

## The Results of the Study of Professional Intentions by School Students

<sup>1</sup>A.B. Mukasheva, <sup>1</sup>G.A. Kassen, <sup>2</sup>B.H. Galiyeva, <sup>1</sup>D. Yertargynkyzy and <sup>1</sup>D. Mukhatayeva

<sup>1</sup>Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, Almaty, Kazakhstan

<sup>2</sup>Gumilev Eurasian National University, Astana, Kazakhstan

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**Abstract:** This study was written by the authors as part of a grant project of the Ministry of Education and Science of RK “Psycho-pedagogical bases for formation of competence of the today youth for professional identity in the context of globalization.” This study presents contemporary and classical understanding of professional identity which is seen not only as a specific choice of profession but as a continuous process of finding meaning, developing and accomplishing the selected professional activities. The study presents the results of interviews with students in Almaty conducted in order to study their professional intentions. The percentages of professional intentions are presented below which prove that the most popular professions in Almaty today are Estimating Engineers, Design Engineers and doctors of different specializations, nursery teachers, middle and low ranking health workers, teachers, accountants, cleaners of industrial premises, maintenance workers and others. This is confirmed by the number of vacancies according to different web sites. Peculiarities of professional intentions from regular schools, present the general trends in the development of modern youth professional identity. The authors are convinced that before supporting a young person in professional identity, it is necessary to realize the purpose and meaning of support, understand the prospects and limitations of the individual, depending on the choice of profession and further professional training. One of these conditions, in the opinion of the researchers must be an educational process that focuses on the development of readiness for personal and professional identity.

**Key words:** Professional identity, professional intentions, career guidance work, profilisation, process

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### INTRODUCTION

Study of the career guidance and professional identity problems of students in Kazakhstan science has always been given a considerable attention (K.A. Duisenbaev, B.A. Koishybayev, L.Kh. Mazhitova, G.K. Praliyeva, A.P. Seyteshev, N.R. Shametov, G.T. Khairullin, V.V. Trifonov, G.S. Saudabayeva, G.Zh. Kusepova, A.N. Syzdykova, G.A. Userbaeva, Z.S. Dosbenbetova). However, experience shows that insufficient use of new socio-economic opportunities by teaching staff of regular schools, as well as violation of balance in relationship between schools and universities, in preparation of students for conscious choice of profession and specialty lead to overloading with improper tasks which reduce the overall efficiency of educational process in schools.

Increased globalization and escalation of social and economic competition between different groups of countries, against the background of diverse, expanding cooperation clearly demonstrate trends in the development of modern industry in various production sectors that depend strongly on the market situation which requires adjustment of social services for the career

training, involving necessary active cooperation between industrial enterprises and professional education institutions.

Purposeful training of youth to the conscious choice of profession in the context of such cooperation assumes particular importance, as soon as it can be considered as a guarantee for the future productive labor. Thus, social service procurement to a regular school now determines not only preparation of active, highly cultured and educated people but also professionally established members of society. This approach requires development of career guidance of youth, contributing to the development and support of public demand for vocational education in accordance with the needs of labor market. This need determined a study of professional intentions of students in order to create an integrated program for formation of competence of modern youth for professional identity in the context of globalization.

In the modern sense professional identity is not only considered as a specific choice of profession, but as a continuous process of finding meaning in developing and accomplishing the selected professional activities (Tkachenko, 2012; Sokolova, 2015). In the frames of this concept, professional identity is a process of

interchanging choices, each of which is considered as an important life event that defines the next step on the path of individual professional development.

If we turn to the classics of professional identity, E.A. Klimov thought that professional identity is an activity of an individual, that acquires specific content during its development as a subject of labor. Thus, professional identity includes the process of initiation in the professional group and a constant search for self-development opportunities (Klimov, 1996). Russian psychologists L.D. Stolyarenko and V.E. Stolyarenko see professional identity as a lifelong process arising from the professional intentions and ceasing at the end of labor activities (Stolyarenko and Stolyarenko, 2001). Professional identity was considered in the works of N.S. Pryazhnikov, who believed that this process is linked to personal self-realization and search for meaning in the work carried out in the context of the existing social reality. I.S. Kon connected professional identity with the development of age-related human characteristics. On this basis, he defines 4 stages of this process: child game, adolescent fantasy, preliminary choice of profession and career choice as such. Thus, professional identity is represented as a multi-step process that covers most of individual's life (Kon, 1989).

- There are two kinds of professional identity (Kolesnikov, 2009)
- Identity with respect to vocational education which involves choice of institution and specialty of study for continuing education

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

Dentity with respect to professional activity, suggesting choice of the field (type) of activity and profession position, where graduate is going to work.

An integral part of professional identity is awareness of a student about the existing occupations and situation in the labor market and a degree of his personal qualities with respect to the requirements of a profession (professionally important qualities) as well as about different aspects of the profession (salary, process and peculiarities of labor, working conditions, institutions providing proper education and others.). These structural elements are the link between value orientation and willingness to make a choice.

Career guidance is a natural extension of the entire educational work with students and in some sense it is a logical conclusion. Full support for students in choosing a profession not only helps them to organize an educational activity (when a student is consciously

studying school subjects, it may be useful in a future adult, working life) but also brings elements of calmness in a student's attitude towards their future (when an optimistic mindset and professional perspectives save a teenager from the temptations of today's life) (Kolesnikov, 2009).

Career guidance assumes a wide, beyond education and psychology, set of measures to assist students in choosing profession. Career guidance can be carried out both on the lesson and as an extracurricular activity. Almost all subjects are created to inform the students about different professional activities. At the lectures a teacher should present information about professions; disclose social, economic and psychological side of professions; inform students about the ways of mastering their profession; form values, persistent professional interests and motives of profession choice. The success of career guidance at the lectures depends on the teacher's ability to relate career guidance material with the program and create a positive attitude among high school students towards a particular kind of activity and also it depends on his knowledge and teaching method skills. In addition to the lesson it is possible to organize conversations, excursions, meetings with the profession representatives. An important link in the career guidance from school is to work with parents.

Practice shows that problems with professional identity among undergraduates are often the result of their personal immaturity which is based on the difficulty of family education such as lack of understanding of the tasks from parents in relation to maturing children, tendency of parents to have authoritarian pressure and hyperprotection that restrain development of personality and most importantly, prevent professional identity. Parents usually take an active part in determining life and professional plans for their children. However, choice of profession and education is a difficult task, both for the students and their parents. The practice of studying professional intentions of students in the Republic of Kazakhstan

In the study of Simonov "Pre-university preparation of students for the choice of the legal profession: on the example of educational institutions in Kazakhstan," it is noted that in most cases the choice of future profession was affected by external factors (demand in society, working conditions, material security, etc.) while possibility of a person to do the required activity is not taken into account by any means. According to the researcher this means that we need to improve the system of pre-university training, search for its effective forms and methods, since pre-professional training, on one hand, allows to deepen the knowledge in a particular area

and on the other hand it is an important step in the life of a young person on path to identity and profession.

In the study by Ramakhanbetova and Shodiev (2011), conducted in South Kazakhstan State University name after M.O. Auezov on “Career guidance of senior students on art education by means of fine art” (Ramahanbetova, 2012) also covered professional intentions of school students and professional focus on artistic and aesthetic education. The study of professional intentions of unergraduates indicated that the choice is

made mainly in favor of economic, social and humanitarian professions. The researcher also found that in the last month before graduation in regular school 3% of graduates still did not choose their profession.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Basing on the data analysis, the researcher confirms that a significant barrier to the development of a successful identity and sustainable professional

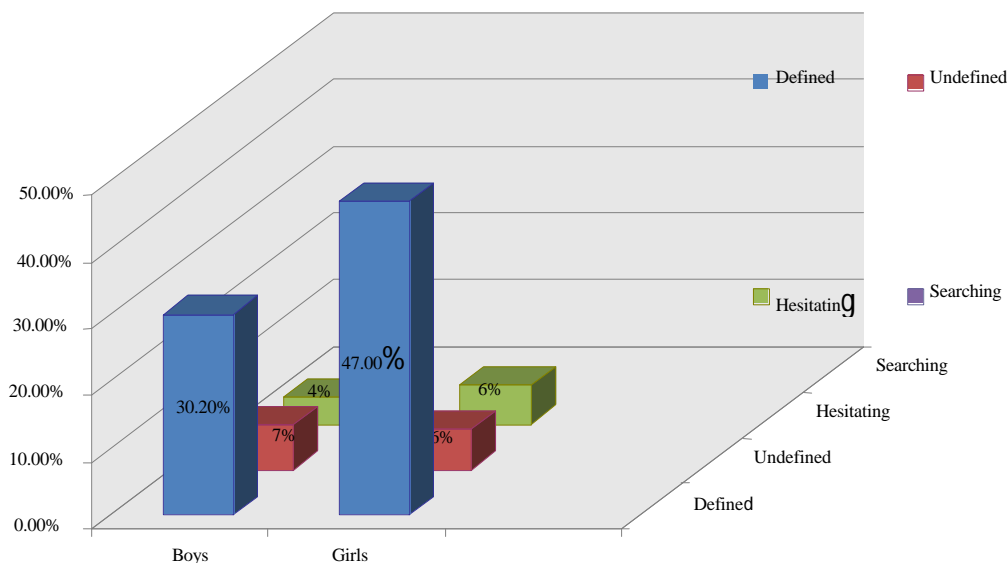


Fig. 1: The ratio of girls and boys in the context of choosing profession

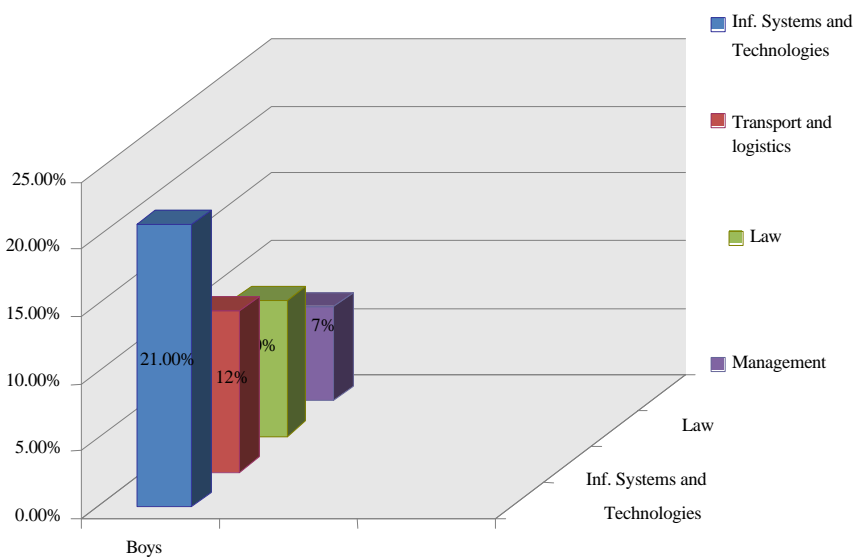


Fig. 2: Distribution of popular professions among boys

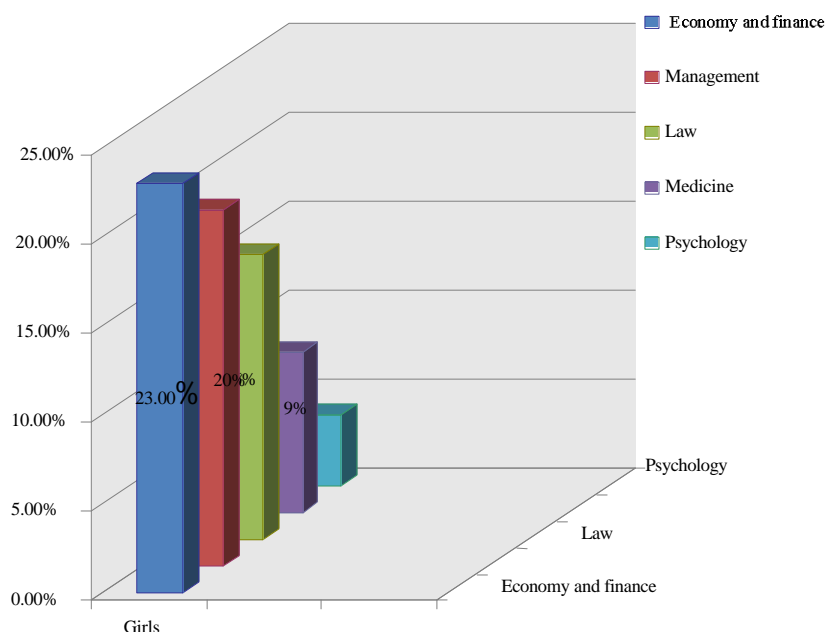


Fig. 3: Distribution of popular professions among girls

intentions is as a rule, career guidance activity designed for a certain average student which means that there is no individual, differentiated approach to the student, selecting specific, not any one of many professions. Also Sh.E. Ramakhanbetova focuses on the stages of professional orientation during preparation to pre-professional training which in her opinion, are carried out in schools only as a mere formality (Ramahanbetova, 2011).

As part of the research by Utemuratova (2014). on “Formation of professional identity of senior students in the Resource Center” experimental research work carried out on the basis of 12 schools in Karaganda, Karaganda State Technical University (KSTU), Karaganda State Medical University (KSMU), State Archives of Karaganda region, colleges No. 9, 12 (271 young people participated in the study). The researcher found the level of student readiness to make a conscious choice of profession for the purpose of further professional education through the use of the following methods: “Differential-diagnostic questionnaire” (E.A. Klimov); “Study of cognitive interests in connection with the professional orientation tasks” (A.E. Golomshok); “Structure of work motivation” (K. Zamfir); “The method of professional interests and abilities evaluation” (I.L. Solomin); “Life-purpose orientations test” (D.A. Leontiev). The survey results revealed that 77% of students have difficulty in choosing their future profession due to the ignorance of training and types of professional activities for each of them. The

rest of the students had made a choice, but rationalize it by the environment influence (relatives, friends), social prestige, etc. which also implies a lack of self-motivation (Pryazhnikov, 1996).

As a result of this study, academic content was designed for training and methodological support of students with regard to regional requests based on the contextual education principles, implementation of professional samples using criteria for evaluation of the achieved results. The main result of the study by Utemuratova (2014) is that the practice-oriented courses were methodologically proved, developed and implemented in educational process, courses that reveal the content of specialist activities in various fields of the economy, aimed at identifying the individual inclination for senior students and implementation of individual educational paths of study.

In the study conducted by teachers from Al-Farabi Kazakh National University (Taubayeva *et al.*, 2016) on the system of students value orientations, it is proved that a material well-being still remains the dominant social values and behavioral priorities of today’s youth which is largely associated with the prestige of certain schools and professions (graduation from these schools is not a guarantee for successful employment in the future).

In recent years, in Kazakhstan there are a lot of talks about organization of specialized differentiation in public schools which involves direct specialization of the content of education, taking into account interests,

inclinations, abilities of students and their subsequent professional intentions (V.A. Krivoruchko, G.M. Shigabedinova etc.).

Thus, despite the differences in the methodology of research, all researchers are unanimous in that the integral result of an effective career guidance is students' conscious professional identity, expressed in validity, feasibility and sustainability of professional intentions which proves the need to study professional intentions as a basis for professional identity.

In October 2015 in order to study professional intentions of students a mini-study was conducted using the method of sociological survey which acted as a primary collection of information based on verbal interaction between an interviewer and a respondent.

The study object was students of 11th grades from regular schools in Almaty. In total 371 people were interviewed. The results of the interviews allowed us to establish (Fig. 1), that the total number of students who choose a profession makes 286 people or 77% out of the total number of respondents. Among the respondents, girls better choose a profession (47%) than boys (30.2%). However, girls are hesitating more, although not by much (2%).

Distribution of popular professions among young men and women is presented in Fig. 2 and 3. The most popular professions among the youth are information systems and technology (21%), transport and logistics (12%), law (10%), management (7%).

Figure 3 shows that the most popular professions among girls are economy and finance (23%), management (20%), law (16%), medicine (9%), psychology (4%). It is worth noting that the most popular professional fields among schoolchildren of both sexes is law, this field have been chosen by 11% of the total number of respondents, as well as management by 12%, respectively.

It should be noted that the most popular professions in Almaty today are Estimating Engineers, Design Engineers and doctors of different specializations, nursery teachers, middle and low ranking health workers, teachers, accountants, cleaners of industrial premises, maintenance workers and others. This is confirmed by the number of vacancies according to different web sites.

Interview results also show that the choice of future profession is defined by the choice of institution. With this purpose the following question was asked: "Did you choose the institution?" Based on this data, we can conclude that 57% of the total number of respondents know where they will receive professional knowledge and skills in the future. However, it should be noted that the professional choice looks very convincing as compared with the choice of an educational institution. To the question "Where do you plan to get an education?" the

following answers were received: 38% of respondents decided to study in Almaty in such institutions as Kazakh National University named after Al-Farabi (22%), KazNT named after K. Satpayev (16%); 62% of respondents decided to travel to other cities, among the most popular cities are: Astana (19%), St. Petersburg (15%), Moscow (9%), Atyrau (4%), Karaganda (3%). The main reasons for choosing an educational institution are: desire to obtain higher education (32%) interest in the chosen profession (32%), prestige of the institution (16%), advice from friends, parents (11%), indicating a desire for future graduates to receive a higher professional education and an interest in the profession, prestige of the institution also plays an important role.

Among the sources of information about educational opportunities and employment internet takes the first place with 77% of the total number of respondents. In the second place we have so-called "parents told" with 19% of the graduates' responses. 17% of the respondents, respectively, are informed by their school, but television and newspapers extremely rare are considered as a source of information for these purposes. Thus, it can be concluded that, despite some positive survey results, career guidance in the current conditions still cannot achieve its main goal-formation of professional identity of students in accordance with individual characteristics of each student and the needs of society in labor force.

Raising the quality of career guidance is the main task not only for general education schools, but for higher professional institution also, as well as a need to work with the students' parents in regard to career guidance.

There are certain obstacles (as 92% of respondents noted) in the process of professional identity, arising in connection with the solution of profession choice problems. The problems are based on the following groups of contradictions: contradiction between available and necessary level of knowledge, skills and methods for ensuring implementation of the objectives that a high school senior faces; contradiction connected with definition and evaluation of life prospects; between an ability to express themselves in various activities and the need for self-limitation; between inclination to any profession and its low prestige; between awareness of their overall development and the need to do an unskilled work. There are also other contradictions related to the assessment of suitability for the selected professional paths: between the interests and abilities, between the ideal and professional self-esteem, between the level of claims and real opportunities, between health characteristics, character, habits and requirements of the profession.

The study does not pretend to solve all the complex problems associated with the formation of professional

identity for school students. The further development can go in such fields as succession of pre-professional training of students in general and higher educational institutions, professional training for the preparatory departments of universities, specialized testing or interview as a basis for certification of students in professional institutions. Issues on the design and development of new interaction mechanisms between educational institutions and social partners on the formation of young people professional identity are also relevant.

### **CONCLUSION**

The interviews showed that the most common difficulties and errors of young people in choosing profession are the following: the use of inappropriate and even biased sources of information about profession and as a consequence, development of misconceptions about it; inability to systemize the available information and identify main and minor details. Also, some answers indicate an inadequate self-esteem; wrong understanding of their abilities and substitution of abilities by moral qualities; incorrect ideas about the development of professionally important qualities, ways and methods of professional development; predominance of the emotional component in the decision-making process; inability to change decision after receiving new information. But the most important causes and factors of professional identity for modern school students are conformity with “pressure” from the others and choice of profession on the basis of sympathy for this or that personal unprofessional traits of a representative of certain profession.

Here, we see that before supporting a young person in his/her professional identity, it is necessary to realize the purpose and meaning of support, understand the prospects and limitations of an individual, depending on the choice of profession and further professional training. It is not enough to give recommendations to the student on what kind of work to choose; it is necessary to ensure the conditions that promote personal development and help a student to take responsibility for a particular professional choice.

One of these conditions should be educational process that focuses on the development of readiness for personal and professional identity. At the level of education content this readiness must be ensured by implementation of deeper or wider components in specialized lessons. At the level of teaching process organization, it should be provided by student-evolving technology and teaching methods, different variants of

non-traditional forms of lessons such as: elective courses in small groups; educational and research groups; flow line team organization of lessons in 10-11th grades which allows to combine basic education with profiling elements (“soft profile”).

Overall, our research allows to state that, despite the fact that today's high school graduates have no shortage of information about the world of professions and labor market requirements, they have no idea about the requirements of the employers towards the young professionals in real working conditions. They do not see a place of further employment, as well as opportunities for professional and career growth. Thus, the majority of high school graduates lack the skills of identity, life and professional path planning.

Higher education institutions should be directly interested in the effectiveness of professional identity of school students. This affects how conscious high school graduates will choose an educational institution, specialty and how they will pass educational process at the university and therefore, how successful they will be in further professional development. This ultimately determines reputation of a university and its competitiveness. In our opinion, the career guidance in any way should not be reduced to propaganda of a particular institution.

We offer a system of support of curious and talented students widely practiced in Al-Farabi KNU as an innovative form of professional identity development. This includes series of “Al-Farabi” academic competitions, leadership lectures by the leading professors of the university on the subject of innovative changes in different areas of life: in the field of information systems and technologies; in the field of economy and culture; intellectual contests at departments. The next stage of work with the students, that had already made their choice involves organization of professional practices and club activities. Thus, “The Young Scientist School” was formed on the basis of the Department of Educational Science and Educational Management, the Department of Journalism can serve as a basis for the club of young journalists or a school for the future PR specialists, etc. These are the examples of how to organize an immersion into future profession.

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