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STRATEGIES AND MOTIVATIONS OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN CAREER CHOICE

Career choice refers to the process of self-determination among high school students regarding their future professional direction. The issue of professional self-identification and career choice among high school students remains relevant, as effective career guidance is crucial for ensuring youth employment and their competitive positioning in the labor market. Various factors influence students' selection of specific career paths, highlighting the need for sociological research to identify the primary challenges in this process. The objective of our study is to determine the strategies and motivations of high school students in choosing their future careers.

According to sociological research, the most important characteristics of future careers and jobs for high school students include a high salary, opportunities for self-realization, career growth prospects, and the availability of numerous job opportunities in the chosen profession. When choosing a future profession "high wages" is one of the most important motives for students studying in Kazakh and Russian. While the number of government scholarships is less important for students in specialized schools, it is crucial for those in general education schools. The majority of high school students have already made their career choices, indicating that their selection strategies are well-structured. Compared to general education students, specialized school students are more aware of labor market trends and the demand for specific professions.

Identifying strategies and motivations for career choice can help educational institutions and administrators develop effective approaches to assist students in making informed decisions. However, these motivations may change based on socio-economic conditions.

Key words: high school students, youth, profession, future career choice, motivation, strategy.

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Жоғары сынып оқушыларының мамандық таңдау стратегиялары мен мотивтері

Мамандық таңдау бұл жоғары сынып оқушыларының болашақ жұмысының бағытына қатысты өзін анықтауын білдіреді. Жоғары сынып оқушыларының кәсіби өзін-өзі анықтауы мен мамандық таңдау мәселесі өзектілігін жоғалтпайды. Себебі, кәсіби бағдарлаудың тиімді жүзеге асуы жастардың болашақ жұмысқа орналасуының және еңбек нарығындағы бәсекелестік позицияларының кепілі, маңызды көрсеткіштерінің бірі болып табылады. Сондықтан, оқушылардың мамандықтың нақты бағыттарын таңдауына әсер ететін түрлі факторларды анықтауға мүмкіндік беретін әлеуметтанулық зерттеулер қажет. Зерттеуіміздің мақсаты жоғары сынып оқушыларының болашақ мамандық таңдаудағы стратегиялары мен мотивтерін анықтау.

Әлеуметтанулық зерттеу нәтижесі бойынша жоғары сынып оқушылары үшін болашақ мамандық пен жұмыстың ең маңызды сипаттамалары мыналар: еңбекақының жоғары деңгейі, өзімді жүзеге асыруға мүмкіндіктің болуы, мансаптық өсу мүмкіндігі, бұл мамандық бойынша көптеген жұмыс орындарының болуы. Оқыту тілі бойынша болашақ мамандық таңдауда «еңбекақының жоғары болуы» қазақ және орыс тілде оқитын оқушылар үшін аса маңызды мотивтердің бірі. Білім беру грантының саны арнайы мектеп оқушылар үшін маңызды емес болса, жалпы білім беретін мектеп оқушылары аса маңызды екені анықталды. Жоғары сынып оқушыларының басым бөлігі болашақ мамандықтарына таңдау жасаған. Бұл, олардың мамандық таңдау стратегиялары нақты құрылғанын көрсетеді. Арнайы мектептердің оқушылары жалпы білім беретін мектептердегі оқушылармен салыстырғанда еңбек нарығындағы өзгерістер және белгілі бір кәсіптерге сұраныс туралы біледі.

Мамандық таңдаудағы стратегиялар мен мотивтерді анықтау білім беру мекемелері мен басшылары үшін оқушыларға болашақ мамандық таңдау мен кәсіби шешім қабылдау бойынша тиімді стратегияларды әзірлеуде пайдалы болуы мүмкін. Алайда бұл мотивтер әлеуметтік-экономикалық жағдайға байланысты өзгеріп отыруы мүмкін.

Түйін сөздер: жоғары сынып оқушылары, жастар, кәсіп, болашақ мамандық таңдау, мотив, стратегия.

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Стратегии и мотивы выбора будущей профессии школьников старших классов

Выбор профессии означает самоопределение старшеклассников относительно направления их будущей работы. Проблема профессионального самоопределения старшеклассников и выбора профессии не теряет своей актуальности. Эффективное осуществление профессиональной ориентации является одним из важнейших показателей, залогом будущего трудоустройства молодежи и конкурентных позиций на рынке труда. В связи с этим необходимы социологические исследования, позволяющие выявить различные факторы, влияющие на выбор школьниками конкретных направлений профессии. Цель исследования: выявить стратегии и мотивы старшеклассников в выборе будущей профессии.

По результатам социологического исследования наиболее важными характеристиками будущей профессии и работы для старшеклассников являются: высокий уровень оплаты труда, наличие возможности реализовать себя, возможность карьерного роста, наличие большого количества рабочих мест по данной специальности. При выборе будущей профессии по языку обучения «высокая заработная плата» является одним из важнейших мотивов для учащихся, обучающихся на казахском и русском языках. Определено, что количество образовательных грантов не столь важно для школьников специализированных школ, а для старшеклассников общеобразовательной школы – не менее важно. Большинство старшеклассников уже определились со своей будущей профессией. Это показывает, что их стратегии выбора профессии четко сформулированы. Старшеклассники специализированных школ лучше осведомлены об изменениях на рынке труда и спросе на определенные профессии, чем школьники общеобразовательных школ.

Определение стратегий и мотивов при выборе профессии может быть полезным для образовательных учреждений и руководителей при разработке эффективных стратегий для школьников при будущего выбора профессии и принятия профессиональных решений. Однако эти мотивы могут различаться в зависимости от социально-экономических обстоятельств.

Ключевые слова: старшеклассники, молодежь, профессия, выбор будущей профессии, мотив, стратегия.

Introduction

Despite the renewed curriculum and established connections with higher education institutions, many high school students struggle to link their studies with future careers. As the labor market transforms, the connection between education systems and the job market often remains weak. In this context, implementing effective measures to help students choose their future professions becomes essential, as school is where young people make their first and most important professional decisions.

The world of professions is rapidly changing in response to societal demands and advancements in information and communication technologies. Consequently, the traditional approach of choosing a

single profession for a lifetime is no longer relevant for today's high school students. A list of previously unknown professions has emerged (e.g., IT genetics, bioengineering, intelligent design), while traditional professions (e.g., accounting) are gradually disappearing or undergoing fundamental transformations. Given the rise of new professions, young people must be prepared for the reality that they may need to change careers multiple times throughout their lives.

Numerous studies show that the period of professional self-determination is a psychologically challenging time for many students. Young people view this phase of their lives as difficult, often experiencing anxiety and uncertainty about their future. Today, not all high school students are fully

prepared to make independent career choices. Regardless of their school type or region, students face significant challenges in this process, underscoring the importance of studying this issue. Psychological well-being and professional confidence are influenced not only by external factors but also by internal characteristics and motivations. For instance, high school students' cognitive interests, value orientations, awareness of their abilities and potential, and level of social intelligence all play a crucial role in their career decision-making.

Literature review

There are several researchers who have contributed to the study of students' future career choices. For example, E.A. Danilova presents research findings on career choice and its motivation among school graduates. The study involved 10th and 11th grade students. The survey results indicate that the career choices of school students are highly individualized and based on their personal preferences, interests, and aptitudes. Sixty percent of the graduates have chosen their future professions. The distribution of professions shows that the fields chosen by today's adolescents are those characterized by social interaction and interpersonal communication (Danilova, 2021). Russian scholars Narbut N.P. and Trotsuk I.V., in their work "Life Plans of Russian Students: Hopes and Fears in the Professional Field," examined the life strategies and the professional and educational trajectories of young people (Narbut, Trotsuk, 2014). Additionally, A.A. Onipko, in the work "Self-Determination of High School Students in the Process of Career Choice: A Sociological Analysis," considers sociological approaches to researching the professional self-determination of high school students (Onipko, 2011).

In Turkey, important decisions, such as choosing a future profession, are influenced by cultural factors, including family and close social circles. High school students often lack sufficient and accurate information about themselves and potential careers, which creates difficulties in career selection (Kırdök & Harman, 2018). Blazquez C. and colleagues studied the factors that determine high school students' career preferences using a discrete choice model. The results showed that school type, gender, academic performance, type of work, and parents' education level significantly influence students' career choices. However, these factors may vary depending on the chosen profession and career field. Additionally, the researchers found

that gender, academic achievement, school type, and parental occupation play a crucial role in career selection, with clear gender differences. Boys tend to choose careers in STEM fields, while girls prefer professions in healthcare, education, and the humanities (Blazquez et al., 2024). International researchers have also extensively studied students' career choices, emphasizing the importance of career counseling in schools for students preparing to graduate. Career counseling helps students make informed decisions about their future professions by considering their individual abilities (Maree, 2024). In his research, Maree describes the impact of cultural factors on career choices among youth in South Africa. In these cultures, girls are often expected to choose professions related to household duties, which restricts their ability to select careers based on their interests and capabilities. Additionally, gender discrimination and limited access to education further constrain their career opportunities (Maree, 2020).

In the United States, school counselors assist students in selecting their future careers. This practice originated with the establishment of the American School Counselor Association (ASCA). According to ASCA, school counselors who influence career choices are qualified educators providing professional guidance on career selection and development (ASCA, 2012). In England, the Careers Hubs model is being tested as a career guidance system in schools. This model helps students choose their future professions through eight key indicators. Research findings indicate that career guidance efforts are more effective in hub schools compared to other schools (Percy & Tanner, 2022). Larran and Hein conducted a large-scale study to assess the necessity and significance of school counseling in Eastern and Southeast Asian countries. The study revealed similarities in the need for school counselors, emphasizing the importance of professional training and the necessity of a specialized academic program for training career guidance professionals (Larran & Hein, 2024). Nazareno et al. highlighted the need for a specialized course in schools to help students make the right career choices. This course should focus on helping high school students identify their interests and abilities, guiding them toward informed career decisions (Nazareno et al., 2021). Investing in career guidance programs is crucial. Well-structured and systematic career counseling helps students make informed career choices based on their ambitions, interests, and skills. A comprehensive study of professions and career-related de-

cision-making significantly impacts students' future employment opportunities and career success (European Commission, 2021).

Domestic researchers Sadyrova M.S. et al. highlight various factors that influence young people's inability to make the right career choices. Their study reveals that outdated methods, such as standardized counseling sessions and psychological testing, which are still widely used in many schools, are ineffective for determining high school students' professional preferences (Sadyrova et al., 2024). Additionally, there are differences in career preferences between high school students in urban and rural schools. For example, urban high school students actively seek out extracurricular career guidance programs, while rural students are limited to career guidance activities conducted solely within their schools (Sarsenova, 2024).

Methods and methodology

In 2023 (January-May), a sociological study was conducted in the cities of Astana, Almaty, and Shymkent, which hold national significance, as well as in rural areas of the Almaty, Turkistan, West Ka-

zakhstan, Abai, and Pavlodar regions. The study included both general and specialized educational institutions. The survey method was employed as the primary data collection technique, allowing for the acquisition of objective information on career choice strategies. This approach facilitated the participation of a large number of respondents selected through a sampling process. The sample size consisted of 1,093 respondents, specifically 16- and 17-year-old high school students. The study utilized a quota-stratified multi-stage sampling model. The research objective was to examine the career choice strategies and motivations of 10th and 11th-grade students, considering their school type and language of instruction. The collected data were analyzed using SPSS 22.0 software.

Results and discussion

Career guidance in schools plays a crucial role in shaping students' professional orientations and preferences. As part of the study, questions were asked regarding high school students' career choices and their experiences with career guidance programs.

Table 1 – Has Career Guidance Been Conducted at Your School in the Last Two Years? (N=1093)

№	Answer options	Frequency indicator	With percentage (%)
1	Yes, several times	641	58,6
2	Once or twice	375	34,3
3	Never	77	7,0
	In total	1093	100%

According to the responses received, career guidance activities are conducted in most schools with varying frequency and consistency. A total of 92.9% of surveyed high school students indicated that career guidance had taken place in their

schools over the past two years. Among them, 58.6% reported attending multiple career guidance sessions. Additionally, a small proportion of schools (7%) do not conduct career guidance activities (table 1).

Table 2 – Frequency of Career Guidance Activities by School Type and Language of Instruction, N=1093

№	Has career guidance been conducted at your school in the last two years?	by school type		by language of instruction	
		general education school	specialized school	Kazakh	Russian
1	Yes, several times	57,2%	67,5%	58,6%	58,8%
2	Once or twice	35,0%	29,8%	34,2%	34,4%
3	Never	7,7%	2,6%	7,2%	6,8%
	In total	100%	100%	100%	100%

No significant statistical differences were found when comparing the frequency of career guidance activities across different school types. The overall rate of career guidance implementation was 92.2% in general education schools and 97.3% in specialized schools. However, the percentage of schools

that do not conduct career guidance activities was notably higher in general education schools (7.7%) compared to specialized schools (2.6%). Additionally, no significant differences were observed in the frequency of career guidance activities based on the language of instruction (table 2).

Table 3 – Participation in extracurricular career guidance work by school type, N=1093

№	What types of career guidance are provided at the school?	by school type	
		general education school	specialized school
1	Independent search and viewing of University presentations, videos, films about the future profession	24,6%	24,5%
2	Individual consultation	18,4%	21,9%
3	Psychological testing	19,7%	24,5%
4	Testing to determine professional preferences	20,2%	27,2%
5	Meetings, events in Kazakhstan colleges	10,5%	7,3%
6	Fairs, meetings with representatives of foreign universities	6,7%	6,0%
7	Events, meetings with students of Kazakhstan universities	8,1%	7,9%
8	Thematic events related to economics or specific professional fields	3,8%	1,2%
9	I did not participate in extracurricular career guidance	40,0%	36,0%

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

The analysis of responses regarding participation in extracurricular career guidance activities revealed that students from different school types choose various methods and formats. Among the most frequently used approaches, the top three include. Watching university presentations, video clips, and self-directed exploration, which is a popular method among both general education (24.6%) and specialized school students (24.5%). At first, career preference tests rank second. 27.2% of specialized school students took a career preference test, compared to only 20.2% of general education school students. This suggests that this type of career guidance is more commonly conducted in specialized schools than in general education schools. Second, psychological testing is the third most common method. 19.7% of general education school students used psychological testing, while the share among specialized school students was 24.5%. Third, some students reported not participating in any career guidance activities. Specifically, 40.0%

of general education school students and 36.0% of specialized school students never attended external career guidance organizations. Thematic events related to economics or specific professional fields were found to be less popular among specialized school students compared to those in general education schools. Only 1.2% of specialized school students had participated in such events in the past two years, whereas the percentage among general education school students was slightly higher at 3.8% (table 3).

A comparative analysis by school type revealed differences in students' independent access to career guidance services. Students from specialized schools were significantly more likely than those from general education schools to utilize career preference tests, psychological testing, and individual counseling services.

Next, by asking the question, "Which professional field do you choose?", we aimed to identify students' preferred career paths.

Table 4 – Preferred Career Fields, N=1093

№	Which professional field do you choose?	with percentage (%)
1	Natural Sciences	32,2
2	Social and Humanitarian Sciences	23,5
3	Information Technology	17,3
4	Technical Sciences	16,6
5	Foreign Languages	16,3
6	Arts	12,6
7	Law	10,3
8	Economic Sciences	9,8

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

The ranking of responses indicates that natural sciences (32.2%), social and humanitarian sciences (23.5%), and information technology (17.3%) are the most preferred fields among general education students. One in three students wishes to pursue education in natural sciences, one in four in social and humanitarian sciences, and one in five prioritizes information technology. A decline in interest in law and economic sciences has been observed, with only 9.8% of surveyed high school students indicating a preference for careers in economics. Similarly, the arts sector is not a major priority, with only 12.6% of students expressing interest in this field.

Additionally, compared to students in general education schools, those in specialized schools are more informed about labor market changes and demand for professions (45.7% vs. 37.7%, respectively). Specialized school students also rely less on advice from parents, relatives, and friends when choosing a future profession (29.8% vs. 37.4%, respectively) (Table 4).

By school type, students from both general education schools (32.3%) and specialized schools (31.8%) show a strong preference for natural sciences. The next most selected field is social and humanitarian sciences, with 23.1% of general edu-

cation students and 25.8% of specialized school students choosing this area.

The ranking of career field choices among students studying in Kazakh shows a preference for natural sciences (33.8%), technical sciences (20.8%), and social and humanitarian sciences (19.8%). Among Russian-speaking high school students, the most preferred fields are natural sciences (30.4%), social and humanitarian sciences (28.0%), and foreign languages (19.9%). By language of instruction, both Kazakh-speaking (33.7%) and Russian-speaking (30.4%) students prioritize natural sciences. However, technical sciences are chosen by 20.8% of Kazakh-speaking students, while only 11.5% of Russian-speaking students prefer this field. Conversely, 28.0% of Russian-speaking students opt for social and humanitarian sciences, compared to only 19.8% of Kazakh-speaking students.

Regarding motivations for career choice, high school students value the significance of the profession, job type, and employment opportunities. To assess this, students were asked to rank 15 response options on a “level of importance” scale in response to the question: “What is important to you when evaluating a future profession or job type?” The responses were ranked based on their degree of importance.

Table 5 – Motivations for Choosing a Future Profession, N=1093

№	What is important to you when evaluating a future profession or job type?	very important	not very important	not important
1	High salary	89,6%	6,2%	4,2%
2	Opportunity to work independently	81,7%	13,1%	5,2%
3	Career growth opportunities	80,5%	11,3%	8,1%

Continuation of the table

№	What is important to you when evaluating a future profession or job type?	very important	not very important	not important
4	Highly qualified profession, job	74,4%	20,8%	4,8%
5	Availability of many job opportunities in this field	67,7%	22,9%	9,4%
6	Affordable tuition fees for the family	64,7%	20,1%	15,2%
7	Possibility of additional income sources	64,7%	17,6%	17,7%
8	Availability of numerous educational grants for this profession	60,8%	21,7%	17,5%
9	Opportunity to establish beneficial connections	60,8%	23,2%	16,0%
10	Family's ability to support future career	59,9%	25,2%	22,0%
11	Socially significant profession	59,0%	25,5%	15,5%
12	Parents' preference	56,7%	19,9%	23,3%
13	Opportunity to manage and lead	55,3%	26,3	18,5
14	High social status in society	49,0	28,1	22,9
15	Ability to study in the home region or city	45,0	26,1	28,9

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

According to the study results, the top five factors that respondents consider very important are: high salary (89.6%), opportunities for self-realization (81.7%), opportunities for career growth (80.5%), a highly qualified profession (74.4%), and high demand for jobs in this specialty (67.7%). As we can see, material factors are the primary motivation for high school students when choosing a future profession.

The following five important parameters are: affordable tuition fees for the family – 64.7%, additional income – 64.7%, availability of educational

grants in this specialty – 60.8%, effective connections – 60.8%, and family support for a future career – 59.9%.

The last five important characteristics of the chosen future profession and type of activity are: socially significant activity – 59.0%; parental preference – 56.7%; management opportunities – 55.3%; high status in society – 49.0%; and obtaining an education in the region and city of residence – 45.0%. As you can see, motives such as social status, career, and the preferences of society and family are prominent (Table 5).

Table 6 – Motives for choosing a future profession by school type, N=1093

№	What is important to you when assessing the future profession, type of activity ?	very important		not very important		not important	
		general education school	specialized school	general education school	specialized school	general education school	specialized school
1	High wages	89,7%	88,7%	6,4%	5,3%	3,9%	6,0%
2	The ability to work independently	81,0%	86,1%	13,6%	9,9%	5,4%	4,0%
3	Career opportunities	80,4%	81,5%	11,4%	11,3%	8,2%	7,3%
4	Highly qualified profession, job	75,2%	69,5%	20,4%	23,2%	4,5%	7,3%
5	Availability of many jobs in this specialty	69,3%	57,6%	22,1%	27,8%	8,6%	14,6%
6	Affordable tuition for the family	66,5%	53,6%	20,1%	20,5%	13,5%	25,8%
7	Availability of an additional source of income	65,8%	57,6%	17,0%	21,2%	17,2%	21,2%

Continuation of the table

№	What is important to you when assessing the future profession, type of activity ?	very important		not very important		not important	
		general education school	specialized school	general education school	specialized school	general education school	specialized school
8	The availability of many educational grants in this field	62,0%	53,6%	21,2%	24,5%	16,8%	21,9%
9	The ability to establish effective connections	62,2%	51,7%	22,2%	29,8%	15,6%	18,5%
10	The family's ability to help with a future career	54,2%	44,4%	24,3%	30,5%	21,4%	25,2%
11	Type of socially significant activity	58,7%	60,9%	25,7%	24,5%	15,6%	14,6%
12	Parental preferences	58,0%	49,0%	20,0%	19,9%	22,1%	31,1%
13	Allows you to manage	55,2%	55,6%	25,6%	30,5%	19,2%	13,9%
14	Gives a high status in society	48,2%	54,3%	29,0%	22,5%	22,8%	23,2%
15	Studying at higher education institutions located in their region or city of residence	46,8%	33,8%	26,5%	23,2%	26,6%	43,0%

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

If we rank the motives by importance, three primary factors were identified in choosing a future profession. For both general and special school students, the main factors are career opportunities, high wages, and the ability to work independently. The second most important factors are a highly qualified profession, the availability of many jobs in this field, and affordable tuition fees for families. The next three factors are the availability of an additional source of income (65.8% / 57.6%), the availability of many educational grants in this field (62.0% / 53.6%), and the ability to establish effective connections (62.2% / 51.7%).

Regarding the importance of affordable tuition fees for families, 66.5% of general school students rated it as "very important", compared to 53.6% of special school students. When analyzing the "not important" motives, significant differences were observed by school type. For instance, the motive of "affordable tuition for the family" is not very important for 25.8% of special school students, while only 13.5% of general education students share this view. Therefore, for general school students, the amount of tuition fees is more significant for their parents than it is for special school students.

The large number of educational grants for the chosen specialty is deemed "very important" by 62.0% of general school students, while for special school students, this figure is 53.6%. Among those who consider it "not important", 21.9% of special

school students do so, compared to 16.8% of general school students. While the majority of special school students (43.0%) believe that studying at higher education institutions located in their region or city of residence is not an important motive, this figure is significantly lower for general school students (26.6%). General school students are more likely to plan to study at a higher education institution located in their city of residence (Table 6).

In the analysis of the data obtained, the most important motive for choosing a future specialty based on the language of instruction is "high salary" for students studying in Kazakh (89.8%) and Russian (89.3%). In second place is "career growth opportunities" for students studying in Kazakh (80.2%) and Russian (81.0%).

The motive of having many job prospects in the chosen specialty is very important for 72.0% of students studying in Kazakh, while this percentage is lower for students studying in Russian (62.6%). This motive is not important for 7.4% of students studying in Russian, while 11.1% of students studying in Kazakh indicated that it is not important. This suggests that for high school students studying in Kazakh, having job opportunities in their chosen specialty is a more significant motive than for those studying in Russian. For students in Kazakh-language schools (49.8%), the opportunity to receive an education in the city or region where they live is important. The availability of educational grants as

a factor in choosing a future profession is more significant for high school students studying in Kazakh (64.4%) than for those studying in Russian (56.5%).

To determine how many high school students intend to become state education grant holders, the question “Do you make efforts to receive a state education grant?” was asked. More than

half of the respondents (61.7%) indicated that they are making efforts to become state education grant holders. While 4.7% of high school students stated that they study in a paid department, 3.2% of respondents expressed that they do not expect to receive a state education grant, as they plan to study abroad.

Table 7 – Intention to become a holder of a state educational grant, N=1093

№	Do you make efforts to receive a state education grant?	by school type		by language of instruction	
		general education school	specialized school	general education school	specialized school
1	I am doing my best to become a state education grant recipient	62,2%	58,3%	65,9%	56,5%
2	Yes, I am trying, but it is not important to me,	12,5%	18,5%	12,1%	14,9%
3	Yes, but I don't think becoming a state education grant recipient based on my performance	10,6%	9,3%	8,6%	12,7%
4	No, I'm not making the necessary effort	6,8%	4,0%	6,0%	6,8%
5	No, I don't need a grant, study in a fee-paying department	4,6%	5,3%	3,7%	5,8%
6	No, because I am going to study abroad	3,0%	4,6%	3,2%	3,2%
	No, because I have no plans to continue studying further	0,3%	0,0%	0,5%	0,0%
	In total	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

Now, when analyzing the data by school type and language of instruction, the proportion of high school students in general education schools who answered, “I am doing my best to become a state education grant recipient” (62.2%) is significantly higher than that of students in special schools (58.3%). While 18.5% of special school students responded, “Yes, I am trying, but it is not important to me,” only 12.5% of general school students provided the same response. Additionally, 5.3% of general school students and 4.6% of special school students noted that they study in a fee-paying department. For general school students, becoming a state education grant recipient is important.

Winning a state education grant is much more important for students in Kazakh-language schools (65.9%) than for those in Russian-language schools (56.5%). Furthermore, 12.7% of Russian-language students and 8.6% of Kazakh-language students admitted that they are not confident in their chances of becoming a state education grant recipient based on their performance (Table 7).

Conclusion

The analysis of the results made it possible to identify the following groups of motives influencing high school students' choice of future professions.

Material Motives. One of the main motives is the pursuit of a good salary and financial stability. Many high school students strive to choose a profession that ensures a decent standard of living, meets their needs, and provides financial security for the future. According to the study, the majority of high school students (89.6%) consider a high salary to be an important factor when selecting a profession. In terms of language of instruction, “high salary” is a particularly significant motive for students studying in both Kazakh (89.8%) and Russian (89.3%). For students in general education schools (89.7%) and specialized schools (88.7%), the primary motivation for choosing a future profession is the potential for a high salary and the opportunity for self-employment. **Field of Work and Career Direction.** Some high school students focus on specific professional

fields that interest them. One in three high school students wants to pursue education in the natural sciences, one in four prioritizes social and humanitarian sciences, and one in five prefers information technology. When analyzing students' choice of profession by school type, there were no significant differences, as high school students primarily preferred natural sciences, social and humanitarian sciences, and information technology. However, in terms of language of instruction, Kazakh-speaking students prioritized natural sciences, technical sciences, and social and humanitarian sciences. Meanwhile, Russian-speaking high school students ranked their professional preferences as natural sciences, social and humanitarian sciences, and foreign languages. The study also revealed that interest in law and economics-related professions among today's youth is relatively low.

Interest in the Profession. Many high school students choose professions that interest them and bring satisfaction. In the future, they strive to engage in activities they enjoy. Interest in a profession may be linked to personal abilities and experiences. The majority of high school students have already decided on their future profession, indicating that their career choice strategies are well-structured. When selecting a future profession, students in Kazakh-language schools (49.8%) consider the availability of educational opportunities in their city or region important. Additionally, Kazakh-speaking high school students place greater importance on job availability

in their chosen field compared to their Russian-speaking peers.

Opportunities and Resources. Some students choose professions based on available opportunities and resources. For example, they select universities that offer quality education with affordable tuition fees. In this case, career choice is pragmatic and based on realistic opportunities. Compared to students in specialized schools, those in general education schools view university tuition fees as a significant factor. While the number of available scholarships is not a major concern for specialized school students, it is crucial for general education school students. The availability of government-funded scholarships in a chosen field is a more important motivator for Kazakh-speaking students (64.4%) than for Russian-speaking students (56.5%). Analysis of the collected data suggests that general education students primarily rely on state scholarships, whereas specialized school students focus on their personal abilities and opportunities.

The study results show, that specialized school students make greater use of psychological testing and individual career counseling services compared to general education students.

In conclusion, today's youth quickly adapt to new social changes. When choosing a future profession, high school students' motivations and strategies vary based on their type of school and the language of instruction. These choices are largely influenced by their intellectual abilities and potential.

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