

Online assessment tests may help you make a career choice

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Students who wish to get off the crossroads of career choices can take online career assessment tests to get guidance on what career suits them.

In Summary

- David Muyimba, a third year Social Work and Social Administration student at Makerere University, wonders why different tests from different platforms will usually give you different results.

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By Desire Mbabaali

Career assessment tests, also known as career aptitude tests have for a long time been used by universities, career guidance counsellors and individuals as a guiding tool during the career decision making process. What the test does is; through a number of set questions on decision making, expression, socialisation, a person who undertakes it is guided on which careers are best suited for them, depending on the way they answer the set questions.

According to Careerful Counselling Services, an online platform, career assessment is a process of assessing your interests, skills, personality traits, and values. By conducting career assessments in these four areas, you are likely to discover which careers fit you best.

How they work

Career assessment tests are largely done online, and are freely available from different universities and online career platforms.

An Internet search for the meaning of ‘career assessment tests’ will bring you more than a 1,000 results and from these, one can take the test, some requiring that you sign up for an account with them.

Personally, I took two; from Princeton Review and Career Test. Both presented multiple choice answers to the different questions about; character, attitude towards others, openness, socialisation, attitude while working, decision making and numeracy, among others.

I was later, offered career advice on things to consider while making a career decision depending on the test results and a list of career options that are best suited for me.

Are they beneficial?

According to Jean Nuwagaba, a senior career counsellor at Kyambogo University, career assessment tests are standardised tools that help reveal preferential options that offer leverage in an individual’s career decision.

“They are beneficial because they evaluate a number of factors influencing career choice,” she says.

They take into account an individual’s personality traits, values, strength, weakness, opportunities, skills and exposure, preferences, culture, environment, society values, social and psychological competencies, among others.

“The different questions asked during the test help an individual to focus and reflect on themselves and their inner potential and provide an objective basis for their career choice,” Nuwagaba adds.

For Doreen Murungi, a second year student at Makerere University Business School, (Mubs), career assessment tests are very instrumental, especially at a stage when you do not know which path to take.

“During my Senior Six vacation in 2016, I did not know which career path to take. What I did was to look for scholarships online, with the thought that I would figure out the rest when I got a scholarship. However, one of the universities from which I was applying for a scholarship had taking a career assessment test as a prerequisite, so I took it,” that was the first time Murungi heard about this.

Eye opener

As she took the test, she realised it was an eye opener to a wide range of career options. “There was a part in the test that required me to choose one of the two career options being presented, this helped me focus. After that test, I did about four more from different platforms. What I can say is that after the tests, I had a better idea of what I might want to do, and after careful thought and intense reading, I picked business administration,” says Murungi.

However, although career assessment tests are available and some are free online and are user

friendly, their effective interpretation should be done with the help of a professional; a psychologist specialised in career development or a career guidance counsellor, Nuwagaba warns.

“Nobody should rely exclusively on a career assessment test when setting career goals. It is ultimately the responsibility of individuals to make difficult decisions regarding careers. Career assessments have proven useful in getting individuals to consider new career options previously undiscovered, increase satisfaction and confident career plan and increase self-understanding,” an article from Career profiles, an online career platform reads in part.

Varied responses

However, David Muyimba, a third year Social Work and Social Administration student at Makerere University, wonders why different tests from different platforms will usually give you different results.

On this, Gerald Musoke, a career guidance counsellor at St Joseph’s College, Namagoma, shares that whereas career assessment tests are readily available online, many of them are not credible, and very useful, and so, users should be careful.

“The wise thing to do is taking assessment tests from credible online sources, for example credible universities, or, taking the same assessment test more than once, and see whether they give you the same results, answering the questions like you did in the first test. If the results are different or worlds apart, then the source is not credible,” he cautions.

Musoke also advises that to get helpful results, the person undertaking the assessment test should make sure they answer the questions or options put across genuinely and truthfully. Just clicking on any answer will not give effective results.

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