

# **FEATURES OF PROFESSIONAL SELF-DETERMINATION AND PROFESSIONAL ORIENTATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE DIGITAL ECONOMY**

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## **Abstract**

The trends of digitalization and the fourth industrial revolution radically change the content of professions. Narrow professional training comes into conflict with the need to form a wide range of soft-skills, the importance of which is increasing every year. A person needs to be guided in the world of professions, in the dynamics and prospects of their changes, in order to timely form and develop their competencies, to increase their competitiveness in the labor market. The purpose of the research is to identify the features of self-determination and professional orientation of young people in Omsk digital economy, the transformation of the traditional framework of professions. The hypothesis of the research is that the professional self-determination of young people is connected not only with the choice of profession, but also with the forms of employment by profession, with the prospects of demand in the labor market. The research clarifies the factors of professional self-determination; trends of value orientations of young people; the proposed new methods of professional orientation and self-determination, reflecting the trends of the digital economy.

**Key words:** professional orientation, young people, digital economy

**JEL Code:** J24, J62, J 21

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## **Introduction**

Studies of professional orientation have been popular among management and psychology researchers for decades. There are two aspects of professional orientation and professional self-determination, which are interesting for researchers. First, professional self-determination is a condition of development of human resources structure of a state, a region or an organization. Secondly, professional self-determination may be examined on the level of an individual; it plays a key role in the process of job search, professional orientation in the context of his abilities, knowledge, skills and a general state of the labor market. The narrow-

focused paradigm in education conflicts with the need in the wide scope of soft-skills, which become more and more important nowadays.

According to one of the common definitions of professional orientation and professional self-determination is a stage of professional choice in the process of the first job search. However, an individual needs to be informed about processes and trends in the labor market, in order to be able to react adequately to recent changes, develop new competencies and skills. Therefore, professional orientation and professional self-determination should mitigate the main controversy between demand on the labor market and interests and preferences of the individuals in the context of labor diversification and cooperation.

There are numerous studies devoted to professional orientation and self-determination of an individual. In the scope of human resources management, professional orientation was examined from the perspective of labor force mobility, career development, and career management (Carr, 1996; Crompton and Harris, 1998; Felker, 2011; Yakimova, 2011; Dawson, Henley and Latreille, 2014). A few new approaches in developing systems of professional orientation are presented in recent studies Vybornova and Dunaeva (2007), Guichard and Dumora (2008), Westergaard (2012). The problematic of professional self-determination is especially important in the context of educational systems: individual's choice of educational institution, major choice, etc. (Li and Lowe, 2016; Straube, 2010; Boronina, Baliasov and Vishnevskii, 2017).

In the present study, we concentrated on examining of specific attributes of professional orientation and self-determination among high school students in the Omsk region. The study was aimed to find the effective methods of professional orientation and professional self-determination with respect to students' interests and values.

The following tasks were formulated in order to achieve the goal of the study.

- First, it is necessary to collect data about high school students' vocational preferences and expectations related to future occupation;
- Secondly, it is important to establish which methods of professional orientation are the most effective;
- Lastly, based on the results of the previous stages of the study, we developed and described the methods of professional orientation which take into account both students' interests and preferences and recent transformations on the labor market in the context of the digital economy.

## 1 Sample model and method

Data for the present study were collected in the period November 2017 - February 2018. We used the method of survey questionnaire in order to collect the data. The subjects of the study were high school students in the Omsk region. The method of non-probability quota sampling was exploited in order to build a sample with respect to a) place of respondent's permanent residence (city/village) and b) year of study (9th year; 10th year, 11th year). The model of general population and sample structure is presented in the table below (see table 1).

**Tab. 1: Sample model at the second level of the study**

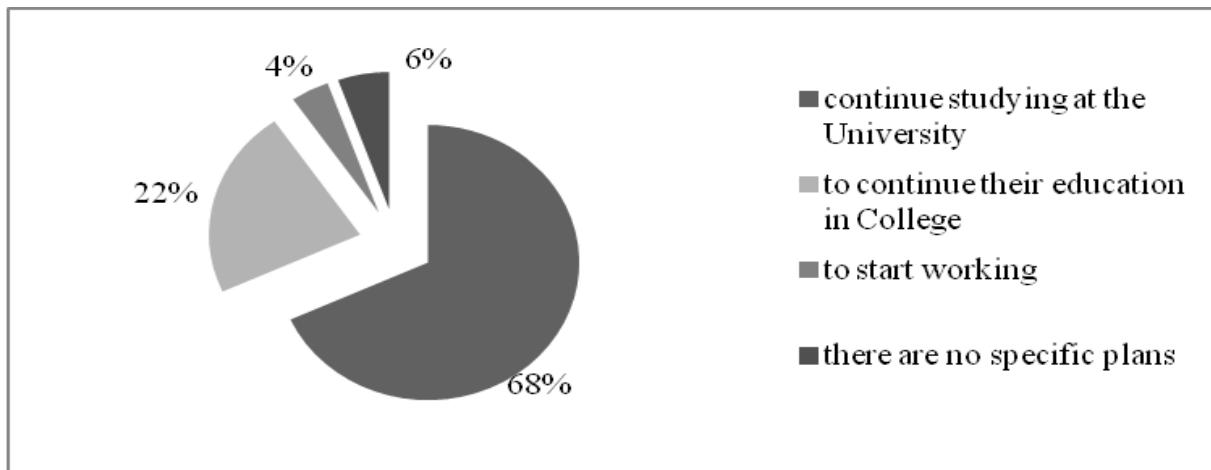
	Total		Sample	
	people	%	people	%
All	36 069	100.00%	11 691	32.41%
City	19 877	55.11%	6 760	57.82%
Village	16 192	44.89%	4 931	42.18%
City				
9 <sup>h</sup> year students	9 796	49.28%	3 259	48.21%
10 <sup>th</sup> year students	5 328	26.80%	1 845	27.29%
11 <sup>th</sup> year students	4 753	23.91%	1 656	24.50%
Village				
9 <sup>th</sup> year students	8 782	54.24%	2 717	55.10%
10 <sup>th</sup> year students	3 843	23.73%	1 067	21.64%
11 <sup>th</sup> year students	3 567	22.03%	1 147	23.26%

source: author

## 2 Results

High school students realize that professional education is the most important factor of successful professional development and vertical social mobility. More than 90% of the respondents reported that they plan to continue their studies (68% are planning to attend universities, 22% of respondents plan to attend technical colleges and vocational schools). However, 6% of the high school students did not have exact educational plans and expectations (see Fig. 1).

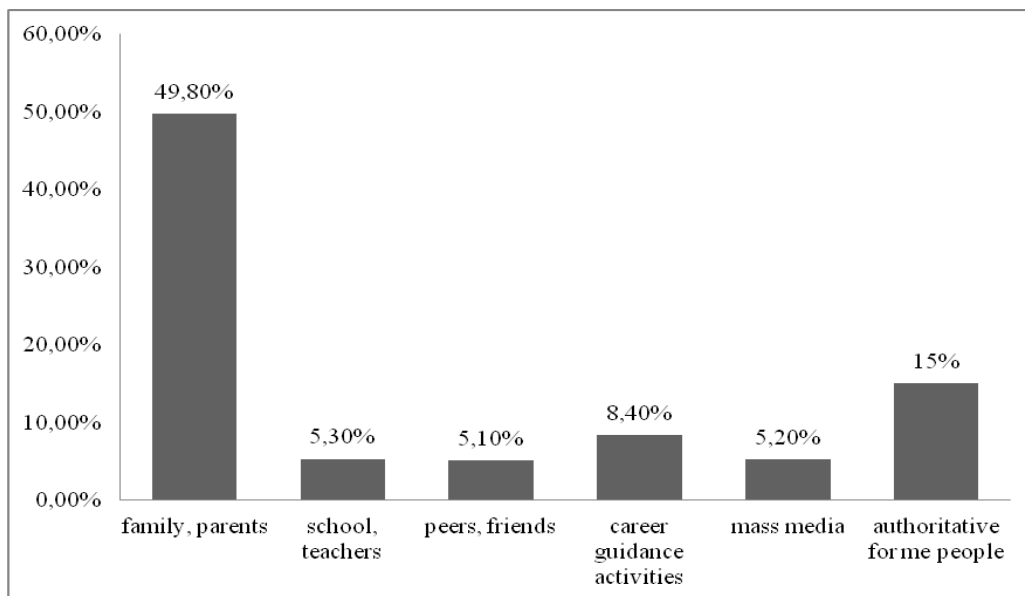
**Fig. 1: Plans of students after high school (% of respondents)**



source: author

At the next stage of the present study, the most significant factors of professional orientation and professional self-determination were examined and described. Two group of variables were employed in this analysis: variables measuring of influence level of different subjects such as school, friends, family, media and significant others on a student' professional orientations are presented below (see Fig.2).

**Fig. 2: Factors influencing the choice of profession (% of respondents)**



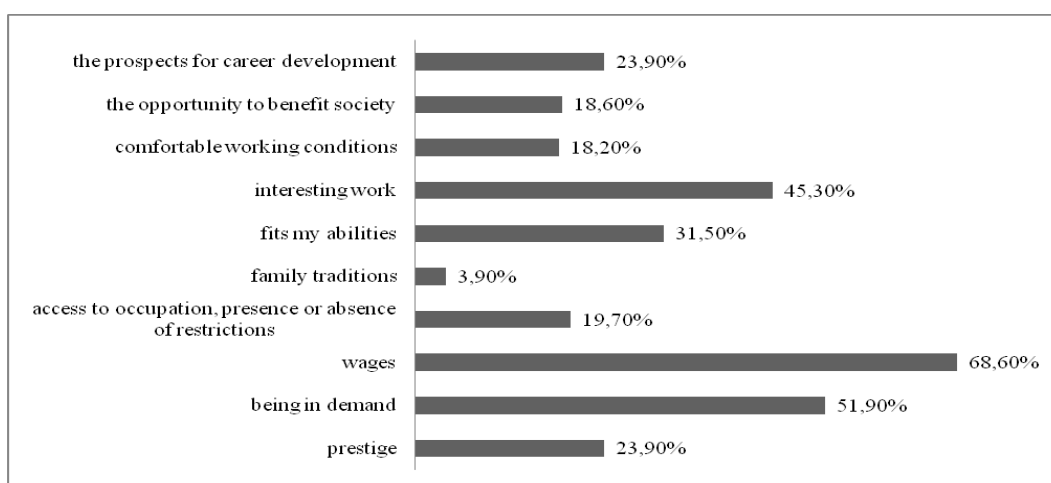
source: author

Family and parents are the most influential factors of professional orientation (49.8% of the respondents); respective professionals (15% of the respondents); professional orientation activities and events significantly influence on the professional orientation of 8.4%

students according to the results of the present study. Based on the results, we can conclude that professional orientation events and activities have a very limited influence on professional self-determination and should be combined with activities of significant others. Only 4% of respondents reported that information from media is important for them, hence, the hypothesis of its effect on the vocational choice of high school students was not supported.

However, it is important to note that the Internet becomes more and more important source of information in the context of professional orientation, more than 90% of the respondents use the Internet-based resources for collecting information about educational opportunities, professional development opportunities and for learning specific aspects of the future profession. Therefore, the substantial factors of professional orientation were described by 10 variables (attributes); the distribution of evaluations of these factors is presented below (see Fig.3).

**Fig. 3: Factors that guide the choice of profession (% of respondents)**



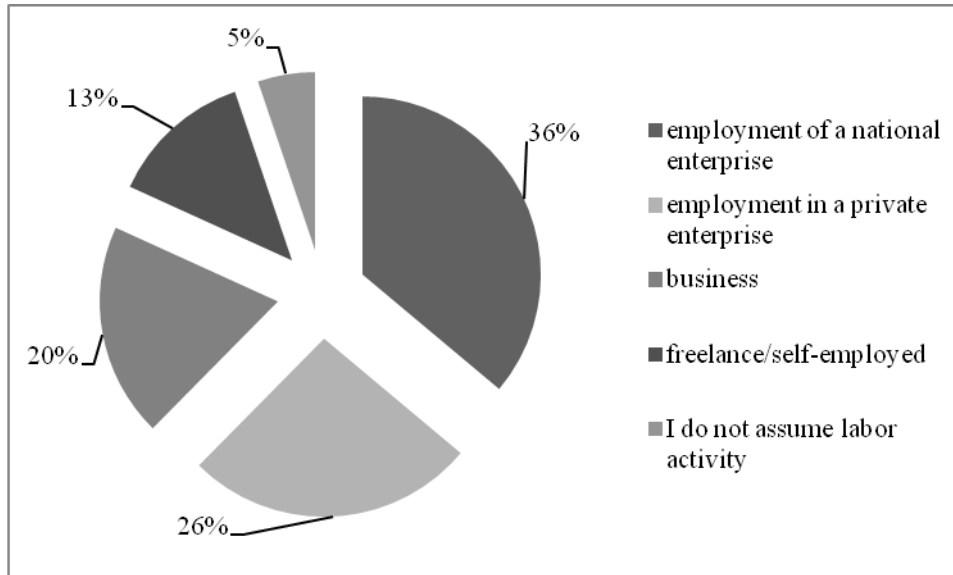
source: author

The results demonstrated that high school students are obviously motivated by future professional opportunities. The group of such factors as career opportunities, wage and being in demand were evaluated on the level of 135 points, while factors of interesting job and the good fit to the job were evaluated on the level of 76 points that is twice lower of compared to the first group of factors.

Since the professional opportunities and wage were the most important factors of professional orientation, the analysis of respondents' expectations of the future job was performed, we

included into the questionnaire the question if they have chosen the future place of work. The answers distribution is presented below (see Fig.4).

**Fig. 4: The preferred form of employment for respondents (% of respondents)**



source: author

It should be noted, that there is a significant part of high school students who are oriented to self-employment; 20% of the respondents expect to be self-entrepreneurs, 13% are oriented to freelance activities, while employment in state-joint companies is interesting for 36% of the respondents, 26% of the students have reported about interest in working in private business sector.

At the next stage of the study, the effectiveness of professional orientation activities and events in the region was evaluated. Based on analyses of reported activities of professional orientation subjects the list of such activities (27 activities total) was formulated. All these events were grouped and presented to the respondents for evaluation. We measured the popularity of these events based on the number of participants. The efficiency ratio was measured as a ratio of respondents evaluated this activity as effective to the total number of participants. This coefficient represents the level of influence of the event to respondents' professional orientation. The coefficient of prospects was measured as the ratio of respondents who evaluated this activity as a perspective to the total number of participants. The detailed results of this analysis are presented in the table below (see table 2).

**Tab. 2: The effectiveness of the career guidance methods**

Events	Used, %	Efficiency ratio	The coefficient of prospects
<b>Activities of General orientation (range):</b>	<b>from 41.35 to 43.36</b>	<b>from 0.34 to 0.40</b>	<b>from 0.18 to 0.21</b>
trade shows (fairs)	41.35	0.39	0.21
theme cool clock	42.49	0.34	0.18
presentations by representatives of universities and colleges at school	43.36	0.40	0.21
<b>Activities of professional orientation (range):</b>	<b>from 16.61 to 29.79</b>	<b>from 0.53 to 0.75</b>	<b>from 0.32 to 0.46</b>
excursions to enterprises	29.79	0.53	0.32
professional tests (educational and professional combines)	16.61	0.75	0.46
meetings with professionals (members of the professions)	26.25	0.65	0.44
<b>Events individual focus (range)</b>	<b>from 15.57 to 44.77</b>	<b>from 0.38 to 0.63</b>	<b>from 0.19 to 0.43</b>
individual consultation	20.27	0.63	0.40
master classes, trainings on career choice (the steps of selecting)	24.34	0.63	0.36
ability testing (psychological)	44.77	0.38	0.19
the changing profile of vocational guidance (dip included)	15.57	0.59	0.43

Source: authors

The data above demonstrates that trade fairs and presentations by representatives of universities are the most common activities in the scope of professional orientation. However, the efficiency coefficients of these activities are in the range between 0.34 and 0.4; coefficient of prospects was evaluated in the range between 0.18 and 0.21.

The least common methods of professional orientation are master classes, individual consultations and training sessions, while the efficiency of these activities is the highest (from 0.38 to 0.63). The coefficient of prospects of this group of methods was evaluated in the range from 0.19 to 0.43. Hence, the effectiveness of traditional methods of professional orientation is significantly lower if compared to more recent, non-traditional methods, which are less common at the present.

These results correspond to the results of the previous studies of prospective methods of professional orientation. Students were asked to name the most effective and desirable methods of professional orientation and professional self-determination. The most popular methods were digital technologies, webinars, and meetings with active professionals and representatives of a future profession.

## Conclusion

Career guidance methods were examined in this study in the context of their effectiveness. Several conclusions can be drawn from the foregoing analyses. First, professional orientation system should be based on actual, appropriate and young people-friendly methods (digital technologies, webinars, online tours, seminars). Therefore, professional orientation technologies should concentrate not only on personality tests and assessment of individual's abilities and skills but also on guiding of job search with respect of soft skills, competencies and such external factors as general trends in the national economy, labor law changes, and major labor market trends. Finally, we can conclude that professional orientation should not be based on current variables only (current level of development of an individual's skills, the current state of the labor market) but also on its perspective states in future. The innovative character of work and workplace, career opportunities and access to innovative technologies in the work setting are especially important for young professionals.

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