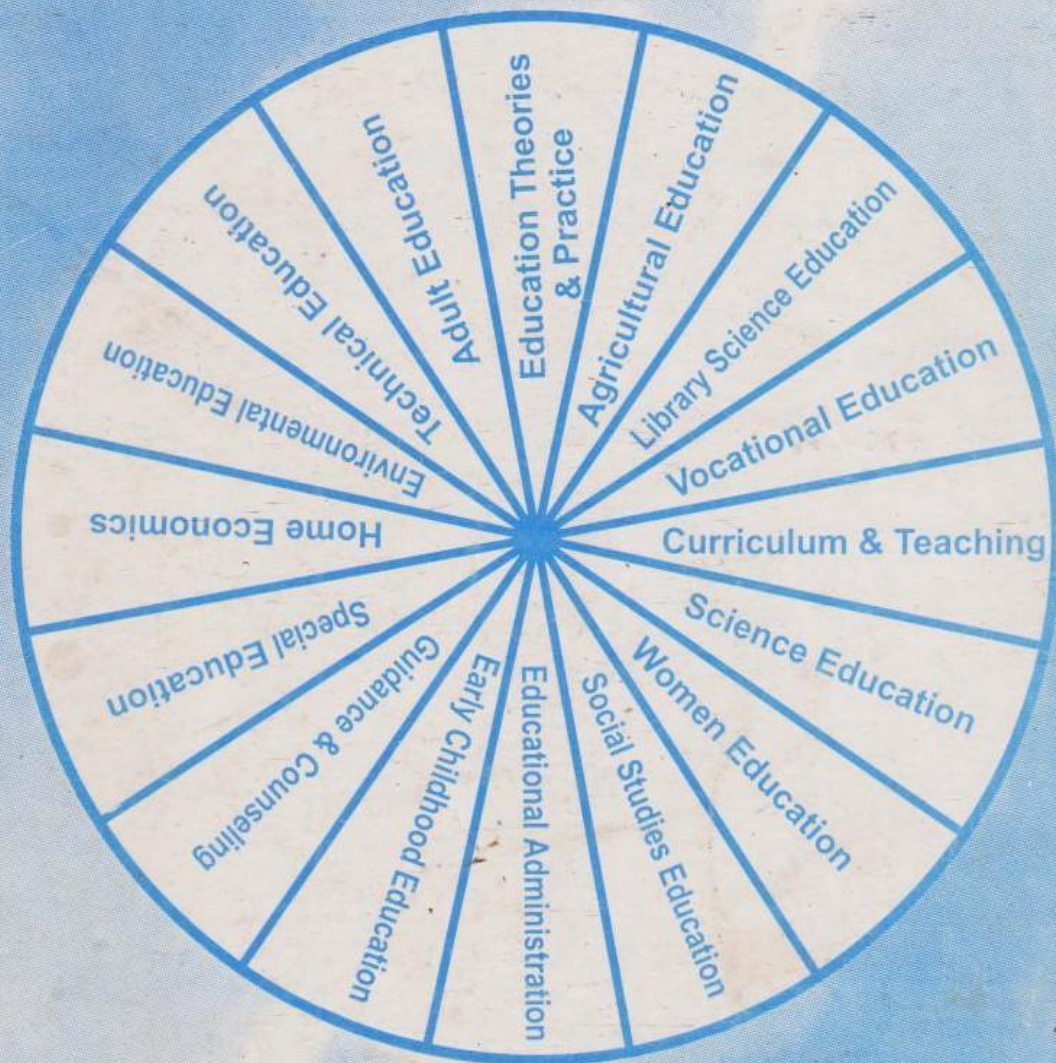


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**HOLLAND'S PERSONALITY TYPOLOGY, THE LIBRARIAN AND  
READERS' FUNCTIONALISM.**

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**ABSTRACT**

*This paper seeks to highlight Holland's personality typology, the librarian and readers functionalism. It emphasizes the distinctive personality types which affect reading habits and how they can be hamessed by the librarian in order to make reading consistent with readers' personal goals, values, interests and skills. This will invariably make them functional participants in the discovery, imaginary and everyday worlds of learning. Librarians as information providers need to be well informed about Holland's RAISEC theory, so as to give a bibliotherapeutic organization of information to help readers' interest and options. All in all, the paper recommends a re-engineering of the library science curriculum to include personality studies and made a core course in the library science curriculum to ensure the effective and functional development of the reader.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Personality can be seen as the distinctive patterns of behaviour that characterise each individual's adaptation to the situations of his or her life. Over the years, one of the most commonly used assessments of personality has been simply to describe a person in terms of the traits he most obviously manifests. For such traits, we have significantly differentiated friendliness, tolerance, cheerfulness, resilience, integrity, loyalty, ambition, determination, optimism, cautiousness, reliability and interests in appetite for food, reading, for sports, and so on. This implies that a person's personality type enhances his reaction to situations around him. This has a great deal to do with ones success and achievements in life and are basically influenced by two things according to psychologists. These two are heredity and environment. This paper focuses on the later; the influence of reading materials which has great impact on the development of the individual and later career as relating to Holland's RIASEC typology. If it is true that people choose careers that are reflective of their personalities, the implication is that right from the early days librarians must select reading materials that are supportive of their individual traits development. Hence bibliotherapy can be seen as a function of personality development.

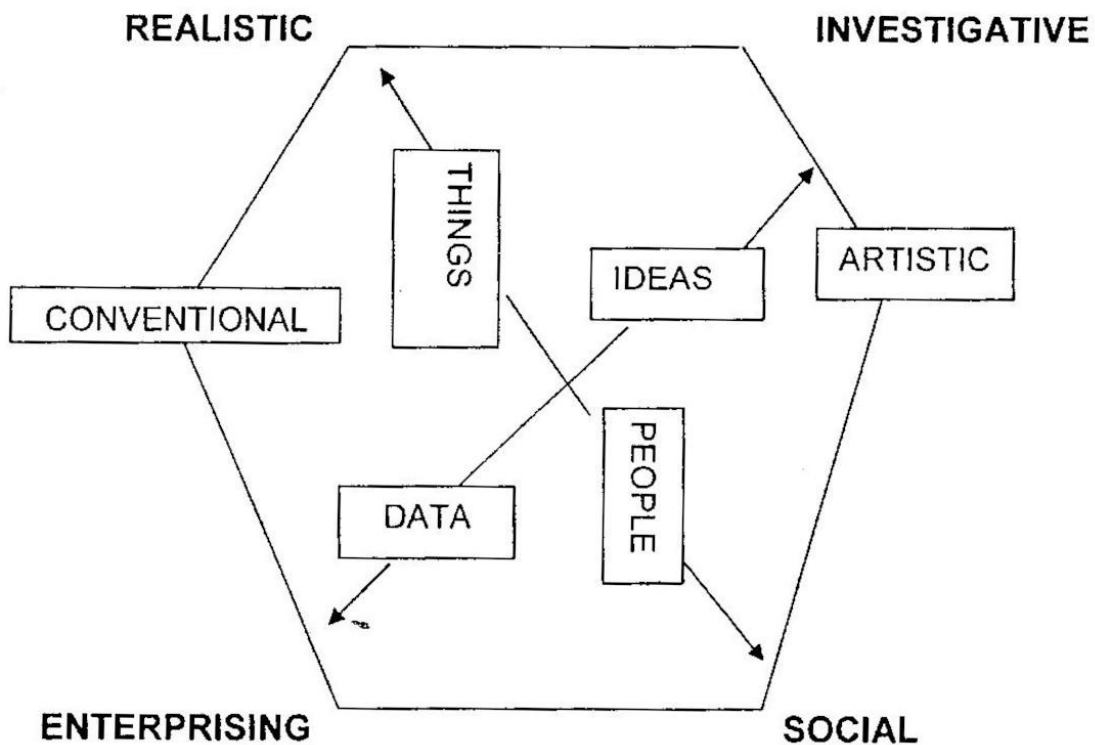
## **HOLLAND'S TYPOLOGY**

In an effort to validate empirically, the relationship which holds between personality types which also affects reading habits, Holland (1996) developed a general model of interest dimensions for understanding how people approach or operate within learning and work

environments. In consonance with this, he later identified six personality types or "themes" that represent characteristics of both the environment, personality traits and interest in a chosen field as: Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising and Conventional (RAISEC) (Holland: 1997). These six themes can be identified thus:

- 'Realistic' (Working with things and tools)
- 'Investigative' (Scientific Pursuits)
- 'Artistic' (Aesthetic Pursuits and Self expression)
- 'Social' (Contact with and helping people)
- 'Enterprising' (Persuasive and enjoys leading people)
- 'Conventional' (Office practices and well structured tasks)

FIG. 1 The RIASEC Model of the Structure of Interest



### **Culled from Holland J. L. (1996)**

This hexagonal model represented above has been reduced by psychologists to two relatively independent bipolar dimensions: i.e. People versus Things and Data Versus Ideas. The former runs from 'social' (people) to 'realistic' (things) while, the latter runs from the midpoint of 'enterprising' and 'conventional' (data) to the midpoint of 'artistic' and 'investigative' (ideas).

In figure1 above, it is noted that the hexagon structure is defined by six general interest themes, with adjacent themes most correlated and opposite themes least correlated. This further emphasize Holland's opinion about the more verbal orientation of the Enterprising, Social and Artistic (E, S, A) types versus the more nonverbal orientation of the Conventional, Realistic and Investigation (C, R, I) types. The types closest to each other on the hexagon have the most characteristics in common. This model helps individuals use information to make educational and occupational decisions that are consistent with their personal goals, values, interests and skills. He also states that people may be characterized by their resemblance to one or more personality types.

Several other studies have been conducted to establish the relationship between personality traits and students choice of career. Some of them are those of Afolabi (1984), Holland (1993), Clifford (2002), Etim (2004). When Holland studied the vocational preferences of High school and college students, he developed an personality/environment model for career selection which included six personality types as earlier

stated, each suited to a particular kind of work environment. For example, Etim (2004) maintained the following:

- (a) People who are Vigorous, loquacious, ambitious and otherwise enterprising are said to be inclined towards careers that reward people for achieving power, status and money, which leads to sales-inclined careers. She went on to analyze personalities according to Holland's themes as enumerated below:
  - (a) **Realistic (R) Theme:** She recommended the robust, rugged. Masculine, and aggressive people who are not good at creativity or social activities: but good at working with machines and tools.
  - (b) **The Investigative (I) Theme:** Has people who enjoy studying, solving mathematical and scientific problems with flair for ambiguous challenges and solving abstract problems and are unconventional in nature. They are good at Scientific pursuits.
  - (c) **The Artistic (A) Theme:** These are said to prefer free, unstructured situations and love individualistic expressions. They are therefore good at aesthetic pursuits and self-expression.
  - (d) **The Social (S) Theme:**

Those in this group are identified as people who are sociable, responsible, humanistic and religious. They are particularly given to solving problems by discussing with others and rearranging relationships between others. They are sociable, and good at helping people.
  - (e) **The Enterprising (E) Theme:**

Personalities belonging to this group love verbal skills; persuading others to their own viewpoint and like to manage, direct, lead and

influence others. They are good at managing, directing, leading and influencing people.

**(f) The Conventional (c) Theme:**

These have very little to do with ambiguous and abstract thinking, love to organize data, keeping written records and preference for systematic activities. They are good at office practices and well-structured tasks.

These career fields can be matched with personality types as presented in Fig. II below.

**FIG II Personality and Career Fields**

	<b>PERSONALITY TYPE</b>	<b>CAREER FIELDS</b>
1	Realistic Personality	(a) Aeronautical Engineering (b) Mechanical Engineering
2	Investigative Personality	(a) Medicine (b) Mathematics (c) Architecture
3	Artistic Personality	(a) Literary Careers Such as writing, reporting, radio programme, writing. (b) Fine & Industrial Artistic occupations (c) Artistic Careers such as Advertising, Modelling (d) Music
4	Social Personality	(a) Librarianship (b) Guidance and Counselling (c) Teaching (d) Pastoring
5	Enterprising Personality	(a) Law (b) Business Management (c) Insurance brokers
6	Conventional Personality	(a) Accounting (b) Banking and Finance.

Framed From Etim I. A. (2004)

## **THE LIBRARIANS AND RIASEC THEORY**

Holland (1996) maintained that the closer the match of personality to an environment, the greater the satisfaction. This implies that reading for enjoyment is closely related to resource contents that are naturally attractive to readers and appeal to their personality traits. Librarians, who are information service providers, need to understand the importance of Holland's RIASEC theory. For instance Day and Rounds (1998) reported that the RAISEC typology was used similarly by ethnically diverse groups of US students to organize information about their interests and options.

### **Bibliotherapy / The Reading Culture**

The art of reading could be an extremely rewarding experience if properly guided. A reading culture activated early can also be extremely rewarding in the future if learning resources are selected to match the innate traits of early readers. This is to say that personality and reading resources should be in consonance with Library science Law III which says "Every reader his book". This is closely related to bibliotherapy which Gladding and Gladding (1991) assert have obvious value in that "it provides the opportunity for the participants to recognize and understand themselves" and have self awareness with the hope of going further to become what naturally the individual should become, that, is, his career. For this process to succeed, the right reading resources need to be given to the right readers, at the right time. Beyond this development, it is worthy of note that if the reading culture is to be developed, bibliotherapy must be introduced early in life. Otherwise, according to Library Science assertion that the thirst for information is not like the thirst for hunger that endures, children become discouraged if given the wrong resources to read and the



thirst will gradually die and the culture lost. This inadequacy cannot be divorced from the lot of vices that we see in institutions of higher learning adopted today as alternative methods of passing examination.

However, useful as bibliotherapy is, it must be stressed that both the librarian and the readers must be willing to get along together before it works.

### **FUNCTIONALISM**

Functionalism, a guiding principle in education, maintains that the main objective of education has been to enable the child to grow into a functional member of the society (Taiwo 1980). It presupposes the preparation of the learner both for career as well as for all aspects of living. Modern education aims at being functional which implies giving the learner what he or she needs for successful living in the society.

This means that the librarian whose mark is to assist the teacher to complement and implement the curriculum, must provide the learner with appropriate reading resources that match children's personality types.

### **Matching Personality with Reading Resources**

Good reading materials can very effectively support and complement what children learn and promote awareness that leads to functionalism in later life.

### **Discovery World: (Realistic and Investigative)**

In this group, the readers are those that would be interested in trying to read longer books and work out their difficulties in terms of the

vocabulary and characters experiences. The activities arrange interest in Geography, Science and Sports and promote science enquiry. *Manute Boe* by D. Morgan – (A very tall poor boy who became a basketball star in the USA). Examples of titles are *Sarah Margru Kinson* by C. Conteh and S. L. Sollicot. This sharpens them to imaginative skills and challenges their courage to make it in arts.

### **Imaginary World: (Artistic)**

For the arts inclined, stories of imaginary world are recommended. Folktales and stories set in fantastical places which will be useful in stretching readers' imaginations and preparing them for the world of arts. This will prepare them for the joy of reading and communication, visual and performing Arts. *The Voyage of Hope* by D. Morgan. Children can be made useful by seeing how Ali's diligence in this work paved the way for him after school.

### **Everyday World: (Conventional, Social and Enterprising)**

The simple hearted need realistic stories set in familiar contexts and which address the day-to-day concerns of life. These sets inculcate in children ways of solving problems for themselves and for others around them. Examples are *The Great Writer* by Ignatius Musonza and *Wire is Wonderful* by Dawn Ridgway.

## **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS**

This paper establishes that there is a close relationship between personality traits and career choice and discusses the roles of the librarians in making learners functional towards their future careers.

Holland's personality typology is presented, discussed and matched with reading resources.

Smart, Fieldman and Ethington (2000) in support of Holland's theory, concluded that environments create situations inclined to require, reinforce and reward the distinctive patterns of abilities and interests of individuals in a manner consistent with Holland's theory. Holland's theory seems to subscribe to the trait-and-factor theory which is "a coherent explanation of the processes of career choice as proposed by Parson (1909)" and George (2005).

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The above being the case, the paper suggests radical re-engineering of Library Science Curriculum to include personality studies which should be made a full flesh course on the library Science Curriculum to ensure effectiveness and successful development of the reader. This is imperative considering today's goal of education in Nigeria which emphasizes functionalism.

1. The dearth of reading resources in school libraries is a great hindrance to personality development using books. Government is therefore called upon to implement her policies stated in the National Policy on Education by providing adequate resources for schools, as more policies cannot be used to actualize the stated goals.
2. Library studies should be made a full course of study from the developmental stage of the primary school and not start the battle without foundation at the University level.



3. School libraries need to employ full flesh librarians who are Keen at reading, to ensure that they are familiar with their stock contents.
4. The Nigerian Library Association should solicit collaboration with Universal Basic Education Board (UBEB) and State Secondary Education Board (SSEB) to ensure the employment of professionals as librarians for school libraries.

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