated with the performed activity, that is, being led toward a purpose or destination. In this sense, being vocationally located implies carrying out work in a pleasant, interested, and efficient manner, providing joy, kindness, and attention to those with whom one works or offers professional services.

Additionally, according to the Ministry of Education of Peru (2013), vocation is a process that begins in the early stages of children's development through an understanding of their environment, the diversity of games, and explorations that influence their future vocation. This process involves the formation of values, the development of identity, self-esteem, and personality, as well as the discovery of appropriate capacities. In this way, vocation is intertwined with the opportunities and limitations of reality.

Importance of Vocational Guidance in the Career Choice Process

Vocational guidance plays a fundamental role in the career choice process as it helps individuals make informed decisions about their academic and professional future. Correspondingly, vocational choice is a complex process that involves the consideration of various internal and external factors. Firstly, a person's interests and abilities play a fundamental role in choosing a profession. It is important that the individual is attracted to and has the ability to perform tasks and activities associated with the chosen career. Additionally, values and personality must also be considered, as a profession should align with the individual's principles and way of being. Heppner, *et al.* (1994) emphasize the importance of interests, abilities, and social values in vocational choice.

However, these internal factors are not the only ones that influence vocational choice. External factors, such as gender and socioeconomic level, also play a role. Professional stereotypes and cultural expectations can limit an individual's career options, especially in societies where certain careers are deemed more suitable for men or women. Ducoing (2005) asserts that gender, so-cioeconomic level, and professional stereotypes deeply rooted in society are of particular relevance. Additionally, socioeconomic status can influence the possibility of accessing certain professions, as some require a significant financial investment. Gonzalez & Lessire (2005) add to the list of determining influences gender, socioeconomic origin, as well as pressures exerted by the family environment and close friendships.



132

Vocational choice also aims to find a profession where an individual can fully develop and leverage their abilities and talents. It is important for a person to find a career that allows them to express themselves and grow both personally and professionally. Additionally, it is necessary to consider demand and space in the economically active population. Choosing a profession with low demand or few job opportunities makes little sense, as it could hinder career develop-

ment and have negative consequences on the individual's economic life. Studies by De Garay (2001) and De La Mano & Moro (2013) have reported that the personal, professional, and academic goals of students play a significant role in this choice.

There are studies that assign great importance to vocational guidance in career choice. In this regard, Yamada & Castro (2013) have found that a significant percentage of higher education graduates regret the decision they made to pursue a university career. Quispe (2014) emphasizes the importance of a choice in line with each individual's vocational guidance as a way to avoid and prevent future dissatisfaction and frustration in students.

Theories and Approaches Relevant to Vocational Guidance

There are several relevant theories and approaches in the field of vocational guidance. Some of the most notable ones include:

• Career Development Theory: According to the theory proposed by Donald Super, the vocational choice process occurs throughout life and is influenced by various factors such as personality, interests, skills, and the socioeconomic environment. Super (1968) contends that professional development is divided into two stages: the growth stage and the exploration stage.

In the growth stage, which spans from birth to 14 years old, exploration, information search, and identification take place. During this period, individuals seek references from significant figures in their environment, such as school, family, and the community, among others. These figures play an important role in self-discovery and the development of self-concept. In this stage, occupational preferences are more related to the person's emotional needs rather than their professional skills and interests. Additionally, these preferences tend to change over time.

According to Busot (1995), the growth stage is divided into the following phases: (a) Fantasy Stage: From birth to 11 years old, characterized by the pursuit of pleasure, attraction to power-related activities, distortion of time perception, lack of objectivity, quest for adventures, excitement, and questioning of fantasy. (b) Interest Stage: Manifests between 11 and 12 years old, during which interests based on the individual's personal preferences develop and may change unstably. Additionally, contact with occupational reality begins, and it is understood that decision-making should be based on one's own motivations and interests. (c) Capacity Stage: Extends from 13 to 14 years old, representing the moment when individual aptitudes and capacities consolidate as they are put into practice through various activities such as games, sports, household and school tasks. Furthermore, the individual's self-concept strengthens.

As for the exploration stage, it refers to the process of researching and discovering an individual's interests, skills, values, and personality. This stage is part of Super's career development



model, which also includes the growth, establishment, maintenance, and decline stages.

During the exploration stage, individuals typically have the opportunity to experiment with and try out different professional options and paths. This involves conducting research, talking to people working in different industries, participating in internships or professional practices, and engaging in personal and professional development activities. Researchers like Morán *et al.* (2012) maintain that this stage occurs between the ages of 15 to 24. During this period, individuals test behaviors developed in the previous stage, and the performance of roles in both fantasy and reality combines to try to fulfill the most important vocational task of adolescence: defining the problem of choice. This means that adolescents seek to strengthen their skills and abilities but also may modify and readjust their self-concept as they play different roles.

In Colombia, Super's theory can be applied to explain the professional development process at different stages of education. In Secondary Education, spanning from ages 11 to 14, adolescents dedicate themselves to discovering and assimilating values, interests, and needs. During Middle Education, covering ages 15 to 16, and Higher Education, ranging from ages 17 to 21, young people seek information about educational opportunities and university careers.

Motivation Theory: Initially advocated by Maslow, his hierarchy of needs theory establishes that people have different levels of needs, ranging from the most basic (physiological) to the most complex (self-actualization). According to Maslow, people are motivated to satisfy these needs in a hierarchical order. Cano (2008) argues that Maslow's theory conceives motivation from a humanistic perspective, creating a hierarchy of human needs that are satisfied in a specific order.

Motivation theory and vocational guidance are related in the sense that both focus on understanding and explaining the factors that influence people's decisions and behaviors regarding their career or work.

Motivation theory refers to the study of the psychological processes that drive and direct human behavior. It examines how needs, desires, goals, and expectations affect how people are motivated and respond to different stimuli and situations.

Vocational guidance, on the other hand, aims to help individuals make informed and satisfying career decisions. This involves exploring and understanding individual skills, interests, personality, and values, as well as the demands and opportunities present in the work environment. The main goal of vocational guidance is to help individuals find a job or career that aligns with their characteristics and personal goals.

In this regard, motivation theory can be applied in vocational guidance to understand what factors motivate individuals to choose a specific career or profession. For instance, someone



134

may be motivated by the pursuit of success and recognition, while another may be motivated by passion or the desire to contribute to society. Understanding these motivations can help counselors guide individuals toward careers that are meaningful and satisfying for them.

Furthermore, motivation theory can also provide tools and strategies to promote motivation and engagement in career development. This may include setting clear goals, fostering self-determination and autonomy, providing positive feedback, and creating a work environment that promotes satisfaction and personal growth.

It is worth noting that in educational guidance, it is necessary to consider both internal and external motivation proposed by McClelland and Atkinson. The relationship between educational guidance and internal and external motivation lies in the fact that educational guidance can influence students' motivation. Educational guidance can assist students in developing internal motivation by providing them with information, emotional support, and practical resources to make educational decisions. For example, counselors or advisors can help students identify their interests and strengths and connect with educational opportunities that align with their personal goals. Finally, educational guidance can also influence external motivation in students by providing them with incentives and external rewards. For instance, educational guidance may offer scholarships, awards, or recognition to students who achieve certain academic objectives.

Theory of the Activation Model of Vocational and Personal Development or Interacting Models (MID).

This theory, proposed by Pelletier, is based on the idea that career development and personal identity are interconnected and mutually influential. Pelletier (1978) points out that vocational choice is the result of an evolutionary process that requires continuous educational practice, the construction of a professional and personal project, and an understanding of the necessary possibilities to carry it out.

The central premise of the theory lies in the activation of vocational and personal development through three main processes: (a) Cognitive Activation: This process involves acquiring the know-ledge and skills necessary for making vocational and personal decisions. It includes the development of self-awareness, exploration of interests and values, acquiring information about career options, and assessing personal skills. (b) Motivational Activation: In this process, the goal is to increase motivation for both career and personal development. This would involve setting clear goals, establishing a connection between personal and vocational goals, and seeking self-efficacy to achieve those goals. (c) Contextual Activation: This process focuses on the environment and resources available to the individual. It includes social support, learning opportunities, access to information, and organizational policies and practices that can impact vocational and personal development.

Romero notes that vocational guidance is divided into four phases with different tasks and specific skills: (a) Exploration Phase: During this stage, the individual is exposed to new experiences



13'

and information related to their education. (b) Crystallization Phase: In this stage, a general idea of the guidance process is formed, and a potential vocational project is considered. (c) Specification Phase: At this point, the individual faces possibilities and limitations, analyzing and specifying their personal project. What is desirable is evaluated against what is likely. (d) Realization Phase: This stage involves commitment and responsibility to the decision made, as well as planning strategies to carry out the established project.

On the other hand, it is essential to highlight that the guidance process is based on three fundamental principles: (a) Experiential Principle: According to Pelletier (1978), knowledge is acquired through the individual's sensory experiences, making experience more relevant than passive information received. Guidance should focus on providing a high level of experience. Additionally, according to Romero (1994), this principle involves considering attitudes, emotions, personal or external needs, intentions, and values in the guidance process. (b) Heuristic Principle: Romero (1994) asserts that this principle emphasizes the active cognitive inquiry of the individual and their autonomy as a subject in the decision-making process. The active participation of the individual allows them to determine why something is good for their project, generating a sense of competence and autonomy. (c) Integrative Principle: Both Pelletier (1978) and Romero (1994) agree that this principle involves finding meaning in the actions undertaken during the guidance process.

Furthermore, there are three essential principles underpinning the guidance process: (a) The *Experiential Principle*, according to Pelletier (1978), knowledge is acquired through the individual's sensory experiences, placing greater emphasis on experience than on passive information received. Therefore, guidance should focus on providing a high level of experience. Romero (1994) adds that taking into account attitudes, emotions, personal or external needs, intentions, and values in the guidance process is crucial. (b) *The Heuristic Principle*, according to Romero (1994), emphasizes active cognitive inquiry by the individual and their autonomy as a subject in the decision-making process. The active participation of the individual allows them to determine for themselves what is most suitable for their project, generating a sense of competence and autonomy. (c) *The Integrative Principle*; Pelletier (1978) and Romero (1994) affirm that finding meaning in the actions undertaken during the guidance process is necessary. Activities and decisions made during this process should align with the individual's objectives and goals, creating a sense of coherence and purpose in their development path.

Regarding the integrative principle, Pelletier (1978) asserts that there are two ways to achieve it: (a) Signification: refers to giving meaning to each experience lived in the present and integrating it into the entirety of the individual's life, focusing on relevant aspects that may have been ignored or unknown previously. (b) Direction: Refers to the negative, positive, or neutral evaluation that can be given to the experience.



136

Theory of Multiple Intelligences in Relation to Vocational Guidance and Choice

Howard Gardner has proposed the existence of various types of intelligence. According to this researcher, each of these types of intelligence acts independently in an individual. Gardner (1993)

asserts that intelligence should not be viewed as a single, generalized capacity but as a combination of different skills and competencies. The author initially identified seven different intelligences that interact with each other, namely linguistic intelligence, logical-mathematical intelligence, spatial intelligence, musical intelligence, bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, interpersonal intelligence, and intrapersonal intelligence.

Linguistic Intelligence: The ability to use language effectively, including understanding, analyzing, and producing written and oral texts.

Logical-Mathematical Intelligence: The ability for logical reasoning, abstract thinking, solving mathematical problems, and understanding scientific principles.

Spatial Intelligence: Involves the ability to perceive and manipulate visual and spatial information, as well as solving problems related to space and orientation.

Musical Intelligence: The ability to appreciate, compose, and produce music, as well as perceive and recognize musical elements.

Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence: Involves the ability to use the body expertly and coherently, as seen in athletes, dancers, or surgeons.

Interpersonal Intelligence: Refers to the ability to understand and relate effectively to others, as well as perceive and respond to others' emotions and motivations.

Intrapersonal Intelligence: Refers to the ability for self-awareness, self-control, self-evaluation, as well as understanding one's own feelings, needs, and goals.

Later, Gardner (2001, 2011) added two more intelligences to his list: naturalistic intelligence, referring to the ability to classify and relate to elements of nature, and existential intelligence, related to reflecting on fundamental questions of human existence.

Gardner's multiple intelligences can be related to vocational guidance and choice in several ways:

Self-awareness: Intrapersonal intelligence refers to the ability to understand and manage our own emotions, goals, strengths, and weaknesses. This intelligence is crucial in vocational choice as it involves being aware of our preferences, interests, and abilities, which can help identify careers that align well with us.

Interpersonal Relationships: Interpersonal intelligence consists of the ability to understand and relate effectively to others. This intelligence is important in vocational choice, as many careers require teamwork skills, effective communication, and building strong relationships with others.

Specific Skills: Gardner's different multiple intelligences are related to specific skills that may be relevant



to certain careers. For instance, musical intelligence may be important in choosing a career in music or the arts, while logical-mathematical intelligence may be relevant to careers in engineering or science.

Diversity of Options: The theory of multiple intelligences recognizes that each individual has unique strengths and abilities. This implies that not all careers are suitable for everyone. Vocational choice based on multiple intelligences allows for considering a wide range of professional options and finding those that best match each individual's strengths and abilities.

How can Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences be employed in guiding the vocational choices of young individuals?

Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences can be used to guide the vocational choices of young individuals in several ways:

Identifying Strengths and Weaknesses: It is crucial to identify the strengths and weaknesses of each individual. The theory of multiple intelligences suggests that each person has different types of intelligence, such as linguistic, logical-mathematical, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, spatial, naturalistic, and bodily-kinesthetic. By assessing the skills and preferences of each young person in relation to these intelligences, their strengths and weaknesses in different areas can be identified. Tests that determine the type of intelligence of the student can be employed for this purpose.

Providing Career Options Matching Predominant Intelligences: Once the predominant intelligences of an individual have been identified, career options or professional fields that leverage those skills can be provided. For example, if a student has outstanding musical intelligence, they might consider careers in music, music production, or music education.

Adapting Teaching and Evaluation Methods: By knowing the predominant intelligences of young individuals, vocational counselors can adapt teaching and evaluation methods to meet their individual needs. For example, if a student has outstanding spatial intelligence, they might benefit from practical and visual activities rather than solely reading written information.

Encouraging Self-awareness and Exploration: The theory of multiple intelligences can help young individuals better understand their own strengths and weaknesses, allowing them to make more informed decisions about their professional future. Exploring different areas of intelligence through activities and experiences can also help young individuals discover new interests and skills.



138

Conclusions

It is concluded that, in Donald Super's theory, vocational choice is a continuous process influenced by elements such as personality, interests, skills, and the socio-economic environment. During the growth stage, spanning from birth to 14 years, exploration and information-seeking take place, where occupational preferences are more related to the emotional needs of the in-

dividual. The objective of this stage is to help individuals gain a deeper understanding of themselves and the various occupational options available. Additionally, it enables them to identify and adjust their goals and objectives as they acquire more information and experiences.

We believe that the theory of motivation and vocational guidance are related because both focus on understanding and facilitating individuals' decisions and behaviors regarding their careers or jobs. Both fields can mutually benefit by using motivation principles and concepts to inform and enhance the vocational decision-making process.

Similarly, we conclude that career choice is a process divided into two stages: the growth stage and the exploration stage. During the exploration stage, individuals can experiment with different professional options, involving research, conversations with professionals in various industries, internships, and participation in personal and professional development activities. Activities and decisions made during this process should align with the individual's goals and objectives, generating a sense of coherence and purpose in their developmental path.

We conclude that the theory of multiple intelligences recognizes that each individual possesses unique strengths and abilities, implying that not all careers are suitable for everyone. Vocational choice based on multiple intelligences allows for considering a broad range of professional options and finding those that best align with each individual's strengths and abilities. Therefore, it is important for individuals to identify their strengths and weaknesses to choose a career that enables them to fulfill their full potential.

Finally, we conclude that there are various practical tools that can help individuals make informed educational decisions, such as multiple intelligences tests, interest and skills questionnaires, and interviews with professionals from different industries. These tools allow individuals to understand their strengths and weaknesses, as well as the professional options that best align with their skills and goals. Therefore, it is crucial for individuals to use these tools for making informed and satisfactory educational decisions. The teacher or vocational guidance facilitator should strive to consider the personal characteristics, interests, skills, and abilities of students and, accordingly, develop vocational guidance for the students.

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139

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140