

SOCIAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF CAREER ORIENTATION OF SCHOOL STUDENTS

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<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.20384482>

Abstract. The present article examines the social and psychological dimensions of career orientation among school students. It analyzes the mechanisms of professional self-awareness formation and identifies major psychological and social determinants affecting students' career choices. Special attention is paid to individual psychological characteristics, motivational tendencies, personal interests, family background, peer influence, and pedagogical support as essential components of professional decision-making. Furthermore, the role of school psychologists in organizing effective career counseling and practical recommendations for improving vocational guidance systems are discussed [1;3].

Keywords: career orientation, socio-psychological factors, professional self-awareness, motivation, interests, abilities, reflection, pedagogical assistance.

Introduction. Modern globalization processes, technological progress, and the rapidly changing labor market require educational institutions to prepare younger generations for future professional activity. The sustainable development of society directly depends on the preparation of competent specialists. For this reason, one of the strategic tasks of school education is to ensure the development of students' professional orientation [6]. Choosing a profession represents one of the most significant life decisions. A successful professional choice contributes to social stability, financial well-being, psychological balance, and personal fulfillment. Conversely, an inappropriate career decision may result in emotional dissatisfaction, professional crisis, and adaptation difficulties [2]. School age is considered a critical period for developing professional interests, self-reflection, awareness of personal abilities, and future life perspectives. Therefore, scientifically grounded career guidance should be implemented during this developmental stage [5].

Scientific foundations of career orientation. Career orientation is understood as a pedagogical and psychological process aimed at assisting students in making informed professional choices based on their interests, abilities, and social demands [4]. According to Klimov, professional self-determination emerges through the interaction between internal personal needs and external social expectations [3]. The main objectives of career orientation include:

- introducing students to the world of professions;
- identifying individual psychological potential;
- stimulating professional interests;
- developing career motivation;
- preparing students for conscious professional decision-making.

This process not only facilitates occupational choice but also contributes to shaping life strategies and social identity [1].

Psychological Determinants of Career Choice. Professional success depends significantly on students' psychological characteristics. Interest as a motivational basis. Interest

reflects a stable emotional-cognitive orientation toward specific activities [2]. Career decisions based on genuine interest tend to produce higher effectiveness and satisfaction. For example, analytically oriented students often choose technical fields, while socially active individuals may prefer psychology or pedagogy.

Abilities and professional compatibility. Abilities are psychological qualities ensuring successful task performance [2]. They are commonly identified through:

- psychodiagnostic assessment;
- systematic observation;
- professional interviews;
- practical assignments.

A discrepancy between abilities and occupational demands often leads to reduced confidence and frustration. Temperament and personality traits. Temperament influences work style and adaptation to professional environments [5]. For example:

- sanguine individuals adapt well to communication-based professions;
- choleric individuals succeed in dynamic decision-making occupations;
- phlegmatic individuals perform effectively in structured environments;
- melancholic personalities often demonstrate creative potential.

Career motivation. Motivation serves as the psychological engine of professional growth. Intrinsic motivation includes: personal interest, self-development, creative fulfillment. Extrinsic motivation includes: financial reward, prestige, parental expectations. Studies indicate that internally motivated professional choices ensure long-term satisfaction and higher achievement [4].

Social Influences on Career Development. Family environment. The family serves as the primary institution of socialization [1]. Parental attitudes strongly shape students' professional aspirations. Excessive parental control over occupational decisions may create psychological pressure, while supportive family relationships foster independence and self-confidence. Peer influence. Adolescents are highly sensitive to peer evaluation [5]. Students often imitate friends' professional preferences, which may negatively affect individuality in decision-making.

School environment. The educational environment is a key factor in effective career guidance [6]. A productive school system includes: psychological testing, vocational counseling, professional meetings, career exhibitions, excursions to workplaces. These practices significantly broaden professional awareness.

Development of Professional Self-Awareness. Klimov identifies several developmental stages of professional self-awareness [3]. Stage 1. Initial acquaintance with professions. Basic occupational perceptions emerge during primary education.

Stage 2. Formation of stable interests

Students begin identifying subject preferences in middle school.

Stage 3. Reflective self-assessment

Personal abilities and opportunities are critically evaluated.

Stage 4. Conscious professional decision. Career choice becomes clearer during upper secondary education. At each stage, psychological guidance is essential.

Functions of the School Psychologist in Career Guidance. The school psychologist fulfills several professional tasks:

- conducting vocational diagnostics;
- organizing individual counseling;
- assessing personal abilities;
- cooperating with parents;
- arranging career development training.

Professional psychological support strengthens students' confidence and decision-making competence [4].

Improving Career Guidance Practice. To increase effectiveness, schools should implement:

- digital information platforms about professions;
- practical career simulations;
- parental awareness seminars;
- individual professional development maps;
- integration of innovative educational technologies.

Such approaches improve students' readiness for modern labor market challenges.

Conclusion. Career orientation of school students represents a multifaceted socio-psychological process shaped by personal characteristics, family influence, peer interaction, and educational conditions [1;3;6]. Scientifically organized vocational guidance supports successful professional adaptation, enhances life satisfaction, and contributes to social progress.

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