

PNP 2021  
Personality in Norm and in Pathology**MOTIVATION FOR CHOOSING A FUTURE PROFESSION IN  
MODERN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS**Elena E. Danilova (a)\*  
\*Corresponding author

(a) FGBNU "Psychological Institute of the Russian Academy of Education", 9, Mokhovaya St., building 4, Moscow, Russia, e-mail: danillen@yandex.ru

**Abstract**

The article presents the results of a research devoted to the problem of career choice and its motivations among school graduates. The study involved the students of grades 10-11 of Moscow schools. In the course of an anonymous written survey, the students were asked a number of questions: have they already chosen their future profession? If they have, what profession and why? If they haven't made their choice yet, what profession and why would they like to choose? The results of the survey show that the career choice of school students is largely individualized and is made on the basis of their personal desires, interests and inclinations. 60% of graduates have already chosen their future profession, which is significantly less as compared to their peers in the socialist era. The distribution of the professions named by the school students shows that modern teenagers are focused on the spheres characterized by social interaction and interpersonal communication ("man-and-man" jobs). This meets the needs of young people and corresponds with their real inclinations, as proved by the results of the vocational guidance testing. Creative jobs, the spheres of IT technologies and education are the most popular with the school students, which reflects the specificity of the modern post-industrial economy based on the wide use of information technologies, knowledge industries and service sector, as well as the young people's need for self-improvement and self-expression.

2357-1330 © 2021 Published by European Publisher.

*Keywords:* Career choice motivations, professional self-determination

## 1. Introduction

Professional self-determination, which is one of the most important tasks of age development at an advanced school age, necessarily involves the choice of a certain occupation, profession or sphere of activity, one that a graduate would like to dedicate himself to after graduation. The question of the choice of a future profession arises from the specific social situation of high school students on the threshold of adulthood and is therefore traditional for graduates of different historical eras. However, in today's world of global and dynamic changes, with unpredictable consequences occurring in all spheres of human life, the problem of professional choice is also changing. Today the principle of "one job for a lifetime", which guided the generation of grandparents of current graduates, is no longer relevant. The world of professions is changing rapidly in response to the demands of society and the development of new information and communication technologies. Unknown before, almost fantastic specialties (for example, IT-genetics, bioethics, designer of "intelligent environment") appear, and traditional professions (for example, accountant), gradually die out or radically change their functionality (Varlamova et al., 2020). And it is already obvious that modern young people need to be prepared for that once chosen occupation they may have to change several times during their working life (Aron, 2016; Chesnokova et al., 2019; Haymovskaya & Bocharova, 2016). However, it is in high school that young people make their first and therefore important professional choices.

Numerous studies show that the period of professional self-determination is psychologically very stressful for many high school students. Young people assess this time of their life as difficult, experiencing personal dissatisfaction, increased anxiety, uncertainty in the future (Golovey et al., 2019). Not all high school students today are prepared for a full, independent and responsible choice of a future profession. At the same time, significant difficulties of professional choice are experienced by schoolchildren, regardless of the type of educational institution or the region of residence (Guzich & Khokhlova, 2016; Snegova & Maltseva, 2019). Since psychological well-being and professional confidence determine not only external factors, but also internal, personal characteristics: a young person's system of values orientations and the sustainability of cognitive interests, Formation of professional plans, knowledge and consideration of their inclinations and possibilities, social intellect, readiness to act effectively in constantly changing conditions (Konshina et al., 2018; Molchanov & Kirsanov, 2018; Pryaznikov et al., 2018; Puchkova et al., 2019).

## 2. Problem Statement

It is obvious that the professional choice of a young person is influenced by a variety of factors, both subjective and objective. It can be assumed that in a modern, dynamic post-industrial society with multiple transitivity traits, professional self-determination becomes more difficult for school leavers than for their peers, the maturation of which took place in the more stable Soviet era, based on the industrial economy.

### **3. Research Questions**

The study was intended to answer the following questions:

- What professions do school graduates choose today?
- What is the motivation behind this choice?
- How many schoolchildren have chosen their future careers?
- Do pupils in grades 10 and 11 differ in their professional choices?
- Are there differences in the occupational choices of today's high school students and their peers from the previous historical era?

### **4. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study is to explore the confidence of professional choice, its content and motivation in modern pupils in grades 10-11.

### **5. Research Methods**

The study was conducted in February 2020. In a written and anonymous survey, students were asked a number of questions about whether they had chosen their future profession? If so, which one and why? If not already chosen, which profession and why would you like to choose if there were no restrictions or doubts?

Statistical processing was done using the t-Student criterion (for percentages).

A sample of the study was made by pupils in grades 10-11 of schools in Moscow and Moscow Oblast, aged 16-17; pupils in grades 10 – 45 (23 boys, 22 girls) and pupils in grades 11 – 33 (13 boys, 20 girls). There are 78 people.

### **6. Findings**

#### **6.1. Confidence in the professional choice of pupils in grades 10-11**

The results of the survey show that there has been a significant increase in the number of pupils choosing a future occupation (60,6 %), compared to class 10 (24,4%;  $p \leq 0,01$ ), as well as a significant decrease in the number of pupils leaving school (10th grade 42,2%, 11th grade 15,2%,  $p \leq 0,01$ ). The number of high school students who have not yet made a final choice and are considering two to three career options remains roughly the same in grades 10 and 11 (33,3% and 24,2%). There are no significant differences in the confidence of boys and girls in their future career choices.

With regard to the quantitative indicators obtained, it should be noted that according to studies from the 1960s. In the 20th century, the number of students in the final grade of the school, indicating exactly which profession they choose, was markedly higher than that of today's students, and was 84% (Bojovitch, 2008).

Thus, today's school leavers show less certainty of professional choice than their mid-century peers. It can be assumed that this is due in large part to the specific nature of the world of occupations and

the labour market in a modern post-industrial society, their considerable diversity, dynamism and high competitiveness. In addition, in a transitive society that is fluid and uncertain, young people can no longer rely on the assistance of adults, who also have no well-defined orientation towards contemporary realities, in choosing a profession. In such circumstances, making a professional choice becomes a much more difficult task for today's graduates than for their peers of past generations.

## 6.2. What professions high school students choose

An important context influencing the vocational choices of school leavers is the specific social and economic conditions of society. Thus, for example, in the difficult post-war years (1947-1948), when our country was in dire need of working hands, 31% of graduates of Moscow schools chose production professions (Ariskina, 1952). In the early 1960s, during the development of the industrial economy and the beginning of a new era in space exploration, high school students preferred the technical, engineering and humanistic professions. Whereas in the mid-1980s priority was already given to humanitarian specialties, as well as professions belonging to the sphere of service, which previously fell in the category of "low-status" among young people (Mkrtychyan & Chirikova, 1985).

In Russia today, there is a trend towards a post-industrial economy, in which advanced information technologies are becoming increasingly important, knowledge and intellectual resources are increasingly in demand, and the share of services is increasing (financial, legal, managerial, educational, etc.), which should also be reflected in the professional preferences of graduates.

Our research showed that the range of professions chosen by schoolchildren was quite wide. In naming the professions already chosen and desired for themselves, the high school students indicated about 60 different specialties, professions and professional areas. Their quantitative distribution according to the classification Klimov and Noskova (2020) is presented in table 1.

**Table 1.** Types of high school occupations (%)

Type of profession	Professional areas	Boys	Girl's	Σ
Human-technique	Technical, engineering trades	11	2	7
Human-human	Education and training, medicine, psychology, Jurisprudence, Management, Marketing, Power, Politics, Media, Sports	46	61	53
Human - SignSystems	IT-technologies, economics, finance, science, foreign languages	30	14	22
Human-artistic image	Creative activity (artist, musician, Designer, actor, director, writer), handicrafts	11	20	16
Human-nature	Forest ranger, veterinarian, wildlife worker	2	2	2
Another	Millionaire's wife	-	1	1

It can be seen that modern young men and women are largely oriented towards the choice of professions connected with social interaction (professions such as "Human-human"). Technical specialties and work with natural objects are the least demanded. At the same time, the priority professional areas are for graduates of creative specialties, sphere of IT-technologies and sphere of education. Such choices reflect both the specificities and demands of today's post-industrial economy,

based on the broad development of information technology, the knowledge industry and services, as well as young people's expressed need for self-improvement and self-expression.

In this connection, it is interesting to note the significant changes that have taken place in the attitudes of young people towards teaching professions: while in the early 2000s teaching activities were in the last place among the professional preferences of high school students (according to: Azbel, 2004), that today professions in the education system (teacher, educator, teacher of foreign language/tutor, children's sports coach) are among the priorities.

In our research gender features of professional preferences of high school students have been identified: young people are more likely to choose professions such as "Human-sign systems" ( $p \leq 0,05$ ) and "Human-technique" ( $p \leq 0,1$ ). This is in line with previously established facts about the gender-specific nature of professional choices, according to which boys prefer technical, entrepreneurial and scientific specializations and girls prefer social orientation (Golovej, 1996).

It is important to note that the general preference of graduates of professions involving active social interaction reflects not only the desires of young people, but also to a large extent corresponds to their abilities and predispositions. So, for example, according to the "Profile" service, based on the results of the professional consultations on the basis of the existing tendencies of schoolchildren, it is professions such as "Human-human" that are recommended to modern young people (sales consultant, psychologist, tourism manager, waiter, administrator, etc.). However, these professional recommendations may not always coincide with the young people's commitment to higher education and the subsequent acquisition of prestigious and well-paid jobs (Career for Zoomer, 2020).

### 6.3. Motivations for professional choice among high school students today

In choosing a future occupation, high school students have different motivations and often cite multiple reasons for choice. The options for motivating professional choice are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Motivation of professional choice among high school students (% of quotes)

Reasons for choosing a future profession		%	
Personal (personal and interest-oriented)	Matching inclinations, brings pleasure, "liking"	34,1	
	Interest	19,5	
	Opportunity for self-realization, self-development, creativity	11	68,2
Broadersocial	Opportunity for communication, new acquaintances	3,6	
	Desire to help people / public utility of the profession	15,9	15,9
	Financial aspect (profitability of the profession)	7,3	
Pragmatic	Contemporary, relevant and necessary nature of the profession	3,7	14,7
	Employing professional knowledge and skills in their daily lives	3,7	
Emotional	Boyhooddream	1,2	1,2

Analysis of the motivation of high school students in the choice of profession shows that young men and women are motivated primarily by their own interests and inclinations ("Programmer Engineer, System Administrator. Why? Yes because I like it!", "Architect: I like to draw, draw, model").

It is important for them that professional activities give them pleasure, are entertaining and offer opportunities for self-development and self-expression ("I want to become a teacher, as this profession is always up-to-date, interesting and gives new ways to self-development"; "I chose the profession of a designer, since in it I can reveal my artistic abilities and enjoy work").

Broad social motivation ("I want to be a pediatric doctor. I want to heal, help, relieve the pain of children"; "Policeman, firefighter. I choose these professions because I like them, and I want to help people in different life situations. Also these professions can be useful in any life situation") as well as the motivation pragmatic ("I choose the profession of IT-developer, as this work is interesting to me, as well as well paid and demanded"), They are much less common among modern schoolchildren and are almost never named as the sole reason for choosing a profession.

## 7. Conclusion

The study showed that by the end of school most graduates were determined by the choice of a future occupation, but this problem was not solved by all 11-year-olds.

The professional choices of high school students are highly individualized and made primarily on the basis of their own desires, interests and inclinations.

Young men and women today are oriented towards professions related to social interaction and interpersonal communication, which not only respond to young people's own needs, but also respond to their real tendencies.

The most attractive professions for high school students are creative, IT and education. This choice corresponds to the needs of the post-industrial economy and also to the expressed need of today's young people for self-expression and self-realization.

## References

- Ariskina, K. A. (1952). *Vybor professii uchashhimisja srednej shkoly* [Choice of profession by secondary school students]. Moscow. [in Russ.]
- Aron, I. S. (2016). Psihologicheskaja gotovnost' k professional'nomu samoopredeleniju podrostkov, nahodjashhimsja v raznyh social'nyh situacijah razvitija [Psychological preparedness for professional self-determination of adolescents in different social development situations]. *Psychology issues, 1*, 86–95 [in Russ.]
- Azbel, A. A. (2004). *Osobennosti formirovanija statusov professional'noj identichnosti starshklassnikov* [Features of the formation of professional identity statues of high school students]. Moscow. [in Russ.]
- Bojovitch, L. I. (2008). *Lichnost' i ee formirovanie v detskom vozraste* [Personality and its formation as a child]. Peter. [in Russ.]
- Chesnokova, O. B., Churbanova, S. M., & Molchanov, S. V. (2019). Professional'noe samoopredelenie v junosheskom vozraste kak strukturnyj komponent budushhego professionalizma: sociokognitivnye i kreativnye faktory [Professional Self-determination in Young Age as a Structural Component of Future Professionalism: Socio-Cognitive and Creative Factors]. *Cultural-historical psychology, 15*(4), 109–118. <https://doi.org/10.17759/chp.2019150411> [in Russ.]

- Golovej, L. A. (1996). *Psihologija stanovlenija sub#ekta dejatel'nosti v period junosti i vzroslenija* [Psychology of the emergence of a subject of activity during the period of youth and adulthood]. Saint-Petersburg. [in Russ.]
- Golovej, L. A., Danilova, M. V., & Gruzdeva, I. A. (2019). Psihojemocional'noe blagopoluchie starsheklassnikov v svjazi s gotovnost'ju k professional'nomu samoopredeleniju [Psychological well-being of high school students in relation to their readiness for professional self-determination]. *Psychological Science and Education*, 24(6), 63–73. <https://doi.org/10.17759/pse.2019240606> [in Russ.]
- Guzich, M. E., & Khokhlova, N. I. (2016). O gotovnosti junoshestva severnogo regiona Rossii k professional'nomu vyboru [The Readiness of Young People of the Russian Northern Region to the Profession]. *Psychological Science and Education*, 8(1), 86–95. <https://doi.org/10.17759/psyedu.2016080109> [in Russ.]
- Haymovskaya, N. A., & Bocharova, A. L. (2016). Social'no-psihologicheskie aspekty professional'nogo samoopredelenija v sovremennom obshhestve [Socio-psychological Aspects of Professional Identity in the Modern Society]. *Psychological Science and Education*, 8(1), 105–113. <https://doi.org/10.17759/psyedu.2016080110> [in Russ.]
- Kar'era dlja zumera: ozhidanie i real'nost'. (n.d.). [Career for Zoomer: Waiting and Reality]. Retrieved from <https://vybor-professii.tass.ru/rejtingeprofessiy/> [in Russ.]
- Klimov, E. A., & Noskova, O. G. (Eds.) (2020). *Psihologija truda: uchebnik dlja vuzov* [Psychology of Work: Textbook for Higher Education]. Yurajt. [in Russ.]
- Konshina, T. M., Pryazhnikov, N. S., & Sadovnikova, T. Y. (2018). Lichnaja professional'naja perspektiva sovremennyh rossijskih starshih podrostkov: cennostno-smyslovoj aspekt [Personal professional perspective of modern Russian senior teenagers: a value and meaning aspect]. *Moscow University Psychology Bulletin. Seriya 14: Psychology*, 3, 37–59. <https://doi.org/10.11621/vsp.2018.03.37> [in Russ.]
- Mkrtychyan, G. M., & Chirikova, A. E. (1985). O professional'nyh orientacijah starsheklassnikov [On the professional orientation of high school students]. *Psychology issues*, 3, 91–97. [in Russ.]
- Molchanov, S. V., & Kirsanov, K. A. (2018). Svjaz' lichnoj professional'noj perspektivy i statusaidentichnosti v professional'noj sfere v staršem podrostkovom vozraste [The relationship of personal professional perspective and the status of identity in the professional sphere at the age of adolescence]. *Bulletin of Moscow Region State University. Seriya: Psychology*, 4, 38–49. <https://doi.org/10.18384/2310-7235-2018-4-38-49> [in Russ.]
- Pryazhnikov, N. S., Molchanov, S. V., & Kirsanov, K. A. (2018). Moral'no-cennostnye osnovanija processa professional'nogo samoopredelenija v podrostkovom vozraste [Moral and value bases of the process of professional self-determination in adolescence]. *Psychological research*, 11(62), 7. <http://psystudy.ru/index.php/num/2018v11n62/1643-pryazhnikov62.html> [in Russ.].
- Puchkova, E. B., Temnova, L. V., Sorokoumova, E. A., & Kurnosova, M. G. (2019). Vzaimosvjaz' cennostej i kar'ernyh orientacij sovremennyh podrostkov [Relationship Between Values and Career Orientations in Modern Adolescents]. *Psychological Science and Education*, 24(5), 27–36. <https://doi.org/10.17759/pse.2019240503>[in Russ.]
- Snegova, Y. V., & Maltseva, S. Y. (2019). Psihologicheskoe issledovanie professional'nyh predpochtenij starsheklassnikov [Psychological study of professional preferences of high school students]. *Notes by the Saint Petersburg State Institute of Psychology and Social Work*, 32(2), 130–137. [in Russ.]
- Varlamova, D., Sudakov, D., Grapes, E., Ramzayeva, M., Kukin, F., Mikhailova, A., & Djakova, E. (2020). *Atlas novyh professij 3.0* [Atlas of new professions 3.0]. Alpina. [in Russ.]