

## THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PUPILS' CAREER ORIENTATION AND LEARNING MOTIVATION

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**Abstract.** *This article analyzes the relationship between pupils' career orientation and learning motivation from a psychological and pedagogical perspective. Career orientation is considered an important factor that shapes pupils' educational goals, attitudes toward learning, self-awareness, and future professional choices. Learning motivation, in turn, serves as a psychological basis for pupils' academic activity, persistence, cognitive interest, and achievement. The article discusses the role of personal interests, professional values, self-efficacy, social environment, parental support, teacher influence, and school-based career guidance in developing pupils' motivation for learning. Special attention is paid to the fact that pupils with a clear career orientation tend to demonstrate a higher level of educational motivation, responsibility, goal-directed behavior, and readiness for self-development. The article concludes that effective career guidance in school should be closely connected with the development of learning motivation, self-determination, and conscious professional choice.*

**Keywords:** *pupils, career orientation, learning motivation, professional self-determination, educational goals, self-efficacy, career guidance, school education, personal development, academic motivation.*

**Introduction.** In modern society, the issue of preparing pupils for conscious professional choice has become one of the most important tasks of the education system. Rapid social, technological, and economic changes require young people not only to acquire knowledge but also to understand their abilities, interests, values, and future professional opportunities. In this context, career orientation is no longer limited to choosing a future profession; it becomes an important psychological process connected with self-awareness, personal development, social adaptation, and educational motivation.

School age is a significant period in the formation of professional interests and attitudes toward learning. During this period, pupils begin to think about their future, compare different professions, evaluate their own abilities, and develop ideas about success, work, responsibility, and social usefulness. If this process is supported by the family, school, teachers, and the social environment, pupils are more likely to develop a conscious attitude toward learning and future professional activity.

Learning motivation is one of the central psychological factors that determines the effectiveness of the educational process. A motivated pupil does not study only because of external pressure or formal requirements. Such a pupil understands the meaning of education, connects knowledge with future goals, and shows interest in personal growth. Therefore, the formation of learning motivation is closely related to the development of career orientation.

The relevance of this topic is determined by the fact that many pupils experience uncertainty in choosing a future profession. Some of them do not clearly understand why they study certain subjects, how school knowledge is connected with future life, and what personal qualities are necessary for professional success. As a result, their learning motivation may decrease, and their attitude toward education may become passive. In contrast, pupils who have a clearer career orientation usually show more responsibility, persistence, and interest in learning.

The purpose of this article is to analyze the relationship between pupils' career orientation and learning motivation and to identify the psychological and pedagogical factors that support this relationship in the school environment.

**Main Part.** Career orientation is a complex psychological and pedagogical process that includes pupils' awareness of their interests, abilities, values, professional preferences, and future life goals. It helps pupils understand the connection between education and future professional activity. In this sense, career orientation performs not only an informational function but also a motivational and developmental function.

From a psychological point of view, career orientation is closely connected with the process of professional self-determination. Professional self-determination means that a pupil gradually forms an understanding of personal abilities, interests, social expectations, and possible career paths. D. Super's theory of career development emphasizes that professional choice is not a one-time decision but a continuous process of personal growth, self-concept formation, and adaptation to social roles [1]. This idea is especially important for school pupils because their professional plans are still developing and can change under the influence of education, family, teachers, and social experience.

Learning motivation refers to the internal and external factors that encourage pupils to participate in educational activity. It includes interest in knowledge, desire for achievement, responsibility, curiosity, aspiration for success, and understanding of the

practical value of learning. Learning motivation may be intrinsic or extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation is based on interest, personal meaning, and satisfaction from the learning process, while extrinsic motivation is connected with grades, rewards, parental expectations, or social approval.

E. Deci and R. Ryan's self-determination theory explains that motivation becomes stronger and more stable when a person feels autonomy, competence, and social relatedness [2]. In the context of pupils' career orientation, this means that learning motivation increases when pupils understand that their education is connected with their own goals, abilities, and future profession. If a pupil studies only because of external pressure, motivation may remain unstable. However, when the pupil sees personal meaning in learning, educational activity becomes more purposeful.

The relationship between career orientation and learning motivation can be explained through the concept of goal-directed behavior. A pupil who has a clear idea about a future profession usually understands why certain subjects are important. For example, a pupil who wants to become a doctor may show greater interest in biology and chemistry; a pupil who wants to work in information technologies may be more motivated to study mathematics and computer science; a pupil interested in teaching may pay more attention to language, psychology, and communication skills. Thus, professional goals give meaning to learning activity.

J. Holland's theory of vocational personalities and work environments suggests that professional choice is related to personal interests and the correspondence between personality type and occupational environment [3]. This theory is important for school career guidance because pupils' motivation increases when they see a connection between their personal interests and possible professions. If a pupil's interests are identified correctly, it becomes easier to guide him or her toward relevant educational subjects and activities.

Career orientation also influences pupils' academic responsibility. When pupils understand that their future depends partly on their current learning efforts, they become more disciplined and persistent. They begin to perceive school subjects not as isolated academic requirements but as resources for future success. In this case, learning becomes a means of self-development and professional preparation.

Another important factor connecting career orientation and learning motivation is self-efficacy. A. Bandura defines self-efficacy as a person's belief in his or her ability to organize and perform actions necessary to achieve specific goals [4]. Pupils with high self-efficacy are more likely to believe that they can master difficult subjects, overcome obstacles, and achieve educational success. Career orientation strengthens self-efficacy when pupils receive realistic information about professions, understand their abilities, and experience success in relevant learning activities.

For example, if a pupil is interested in engineering and successfully completes tasks in mathematics or physics, this success strengthens confidence in future professional ability. As a result, the pupil's learning motivation increases. Conversely, if a pupil has no clear professional goal or doubts his or her abilities, learning motivation may decline, especially in difficult subjects.

The development of career orientation is also connected with pupils' value system. Pupils choose professions not only according to abilities but also according to personal and social values. Some pupils value creativity, others prefer helping people, stability, leadership, financial independence, scientific research, or social usefulness. When learning is connected with these values, motivation becomes more meaningful. Eccles and Wigfield emphasize that achievement motivation is strongly influenced by the value a person attaches to a task and expectations of success [5]. Therefore, pupils' motivation increases when they believe that learning is useful, meaningful, and connected with future success.

The family plays an important role in shaping both career orientation and learning motivation. Parents influence pupils' professional interests through communication, expectations, support, personal example, and attitude toward education. A supportive family environment helps pupils understand their abilities and develop confidence in their future. However, excessive pressure from parents may have a negative effect if the chosen profession does not correspond to the pupil's interests and abilities.

Parental support should not be limited to demanding high grades. It should include emotional support, discussion of future plans, encouragement of independence, and respect for the pupil's individuality. When parents help children explore professions and understand their own strengths, pupils become more motivated to learn. In contrast, when professional choice is imposed without considering the pupil's interests, learning motivation may become formal or unstable.

Teachers also have a significant influence on the relationship between career orientation and learning motivation. A teacher can show pupils the practical meaning of school subjects, connect educational content with real-life professions, and support pupils' interest in different fields. For example, a mathematics teacher can explain the role of mathematics in engineering, economics, programming, and architecture. A literature teacher can connect reading and writing skills with journalism, teaching, law, and communication. Such an approach helps pupils understand the relevance of learning.

In the educational process, teachers should also identify pupils' abilities and interests. Individual approach is important because pupils differ in cognitive abilities, emotional characteristics, learning styles, and professional aspirations. If the teacher recognizes these differences and supports pupils' strengths, learning motivation becomes more stable. Pintrich and De Groot note that self-regulated learning, motivation, and cognitive strategies are closely related to academic performance [6]. Therefore, pupils should be taught not

only subject knowledge but also goal-setting, planning, self-assessment, and responsibility for learning.

School-based career guidance is one of the main mechanisms for strengthening the connection between career orientation and learning motivation. Effective career guidance should include psychological diagnostics, individual consultations, meetings with professionals, excursions to organizations, career days, project-based learning, and information about educational pathways. Such activities help pupils connect school learning with future professional life.


Career guidance should begin not only in the final grades but also earlier, in accordance with pupils' age characteristics. In lower grades, it may focus on general ideas about work, interests, and social roles. In middle grades, pupils can explore different professions, identify personal strengths, and develop learning interests. In higher grades, career guidance should become more specific and include professional choice, educational institutions, labor market information, and personal career planning.

The connection between career orientation and learning motivation is also reflected in pupils' cognitive activity. Pupils who understand the purpose of learning are more likely to ask questions, search for additional information, participate in discussions, and complete tasks independently. They do not limit themselves to memorizing information but try to understand how knowledge can be applied. This increases the quality of learning and develops independent thinking.

Professional interests also support the development of internal motivation. When a pupil is interested in a future profession, he or she begins to see learning as personally significant. This personal meaning is one of the strongest motivational factors. In this case, even difficult subjects may become more attractive because they are connected with future goals.

At the same time, it is important to recognize that career orientation alone does not automatically guarantee high learning motivation. If pupils have unrealistic professional goals, lack information about the profession, or do not receive support from adults, motivation may remain weak. Therefore, career guidance should be realistic, systematic, and psychologically grounded. Pupils should understand not only the attractive aspects of professions but also the required knowledge, skills, responsibility, and possible difficulties.

Social Cognitive Career Theory developed by R. Lent, S. Brown, and G. Hackett explains that career interests and choices are influenced by self-efficacy beliefs, outcome expectations, and personal goals [7]. This theory is especially useful for understanding pupils' motivation because it shows that professional aspirations become stronger when pupils believe in their abilities, expect positive results, and set clear goals. Thus, learning motivation can be strengthened by developing pupils' confidence and helping them experience success in educational activity.



The school environment should create conditions for pupils to test their interests in practice. Project-based learning, clubs, competitions, research tasks, and creative activities allow pupils to understand their abilities more deeply. For example, participation in a robotics club may increase interest in engineering or programming. Participation in debates may support interest in law, politics, or journalism. Volunteering may strengthen interest in social work, medicine, or teaching. Such experiences help pupils connect personal interests with professional possibilities.

Another important aspect is the role of peer influence. Pupils often discuss future professions with classmates and compare their achievements with others. A positive peer environment can strengthen motivation if pupils support each other's educational goals. However, negative peer influence may reduce motivation if learning is not valued in the group. Therefore, schools should promote a culture in which education, personal development, and professional planning are socially valued.

The development of learning motivation is also related to pupils' emotional attitude toward school. If pupils experience constant failure, fear, criticism, or humiliation, their motivation decreases even if they have professional interests. In contrast, a psychologically safe school environment supports confidence, curiosity, and active participation. Vygotsky's socio-cultural approach emphasizes the importance of social interaction and adult support in the development of higher psychological functions [8]. In the context of career orientation, this means that pupils need guidance, dialogue, feedback, and cooperation with adults.

Career orientation should also support pupils' autonomy. It is important that pupils gradually learn to make independent decisions about their future. Adults should guide, inform, and support them, but not replace their personal choice. When pupils feel that their opinions are respected, they become more responsible for their learning. Autonomy strengthens internal motivation because pupils perceive education as their own meaningful activity.

The relationship between career orientation and learning motivation can be seen in several psychological indicators. These include interest in school subjects, persistence in completing tasks, academic responsibility, self-confidence, future planning, willingness to overcome difficulties, and participation in additional educational activities. If these indicators are developed, pupils are more likely to achieve academic success and make conscious professional choices.

However, there are also factors that weaken this relationship. These include lack of information about professions, mismatch between pupils' interests and parental expectations, low self-esteem, poor academic achievement, absence of career guidance, and negative school climate. In such cases, pupils may lose interest in learning or choose a profession randomly. Therefore, psychological and pedagogical support is necessary.

Modern career guidance should be based on an integrated approach. It should combine psychological diagnostics, motivational support, subject-based orientation, family cooperation, and practical experience. Savickas' career construction theory emphasizes that individuals construct their careers through personal meanings, life stories, and adaptation to changing social conditions [9]. This idea suggests that pupils should be helped not only to select a profession but also to understand themselves and build a meaningful future.

In the contemporary world, professional choice is becoming more flexible and dynamic. Many professions are changing, new fields are appearing, and traditional career paths are transforming. Therefore, pupils need not only knowledge about existing professions but also adaptability, lifelong learning skills, critical thinking, communication skills, and motivation for continuous self-development. Career orientation should develop these qualities from school age.

The OECD also emphasizes the importance of career guidance in helping young people make educational and professional decisions and connect learning with labor market opportunities [10]. For schools, this means that career orientation should not be a formal activity carried out only before graduation. It should be integrated into the educational process and connected with pupils' motivation, abilities, interests, and personal development.

Thus, the relationship between pupils' career orientation and learning motivation is complex and multidimensional. Career orientation gives learning personal meaning, strengthens goal-directed behavior, increases self-efficacy, and supports academic responsibility. Learning motivation, in turn, helps pupils achieve educational success and prepare for future professional activity. These two processes mutually influence each other and should be developed together in the school environment.

**Conclusion.** The analysis shows that pupils' career orientation and learning motivation are closely interconnected psychological and pedagogical phenomena. Career orientation helps pupils understand their interests, abilities, values, and future professional goals. Learning motivation provides the internal energy, persistence, and responsibility necessary for educational success. When these two processes develop together, pupils become more active, goal-oriented, and conscious participants in the educational process.

A clear career orientation gives personal meaning to learning. Pupils who understand the connection between school subjects and future professions are more likely to demonstrate interest, discipline, persistence, and responsibility. They perceive education not as a formal requirement but as an important condition for personal and professional development.

At the same time, learning motivation supports the development of career orientation. Motivated pupils are more open to new knowledge, more willing to explore different

professions, and more capable of evaluating their own abilities. They are also more prepared to make conscious decisions about future education and career paths.

The family, school, teachers, peer environment, and career guidance system play an important role in strengthening the relationship between career orientation and learning motivation. Parents should support pupils' interests and independence, teachers should connect subject content with real professional opportunities, and schools should organize systematic career guidance activities.

In general, the development of pupils' career orientation should be considered one of the important ways to increase learning motivation. For this purpose, schools need to create a psychologically supportive environment, provide career information, organize practical activities, develop pupils' self-efficacy, and help them connect learning with future life goals. Such an approach contributes not only to academic achievement but also to pupils' personal growth, professional self-determination, and successful social adaptation.

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