

Professional orientation of secondary school students of economics

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Abstract: Professional identification and orientation is an important turning point because it reflects personal opinions on different occupations, affects personal satisfaction of the individual, self-esteem and self-respect, as well as the biological and social progress of the community. The paper presents the results of the research of the professional orientation of students of the fourth grade of the School of Economics in Čačak, conducted in 2017/2018. school year. Choosing a life course at the end of a high school is a major decision that is conditioned by various factors and this choice can be influenced by a multitude of life elements, the current state of the world and the personal attitude and desires of the individual.

Keywords: professional orientation; professional determination; professional maturity; professional development.

1. INTRODUCTION

Psychology of professional determination studies the conditions and circumstances in which professional decisions are made [1].

1.1. Professional development and professional orientation

Vlado Andrić and Mira Čudina [1] determine professional development as a continuous process of maturing a professional decision based on an insight into their own characteristics, knowledge of work tasks and general social conditions; professional maturity and the reality of professional decisions depend on the accuracy of the assessment of these three components of professional decision making. Within the concept of professional development, these authors perceive professional maturation as a development process that encompasses the whole lifetime of the individual and relates to professional behavior and professional decision-making, careful career planning, awareness of personal professional progress, etc. In the course of professional development, different life milestones are distinguished: transition from elementary to secondary school; finishing high school; first profession; additional education; the next profession; middle age crisis; retirement.

Three important information is required for the decision of a high school student on future profession:

1. Real self-image of oneself,
2. Knowledge and experience of different human activities, occupations and jobs,

3. A clear picture of current and future social needs for particular jobs, knowledge and professions. [3]

Making professional decisions encountered at least three levels of difficulty: (a) difficulties in linking knowledge about yourself to the knowledge of the world of work, (b) the problem of developing personal perception or the desire to change the image of oneself based on a professional determination, (c) deep disorder of the individual, meaning that problems of professional development are associated with the symptoms of deeper disorders [1].

The process of professional decision-making takes place in at least three stages:

1. Phase of preference in which decision-making affects the attractiveness of the activity,
2. The stage of the election in which besides the attractive activity have great influence also have expectations of their own abilities,
3. Phase of the decision in which, in addition to the previous factors, the probability of success and opinion of parents and peers is also included [1].

It is important to note that the professional orientation after secondary school is only one of the turning points of modern life, the choice of secondary school plays an important role. The importance of these two choices is also reflected in the years in which such decisions are made, since not every individual is able to make such decisions independently. Through conversation with students of the High School of Economics in Čačak, during the implementation of this research, the financial impact on further choices and decisions is noticeable, as well as the ignorance and lack of interest of the respondents for various reasons that

can't be assessed from the conducted questionnaires. The subject teachers who attended the study pointed to a drastic drop in the interest of most students in schooling, which can be considered as one of the very influential factors of professional orientation in the sense that such an individual will opt for an easier choice, not the one for which he is interested / or competent [3].

1.2. Continuous monitoring of the professional identification of students of the School of Economics in Čačak

The School of Economics in Čačak conducts an internal research each year. The first step is to conduct a questionnaire on the professional orientation of students in the first grade of secondary school, in which each student receives a personal code that is re-used in the fourth grade of

secondary school for the same student. The questionnaire is filled in again in the fourth grade, data are processed and the results are compared. Also, the school keeps track of the real situation (where did the students continue their education / work) [2].

In cooperation with class supervisor, a career guidance and professional orientation team at the High School of Economics in Čačak conducted a survey on where students enrolled in college / got a job from the generations who graduated from the school year 2014/15, 2015/16. and 2016/17. (Table 1).

Researching student intentions during the fourth grade shows that students from generation to generation are mainly identified for studies that relate to their secondary education.

Table 1. Comparative overview of the intention of further education and enrollment

University, faculties, college	Wants to attend			Really enrolled 2016/2107
	2014.	2015.	2016.	
Faculty of economics	37	67	36	45
Technical faculties	4	3	5	26
Teachers' faculties	6	7	5	5
Faculty of political science	4	7	3	1
Faculty for security	10	9	8	4
Faculty of law	9	8	8	6
Faculty of organizational Sciences	4	12	19	6
Faculty of philology	11	2	9	4
Faculty of sport and physical education	3	2	1	2
Faculty of natural sciences	/	/	2	2
Faculty of agriculture	/	1	1	2
Faculty of mechanical engineering	/	1	1	/
Medical School	/	/	2	/
Faculty of drama arts	/	/	1	1
Private faculties	/	/	4	8
Faculty of maritime studies	4	4	1	/
Criminalistics	4	1	2	1
High business school	/	9	2	20
Faculty of transportation	1	/	2	3
Undecided	7	10	7	/
Total:	116	155	119	136

Following the explicit wishes of students (Table 1), only a small number of students wants to enroll in the Faculty of Technical Sciences in Čačak (5 students want to enroll), but it seems that in the end, for economic reasons, due to the failure to enroll at the desired faculty or for some other reason, 26 students enrolled at this faculty. Also, greater disagreements between wishes and possibilities, show data for specific faculties for which, besides knowledge, they need special skills, readiness and skill (such as the Faculty of sport and physical education, Academy of criminology) [2].

2. EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

Although both researchers and practitioners are looking for answers about the reasons and ways of

professionally identifying students, social changes that reflect on the development of high school students are continually triggering re-examination of motivation for professional choice and education. Current social conditions are an important factor that affects professional attitudes, and the general tendency of students can't be determined at all, as the probability that the next year will be different is very high. This problem is the basis for the further development of this research focusing on determining the reasons, motives for the professional determination of students at the end of high school.

2.1. Research organization

Subject of research: This paper examines the motives of graduates (students of the fourth grade

of the High School of Economics in Čačak) for making professional decisions on further education and choice of studies or employment upon completion of secondary education. Different motives (both social motives of professional identification, as well as different information, material motifs, etc.) were examined.

The aim of the research was to determine the degree to which different reasons / motives influence the professional orientation of the graduates, and whether there are differences in the professional orientation of the graduates of different types of secondary education. As far as the secondary vocational school is concerned, this research also determines the diversity in the areas of the desired education.

The basic hypothesis of this research is as follows: Most high school students in the fourth grade of secondary education are determined to continue their education at various higher education institutions, but there are differences between high school students of different school achievements, different occupations or secondary education directions not only in the field of education, but also in the type of studies which are defined.

Specific hypotheses are based on this basic hypothesis: When it comes to the School of Economics in Čačak, an important part of the examination is the variety of choices, i.e. determining compliance with the areas of economics, law, management and business, or the introduction of a change by identifying for another area of education. During the research, the interview found that the majority of pupils are defined with economics, law and management, and that most have a desire to study at the University of Belgrade.

Sample: Students of the fourth grade of the School of Economics in Čačak, professions: economics technician, financial administrator, bank clerk, insurance officer and commercialist, a total of 160 pupils.

A non-experimental method of research is applied. A survey technique was used to collect data. For this research, the POMIS instrument was developed, which was analyzed in the pilot phase in the focus group and on a small sample of the student population. The instrument was developed within the activities of the Department of Educational Sciences and Technology at the Faculty of Technical Sciences in Čačak, University of Kragujevac, in cooperation with the Department of Mathematics and Informatics of the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, University of Novi Sad, as a joint research. Students of the fifth year of the IAS Technique and Informatics, who carried out research in secondary schools in Čačak, also participated.

POMIS (Professional definition of graduates and choice of studies, Graduates' professional decision

and selection of tertiary education) is an instrument consisting of two parts:

- The first part is a questionnaire with questions of closed and open form intended for collecting data on educational and demographic variables;
- The second part contains three self-assessment scales (five degrees) designed for determining the degree of motivation for different factors of professional identification (two sub-classes) and self-assessment of IT and technical skills that are in basic IT and technical literacy (one sub-subject).

Variables:

- Demographic variables: gender (female and male).
- Education variables:
 - School achievements at the end of the third grade;
 - Education area of tertiary education: engineering and technology, socio-humanistic field, philological sciences, medical and biomedical field, art, interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary field;
 - Types of tertiary education: bachelor academic level, bachelor vocational level, integrated academic level,
 - Institutions of higher education: faculties and faculties in Serbia, universities and faculties in other countries;
 - Motivational variables - motivation / graduation factors of graduate students and selection of types of higher education institutions: social factors, material-financial factors, professional status, status of educational institutions, personal characteristics of students and their expectation of themselves, etc.

Procedures for descriptive statistical analysis (frequencies and percentages, arithmetic mean, standard deviation) and comparative analysis (ANOVA) using statistical software SPSS were used for data processing. Graphical solutions from the mentioned software were used to display the results [4]. The research was carried out in December 2017.

2.2. Research results

In the study in the School of Economics in Čačak, 160 students participated, of which 101 were girls and 56 boys, and 3 students did not indicate half, most of them having achieved very good school success.

After completing a four-year high school, students of the High School of Economics in Čačak intends to:

1. continue education at a faculty in Serbia 127 graduates (79.4%);
2. continue education at a high vocational school in Serbia 8 graduates (5%);

3. get a job 11 graduates (6.9%);
 4. starts their own job 3 graduates (1.9%);
 5. continue education at some faculty outside Serbia 8 graduates (5%).

It examined the extent to which different motives, information, opportunities and reasons - which they have about potential studies - are important

graduates for professional identification and choice of type of study and institution in which they will continue their education. The importance of socialized motives for further education is confirmed by numerous studies. The social impact on the definition of further education and type of education was also examined in this study (Table 2.1).

Table 2.1. Social motives and factors of professional decision of secondary school students of economics

Reasons:	Frequency					M	SD
	1	2	3	4	5		
Parents' or family members' recommendations	42	22	37	18	24	2.72	1.436
University programs similarity with the family members' professions	89	28	12	10	5	1.71	1.102
Teachers' recommendations	80	29	20	12	3	1.81	1.090
The same profession is selected by the friends	100	18	11	4	11	1.67	1.212
I like a city where is location of the tertiary education institutions	40	23	26	28	27	2.85	1.486
Positive experience of the older students of the same institutions	11	15	29	44	45	3.67	1.234
Family's opinion about the university curriculum	35	29	36	34	12	2.72	1.285
Family's opinion about the tertiary education institutions	14	15	39	43	34	3.47	1.231
Information about the students' life	18	23	40	38	26	3.21	1.265
Characteristics of the city for the gymnasium graduates' future education	42	22	37	18	24	2.72	1.436

The greatest influence, when it comes to social motives, is the experience of older students ($M = 3.67$), then information on student life and entertainment (3.47) and characteristics of the city in which the student wants to study (3.21). The smallest influence has the choice of friends (1.67).

Today, the importance of material and financial motives in work is emphasized, and the role of these reasons for selecting types of studies and further education in this research (Table 2.2) is examined.

Table 2.2. Material and financial motives for tertiary education (university programs and institutions)

Reasons:	Frequency					M	SD
	1	2	3	4	5		
Starting your own business in that area.	37	28	31	26	22	2.78	1.407
I think that I can easily recruit at the end of the chosen faculty / college.	13	8	37	41	45	3.67	1.228
Possibility to work with a faculty / college degree in different business environments.	7	7	20	40	71	4.11	1.119
The opportunity to get employment in Serbia and other countries with diploma, knowledge and skills you acquire.	5	5	18	36	81	4.26	1.103
N=							

The greatest influence on professional determination, when the material and financial motive is concerned, is having the possibility of employment in Serbia and other countries with acquired diploma (4.26), as well as the possibility

of working in different business environments (4.11)

It was examined how the graduates are affected by the reputation and status of the chosen profession (table 2.3.).

Table 2.3. Characteristics and status of the profession for decision making of graduates from school of economics

Reasons	Frequency					M	SD
	1	2	3	4	5		
I've always been attracted to this area.	2	11	28	48	53	3.98	1.007
I am particularly interested in the study program for which I apply.	5	19	32	56	34	3.65	1.080
Possibility of practice in companies during studies.	10	9	26	51	49	3.83	1.169
The ability to learn about new technologies and apply it in your future work.	12	10	27	35	62	3.86	1.270
Names and contents of the object.	6	2	22	45	71	4.18	1.017
The status of the profession in our country.	3	8	20	42	73	4.19	1.006
Possibility to gain specialized knowledge and skills.	31	34	38	24	19	2.77	1.313
Possibility to acquire widely applicable knowledge and skills.	44	46	35	13	8	2.28	1.149
Studying the latest achievements in IT, IT and computing.	78	40	12	12	4	1.79	1.076
The challenge is to learn the latest achievements of technical engineering disciplines.	31	35	27	26	26	2.87	1.411
The challenge is to study the latest developments in the field of biomedical science.	31	37	38	29	19	2.85	1.329
The challenge is to learn the latest achievements in the socio-humanistic field.	64	36	23	19	3	2.04	1.148
The challenge is to learn the latest achievements in the field of language and literature.	60	37	21	13	14	2.20	1.326
The challenge is to learn the latest achievements in the field of natural sciences.	7	7	34	44	53	3.89	1.106
The challenge is to study the chosen artistic area.	2	16	30	53	44	3.83	1.027
Contents of subjects that you can continue to perfect your skills.	2	9	35	40	60	4.01	1.014
Relation of theoretical and practical knowledge in studies that enables you to acquire good professional knowledge and skills.	7	11	31	44	51	3.84	1.138
The challenge and the interest of the profession for which you will be preparing for the studies.	2	11	28	48	53	3.98	1.007
The opportunity to engage in practice in quality companies or institutions during the course of studies.	5	19	32	56	34	3.65	1.080
N=							

Challenge and interest of the profession they will prepare at studies are very important to the students (4.01), they are very interested in studying the program for which they are enrolling (3.98), and the most important is the possibility of acquiring specialized and widely applicable knowledge and skills (4.18 and 4.19). Students are

least interested in studying biomedical achievements (1.79).

The study included examining the impact of reputation and the status of an educational institution (table 2.4.).

Table 2.4. impact of the educational institution's reputation on studying students of graduates from school of economics in relation to the education course

Reasons	Frequency					M	SD
	1	2	3	4	5		
Weight of the entrance exam.	28	17	39	37	22	3.06	1.336
Good study conditions (classrooms, laboratories).	27	26	41	26	23	2.94	1.331
Professors are overwhelming and cooperative.	28	20	28	30	38	3.21	1.467
Education is free (on the budget).	9	14	33	51	39	3.66	1.152
The reputation of faculty / college.	4	1	16	48	77	4.32	0.902
Quality of the study program.	8	8	26	51	51	3.90	1.120
Study condition Conditions for university education	37	32	29	29	18	2.72	1.368
Possibility of studying at a distance.	20	33	33	36	23	3.06	1.292
Possibility to study in a small study group where it is possible to learn more and cooperate more directly.	10	13	29	33	60	4.04	2.801
Pre-availability and willingness of professors to cooperate.	8	15	45	49	29	3.52	1.091
Faculty / college equipment.	28	17	39	37	22	3.06	1.336
N=							

Quality of the studies and the program for which they are enrolling are the most important to the students (4.32), as well as the readiness of the

professors for cooperation (4.04). Study conditions (3.90) and the reputation of faculty / high school play an important role as well.

Table 2.5. Impact of information accessibility for decision making of graduates from secondary school students of economics

Reasons	Frequency					M	SD
	1	2	3	4	5		
Advertising by faculty / college.	55	40	24	19	6	2.17	1.196
Information at the education fair.	57	33	29	15	10	2.22	1.265
Information on social networks.	44	27	34	19	20	2.61	1.400
Information obtained at college / high school during a visit to the "Open Doors Day"	67	20	25	19	12	2.22	1.265
Presentation of faculty in my school.	72	19	25	20	7	2.10	1.296
Faculty website / high school	34	29	30	26	25	2.85	1.419
Information I got during additional classes, sections or preparations for competitions	73	29	26	11	3	1.89	1.092
Information within courses and workshops outside the school (Petnica Research Station, research camps, tribunes).	82	28	25	6	2	1.73	0.987
The way the university institutions / college advertises and publicizes.	20	28	54	32	12	2.92	1.136
N=							

Students are informed about universities, university departments and colleges in various ways, and most often through the website (2.85)

and social networks (2.61). An important factor in identifying is the way in which the college is advertised and presented in public (2.92)

Table 2.6. Personal characteristics and expectations for decision making of secondary school students of economics

Reasons	Frequency					M	SD
	1	2	3	4	5		
In these studies, I can continue to improve my skills.	10	14	22	52	46	3.76	1,200
Inability to write something else for the success of high school.	93	14	21	6	9	1.77	1.212
Information on which studies your peers choose, friends.	41	34	36	23	11	3.51	1.264
Expectations that others have of you.	49	28	33	27	8	2.43	1.279
Special skills or skills you have for specific studies.	4	18	40	47	35	2.63	1.069
My interest in secondary education is related to the field of further education.	36	27	26	19	34	2.92	1.518
Previous experience and knowledge in the field of future studies.	15	16	36	45	33	3.45	1.247
Connectivity of your high school education with a type of study.	37	21	35	15	36	2.94	1.513
N=							

It is very important for pupils to continue to improve their skills in studies (3.76), the choice of studies of their peers and friends (3.51), as well as personal experiences and knowledge from the area they want to continue to study (3.45). The smallest influence on the choice has achieved success during high school education (1.77).

2.3. Educational implications

On the basis of the results obtained, teachers working with secondary school students could explore or contact different universities to recommend them to students. At the School of Economics in Čačak there is very little variety in the choice of further education. Most students choose economics, law, and management, which are areas they have studied during high school. The problem

arises, in this particular case, that most students have a desire to enroll a particular faculty, but do not have the necessary competence or success in high school education.

With this in mind, teachers can direct students to choose the appropriate faculty / college in accordance with the level of knowledge and competencies they have acquired. The general problem that can be noticed through the interview with the respondents of this research is the inability to assess the financial status of the family.

The High School of Economics in Čačak is implementing the internal research mentioned annually, there is a large percentage of students who do not remain consistent with their own wishes

and plans. The way a school can use this internal research is a conversation with students.

The way colleges can contribute to the mature professional decision making of high school students is implementing the promotion of the faculty as mandatory in cooperation with secondary schools. Uninformation is a major obstacle in making professional decisions, so for the beginning such a problem can be removed in the mentioned way.

3. CONCLUSION

The survey found that high school students who are studying for occupations in the field of economics work are generally homogeneous when it comes to professional choices. Even 78% of students at the School of Economics in Čačak decided to continue further education in the field of economics and related disciplines.

Professional identification is very important, especially after the completion of high school when there is a big turning point in life. Wrong choices are generally not detrimental to the professional life of an individual, but they certainly cost as much time as it has been spent on the chosen path. In today's time of understanding and realization of professional orientation, it is a very complex, permanent and comprehensive work of numerous institutions. We share the view that modern professional orientation is based on the conception of choice of occupation and workplace as a process consisting of a series of personal choices of a person and making decisions important for his further professional development. Activities in the domain of professional orientation have existed since ancient times as an indispensable segment of educational work, and today professional orientation is recognized as a necessary activity in almost all countries of the world and has become a necessary part of the teaching work and the entire educational system. The importance of investing in and developing the concept of professional orientation in the educational system, that is, in the institutions, as well as in the later professional engagement, work and life of people, is becoming increasingly important in the world [5].

Most students of the High School of Economics in Čačak chose the way when they decided to attend an economic school. There is a possibility for students to feel the pressure of the environment to continue education in the direction of economics, although most students have indicated that they do not care what others think about their choices. It is also possible to emphasize the factor of the unknown. In an economic school, the educational program focuses mostly on economics, which limits the students to change their field of education.

A new generation enrolling economics from 2017 will be attending a new educational plan for economics schools that includes physics, fine arts

and other subjects that they had not previously had or have had in smaller number of classes. Opinions are divided, some believe that it will allow students to acquire knowledge and skills related to the field of economics, while others consider it to provide students with additional knowledge and skills that will reduce fear of changing the field of education.

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