

A. Sarsenova Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, Almaty, Kazakhstan
e-mail: assel.sarsenova@inbox.ru**PROFESSIONAL PREFERENCES OF URBAN
AND RURAL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS:
COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS**

The actuality of the problem of professional preference defining and studying of high school students is increasing. This is due to the fact that the successfulness of a professional orientation work in schools is one of the important indicators of modernization of Kazakhstani education as a guarantee of future youth employment and competitive positions in labour market. Given article is devoted to the studying the professional preferences of urban and rural high school students. The aim of the research is determining factors, similarities and differences that affecting on professional preferences of urban and rural high school students.

In theoretical part of the given article was made an overview of scientific conceptions of professional preferences of high school students. The empirical part shows the results of the research conducted by questionnaire method among students (N = 270) of urban and rural high school students (Almaty city and Almaty region).

The results of the research demonstrate that students of urban high schools apply independently career guidance and counselling institutions outside of school, as well as rural youth prefer only school career guidance activities. Psychological testing is the widely used form of professional orientation work in urban and rural schools. The main factors which were affected by changes in the professional preferences of urban youth are the demand for particular specialities in the labour market, as well as on students of rural schools affect of social ties. Rural youth don't have a concrete position in choosing not only a profession, also a higher educational institution. The high level of remuneration is very important in future job as urban as rural youth.

The results of the study can be used to develop recommendations and further improve the effectiveness of vocational guidance for young people in the education system.

Key words: profession, professional preferences, choice of profession, career guidance, schoolchildren, rural youth, urban youth.

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e-mail: assel.sarsenova@inbox.ru**Қала және ауыл жоғары сынып оқушыларының кәсіби қалаулары:
салыстырмалы талдау**

Жоғары сынып оқушыларының кәсіби қалауларын анықтау және зерттеу мәселесінің өзектілігі артуда. Себебі, мектептерде кәсіптік бағдар берудің жетістігі жастардың болашақта жұмысқа орналасуының және еңбек нарығындағы бәсекеге қабілетті позициялардың кепілі ретінде қазақстандық білім беруді жаңғыртудың маңызды көрсеткіштерінің бірі болып табылады. Мақала қала мен ауылдың жоғары сынып оқушыларының кәсіби қалауларын зерттеуге арналған. Зерттеудің мақсаты қала және ауыл мектептерінің жоғары сынып оқушыларының кәсіби қалауларына әсер ететін факторларын, айырмашылықтарын мен ұқсастықтарын анықтау.

Мақаланың теориялық бөлімінде жоғары сынып оқушыларының кәсіби қалауларына қатысты ғылыми тұжырымдамаларға шолу жасалынды. Зерттеудің эмпирикалық бөлімінде қалалық және ауылдық мектептердің (Алматы қаласы мен Алматы облысы) жоғары сынып оқушылары (N = 270) арасында сауалнама әдісімен жүргізілген зерттеу нәтижелері ұсынылған.

Зерттеу материалдары негізінде қаланың жоғары сынып оқушылары мектептен тыс кәсіби бағдар беретін ұйымдар мен кеңес беретін мекемелерге өз бетінше жүгінетіні, ал ауыл жастары жүгінбейтіні айқындалды. Қала мен ауыл мектептерінде кәсіби бағдар жұмыстарының ішінде ең кеңінен қолданылатын түрі психологиялық тестілеу. Зерттеу көрсеткендей, қала жастарының кәсіби бейімділігінің өзгеруіне еңбек нарығындағы белгілі бір мамандықтарға сұраныстың өзгеруі, ал ауыл мектептеріндегі мектеп оқушылары үшін әлеуметтік байланыстар әсер етеді.

жастарының тек мамандық емес, жоғары оқу орнын таңдауда нақты ұстанымы жоқ. Қала және ауыл оқушылары үшін еңбекақы деңгейі өте маңызды.

Зерттеу нәтижелері бойынша ұсыныстар әзірлеу және білім беру жүйесінде жастарға кәсіптік бағдар берудің тиімділігін одан әрі арттыру үшін пайдалануға болады.

Түйін сөздер: кәсіп, кәсіби қалау, мамандық таңдау, кәсіби бағдар, оқушылар, қала жастары, ауыл жастары.

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Профессиональные предпочтения городских и сельских школьников старших классов: сравнительный анализ

Актуальность проблемы определения и изучения профессиональных предпочтений школьников старших классов возрастает. Это связано с тем, что успешность профориентационной работы в школах является одним из важных показателей модернизации казахстанского образования как залога будущего трудоустройства молодежи и конкурентных позиций на рынке труда. Статья посвящена изучению профессиональных предпочтений городских и сельских старшеклассников. Цель исследования – определить факторы, сходства и различия, влияющие на профессиональные предпочтения школьников старших классов городских и сельских школ.

В теоретической части данной статьи сделан обзор научных концепций профессионального предпочтения старшеклассников. Эмпирическая часть представляет результаты исследования, проведенного методом анкетирования среди учащихся старших классов (N=270) городских и сельских школ (г. Алматы и Алматинская область).

Результаты исследования демонстрируют, что школьники старших классов города ориентированы обращаться в профориентационные и консультационные учреждения вне школы, в то время как сельская молодежь предпочитает только школьные профориентационные мероприятия. Наиболее широко используемой формой профориентационной работы в городских и сельских школах является психологическое тестирование. Исследование показало, что на изменение профессиональных предпочтений городской молодежи влияет изменение спроса на определенные специальности на рынке труда, а для школьников сельских школ – социальные связи. Сельская молодежь не имеет четкой позиции в выборе не только профессии, но и высшего учебного заведения. Очень важным как и для городских, так и сельских школьников является уровень оплаты труда.

Результаты исследования могут быть использованы для разработки рекомендаций и дальнейшего повышения эффективности профессиональной ориентации молодежи в системе образования.

Ключевые слова: профессия, профессиональные предпочтения, выбор профессии, профориентация, школьники, сельская молодежь, городская молодежь.

Introduction

The choice of a future profession is one of the most important decisions in the life of any high school student. The professional choice is influenced by several factors: parental advice, Internet resources, personal decisions or preferences, career guidance work at school, etc. It can affect not only the personality of young people but also the socio-economic problems at the state level. That is, there is an increase in the need for certain professions in society and a shortage of personnel. Therefore, the right choice of future profession is necessary from the very beginning in schools. Although the professional choice of high school students depends on personal goals, life positions, strategies and abilities, purposeful

and systematic career guidance work allows you to determine students' professional interests, values and orientation. The problem of determining professional preferences has always been among the most pressing.

Normally, high school students face many difficulties in the process of professional choice. In solving such problems, the head of state K. Zh. Tokayev proposes the need for early implementation of comprehensive measures in schools that will help students make rational professional choices (Tokayev, 2021).

In many, the problem of vocational guidance of schoolchildren and its system began to be studied in the pedagogical, as well as in the social and humanitarian Sciences. Prior to analyze theoretically the professional preferences of the students in socio-

logical science, first of all let's dwell on the concept of career preferences.

In different countries, the measures and forms of assistance to students in choosing a professional profession are different. Among them, let's analyze the experience of several advanced countries. In England, at the beginning of the 20th century, the economic situation was unstable and the number of unemployed categories of people increased sharply. To resolve this issue in the country, the first professional orientation work was carried out. Such works included works aimed not only at young people, but also at people of middle age, and these works were carried out by anyone, without resorting to the help of a special specialist. As a result of such systematic work, the UK solved and regulated the problems of unemployment, staff shortages, etc. (Roberts, 2013). The Netherlands also has a career guidance practice aimed at developing the student's professional competence and personal abilities. Therefore, career guidance services are not limited to providing information about the labour market, universities, etc., but involve the identification and development of personal abilities and professional inclinations of high school students (Tewierik et al., 2015). In modern conditions, several prestigious universities in the United States have special Centers for the study of career. The purpose of the centres is to contribute to the preservation of economic stability in the country or a particular region by compiling a list and map of professions necessary for society. The results of the conducted research are submitted as recommendations to school management in each region, and special specialists engaged in Career Guidance work.

Literature review

Professional orientation consists of a large-scale system of work carried out in various forms. One of the types of them is the determination of professional preferences. The concept of career guidance is the object of study of some social and humanitarian sciences, such as Psychology, Sociology, Political Science, etc., and the research features of each are different. The main goal of professional orientation work in any form is to help in choosing a future profession. An American psychologist who studied the choice of profession from a psychological point of view associates the name Holland. According to his concept, when choosing the right profession, it is important to consider the personal qualities and personality characteristics of the individual, and his preferences (Holland, 1997). This is because choosing a profession that does not consider the person's

professional preferences and does not correspond to their abilities may in the future make him not work in that professional field at all or move on to his desired profession (Kimongo-Kemboi, 2016). At the same time, young people with a profession tend to choose a good profession and make decisions.

Although many people believe that profession choice is a personal decision, studies have shown that a number of factors influence students' final choices such as family, school, community, social and economic factors (Ferry, 2006). Among these factors, parents have an important influence on the choice of professions. Additional research has shown that parents influence the career choice of students more than teachers (Kniveton, 2004). Some scientists suppose that children cannot engage in particular professions, or even cannot think about it without parental permission (Taylor et al., 2004). A. Henderson and K. Mapp approve that children study better and visit best schools only then, parents are engaged and involved (Henderson et al., 2002). In the A. Roe's opinion. Upbringing styles have a significant influence on a child's career decisions, especially when choosing personality-orientated careers. A. Roe comes to the conclusion that the most important aspect of this is the child's proximity to the parents. Thus, considering parental involvement as a major factor influencing students' career choices, the researcher investigated the career preferences of high school students in relation to parental involvement at secondary school level in Malwa region of Punjab (Roe, 1957).

The study professional desire involves analyzing various situations of professional choice, exploring its motivational aspects, and examining the peculiarities of its realization (Skosireva et al., 2020). Considering the context of established social relations and cultural institutions is crucial. In M. Eyo and P. Edet's opinion, the profession choice is a decision that most people make at some point in their lives (Eyo et al., 2011). The Oxford English Dictionary describes a profession as the course or development of a person throughout life or in a particular part of life. According to F. Mish, "Profession" is a certain skill that a person acquires, which is necessary for his life. And desire means a choice in the realization of the conceived. Professional preference is the freedom to choose a profession of one's own choice, referring to the type of occupation that is considered attractive to young people regardless of the state of the labour market (Mish, 2004).

It was Holland who comprehensively explored the concept of vocational desire from a psychological perspective. As we have already noted, the main

conclusion of the researcher is to determine the professional preferences of the individual in what profession he has a predisposition and to propose a list of professions that correspond to his abilities and skills. Holland uses a psychological test as a means of identifying these. Through this tool, a typological portrait of the personality is created, helping to choose professions that are close and inclined to oneself, depending on the character of the personality (Holland, 1993). From the point of view of Super, people do not immediately from a decision about their future profession. At the stage of personality development, it undergoes many changes and can be influenced by various factors (Super, 1952). Therefore, it is advisable to Start Career Guidance work not only among high school students but also in elementary grades. The work started at an early stage will be a systematized and comprehensive work aimed at identifying students' professional preferences.

The career guidance service of general educational organizations has the following main structural elements (or directions):

- professional diagnosis;
- professional counselling;
- professional preference;
- social and professional adaption;
- professional education (Gaxiola et al., 2015).

One of the negative consequences of high school students during their schooling is the lack of formation of personal professional interests and labor motives, as well as insufficient attention to the problem of their timely professional self-determination. As a result, young people who graduate from school may spend several years "looking for their place in life" without studying or working. That is why the work on determining the professional preferences of high school students in schools is one of the main stages of their future professional development.

The emergence of new, modern professions and various changes in society in the professional and educational spheres have created difficulties for high school students in making decisions regarding their future professions. Of course, students' choice of profession is influenced by educational institutions, family, friends, and the internet, but it is not easy to choose a profession that corresponds to their preferences and personal abilities. Especially the remote location of rural areas from the city and the lack of availability of many resources cause difficulties in professional determination and decision-making for rural schoolchildren. Therefore, there may be differences in the formation and determination of professional preferences of students of urban and rural

schools, and in the ways of choosing a profession in the end. Under this, we attempted to conduct a comparative analysis to identify the most important factors affecting the professional trajectory strategies, and professional preferences of high school students in urban and rural schools.

Material and methods

The study was attended by high school students aged 15-17 years from Almaty and rural settlements of the Almaty region. The collection of empirical data was carried out from October to December 2023. The sample total is 270 respondents. Almaty city – 135 students, Almaty region-135 students. The purpose of the study is to identify the differences and similarities in the professional preferences of urban and rural schoolchildren and strategies for choosing a profession. The article was prepared within the framework of the scientific project of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan 14870735 "Transformation of professional preferences of high school students of urban and rural schools: comparative sociological analysis". The survey was conducted among high school students of 14-17 years old by applying the questionnaire method. The survey consists of several parts. The first part raises questions related to the socio-economic situation of the family, the second part raises questions about the career guidance work organized and carried out at school, and the third part raises questions related to determining the professional position of the student. Structure of the sample population: by gender: (Almaty city) boys – 55.3%, girls – 44.7%; (Almaty region) boys – 34.5%, girls – 65.6%. The obtained data were analyzed in SPSS software version 21.

There are several reasons why these regions have been chosen as the testing ground for the comparative study: Almaty is a major administrative, educational and cultural, financial and business center. The city of Almaty ranks first in the republic in terms of the number of public and private secondary educational institutions providing general education. Almaty region is the administrative center. Although it is one of the closest regions to Almaty city, it differs in the level of general secondary education from neighboring settlements.

Results and discussion

The school is engaged not only in teaching and education but also in the personal lives of students and the process of choosing a future profession nec-

essary for society. Before receiving professional higher education in higher education institutions, schoolchildren receive the first information about the world of professions and the nature, importance of the profession in general education institutions. In the course of Career Guidance work, such information is provided and taught to make the right professional decisions. On the basis of the questions presented in the second part of the survey, respondents were asked: “Has there been vocational guidance work in the school in the last two years?”

Almost half (49.1%) of the students in Almaty city had career guidance several times, and 65.6% of students in Almaty region showed that career guidance was conducted several times in the last two years. 43.0% of urban schoolchildren reported that only one or two vocational selection activities were conducted in their schools, while 28.3% of rural schoolchildren had only conducted it once or twice. Unfortunately, it was also known that no

career guidance work was done at all. Thus, 7.9% of urban respondents and 6.2% of rural respondents stated that they never heard of career guidance and never had it (Table 1).

Table 1 – Has there been vocational guidance work in the school in the last two years?

Answer options	Almaty city	Almaty region
	%	%
Yes, several times	49.1	65.5
Once-twice	43.0	28.3
Never	7.9	6.2

In order to determine in what form of activity career guidance out in the school, respondents were asked: “What form of career guidance work is carried out in your school?”

Table 2 – What forms of career guidance work is carried out in your school?

Answer options	Almaty city	Almaty region
	%	%
Personal consultation	22.8	27.2
Psychological testing	46.9	52.6
Tests on defining professional preferences	34.2	44.1
As s discussion with teachers	21.9	33.8
Meetings with various profession representatives	23.9	25.5
Thematic events about any sphere of economy, professional activity	3.5	6.2
Watching university presentations, videos, news, educational and professional films	26,3	29,0
Visiting professional organizations with teachers	7,9%	10,3%
Visiting universities and colleges of Kazakhstan with teachers of schools	11,4%	13,8%
There was no career guidance at school	2,6%	4,1%

*Note. Since respondents were given the opportunity to mark more than one answer option, the overall response rate exceeds 100 %

Almost half of schoolchildren in Almaty city (46.9%) and Almaty region (52.9%) who took part in the study indicated that one of the activities aimed at helping them choose their future profession is a psychological test. It became known that next place is occupied by the “test to determine professional preferences” (urban schoolchildren – 34.2% and rural schoolchildren – 44.1%). Then comes professional orientation among schoolchildren of Almaty region through “talking to teachers” (33.8%) and “watching university presentations, videos, films about education and professional activity” (29.0%).

And for urban students, “watching university presentations, videos, films about education and professional activity” and (23.7%) “meetings with representatives of various professions” are one of the three most important types of professional orientation. Along with this, visits to higher education institutions and colleges for counseling meetings are a type of career guidance conducted in schools. Because, in our opinion, it is much easier to visit a vocational education organization. Since it is obvious that there is competition between universities and colleges to attract new applicants, so higher educa-

tion institutions are interested in cooperation with schools. For example, 11.4% of urban and 13.8% of rural respondents to the study showed that they went to higher education and colleges with their teachers.

Only 7.9% of urban and 10.3% of rural high school students use visiting of professional organizations with teachers as a form of vocational guidance (Table 2). The results of the research show that contact with professional organizations (companies, various employers, etc.) in urban and rural school is not established correctly at the required level. Taking into account the fact that in Soviet times such experience was widely used and gave ten results, we believe that today it is necessary to introduce such experience in general education institutions. That is, after the school determines the professional abilities and skills of students through a psychological test, meetings with the heads of institutions on their professional inclinations, and familiarization with workplaces will undoubtedly contribute to the correct choice of future professions for young people.

According to the data in Table 3, it is known that more than half of rural schoolchildren (57.2%) have never visited organizations and institutions provid-

ing career guidance outside school, and 30.7% of urban schoolchildren have never visited institutions providing career guidance on their own. However, almost half of the urban young people – 43.9 per cent – made several visits to vocational guidance outside school. This can be explained by the fact that there are many different centers in Almaty that prepare high school students for the United National Test, help them to choose a profession in foreign universities. It has been established that only 19.3 per cent of rural schoolchildren have applied for assistance outside school several times (only pupils from rural areas close to Almaty can this possibility) (Table 3).

Table 3 – Did you visit out of school establishment and organizations of counseling on professional orientation in last two years?

Answer options	Almaty city	Almaty region
	%	%
Yes, several times	43.9	19.3
Once-twice	25.4	23.4
Never	30.7	57.2

Table 4 – What types of professional guidance outside of school have you personally participated in?

Answer options	Almaty city	Almaty region
	%	%
Personal counseling	27.2	16.6
Psychological testing	22.8	22.1
Testing on defining professional preferences	17.5	24.8
Measures and meetings with Kazakhstan universities' students	9.6	2.8
Measures and meetings with Kazakhstan colleges' students	9.6	4.1
Fairs, meetings with representatives of foreign universities	0.9	3.4
Independent search and review university presentations, videos, news, educational and professional films	21.9	25.5
I didn't participate in career guidance outside of school	33.3	42.8

* Note. Since respondents were given the opportunity to mark more than one answer option, the overall response rate exceeds 100 %

According to the survey results presented in the table, the majority of urban (33.3%) and rural school students (42.8%) did not participate in career guidance activities outside school. Students of Almaty region 25.5% of independent career guidance in choosing a future profession spend as “independent search and viewing of university presentations, video clips, news stories, films about education and professional activity”. It has been established that

the next place among senior pupils of rural schools is occupied by the “test for determining professional preferences” (24.8%). The same “psychological testing” for urban (22.8%) and rural (22.1%) schoolchildren is a form of career guidance outside of school. Events, meetings, university fairs with students of Kazakhstani universities and colleges take the last place for urban and rural students. This is due to the fact that such forms of career guidance

are organized by heads of school and universities (Table 4).

Answers to the question “*In your opinion, what classes in the school help students to choose a future profession?*” urban and rural schoolchildren in the study were similar. The first three events were defined as “meetings with people who have achieved signification success in their field”, “meetings with representatives of various professions and fields of activity” and “organized contacts with university students who graduated from a given school”. In addition, 21.1% of students in Almaty region and 17.5% of students in Almaty city noted that such events as “thematic meetings with university teachers” help students to choose their future profession. Because we find it useful hundreds of meetings to get information about what universities, what educational programs they prepare and what are the conditions of admission in large cities or in their cities. Pupils in rural areas (23.4%) and urban school students (34.2%) believe that professional choice should be made at “creative competitions in the field of education Olympiads”. The need for counseling can be further demonstrated from the response to our inquiry. The survey for rural (22.8%) and urban (20.2%) schoolchildren in the choice of future profession shows that such factor as “personal professional consultation with school specialists” helps.

Choice of profession is important in the choice of vocational educational and future professional activity. Therefore, to find out whether the respondents have made/not made a professional choice, the question “*Have you decided on your professional choice?*” was asked.

According to the survey results, more than half of urban (60.5%) and rural (55.2%) schoolchildren have already decided on their professional choice. This indicates that students have a subjective understanding of their place in the professional environment. It became known that only 33.3 per cent of urban and 33.8 per cent of rural youth had not made

a meaningful, concrete decision. Among the respondents who took part in the study, there were those who have not yet made their professional choice (Almaty city – 6,1 per cent, Almaty region – 11.0 per cent). In general, the level of confidence of urban and rural youth in choosing a profession is quite high. It can be said that when a person initially pays attention to a certain profession, occupation and makes a conscious choice, then after his graduation the society will be provided with a highly qualified specialist ready to work according to the received knowledge (Table 5).

Table 5 – Making a decision on professional selection

Answer options	Almaty city	Almaty region
	%	%
Yes	60,5%	55,2%
Not particular	33,3%	33,8%
No	6,1%	11,0%

To define this question in more detail, respondents were asked “*Have your professional preferences changed over the last 3 years?*”. More than half of rural schoolchildren (52.4 per cent) had significant changes in their occupational preferences, while 35.2 per cent of respondents had minor changes. Only 12.5% of rural senior pupils had no permanent and special preferences. Meanwhile, 42,1 per cent of urban students changed their occupational preferences and 42.1 per cent showed a slight change, while 15.8 per cent of urban students showed that their occupational preferences had not changed and they had no particular preference in choosing their occupation. To determine the factors that influenced the change of professional preferences, we were asked to answer the question “*Specify what influenced the change of your professional preferences over the last 3 years?*” let us try to analyze the obtained results.

Table 6 – Specify what influenced the change of your professional preferences over the last 3 years? (you can choose 3 answer options)

Answer options	Almaty city	Almaty region
	%	%
Availability of employment in various employment sectors	34.2	29.7
Educational policy of the state (support of universities, number of grants, etc.)	28.1	32.4
Changes in the labor market and demand for specialties	40.4	38.6
Advice of my parents, relatives and friends	31.6	48.3

Continuation of the table

Answer options	Almaty city	Almaty region
	%	%
Professional orientation in school	5.3	8.3
Changes in my interests in self-improvement	38.6	40.7
Work of universities and colleges to attract applicants	1.8	4.1
Information obtained independently from the websites of educational organizations	12.3	11.7
Information on the Internet, mass media	22.8	25.5

* Note. Since respondents were given the opportunity to mark more than one answer option, the overall response rate exceeds 100 %

Respondents were asked to choose the three most important answers, and differences in the ranking of answers were observed between urban and rural schoolchildren. For example, for urban students, the top three factors that influenced the change in their professional preferences were: changes in the labour market and demand for specialties (40.4%), changes in interests in self-improvement (38.6%) and the availability of employment, in various areas of employment (31.6%). For rural schoolchildren: advice from parents, relatives, friends (48.3%). Changes in my interests in self-improvement (40.7%) and changes in the labour market and demand for specialties (38.6%). Based on the analysis of the data, the main factor that influenced the change in the professional preferences of urban schoolchildren was the *demand on the labour market*, and for rural schoolchildren, it was the *advice of parents, relatives, acquaintances and friends* that contributed to the transformation of their recent choice of profession. Therefore, it became clear that the influence of social ties prevails for rural schoolchildren who make the final decision to choose a profession. 32.4% of schoolchildren in Almaty region and 28.1% in Almaty city were influenced by the educational policy of the state, i.e. the number of state grants allocated for training in certain specialties also led to a change in their professional preferences. In the process of analyzing the influence of sources of information on the Internet, and social networks on changes in the professional preferences of high school students of urban and rural schools, no significant difference was observed. This indicator was 22.8% for high school students in Almaty and 25.5% for high school students in Almaty region. The change in the professional preferences of high school students at the city school was influenced by the following important factors: a change in the labour market, high self-interest and future employment opportunities. Rural schools

were the first three important factors for high school students: social contacts, personal interests and demand in the labour market (Table 6).

By the question “*What professional areas do you prefer?*” we wanted to determine the final decisions made by high school students of urban and rural schools.

Table 7 – What professional field do you want in the future?

Answer options	Almaty city	Almaty region
	%	%
Natural sciences	32.5	31.7
Technical sciences	26.3	17.9
Informational technologies	28.1	20.7
Social-humanitarian sciences	17.5	26.2
Economical sciences	7.9	10.3
Juridical sciences	7.9	4.8
Foreign languages	12.3	19.3
Art	9.6	10.3

Based on the analysis of the data, three leading professional choice areas of high school students can be distinguished: 1. Natural Sciences; 2. Information technologies; 3. Technical Sciences. There is no significant difference in the choice of Natural Science direction between urban high school students (32.5%) and Rural High School students (31.7%). From a regional point of view, statistically significant differences were observed in the level of choice of some professional direction by high school students in urban and rural schools. 28.1% of high school students from city schools chose the direction of Information Technology and 20.7% of high school students from rural schools. 26.3% of urban high school students decide to choose techni-

cal sciences and 17.9% rural high school students preferred technical sciences. This choice can be explained, first of all, by the fact that these professions are in demand today, and also because of the large number of government educational grants for them. In addition, it can be concluded that modern urban schoolchildren are better acquainted with the requirements of the labour market than rural schoolchildren are. Few of the respondents chose economic and legal sciences. For example, if only 7.9 per cent of school children in Almaty city plan to choose economic and legal sciences, while 4.8 per cent of pupils in Almaty region indicated that choose legal sciences and 10.3 per cent economic sciences. Based on the analysis of the data it was found that 12.3% of students of Almaty city and 19.3% of students of Almaty region choose the professional direction “foreign languages”. We believe that the reason for this is that today learning a foreign language is necessary to be competitive in the labour market. If earlier the knowledge of a foreign language determined only the level of a person’s education, now there is need for knowledge of English as the language of new technologies and commerce (Table 7).

To the question “Specify what is important for you in your future profession, occupation?”, the majority of urban (63.9%) and rural (58.3%) schoolchildren have indicated that “high level of salary” is very important for them. As a Russian researcher N. A. Tsvetkova notes, although there is a transformation of value orientations of modern youth, today for young people the profession is necessary to achieve the necessary material prosperity and is an indicator of a successful life (Tsvetkova, 2000). The answers of urban and rural youth are similar, and it was found that the second most important is “career growth opportunity”, and the third most important is “highly qualified profession, job”. As we all know, today’s urban and rural youth also aspire to higher wages. Of course, in modern society material well-being plays an important role, and a person with higher education has higher chance of self-development and success in his future profession.

On this issue, several differences were found between the urban and rural students. For example, for rural students (62.8 per cent), “the allocation of many educational grants in their chosen profession” is considered very important, while for urban students, government educational grants are not very important (48,2 per cent). In our opinion, the low importance of receiving a state grant for educational for graduates of urban schools is explained by the fact that some of them intend to study in foreign universities.

To further analyse this response and identify plans to receive free education in Kazakhstan’s higher education institutions, respondents were asked to answer the question: “Are you trying to get or win a state grant for education?”. According to the results of the study, it is known that more than half of urban (57.9 per cent (and (66.2 per cent) high school graduates hope to receive a scholarship and make every effort to obtain it. At the same time, there are also those who say “it is not important for me” (urban – 19.3%; rural – 11.0%), those who are not confident in their successes and abilities and believe that they have few opportunities to get a grant, there were also answers (urban – 6.1%; rural – 10.3%) and “no, I do not make necessary efforts” (urban – 7.0%; rural – 6.9%).

Conclusion

Socio-economic sustainable development of the country depends on the rational organization and implementation of career guidance work in schools. Timely and systematic career guidance in schools affects student’s future career choice and professional decisions. Such competent decision will regulate the country’s labor market and provide it with the necessary labour resources. UK, USA, etc. there is a need to analyze effective practices in developed countries and introduce new international models of career guidance in schools in the country.

In the study, we tried to determine how the existing vocational guidance system works, opportunities and limitations for urban and rural schools. As a rule, the resources of the city’s schools are sufficient to determine the professional preferences of students. However, based on the analysis of the data, the reverse fact was established: career guidance work is carried out in rural schools more often than in City Schools. However, students in rural areas do not receive independent extracurricular career guidance services (57.2% of respondents have never visited such services). It was found that high school students of the city resort to the services of professional not from the school, but from special career guidance centres (43.9%).

In our opinion, the Career Guidance work provided by the school for schoolchildren of the city is ineffective.

Psychological testing is a common type of professional orientation characteristic of urban and rural schools. At the same time, it also showed the importance of meetings with employers and people who have achieved professional success in making the right professional decisions in the future.

In general, according to the results of the study, we noticed that the level of confidence in choosing a profession is quite high among urban and rural young people. The survey results revealed some differences in the change of respondents' professional preferences over the last 3 years depending on the place of residence: it is known that the main factor influencing the change of professional activity of senior pupils in Almaty is the *demand in the labour market*, while pupils in rural areas are still influenced by the *advice of parents, relatives, acquaintances, friends* to change their professional preferences, i.e. to make professional decisions. Advice from parents, acquaintances, friends means that they are involved in choosing a profession for rural pupils. This is due to the fact that, unlike urban youth, rural youth do not really understand that changing profession affects market conditions, that they should have the ability to adapt, etc. Although

the scope of digital technologies has expanded, rural youth are not sufficiently familiar with such information as professional characteristics of the current labour market, location of educational institutions for their chosen specialties, etc. In future employment, urban (63.0 per cent) and rural (58.3 per cent) schoolchildren said that a "high level of salary" was very important.

In conclusion, we can say that professional preference depends on the quality and efficiency of the career guidance work carried out at schools. This is since today, as one of the ways to prevent and solve social problems, such as unemployment, insufficient labour resources in certain areas, etc., the importance of measures to identify the professional preferences of students, which are carried out in schools from an age, is growing. Such a set of measures should be organized taking into account urban and rural characteristics, and resources.

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