CAREER GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOL STUDENTS AS A SOCIO-PEDAGOGICAL PROBLEM

Asilova Sanobar Xatamboyevna
Independent Researcher, Kokand University
asilovasanobar03@gmail.com

Abstract: This article analyses the socio-pedagogical essence of career guidance for students of general secondary schools, the requirements of the modern labour market and the existing problems in this field. The experience of the USA, Germany, Japan and South Korea is examined comparatively, and effective ways of supporting students' professional self-determination, conducting career diagnostics and preparing students for practical work in the education system of Uzbekistan are described. A stage-by-stage career guidance model based on the integration of school, family and industry is proposed, together with practical recommendations.

Keywords: career guidance, professional self-determination, socio-pedagogical problem, labour market, dual education, career diagnostics, profile education, motivation.

Introduction

The experience of developed countries shows the importance of treating career guidance as a scientific and practical system that enables young people to choose a profession freely and independently, of increasing the effectiveness of vocational education as a factor in shaping students' personalities, and of organising the process of career choice carefully. Today, guiding graduates of general secondary schools towards a conscious choice of profession and helping them choose the right career on the basis of their interests, abilities and labour market needs is one of the most pressing pedagogical problems. According to the OECD report "Dream Jobs?", based on PISA 2018 data, 47% of boys and 53% of girls expect to work in one of just ten of the most popular occupations [5]. This shows how narrow teenagers' understanding of the world of work is.

In Uzbekistan, this issue has been raised to the level of state policy. The Development Strategy of New Uzbekistan for 2022–2026 sets the task of introducing a system that helps every school graduate master at least one profession [1]. Presidential Resolution No. PQ-241 introduced the diagnosis of vocational inclinations in grades 7–9 [2], and Resolution No. PQ-53 introduced the "Business and Vocational Training" track in grades 10–11 [3].

The aim of the article is to substantiate career guidance as a socio-pedagogical problem, to analyse international experience comparatively and to propose an integrative model suited to national conditions. The study used theoretical and comparative analysis and modelling.

Literature Review

The scientific foundations of career guidance go back to F. Parsons, who argued that a sound choice requires people to know themselves and the requirements of occupations and to be able to compare the two [6]. J. Holland identified six types of personality and work environment (RIASEC) and showed that the congruence between them determines job satisfaction [7]. E.A. Klimov divided occupations into five types according to the object of labour: "person – nature", "person – technology", "person – person", "person – sign system" and "person – artistic image" [8]. Among Uzbek researchers, A.A. Mamadaliyev studied ways of improving career guidance mechanisms [11], while R.Q. Panjiyeva and L.H. Qayumova examined the organisation of this work in grades 7–11 [12]. However, the integration of school, family and industry has not yet been sufficiently studied as a holistic model.

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The Socio-Pedagogical Essence of Career Guidance

Career guidance is not merely the process of choosing a particular trade or speciality. It is a continuous pedagogical and psychological system that shapes the student's personal life and social adaptation and helps him or her become an active and productive member of society. This process relies on two groups of factors:

Social factor: the supply of and demand for personnel in society, the level of development of the regional economy and industry, and the social prestige of occupations.

Pedagogical and psychological factor: the student's interests, temperament, abilities, knowledge and skills, and professional motivation.

The career guidance system relies on a balance between social and pedagogical factors: a choice based only on personal interest may lead to an occupation with low demand, while a choice based only on market demand may lead to professional dissatisfaction. Its outcome therefore directly affects both the individual's future and the development of society. Its main components are career information, career diagnostics, career counselling, career trials (work practice) and social and professional adaptation.

Experience of Foreign Countries

In developed countries, career guidance is based on the principles of continuity, practical orientation and social partnership (Table 1).

Table 1. Career guidance models in foreign countries

Country	Main model and mechanisms	Useful aspects for Uzbekistan
USA	"Career Guidance": school counsellors, diagnostics based on Holland's theory, career and technical education	A career guidance specialist in every school; diagnostic tools
Germany	Dual education: potential analysis (Potenzialanalyse), workshop days, company placements	Contract-based placements with enterprises
Japan	"Career education": work experience programmes in 95.8% of junior high schools in 2007; the five-day "14-Year-Old's Challenge" [9]	Short placements in the mahalla (local community) and in organisations
South Korea	Career education and guidance teachers (in 94.5% of schools); the "Free Semester" since 2016 [10]	The position of a career guidance teacher

Career Guidance in Uzbekistan: Current State and Problems

In recent years, 302 career-related topics have been added to textbooks in 18 general education subjects, nearly 34,000 excursions to enterprises have been organised for students in grades 9–11, and the kasb.maktab.uz and profnavigator.uz platforms have been launched [13]. Since 2025, excursions to enterprises for 8th-grade students and free "master – apprentice" (ustoz – shogird) clubs for students in grades 7–11 are being organised [4].

Nevertheless, an analysis of the sources shows that the following problems remain pressing:

1) work is often limited to one-off events, with no continuous programme and only a weak mechanism for tracking results;

2) psychologists and class teachers are not sufficiently trained in career counselling;

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3) diagnostic tools have not been fully adapted to national conditions;

4) in career choice, parents' opinions and the pursuit of "prestigious" professions prevail, while blue-collar occupations are undervalued;

5) students know little about the regional labour market, and cooperation with enterprises is often merely formal;

6) rural schools lack workshops and partner enterprises.

A Model Based on the Integration of School, Family and Industry

On the basis of this analysis, a model was developed that rests on the principles of continuity, student-centred and practical orientation, and social partnership (Table 2).

Table 2. An integrative model of career guidance

Stage (grades)	School	Family	Industry
1. Propaedeutic (1–4): forming ideas about the world of professions	Conversations about professions, role-playing games, the "My Parents' Profession" project	Stories about family occupations; involving the child in household work	Visits to nearby organisations
2. Exploration (5–7): identifying interests	Clubs, meetings with professionals, field lessons	Observing and supporting the child's interests	Open days, master classes
3. Diagnosis and choice (8–9): identifying vocational inclinations	Career diagnostics, individual counselling, career portfolio	Discussing diagnostic results with the school psychologist	Excursions to enterprises, short-term career trials
4. Practical preparation (10–11): acquiring skills	Profile education, the "Business and Vocational Training" track	Supporting the child in the final choice	"Master – apprentice" clubs, work placements, qualification certificate

The central element of the model is the school career guidance coordinator, who maintains students' career portfolios, works with parents and establishes cooperation with enterprises. Effectiveness is assessed according to cognitive, motivational, activity and outcome criteria.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Career guidance is a socio-pedagogical process that harmonises the interests of the individual and society. Foreign experience shows that it must be continuous, rest on scientifically grounded diagnostics and be combined with real practice. Uzbekistan has already established the regulatory framework; the task now is to implement it systematically in school practice. To this end, the following measures are proposed: **1)** introduce the position of career guidance coordinator in every school and provide psychologists with professional development in career counselling;

2) develop career diagnostic methods adapted to national conditions and keep an electronic career portfolio for each student from grade 5;

3) organise "School of Career Choice" sessions for parents;

4) provide schools every year with a map of in-demand occupations in the regional labour market and hold a "career trial week" in grades 8–9;

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5) create a monitoring system that tracks graduates' activities during their first one to three years after school.

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