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PREVIEW

**FACTORS INFLUENCING CAREER DECISION MAKING
AMONG COLLEGE SENIORS AT SELECTED URBAN
UNIVERSITIES IN SOUTHEAST TEXAS**

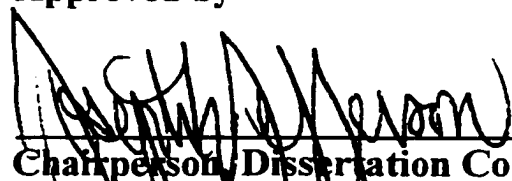
DISSERTATION

**Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree Doctor of Education in the Graduate
School of Texas Southern University**


By

PRUDENCIA N. ETTA, LL.B., BSN., M.Ed.

Approved by



Chairperson, Dissertation Committee



Dean, The Graduate School

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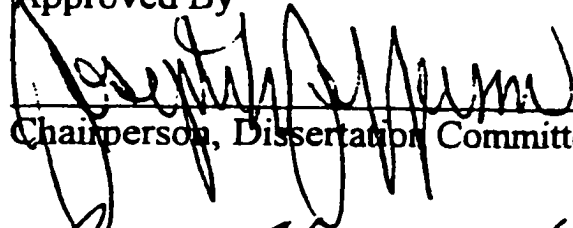
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1999

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**FACTORS INFLUENCING CAREER DECISION MAKING
AMONG COLLEGE SENIORS AT SELECTED URBAN
UNIVERSITIES IN SOUTHEAST TEXAS**

By

Prudencia N. Etta, Ed.D

Texas Southern University, 1999

Professor Joseph L. Jefferson, Advisor

The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship and predictability of personal, social, and family variables on the career decision making of college seniors. Specifically, the researcher endeavored to ascertain the predictive power which the variables age, gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, family structure, college grade-point average, father's occupation, mother's occupation, and employment status might possibly have on the six aspects of career decision making (rational, intuitive, dependent, school adjustment, occupation, and major).

A correlational research design was employed in this investigation to collect and analyze the data. One hundred (100) college seniors were

selected to participate in this empirical study. The Assessment of Career Decision Making (ACDM) and a demographic questionnaire were used to collect the data regarding career decision making. The investigative instrument was adjudged to have excellent construct and concurrent validity. Too, the instrument had a split-half reliability coefficient of .78 for the test as a whole. Additionally, the data were tested through application of Multiple Correlation and Stepwise Multiple Regression Procedure.

The study concluded that a prediction model regarding students' adjustment in school include the variable mother's occupation. Additionally, ethnicity and socioeconomic status were significantly related to students' progression in selecting a college major. The variable college grade-point average did produce a significant relationship on college students' progression in the selection of an occupation. However, there was no significant relationship between the variables age, gender, socioeconomic status, grade-point average, ethnicity, family structure, father's occupation, mother's occupation, employment status, and the career decision making styles of college seniors. The investigation recommends a follow-up study to be conducted using a large global student population using variables highly associated with career decision making styles.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to my mentor, my uncle Lawrence Egbe Ojong, who instilled in me the love of learning and the desire to set my goals high. His continuous love, support and encouragement made this accomplishment possible. A special dedication goes to the memory of my father, the late John Etta, and to my mother, Elizabeth Etta who taught me the importance of a good education, and the determination to see projects through to their completion. Dedication goes to the memory of my aunt, the late Clara Ojong Ojong, and to my instructor, the late Dr. Irma T. Malloy.

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PREVIEW

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Today, making a career choice is a relatively complex process. Although some people make such decisions easily, others face difficulties in making their career decisions, and so seek professional advice or assistance. As for those struggling with educational and career decision making, important characteristics need to be examined that have emerge from the career decision making phenomenon. Among these characteristics are demographic, family, academic, and social factors.

One of the central aims of career counseling is to facilitate the career decision making process of counselees and to assist them in defeating obstacles they encounter during the career decision process. Countless research studies have indicated that there are multiple subtypes of decided as well as undecided students, and that one group cannot be isolated from the other (Rojewski, 1994). For example, in 1990, Jones and Chanery identified two groups as "decided-comfortable," whereas Newman (1990) used the

term "decided-very comfortable" and Vondracek and his colleagues (1990) measured decision at various times. Other past studies, such as those by Multon (1980) identified such subtypes for students as "confident, knowledgeable, and clear in decision making." Therefore, identifying unique difficulties hindering individuals from reaching an ultimate career decision seems to be a crucial step in assisting them with the type of career service they need.

In the past, the construct of career indecision was used to refer to the problems which individuals might have in making their career decision (Slaney, 1988). Today, the social sciences are combining career decision techniques and theoretical frameworks to incorporate a client centered approach to be utilized during vocational counseling and students' decision making processes. In effect, the counselor should not urge a plan of action (i.e., a career decision) for the client, but instead should clarify the client's attitude toward career information and assist the client in implementing his or her own plan. Therefore, the job of the career counselor would appear to be to encourage clients' self-evaluations and subsequent career decisions via use of therapeutic conditions.

During the past decade, extensive research on career decidedness has identified various approaches. For example, some researchers have attempted to determine the differences between decided and undecided students, with the majority of such researchers citing few or no significant differences. Other studies have been concentrated on a wide spectrum of variables in an attempt to isolate the causes of indecision among students who have not made a commitment to an educational or occupational goal (Crites, 1981; Slaney, 1988). Although an important shift in emphasis has taken place in the last twenty years (Gordon, 1995), this evolutionary period can be described as a period of indecision or a period of evolution with regard to indecision. Consequently, college seniors are moving from dichotomy to unidimensional continuum and then to a multi-dimensional concept (Savickas, 1995). Therefore, future research studies dealing with a magnitude of indecisiveness perhaps should not attempt to isolate the variables causing indecision. These studies should rather focus on multiple sets of variables to ascertain how such factors as age, gender, ethnicity, socio economic status, parents' occupational status as well as previous work experience and parental educational level affect students' career decisions and/or life long career goals. This may

determine if there exist heterogeneous subtypes of undecided students or decided students.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship and predictability of personal (age, gender, and ethnicity), social (socioeconomic status, college GPA and employment status), and family (family structure, father's occupation and mother's occupation) variables on the career decision making of college seniors. Specifically, the researcher was concerned with ascertaining the predictive power which the variables age, gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, family structure, college grade-point average, father's occupation, mother's occupation, and employment status might have on the six aspects of career decision making (rational, intuitive, dependent, school adjustment, occupation, and major).

Statement of the Problem

The objective of this study was to determine the relationship and predictability of personal, social, and family variables on the career decision making of college seniors. Accordingly, answers to the following questions were sought:

1. What are the relationship and predictability of the predictor variables age, gender, socioeconomic status, grade point average, ethnicity, family structure, father's occupation, mother's occupation, employment status, and the rational career decision making style of college seniors?

2. What are the relationship and predictability of the predictor variables age, gender, socioeconomic status, grade point average, ethnicity, family structure, father's occupation, mother's occupation, employment status, and the intuitive career decision making style of college seniors?

3. What are the relationship and predictability of the predictor variables age, gender, socioeconomic status, grade point average, ethnicity, family structure, father's occupation, mother's occupation, employment status, and the dependent career decision making style of college seniors?

4. What are the relationship and predictability of the predictor variables age, gender, socioeconomic status, grade point average, ethnicity, family structure, father's occupation, mother's occupation, employment status, and college seniors' adjustment in school?

5. What are the relationship and predictability of the predictor variables age, gender, socioeconomic status, grade point average, ethnicity,