Genogram Reflection Paper

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Careers are constantly changing within the workforce that we live in today. Individuals are beginning to change jobs more frequently due to global, economical and personal factors. There are various theories that portray why an individual may change jobs more or less frequently and how external factors play a major role in career choice. Looking back on three generations there are trends appearing that are all due to these types of factors and may be able to describe why individuals are choosing the jobs that they are. The types of trends that are becoming more evident as generations are choosing careers are those of occupation, education, global factors contributing to those trends as well as specific theories related to career and the developmental ladders that go along with these theories.

Trends come into effect when the idea of generation gaps comes into play. The idea of education for my grandparents at the time of schooling for them is not the idea of schooling that I have in the third generation. Education at the time that my grandparents were in school was not of importance like it is in today’s society. The trend occurring across the board for my grandparents ranged from not finishing high school to finishing high school with a little extra training in some specialty area. The causes of this trend may have been due to the fact that jobs did not require an education minimum and also the war was going on and therefore men were being enlisted into the Army. Although the future occupations of this generation varied the education was similar across the board. Another trend with the first generation was the significance of gender roles. During this time period the men did the “mans” job and the women did the “woman’s” job. Each gender had their specific roles and therefore stuck to them. While the grandfather figures went off to war and worked the women tended to the house and stuck with what was comfortable with them. The women took on the stereotypical female roles of home health aide and nurse. The age of my grandparents also plays a role when looking at
Super’s Theory and his career ladder. According to Donald Super each stage in a person’s life represents steps on a ladder which is coined the term “Super’s Ladder” (Anderson & Vandehey, 2012). Being that at the age my grandparents are now and where they were at their time of death is and was at the death level being that they are and were all retired at this stage in their life. Super’s ladder states that an individual cannot progress up the ladder until the stage they are in is complete. Therefore, one cannot be in the exploration stage and move onto the establishment stage until they have completed the exploration stage (Anderson & Vandehey, 2012). The stages were designed to give the readers a general sense of where the individual stands according to their careers such as with Freud and his developmental stages. Although they are essentially at the top of the ladder according to their age, they may not have all had the exploration phase completed since the global factors that played into their childhood and adolescence such as the post war obstacles they may have not had the time to explore various jobs and gone right into jobs that would support their families as well as jobs that were the typical gender roles of that time period.

The second generation relatives experienced trends that were relevant for the time period as well as trends that were relevant to the issues that they grew up with. One of the biggest trends seen is that relating to Gottfredson’s theory. According to Gottfredson, the biggest predictors of career choices are social class, intelligence and the individuals’ sex (Anderson & Vandehey, 2012). Gottfredson developed four stages at which individuals develop career awareness and unlike Super, the stages build upon one another and last throughout the life (Anderson & Vandehey, 2012). The second generation would be categorized into stage 2 which is classified as orientation to sex roles (Anderson & Vandehey, 2012). Within this stage according to Gottfredson individuals know about and use sex roles to guide behavior and career choices. In
other words individuals place the woman into a woman’s job and the man into a man’s job. Throughout this generation, the males are in predominantly male roles and the women are in predominantly female roles. This trend may be due to the fact that their parents were among this population to believe that men and women had different roles and it was not part of the norm to interchange these roles. For men the idea of having to partake in a job that was selected for women at the time was degrading and therefore was not tolerated in the least. For example my Aunt Jan was and still is a florist even though she likes to work with machines and fix things. By looking at stage 2 of development she is still a florist to this day because that is a sex role that she took on and she believes to be what she should do and not particularly what she likes to do. Another trend occurring with this generation is the placement on Super’s ladder. The trend seen in this generation is that for the most part they are all at the maintenance level which indicates that they are somewhat steady with their jobs for the time being. That they are holding onto their jobs and not choosing to move onto other jobs to see what is out there. This could be due to the fact that global pressures such as the recession and companies downsizing that they are holding onto their jobs because it gives them a sense of security. With the recession nobody knows where they are going to be from week to week if they will still have a job or if they are going to lose their job so for this generation they are worried about their jobs and therefore maintaining what they do have.

The third generation has had to face many obstacles while similar to those of previous generations different in many ways. The first trend seen within the third generation is that of occupations. The women in the third generation are all teachers and have been for quite a few years. This could be due to the fact that a global pressure within this generation is that of a healthy job market. Teachers are always needed in the workforce and therefore the women in this
generation are comfortable with what they are doing. They are all in Supers stage of establishment meaning stabilization and being comfortable and committed to their job (Anderson & Vandehey, 2012). Along with the occupational trend is the education completed. Since teachers are essentially teaching others most schools require teachers to obtain a Master’s Degree. Since the job market is in such a high demand for teachers, most of those individuals looking to get into the field work hard and are able to achieve a higher level of education.

Another trend among the women in this generation is that of the first letter of their Holland Code. Holland Codes are used to describe a person’s personality and asserts that individuals are better suited to some work environments and poorly matched to other work environments (Anderson & Vandehey, 2012). The first letter of each of the women in this generation is S which stands for social and can be directly related to education and other related services. As a teacher one needs to be social and be able to talk to others and listen to others as well. This is a common trend among the women since we are all in the education field.

The men in the third generation also have trends similar to those of the women in that most of the occupations deal with hands on work whether it is mechanically or in the construction field. Most of the men in this generation did not go onto college and therefore picked an occupation where they did not have to have any education past high school. I think that due to global factors such as a high demand in the area of expertise that they are in helped to persuade their decisions to go into the carpentry field and engineering field. Another trend among the men of this generation is that of correspondence. Person environment theory describes the fit between the person and the work environment (Anderson & Vandehey, 2012). This theory takes into account the individuals values as well as the job requirements and expresses job satisfaction (Anderson & Vandehey, 2012). One common term relating to this theory is that of
correspondence meaning the individual and the work environment have their needs met and actively work together to maintain stability (Anderson & Vandehey, 2012). The men in this generation are all happy with their occupations and are exactly where they want to be at this point in their life. Each of their personalities match the job they are in and therefore they are accomplishing correspondence. Their personalities for the most part begin with Holland Code of R meaning realistic. Realistic essentially means being thrifty and working with things such as tools and machines. Therefore carpentry is a good fit for all of them because they all enjoy being outdoors and working with machines and tools. The only exception to this trend is my cousin Rob who is now a nurse. I believe a major factor playing into his job career although along with the others he loves to work with machines he lives in a different state and the job market in the state he lives in now is not as demanding as in the state the others live in. The global factors such as downsizing and recession have affected him and made it hard to find jobs in the carpentry field and therefore he made a major career jump and went into a field that was in higher demand in the state he lives in.

Within all three of the generations Savickas theory played a major role in the career decisions that everyone made. Savickas theory plays upon the idea of role theory and the influence of external factors (Anderson & Vandehey, 2012). Each generation had some type of external factors that were pushing them into the career decisions that they made. The external factors included those of social roles, SES and social influences. External factors are common among all generations because people take into account what others are saying and doing and observe how others are handling their jobs and therefore may tend to select careers based on what others think and feel. A major external factor among generations was that of financial needs and social roles. The financial needs factor may be due to the recession and that people need to
make money to support their families whatever that job may be. The social roles factor may be due to the fact that my family is very close and therefore we take into account what others have to say within the family more to heart than maybe what others have to say. We also trust our family opinions more and family is more honest with each other and therefore what someone says to another might get taken literally and therefore may make the career decision easier to change.

The last trend seen between all three generations is that of the Holland Code letters being similar among families within the genogram. For example with my dad’s family a common Holland Code letter is R. Although each and every individual have a different personality the one common letter remains. This may be because traits are easily passed down among generations and what one individual grows up with and the values they witness everyday as a child affects how they grow up and what type of personality they develop as an adult.

Trends can be seen among generations as well as through generations. Each generation has a significant influence on the next and some traits as passed along while others develop into something else. Career choice is an important decision in every individual’s life and personality traits and external factors play a major role in those careers that people choose.

By building the genogram and then thoroughly examining it made me realize how important it will be in the counseling field to take into account the clients background and trends that have occurred for that client within their family. By examining the client’s history and trends the counselor is better able to identify the reasons as to why the client is choosing a particular career. One of the areas of learning that occurred for me while building my genogram was the similar occupations across the third generation. I had not realized that all of the women in the third generation were in the education field and that it may be the reason why I chose the
education field because I have seen how happy this field has made them and how growing up I have heard them talking about it and that was the norm for me. It made me realize how greatly family influences the decisions one makes about careers as well as external factors as to why individuals choose the careers that they do.
References