



ADA UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

MASTER OF ARTS IN EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT

CAPSTONE PROJECT

**EXPLORING FACTORS INFLUENCING AZERBAIJANI PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL
STUDENTS' CHOICE OF MAJOR**

Nigar Mirzayeva, Nigar Jamalova Gasimova

nmirzayeva16582@ada.edu.az, njamalova16716@ada.edu.az

The Supervisor: Jeyran Aghayeva

The Course Instructor: Samira Hajiyeva

Baku, May 25, 2024

STATEMENT OF AUTHENTICITY

We have read ADA's policy on plagiarism and certify that, to the best of our knowledge, the content of this paper, entitled Exploring Factors Influencing Azerbaijani Public High School Students' Choice of Major is all our work and does not contain any unacknowledged work.

Signed: _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____

School of Education

Public Policy and Strategy: Capstone

Approval Form

Student Name/Surname: Nigar Mirzayeva

Student ID number: 16582

Program Name: Master of Arts in Educational Management

Student Name/Surname: Nigar Jamalova Gasimova

Student ID number: 16716

Program Name: Master of Arts in Educational Management

Academic Track Selection:

Research Track Professional Track **V**

Comments:

The Course Instructor: Dr. Samira Hajiyeva

The Supervisor: Dr. Jeyran Aghayeva

SE Curator of the Graduate Programs: Natella Tarverdiyeva

Dean of SE: Vafa Kazdal

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	8
Acknowledgment.....	8
Chapter 1. Introduction.....	9

1.1. Problem Statement.....	9
1.2. Purpose of Study.....	11
1.3. Significance of Study.....	11
1.4 Research Questions.....	12
1.5. Definitions of the Terms.....	13
Chapter 2. Literature Review.....	13
2.1. Factors Influencing High School Students' Major Decisions.....	14
2.1.1 Involvement of Parents and Teachers.....	14
2.1.2. Financial Issues.....	15
2.1.3 Gender Stereotypes	16
2.2 Development of School Career Guidance and Support for High School Students in Post-Soviet Countries.....	16
Chapter 3. Methodology.....	19
3.2 Research Design.....	20
3.2.1 Target Population.....	22
3.2.2 Sampling Method.....	22
3.2.3 Sample Size.....	23
3.2.4 Recruitment.....	24

3.2.5 Sources of Data.....	25
3.3 Data Collection.....	26
3.3.1 Data Analysis Procedures.....	27
3.3.2 Validity and Reliability.....	27
3.3.3 Content Validity.....	28
3.3.4 Internal Validity.....	28
3.3.5 Triangulation.....	28
3.3.6 Peer Review.....	29
3.3.7 Member Checking.....	29
3.3.8 Ethical Considerations.....	29
3.4 Study Limitations.....	30
Chapter 4. Findings.....	30
4.1. Factors Influencing Azerbaijani High School Students' Choice of Major or Area of Study.....	31
4.1.2 Student's Personal Interest.....	32
4.1.3 External Factors.....	33
4.1.4. Teachers' and School Administration Staff's Guidance and Support.....	35
4.1.5. Role of Academic Achievements and Abilities.....	37

4.1.6. Role of Tuition Fee.....	40
4.1.7. Gender Factor.....	41
4.2. Schools' Support to Students in Exploring and Deciding on Their Career Choices.....	43
4.2.1. Lack of Necessary Information.....	43
4.2.2. New Ideas to Guide and Support Students	44
Chapter 5. Final Product.....	45
Chapter 6. Conclusion.....	49
References.....	51
APPENDICES.....	56
APPENDIX A.....	57
APPENDIX B.....	58
APPENDIX C.....	59

Abstract

High school is a critical time for career planning since it allows students to assess their strengths, weaknesses, and the abilities they will need to succeed in the future. This study examines the factors influencing Azerbaijani public high school students' choice of major and assesses the assistance that schools offer throughout this process. The study shows how socioeconomic status, cultural influences, and family relationships all have a big influence on students' job decisions.

To provide a thorough knowledge of these variables and the efficacy of current career advising strategies, this study uses qualitative methodologies, including interviews with students, parents, teachers, and administrative staff. The results are categorized into several important

areas. Employability concerns, personal interests, family influence, external factors like peer recommendations and societal trends, guidance from teachers and school administration, academic achievements, economic considerations like tuition fees, and subliminal gender stereotypes are the main factors influencing major choice. These results will provide educators and policymakers with insightful information to improve career planning techniques, which will ultimately help students' abilities better match the demands of the job market, promoting both personal and economic fulfillment.

Acknowledgment

We, as members of the Capstone Project team would like to sincerely thank Dr. Jeyran Aghayeva, our supervisor, for her valuable guidance and constant encouragement during this project. Her depth of knowledge and scope of experience have always been a source of inspiration.

We also sincerely appreciate the time, help, and support that our course instructor, Dr. Samira Hajiyeva, provided us with throughout our studies. Her advice, feedback and support have been invaluable to our capstone project.

Chapter 1: Introduction

High school is the ideal time to begin career planning since it helps students identify their limitations and strengths as well as the abilities and knowledge needed to succeed in the future (Vati, 2020). Studies indicate that a student's environment, cultural influences, and family dynamics, among other things, all play a substantial role in determining their professional choice (Gim, 1992; Leong 1995; as cited in Kazi & Akhlaq, 2017). In other words, based on these

factors, different individuals or sources provide students with recommendations about their future career options, in one way or another. Theresa (2015) stated that career advice from various sources should go beyond suggestions on how to study effectively, how to succeed in exams, and how to gain admission to suitable institutions. It should also provide a wide range of information, such as the requirements, benefits, opportunities, and even the risks of the work. Inadequate professional information can have negative consequences on students' major selection and, as a result, their entire life trajectories.

1.1 Problem Statement

A number of government entities and agencies in Azerbaijan intend to actively provide career counselling services for people of all ages, including students. Regular visits to educational institutions, the publication of professional guidelines, and the development of methodological tools for practitioners are among the intended procedures (Borbély-Pecze & Wesley, 2022). As reported by Valiyev and Babayev (2021), for such procedures to be successful in assisting adolescents to choose their future vocations and obtain suitable work possibilities, there must be excellent labor market information available, such as job descriptions and payment rates. In Azerbaijan, progress in this area has been limited by the relatively weak connection between the school sector and potential employers, particularly in the private sector. The authors also emphasized the strained connection between the business and education sectors as hindrance to the development of apprenticeship programs, which are another popular technique of integrating young people into the job market.

According to the preliminary data collected from a group interview with three students of a public school in Baku, the issue at stake is the widespread lack of career awareness among

students attending public high schools. All three students shared a feeling of ambiguity about the requirements of the job market and the qualifications required for a successful career entry. This deficiency raises questions regarding students' long-term job success and overall contributions to the workforce and economic development of the country in addition to impeding their capacity to make educated decisions about their future educational and professional routes. Additionally, the evidence indicates that family influence has a significant impact on students' job decisions, frequently pushing them in the direction of conventional or socially acceptable professional options rather than ones that actually align with their objectives.

Apart from parental intervention, Quiño (2022) stresses factors such as scholarship opportunities, educational quality, tuition affordability and closeness to hometown. The common feature triggering the formation of these factors is the students' (or their families') financial situation. According to Shumba and Naong (2016), the financial position of families has a direct bearing on the future educational prospects of their children.

Clearly demonstrated by the initial literature review, the spectrum of the factors that have an impact on students' choices of majors or fields of study is quite wide. Investigating the factors that most substantially influence major choices among Azerbaijani public high school students can potentially have a good impact on their career awareness by recognizing the problems they experience in this respect.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to look into and examine the factors influencing major choice among Azerbaijani public high school students. The second objective of this research is to

investigate the methods and approaches employed by public schools in assisting high school students as they explore and make choices regarding their career paths.

1.3 Significance of the Study

The high school phase represents a pivotal juncture in the educational journey of students as they transit towards higher education or embark on their careers. During this critical period, students are confronted with the momentous task of making decisions regarding their academic majors and future career paths. These decisions have far-reaching consequences, influencing not only the students' personal and professional lives but also impacting the socio-economic landscape of Azerbaijan. In this context, our proposed study assumes a central role with the primary aim of exploring the factors that influence Azerbaijani public high school students in their selection of academic majors and career paths, ensuring these choices align closely with their individualized interests, aptitudes, and aspirations. By providing a comprehensive analysis of the intricate factors that shape these decisions within the Azerbaijani cultural and contextual framework, this research will empower students, educators, and policymakers to make well-informed choices about education and career planning.

Furthermore, it is widely recognized in academic literature, as articulated by Mincer (1996), that the link between education and economic development is integral. A well-informed and skilled workforce is paramount for national economic growth, innovation, and competitiveness in an increasingly globalized world. Our research will provide valuable data that enables educational and governmental bodies to ensure that the skills and qualifications of high school graduates align seamlessly with the evolving demands of the labor market.

In summary, the proposed study not only offers empirical data, insights into the Azerbaijani context, but it also carries the promise of effecting tangible positive change by addressing enhancing economic development, and contributing to the scientific community's understanding of the major selection factors among high school students.

1.4 Research questions

This study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the factors that influence Azerbaijani public high school students while deciding on a major or area of study?
2. How do public schools support high school students in exploring and deciding on their career choices?

1.5 Definitions of Terms

Major Selection Factors: Major selection factors, as per the literature (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994), encompass the diverse elements that influence high school students when making choices regarding their academic majors. These factors can include personal interests, aptitudes, socioeconomic background, and societal expectations.

High School Students: Students who are studying in 10th and 11th grade years in Azerbaijani context.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The decisions that high school students make regarding their careers are crucial for their educational path and future goals. Successfully navigating this important phase requires

considering personal interests, abilities, family expectations, societal influences, and exposure to different academic and vocational options (Mishra et al., 2017).

This literature review aims to explore the multiple factors that impact the career choices of high school students. It recognizes the significance of comprehending the psychological, socioeconomic, and educational aspects that influence their decision-making processes. The primary objective of this review is to provide an understanding of the patterns, issues, and trends that affect the career decision-making of high school students through the synthesis of existing research.

The second aim of this review is to provide valuable information that can be used to develop successful career guidance programs, educational strategies, and interventions aimed at empowering students to make well-informed and fulfilling career decisions as they transition from high school to higher education and beyond. Given their geographical proximity, extensive review has been conducted on the career support systems of three post-Soviet countries - Russia, Georgia, and Ukraine.

2.1 Factors Influencing High School Students' Major Decisions

2.1.1 Involvement of Parents and Teachers

A student considers a variety of factors before deciding which senior high school course to enroll in. Students' career preferences were significantly influenced by their parents, personalities, interests, and the availability of job opportunities (Dublin et al.,2020). Family has a significant impact on students' decision-making when it comes to major selection (Mishra et al.,2017). For students (male and female) who chose to pursue careers in science and

engineering, parents and teachers were seen as having a greater influence on career choice than for those who did not (Dick & Rallis,1991). Family influence positively impacts self-efficacy in making career decisions (Kochak et al.,2021). Regarding the career process and happiness, the work and support of families, academic satisfaction, and student work all have a positive significant impact. It was acknowledged that a comprehensive perspective encompassing work experience, education, and family should be employed when evaluating career realities (Bellani et al.,2022).

Expanding on the interrelated nature of career development and support mechanisms, a high degree of emotional support from both parents and teachers were found to have a substantial influence on teachers' career flexibility. Notably, teachers' emotional support was found to be more influential than parents' (Song et al., 2022).

Teachers' career adaptability was significantly affected by high levels of emotional support from parents and teachers than by other factors on the scale, with teachers' emotional support being more significant than that of parents (Song et al.,2022). Parental involvement is based upon family characteristics, including the level of education of the mother, the income of the family, and the quantity of books in the home (Prakhov et al., 2020). In contrast to this viewpoint, Daen's (2018) research showed somewhat contradicting results, demonstrating that when it came to choosing a professional path, teachers had no impact on students' course choices; rather, students were predominantly affected by themselves.

2.1.2 Financial Issue

One of the most important factors in choosing a major is an individual's view of the job market (Mishra et al.,2017). A student's career decision-making process was influenced by the

jobs they were interested in, their talents and abilities, the jobs they thought they would be able to use after graduation, the internet, popular scientific magazines, books, and movies, as well as the creativity and independence of the jobs themselves (Cavas et al.,2011). In Russia, a large number of students are driven by factors other than future employment prospects and practical contributions to society. Right now, self-directed and instrumental motivations are prevalent in the country's educational system and labor market (Ivanova.,2015). However, in Azerbaijan one study showed that medical students indicated "job opportunities" had a significant influence on their major selection, while "salary" was considered to have less of an impact (Abizada & Mirzaliyeva, 2023).

2.1.3 Gender Stereotypes

Upon closer examination of the main factors, it becomes evident that stereotypes about gender strongly influence the main elements that high school students consider when choosing a career path. When choosing a career, girls tend to consider working creatively, environmental sensitivity, and self-actualization as significant reference points, while boys tend to consider only "fixing things" (Korkmaz,2015). For men in general, salary played greater importance in choosing a career, whereas for women, real interest played a bigger role in deciding against careers in science or engineering. Though there is still a noticeable gap in the percentage of men to women aspiring to careers in science or engineering, these gender differences do not manifest among students with exceptionally strong backgrounds in math and science coursework (Dick & Rallis,1991).

2.2 Development of School Career Guidance and Support for High School Students in Post-Soviet Countries

The introduction of career advising into the educational system as an essential pedagogical process is a task of utmost significance. The examination of career guidance and support for high school students in post-Soviet nations reveals a diverse educational sector characterized by varying approaches. There are a number of challenges that are still being faced in the development of career guidance systems in these countries, despite the fact that significant efforts are being made by the state, social institutions, the scientific community, and individual educational institutions.

Russia

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, in Russia, the allocation of financial resources for career advisory centers is maintained at a minimal level. Still, career guidance is implemented through main components: the provision of professional information and the provision of professional advice (Sinelnikova, 2021). However, the advancement of career guidance encounters obstacles due to the pedagogical challenges inherent in this field, which underscore both theoretical and practical issues. It is worth noting that lack of professional assistance in the conscious choice of future profession causes problems at both personal and social level (Klimov, et al., 2019). The Russian education system provides diverse career guidance opportunities. The inception of the government career guidance initiative in Russia, known as the "Ticket to the Future," took place in 2018. The program known as "Ticket to the

Future" aims to enhance the professional skill set of students in general education secondary schools. Approximately one million Russian students are scheduled to participate in professional assessment examinations via a digital platform, alongside engaging in a business simulation game. Regrettably, the implementation of the initiative is limited to only 36 locations in Russia, despite its significant value (Sinel'nikova, 2021).

Georgia

Over the course of the previous century, the career development program in Georgia, known as PECE, specifically focused on students in middle school and junior high (Dagley and Hartley, 1976). The curriculum-based guidance technique is designed to facilitate the attainment of career development objectives through the active involvement of students in both classroom and community-based job activities. Classroom coaching encompasses several instructional techniques such as role-playing, simulation, value classification, and decision-making activities. Within the professional setting, students are tasked with carrying out various responsibilities, while also engaging in the process of observing and engaging in conversations with employees regarding their respective roles and perspectives on their work. Approximately 150 middle and junior high schools are now in operation. However, European Training Center reports that (2022), in the Georgian school system, career education is limited. Head teachers introduce the basic concept of the labour market, but career education is not a subject in the curriculum. Teachers do not possess the means to access assistance materials, despite the existence of certain resources that were created as part of international donor projects. Typically, secondary schools do not offer career advising services to students and their parents, nor do they employ personnel specifically tasked with providing career guidance.

Ukraine

Currently, career guidance in educational institutions in Ukraine is an integral part of a holistic system of educational services, the purpose of which is to form the individual's ability to choose a certain type of career activity that best meets individual psychological characteristics, capabilities, interests and needs of the labor market; to help strengthen the competitiveness of the employee in the labor market and achieve effective employment (Ohrimenko and Voronina, 2021). European Training Center reports that (2022), in Ukraine, the primary institutional hubs for career development services and activities are comprised of two entities: the State Employment Service, which operates in 95 city centres with 429 branches, and the guidance centres within the vocational school system, which are available at 142 sites. The national youth policy is currently in effect, in part thanks to the opportunities provided by the EU4Youth project, as well as other domestic and international efforts. Within the educational framework, particular emphasis is placed on grades 8, 9, 10, and 11, while the earlier years of schooling or preschool do not typically incorporate comprehensive career guidance (European Training Center, 2022). According to the national study, school-based advice services prioritize the selection of educational institutions as their primary priority. Nevertheless, there are several novel efforts aimed at offering career education to students in their early years.

Gaps in the Literature

All of the reviewed literature included research studies from other countries. While substantial study on professional decision-making processes has been undertaken in nearby post-Soviet nations such as Russia, Georgia, and Ukraine, there is a notable lack of analogous studies in Azerbaijan. In the available literature, there is a substantial knowledge gap in comprehending

the problems and opportunities within the Azerbaijani educational landscape due to a lack of empirical research in the special details of career assistance system in Azerbaijan.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The objective of this research is to examine and analyze the key determinants influencing major selection among high school students in Azerbaijani public schools, while also investigating the strategies and approaches used by these schools to help students in the selection of their career paths. This section describes the research design and the theoretical foundations of the study. Furthermore, it delves into the procedures employed for data collecting and processing, and the ethical considerations related to the research design. The following are the main questions that guided our investigation:

1. What are the factors that influence Azerbaijani public high school students while deciding on a major or area of study?
2. How do public schools support high school students in making career-related decisions?

This methodology section successively delves into a thorough explanation of the research design, the strategy used for research participant selection, and the complexities of the data collection process, including data source identification and data analysis procedure. Furthermore, ethical dimensions relevant to the research design are carefully addressed.

3.1 Research Methodology

We used a qualitative research methodology in this study to investigate the numerous interventions that influence students' abilities to make judicious and accountable decisions regarding their job prospects in the future. Several factors influenced the decision to

use qualitative methods. First of all, qualitative research enables a comprehensive examination of complex phenomena in their natural surroundings, generating insights that are not usually quantitatively defined (Creswell, 2013). Furthermore, the adaptability of qualitative research allows us to change the research design as new perspectives arise, ensuring that we capture the data's depth and complexity (Creswell, 2013). We can acquire a better knowledge of students' needs, and teachers' and parents' impact mechanisms by focusing on approaches such as interviews, observations, and reflections (Schutt, 2012). This technique is consistent with the belief system behind the research questions as well as the research approach itself, which is required for robust qualitative research (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

3.2 Research Design

The research design applied to this study is based on a qualitative methodology, especially employing an exploratory research design to thoroughly investigate the multifaceted nature of students' career decision-making processes. According to Creswell (2013), exploratory research is a versatile and adaptive technique that is especially useful when the researcher has little to no prior information on the subject. This method enables the creation of hypotheses, a greater comprehension of the topic, and insights into intricate phenomena.

The process by which students choose their future jobs is the phenomenon of interest in this qualitative study. In keeping with the exploratory character of the study, the research design emphasizes an unstructured and empirical technique to unearth the subtle features of this occurrence.

Interviews are the technique of choice for gathering data following the qualitative paradigm. Because it can effectively collect and depict the perspectives, actions, and emotions of study participants, the interview approach is seen to be appropriate (Remler & Ryzin, 2015). As a result, the research design of the study integrates theoretical frameworks with research methodologies and data collection strategies, embracing the adaptable and flexible qualities necessary for a thorough investigation of students' decision-making processes concerning career choices. Furthermore, the research design broadens its focus to encompass the second aim of the study, which entails an examination of the tactics and methods utilized by public schools to support students in making career decisions.

3.2.1 Target Population

The target population, also known as the sampling frame, is defined by Creswell (2013) as a group of people who share a similar defining attribute that the researcher may identify through a list or collection of names. This study's target population includes Azerbaijani public high school students who are in the process of making major decisions, teachers and administrative staff members who hold the responsibility for guiding students through this decision-making journey, and parents who might play a substantial role in influencing and supporting their children's career decisions.

3.2.2 Sampling Method

In this study, maximal variation sampling, a strategy of purposeful sampling method, was applied. We chose purposeful sampling which is a qualitative sampling method described by

Creswell (2013) and best suits the aim of our investigation. Thus, students (accordingly, their parents) were purposefully selected based on their interest in pursuing higher education after graduating from school, demonstrating their involvement in the major decision-making process.

Maximal variation sampling is a deliberate approach where the researcher selects cases or individuals who exhibit differences in certain characteristics (Creswell, 2013). Maximal variation sampling allowed us to include participants who bring a wide range of experiences and perspectives to the study. By intentionally seeking diversity in characteristics relevant to major choices, such as academic interests, personal backgrounds, and career aspirations, the aim was to comprehensively understand the factors influencing students' decision-making processes.

3.2.3 Sample Size

The sample size was eighteen participants in total. We conducted offline interviews with nine eleventh-year students, six parents, one teacher, and two administrative staff members from two different public schools (one Baku school and one suburban school in Garadagh district), allowing for a wide spectrum of perspectives. Table 1 shows descriptive information about the students who participated in the interviews.

Table 1. The Descriptive Information about the Students

Student Name	Gender	Specialty They Want to Choose
Student A	Female	Business Management

Student B	Female	Finance
Student C	Female	IT (Information Technology) or Math Teaching in English
Student D	Female	Economics
Student E	Female	Economics
Student F	Male	Finance
Student G	Male	IT (Information Technology)
Student H	Female	Business Management
Student I	Female	Computer Engineering

3.2.4 Recruitment

The recruitment of participants for this study focused on high school from the 11th-grade students enrolled in public schools across Azerbaijan. Participants were recruited through the maximal variation sampling strategy of the purposeful sampling method, ensuring a diverse range of experiences. The selection criteria included variations in academic performance, extracurricular involvement, and socio-economic backgrounds. Furthermore, we acknowledged

the significance of including essential stakeholders, such as school administrators and parents of high school students.

Because administrative staff members are highly familiar with the academic environment, they may provide pivotal awareness about how schools enable and support students in making educated career decisions. Their thoughts can provide useful insights into the effectiveness of current career consulting tactics employed at schools. On the other hand, school principals can play a crucial role as gatekeepers in our study. Gatekeepers, as defined by Creswell (2013), are individuals with an official or unofficial role at the site who provide entrance, help researchers locate people, and assist in the identification of places to study. By collaborating closely with school principals, who hold influential roles within the school community, we acknowledged their significance as gatekeepers in facilitating access to the school setting and aiding in the identification and recruitment of participants for the interviews.

Parents are frequently the primary decision-makers in their children's lives. Understanding parents' perspectives and actions at home could supplement school-based insights, providing a comprehensive picture of the factors influencing students' career choices. On the other hand, exploring their function in assisting or impeding decision-making contributed to the creation of measures to improve parental support in career-related problems.

In the initial stage of the data collection process, we visited the two schools. We conducted pre-visit assessments to gain insight into the setting, environment, and dynamics of each school, including interactions with staff and students. This preliminary phase aimed to establish a foundation for building rapport and understanding the unique context of each school.

3.2.5 Sources of Data

Data were collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews with high school students, their parents, and their teachers, and administrative staff members allowing participants to express their thoughts, feelings, and experiences. A semi-structured interview is a type of interview used in social sciences and qualitative research. It follows a general guide or protocol but also allows for flexibility to explore topics as the conversation unfolds. It is often used to gather exploratory or clinical data (Creswell, 2013).

We developed clear and concise open-ended questions that were aligned with our research objectives. An open-ended response to a question allows the participant to create the options for responding (Creswell, 2013). Afterward, we discussed the questions with our supervisor and course instructor, gathered their feedback, and refined the questions further to ensure validity and effectiveness.

3.3 Data Collection

We began our data collection process by warmly greeting our participants. Following the introduction, we provided each interviewee with an interview protocol and a structured set of questions that outlined the purpose of our study. Informed consent was obtained, and participants were informed about the voluntary nature of their participation. To conduct a qualitative study involving individuals, researchers are required to obtain authorization from the board, create a project description, and create an informed consent form (Creswell, 2013). The interviews lasted approximately 25-30 minutes per respondent, were audio-recorded for accuracy, and subsequently transcribed. While the interview protocol guided the primary questions, we, as interviewers, probed inquiries to gather comprehensive insights. Finally, upon concluding the

interview, participants were invited to ask any questions they might have, and we expressed our gratitude for their valuable participation in our study.

Additionally, interviews were transcribed on the same day as conducted to ensure prompt and accurate data processing. Throughout the interview process, we tried to actively take notes on crucial elements in participants' speeches, supplementing the transcription process and capturing immediate insights. We also validated our findings by consulting with research participants to confirm the accuracy of the results. Member checking is a method in which the researcher requests one or more participants in the study to verify the correctness of the information provided. This verification process entails presenting the findings to the participants and soliciting their feedback, either by written communication or in an interview, to assess the correctness of the report (Creswell, 2013).

3.3.1 Data Analysis Procedures

During our research, we carefully transcribed the verbal statements made by individuals during interviews and following that examined the written records to comprehend the main ideas and concepts. Initially, we encoded the transcribed data by distinguishing different parts and allocating suitable labels for description and the identification of themes to be included in the study report. Next, we identified common trends and arranged them into more comprehensive classifications utilizing charts to facilitate the visualization of patterns. Through the process of comparing and verifying the material, our objective was to identify significant patterns within and among the interviews. In the "Interpretation" part, the presentation of our findings entailed constructing a clear and comprehensive narrative, considering the surrounding circumstances,

and contemplating any subjective preferences. Most importantly, we upheld confidentiality and addressed ethical concerns while disseminating our study findings.

3.3.2 Validity and Reliability

Since validity and reliability are regarded as crucial components of the study, additional precautions were taken to ensure that the data collection and data analysis procedures were maintained. According to Mohajan (2017), reliability denotes that the research's findings are error-free and consistent, meaning that "the observed score of the measure reflects the true score of that measure". Validity is defined as "whether the results obtained meet all of the requirements of the scientific research method."(Mohajan,2017).

3.3.3 Content Validity

One sort of validity, content validity, tries to demonstrate how well the instrument's questions can capture all the queries about the study's subject matter, according to Creswell (2005). It should be noted that no particular statistical test exists to determine the degree to which questions can cover the subject matter; in this instance, expert input is required (Mohajan, 2017). Participants in this study were only given access to interview questions following their supervisor's review.

3.3.4 Internal Validity

The goal of internal validity is to determine whether the study's design, analysis, and execution yield trustworthy responses to the research question (Creswell, 2005). Three methods were used to make sure this research's internal validity matches reality: member checking, peer review, and triangulation.

3.3.5 Triangulation

Triangulation refers to the process of taking three measurements to determine a point's precise location. In this study, however, the concept is used to describe matching procedures to strengthen the research's credibility (Meijer et al., 2002). To guarantee the accuracy of the data, the researcher can employ a variety of data sources, data collection techniques, and theoretical frameworks. To enhance the credibility of our study, we gathered information from multiple subjects via interviews, cross-referencing it with existing research.

3.3.6 Peer Review

Maintaining the high quality of individual journals and the high standards of scholarly communications depends heavily on peer review. Additionally, it provides crucial support to the researchers who write the papers. Peer review benefits you as the author for more pragmatic reasons. Peer review can help you identify mistakes in your work and gaps in the literature that you might have missed. In our study, we worked with the assigned instructor and supervisor to get relevant feedback in turn.

3.3.7 Member Checking

To receive their input on the changes later on, the study participants were asked to verify the notes made during the interview, suggest alternatives, and provide commentary on what needs to be done (Kornbluh, 2015). It is among the most efficient strategies for boosting the credibility of the information gathered (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). When we transcribed the data, we contacted the participants to ensure the verification of the information.

3.3.8 Ethical Considerations

Enhancing the credibility of the research is contingent upon ethical considerations. The participants' identities were kept private for this study, meaning that only the researchers were aware of them and no outside parties were informed. The participants were informed in advance about the questions, the purpose of the responses, and their rights by taking into account the significance of "informed consent" (Fleming & Zegwaard, 2018). Additionally, a written consent form was given to each participant to sign indicating their willingness to take part in the study. As we discussed a potentially sensitive issue with the teachers, we had to ensure the anonymity of the study. Various kinds of consent forms for the school administration, students, parents, and teachers were provided, deeply explaining their rights and protection of their sensitive information in the study.

3.3.9 Study Limitations

This study has some limitations that can affect the generalizability of its findings. The investigation's scope and depth were constrained due to time and budget restrictions. Furthermore, the absence of participation from regions outside the main area of study limited the diversity of opinions to some extent. The contextual framework was further restricted by a shortage of relevant local literature (Yunusova, 2019; Valiyev & Babayev, 2021; Abizada & Mirzaliyeva, 2023). Furthermore, interviewing only one teacher limited the range of insights, which could bias the results. These considerations underline the importance of doing broader and more varied studies in future investigations.

Chapter 4. Findings

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the factors influencing major choice among Azerbaijani public high school students. The second objective of this research was to investigate the methods and approaches employed by public schools in assisting high school students as they explore and make choices regarding their career paths. This chapter presents the following sub-topics: factors influencing Azerbaijani high school students' choice of major or area of study, and schools' support to students in exploring and deciding on their career choices.

4.1. Factors Influencing Azerbaijani High School Students' Choice of Major or Area of Study

After analyzing the collected data, the findings indicated that the key factors influencing Azerbaijani high school students' choices of major include employability considerations, personal interests, family influence, external factors (peer recommendations, societal trends), guidance from teachers and school administration staff, academic achievements and abilities, economic considerations (tuition fees), and subtle gender stereotypes. It was also found that varying degrees of influence exist among these factors.

4.1.1. Priority to Future Financial Stability

The findings of this study indicate that students give priority to specializations that they believe will provide them with stable financial futures and bright professional opportunities. Almost every interviewee emphasized the significance of determining which specializations will be profitable and in high demand in the future when selecting a specialization. An administrative staff member of the X school emphasized that students pay special attention to this point:

...Əlbəttə ki, uşaqlar harada yaxşı, pullu ixtisaslar var, belə deyək, onlara yönlənmək istəyirlər...

[...Of course, children want to be directed to good, paid specialties, so to speak...]

Students expressed varying ideas on their childhood dreams but when it came to selecting an actual specialty, they focused on technical specialties (See Table 1) that are in great demand in the labor market, demonstrating the importance of the employability aspect in this process. It was also stated that it is critical to consider not only financial revenue options but also the prospects for education and jobs in foreign countries in the chosen specialization. Based on the responses of participating parents in the interview, we can conclude that the younger generation is more concerned with their future life and financial prosperity than previous generations, and they emphasize this issue while selecting a specialization. Parent 1 shared her thoughts on the subject as follows:

... maliyyəni də düşünürlər. Şəxsən, bizim dövrün uşaqları bu dərəcədə açıq fikirləşmirdi ki, ay mən kim olacam, mənim nə qədər qazancım olacaq. Amma indiki uşaqlar, indiki nəsillər onu fikirləşir. Artıq özləri öz qərarlarını, öz gələcəklərini indidən görürlər, qururlar ...

[...They also consider finances. Personally, the children of our era were not as open-minded to the extent of thinking, "Who will I become, how much will I earn?" But today's children, today's generations, think about it. They already see and plan their own decisions, their futures from now on...]

4.1.2. Student's Personal Interest

One of the main factors highlighted by the students was personal interest. Considering the students' interests entails giving preference to specialty groups containing their favorite subjects as well as the specialties they hope to pursue in their future jobs. Student C concluded her thoughts on the subject by adding:

... işini sevməyən bir müəllimdənsə, sevən bir mühəndis olmaq daha xoşdur ki, cəmiyyətə daha xeyirlidir ...

[... it is better to be a loving engineer than a teacher who does not love their job, which is also better for society...]

Throughout the interviews, students often expressed such ideas, emphasizing the necessity of considering their interests while selecting a specialization.

4.1.3. External Factors

External factors include the advice of relatives and acquaintances, the mutual influence of peers, as well as societal trends regarding specialization choices. The analysis of the gathered data resulted in the conclusion that although the coverage of these three factors is extensive (meaning that all three were emphasized in all interviews), their actual influence on the specialization choice process is weak and approximately equal. It is true that Parent 1, emphasizing the influence of peers, voiced a contradicting idea to refute this notion:

... Elə bil ki, uşaqlar hamısı birinci qrupu dedilər, hamısı yığışlırlar birinci qrupa. İndi də ikinci oğlum da ikinci qrup deyir, demək olar ki, sinifində

əksəriyyəti ikinci qrupu tutublar. Uşaqların bir-birilərinə təsirləri böyük olur ...

[...It's like, they all said they're in the first group, and they all gather in the first group. Now my second son also says he's in the second group, which means the majority in his class chose the second group. Children have a big influence on each other...]

The influence of general societal trends regarding specialization choices has also been confirmed during the interviews. To illustrate, simply examining the opinions expressed by Student B during the interview is sufficient to ascertain this:

... Əslində mən Milli Aviasiya Akademiyasında təhsil almaq istəyirdim, lakin qız olduğum üçün cəmiyyətdən neqativ fikirlər eşitdim və bildiyimə görə, pilot peşəsi hazırda yalnız oğlan tələbələrini qəbul etdiyi üçün sahəmi dəyişməli oldum ...

[...Actually, I wanted to study at the National Aviation Academy, but because I am a girl, I heard negative opinions from society, and as far as I know, the pilot profession currently only accepts male students, so I had to change my field...]

Another personal opinion showing the existence of the societal trend above was mentioned by the administrative staff member of the X school:

...İxtisas seçimində, valla, (gülür) qızın qız, öz ixtisas seçimi var, oğlanın da oğlan. Əlbəttə ki, oğlanın qızın fərqi var ixtisas seçimində ...

[...In choosing a specialization, honestly (laughs), there's a difference between a girl and a boy. Of course, there's a difference in choosing a specialization for a boy and a girl...]

Although it is contradictory and regrettable that a representative of Azerbaijan's education system harbors a positive attitude towards gender discrimination in specialization choices, it underscores the existence of such trends in our society. As can be seen from the examples, the gender discrimination factor is at the root of the stereotypes that exist in society regarding the choice of specialty. The findings related to the role of the gender factor in the choice of specialty will be presented in detail in section 4.1.6.

4.1.4. Teachers' and School Administration Staff's Guidance and Support

Teachers' opinions and advice are important guiding factors in students' decisions regarding specialization choices. According to the interviewees, especially subject teachers can identify in which subjects students excel and can provide objective advice in this regard. In both schools where the data was collected, mathematics teachers play a leading role in guiding students in their specialization choices. Analysis suggests that these teachers, taking into account students' interests and abilities in mathematics as well as the demands of the job market, steer them towards technical fields when they make their specialization choices. This fact was emphasized by 80% of the participating students and by all parents and administrative staff members. Parent 2 responded to the inquiry about interactions with school administration and teachers regarding their child's choice of major as follows:

... Bəli, olubdur. Riyaziyyat müəlliməsi ilə olub, Aydan Kərimli ilə. Riyaziyyatı da çox yaxşı gördüyü üçün, o dedi ki, bu uşaq mənə elə gəlir

ki, riyaziyyatı yaxşı bilir. Biz də seçim elədik ki, digər fənnlərlə də hazırlaşsın və ikinci qrupa getsin ...

[...Yes, there have been. It was with the math teacher, Aydan Karimli. She said, 'It seems to me that this child is good at math.' So, we decided that she should also prepare for other subjects and pursue the second specialty group...]

Regarding the support of administrative staff members, students noted that the school administration is always interested in their academic achievements, specialization choices, and the form of support needed in these areas, and they provide support within their means. While the support provided is mostly verbal, students reported that they highly value it.

...Bəli, (məktəb rəhbərliyi) soruşurlar. Həmişə biz hazırlıqlara gedəndə, ümumiyyətlə, soruşurlar necə gedir. Sınaqlara gedəndə də soruşurlar necə oldu deyə...

[...Yes, (school administration) do ask. Always when we go to private tutoring, they usually ask how it's going. When we go to trial exams, they ask how it went...]

It wouldn't be accurate to refer to the opinions of participating parents in this context as they are also teachers at the same school.

4.1.5. Role of Academic Achievements and Abilities

In this research, "academic achievements" refers to the scores students obtain in university entrance exams. "Abilities," on the other hand, encompasses a broader understanding, including a student's knowledge, skills, and psychological adaptability. The analysis conducted indicates that academic achievements are a leading factor influencing students' specialization choices. Particularly during discussions with parents and school administration, it became apparent that even though students may initially lean towards specialties they desire or with the support of their families, their decisions can change last minute based on the score they achieve. The views expressed by both administrative staff members in our conversations also highlight the significance of academic achievements:

... bal toplayandan sonra şagirdlər bala uyğun ixtisas seçimi edirlər, təəssüf ki. Bizdə şagirdlər ixtisası seçməmişdən qabaq birinci balı toplamaladırlar, ondan sonra ixtisası seçirlər ...

[... after collecting the score, students choose their specialization based on the score, unfortunately. In our case, students must collect the score first before choosing their specialization ...]

When discussing supporting their children, parents emphasized providing financial support, especially by sending their children to private tutors, which, in turn, reinforces the importance of academic achievements in specialization choices.

During an interview with one of the parents, it was also revealed that the role of academic achievements in specialization choices was relevant even in the 1990s:

... (yoldaşım) Bakı Dövlətin jurnalistika fakültəsini bitirib. Amma halbuki, onun valideynləri istəyiblər hüquqa getsin. Amma jurnalistikaya qəbul olub. Görürsünüzmü, valideynin istəyi olsa da, o uşağın gücü, potensialı hara çatırsa, odur...

[...(my spouse) graduated from Baku State University's journalism faculty. However, his parents wanted her to study law. But he was accepted into journalism. You see, even if the parents want it, it's where the child's strength and potential lie...]

In such situations, while the role of academic achievements is highlighted, if the collected score turns out to be lower than expected, it can be due to the weakness of the student's knowledge and skills, and in certain cases, psychological adaptability. Student A emphasized the importance of knowledge and abilities, expressing:

...Mənim uşaqlıq xəyalım memar olmaq idi, amma fizika və kimyamanın o qədər yüksək olmadığını düşündüyüm üçün 2-ci qrupa getdim...

[...My childhood dream was to become an architect, but I ended up in the second specialty group because I thought my physics and chemistry weren't that high...]

Similarly, Student C said that due to poor academic performance in some subjects, she had to change her specialty group:

... heç bir şəkildə (ədəbiyyat fənnini) oxuya bilmirdim. Bir dərs (özəl məşğələdə) tarix və ədəbiyyat oxumağım o qrupu dəyişməyimlə nəticələndi,

o qədər gülünc vəziyyətə düşdüm. Düşünün, bugün, mən dedim, üçəm (üçüncü ixtisas qrupu), sonra sabah gəldim dedim ki, 3 istəmirəm. Heç bir şəkildə alınmayacaq...

[... I couldn't study (the subject of literature) in any way. One class (at private tutoring) of studying history and literature resulted in me changing that group, I was in such a ridiculous situation. Think, today, I said, I'm three (the third specialty group), then tomorrow I came and said I don't want 3. It will not be taken in any way...]

Both participants argued that students should first evaluate their level of knowledge and skills before making decisions, especially when selecting the specialty groups in the major choice process.

The inclusion of psychological adaptability in the understanding of abilities in this research is due to the mention by one of the interviewees that "students who choose the medical profession should be psychologically adaptable and strong." While this factor may only manifest itself in certain specific situations, it is important to consider during specialization choices.

4.1.6. Role of Tuition Fee

Based on the opinions expressed by the interviewees, we can note that the cost of education is among the forefront factors considered during specialization choices. For instance, all students from the Baku school and one student from the other school highlighted the importance of this factor. Since the school in the suburban area is designated for former internally displaced persons, four out of the participating students (except one) did not mention

this factor. This is because, according to the Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan regarding some issues related to the payment of education expenses

(https://frameworks.e-qanun.az/22/f_22948.html), individuals with the status of internally displaced persons are entitled to free education once at each level of education. The data obtained indicates that for each student who participated in the interview and is not eligible for this privilege, the cost of education is a crucial factor to consider during specialization choices.

Parent 3 stated:

...(övladım) bala uyğun görək hansını seçə biləcək, informatika mühəndisliyi, neft-kimya üzrə və yaxud da riyaziyyat müəllimliyi, yəni onun balına uyğun. Yəqin ki, o ixtisaslarda yüksək bal var ödənişsizdə. Yəni, elə bal yığmalıdır ki, ən azından bir ödənişliyə düşməsin. Düşərsə də, bir valideyn kimi mən onun ödənişlərini ödəməyə borcluyam...

[...As for my child, let's consider which one she can choose according to her abilities, computer engineering, petroleum chemistry, or mathematics teaching, that is, according to her score. Probably, there are high scores in those majors without payment. That means she has to collect such a score that she doesn't fall into at least one that requires a tuition fee. If she does, as a parent, I am obligated to pay her fees...]

4.1.7. Gender Factor

When asked about the importance of gender in specialization choices, 96% of the interviewees reported being neutral on the subject. As mentioned earlier, only one administrative staff member emphasized the division of specializations between girls and boys and suggested

that specialization choices should be based on this division. However, participating parents and students noted that such discrimination was not allowed in their families, but they observed such instances in society. For example, some interviewees shared the following specific instances from their observations:

Student D stated:

... Mənim elə qız rəfiqələrimdən bir neçəsi polis olmağı düşünürdü, amma həm valideynlərinin təsiri ilə, yəni, qız polis olmaz deyə bir düşüncə var, həm də elə ətraf mühitə görə fikirlərini dəyişdilər...

[...Several of my female friends were considering becoming police officers, but due to both parental influence, meaning there's a notion that girls shouldn't become police officers, and also due to the influence of the surrounding environment, they changed their minds...]

Parent 1 also noted:

...Düzdür, ətrafımda baxıram, deyirlər ki, ay qızıdır, müəllim olsa yaxşıdır, səhər getsin, günorta evində olsun. Amma bu nə dərəcədə düzdür?! O qız özün harda görmək istəyir, mən ona önəm verirəm...

[...It's true when I look around, they say that, oh, she is a girl, it would be better if she were a teacher, let her go in the morning, let her be at home in the afternoon. But how true is this?! Where does that girl want to see herself, I care about it...]

The interviewees who mentioned such factors directly correlate the influence of gender in specialization choices to mentality. The fact that one out of the 18 interviewees did not support gender equality in specialization choices could be considered significant relative to the general population.

4.2. Schools' Support to Students in Exploring and Deciding on Their Career Choices

4.2.1. Lack of Necessary Information

Analysis of the data revealed that the most significant challenge for students regarding specialization choices at schools is the lack of systematic and reliable information. Students and their parents reported during the interviews that they could only obtain information on this matter through the Internet, Abiturient journals, researching the labor market situation, or teachers knowledgeable in this field. Teachers play a crucial role as advisors to students in this regard. Based on the data collected from the process, it can be stated that they are the sole support model for students at schools regarding specialization choices. Parent 4 emphasized:

...Riyaziyyat müəllimi, müəllimləri ilə əlaqə saxlayıram, danışırım, istiqamət götürürəm ki, bu uşaq düz yoldadır. Düzü valideyn uşağını başqa cür görür, amma müəllim isə artıq başqa cür görür və rəy verir ki, bu uşaq həqiqətən də bu istiqamətdə gedə bilər, yoxsa yox...

[...I maintain communication with the math teacher, talk to the other teachers, and seek direction to see if this child is on the right track. The parent sees their child differently, but the teacher sees them differently and gives an opinion as to whether this child can really go in this direction or not...]

All three categories of the interviewees supported and considered it appropriate for schools to systematically provide all information related to specializations, opportunities they offer, factors to consider in the specialization selection process, etc.

4.2.2. New Ideas to Guide and Support Students

The question "What measures can schools implement to support students in choosing their specialization?" was posed to all interviewees, aiming to gather real and innovative ideas for our capstone project product. We anticipated that the ideas presented by the interviewees would provide valuable insights. The new ideas related to the schools' support to students in their specialty choices given by the interviewees were analyzed, categorized, and presented in Table 2. On the other hand, the innovations they wanted to see at schools regarding this matter indicate a clear lack of necessary resources and specific mechanisms at schools to support specialization choices. More precisely, none of the students participating in the interviews expressed positive thoughts regarding organizing informative events or arranging meetings with successful individuals in various fields at their schools. Additionally, the administrative staff members mentioned that their schools did not collaborate with any organization or government body in this regard and lacked the necessary resources and programs.

Table 2. Ideas from the Interviewees to Guide and Support Students

Arranging excursions to various institutions and organizations to increase awareness

Grouping students according to their groups (1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th) and arranging discussions about major decisions and different specialties among students involving teachers, as well.

Arranging placement exams for students to identify which group is appropriate for them.

Discussions with special guests on the education and job opportunities of different specialties

Discussions with the graduates of the school on the education and job opportunities of different specialties

Holding an informative and entertaining event about different specialty groups (ixtisas qrupları) once a month

Arranging a person at each school who is responsible for supporting and guiding high school students in the major decision process.

As can be seen from the situation in the schools where the research was carried out, no specific steps are taken by the school to support the students' choices of specialty, and there is no certain mechanism in this regard. Given this perspective, we have developed a new proposal to assist schools in guiding students through their career decisions. A detailed description of the proposal is presented in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5. Final Product

Data study suggests that an important obstacle for students in selecting specializations is a lack of credible information. Notably, while several measures have already been implemented by various government agencies, participants were unaware of them. As a result, we developed an

information session for high school students that provides a comprehensive overview of these free online and offline resources. We intend to begin the session with 9th grade students because the data we have gathered shows that most students are attempting to make decisions at this time in the schools.

Objectives

By the end of the session, students will be able to:

- recognize the numerous career support programs given by government entities, recognizing the major features and benefits of each one.
- learn how to explore and apply online tests offered on sites like e-psixoloq.az to assess their interests and talents.
- evaluate the suitability of various career assistance services for their specific needs.

Agenda

The session will start with a warm greeting and introduction to the facilitators, Nigar Mirzayeva and Nigar J. Gasimova lasting approximately five minutes and, followed by an overview of the program's objectives. This will prepare students for the primary topic by ensuring that they understand the session's aim and desired outcomes.

Nigar J. Gasimova will then deliver ten minute presentation about the various career support mechanisms available. Following this talk, Nigar Mirzayeva will lead an interactive session that will involve online assessments to help students determine their

interests and skills, as well as entertaining tasks and worksheets for about twenty minutes.

Following that, there will be a ten-minute Q&A time frame in which students can ask questions and get clarification from the facilitators. Following the Q&A, students will be provided both online and offline resources to help with their continued career planning process, which will take about five minutes

The session will end with the collecting of feedback forms, a recap of the main themes discussed, and closing statements from both facilitators lasting 10 minutes. The facilitators will emphasize the importance of using the available tools and encourage students to take proactive measures in their career preparation.

Available Mechanisms for Career Guidance

Azerbaijan has established a comprehensive system of career advising and counseling services, which are largely controlled by the Ministries of Labor and Social Protection of the Population (MLSP) and Education (MSE) (Majidova&Petrivska, 2023). These ministries, through numerous institutions, provide a wide range of services, including career counseling, vocational training, and assistance to job seekers and the unemployed.

To improve the accessibility and effectiveness of these services, numerous online platforms and projects have been established.

One of the important components of this system is the MSE's ambitious plan, which predicts that by 2025, all Azerbaijani general schools will be equipped to efficiently handle career education and support the country's Vocational Education and Training (VET) system (Majidova&Petrivska, (2023). This plan emphasizes the need of

incorporating career coaching within the educational framework so that students are well-prepared for their future careers.

The State Examination Center (SEA) provides career advisory services through general educational institutions and regional offices. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the SEA introduced "Alo Career," a revolutionary online assistance tool that promotes personal and professional development (European Training Center, 2022). In addition to "Alo Career," the SEA runs the online project "Bacar." This initiative provides detailed information on numerous professions, vocational diagnostics, and guidance on making educated career decisions (European Training Center, 2022). The Development and Career Centres are an important part of Azerbaijan's career advising system. With 52 functioning locations across the country, these centers provide a wide range of services, including workshops, counseling sessions, and career planning resources.

The DOST Centers improve the country's career guidance infrastructure. With five active locations, these centers offer comprehensive career advisory services to meet a variety of needs and assist individuals in making educated career decisions (Majidova&Petrivska, 2023).

Interactive Session

A key highlight of this session is the State Examination Center's announcement of a new project in partnership with the Ministry of Education. Counseling services are recommended for students in grades 7 and lower. Upper-grade students are advised to take a career assessment test first, followed by counseling based on the results. This program contains a comprehensive list of over 200 Azerbaijani professions, with

thorough descriptions of over 80 presently available on the e-psikholog.az website, and more to come. This project intends to provide student with targeted and effective career advise based on their age and academic level.

The session will conclude with a special Q&A part in which facilitators will answer any outstanding questions or concerns from the students. This will be followed by the distribution of resources to ensure that students have continuous access to the tools they need for their career planning journey.

Students will be asked to complete feedback forms in order to gain vital insights for future sessions. The event will close with a recap of the important issues covered, as well as words of encouragement from the facilitators to urge students to use the resources available and take proactive actions in their career preparation. By adopting these meetings, we hope to educate high school students with the knowledge and resources necessary to make informed career choices, thus addressing the information gap identified in our research.

Chapter 6. Conclusion

In conclusion, the study's findings highlight multiple important factors influencing Azerbaijani high school students' major choices. Participants in this study prioritize specialties that provide steady financial prospects and professional chances. According to the data, students prioritize subjects that match their personal interests and future job goals.

The study acknowledges the impact of extrinsic factors such as parental guidance, peer group influence, and current societal trends. However, these criteria are found to have a less major influence on professional specialization selections than employability prospects and personal interests. While social norms can foster unintentional gender bias, the majority of interviewees, including students and parents, had a neutral perspective on the gender issue.

The study emphasizes the need for guidance from teachers and school administrators. Notably, teachers have a major influence on students' career paths, guiding them toward technical fields that match their academic skills and personal interests. Furthermore, students' decisions are influenced by their academic performance, as indicated by the significance placed on university entrance exam scores. These exam results frequently exceed initial student choices or familial influences. Financial factors, primarily fees, also continue to be a major influence driving student specialization, particularly for those who lack financial aid.

The study revealed a critical challenge: the lack of a well-structured and accurate information infrastructure within schools. Currently, teachers are the primary source of career advice at schools. Chapter 5 proposes enhanced support mechanisms to overcome this knowledge gap, as well as the lack of creative tools to help students explore specialization options within the present school system.

References

- Abizada, A., & Mirzaliyeva, F. (2023). Factors affecting major choice of medical students in Azerbaijan. *Technium Social Sciences Journal*, 46(1), 50-63.
- Bellani, D., & Ortiz-Gersavi, L. (2022). Parental time preferences and educational choices: The role of children's gender and of social origin. *Ration. Soc.* 34, 96–125.
- Borbély-Pecze, T., & Wesley, J. (2022, September). *A review of National Career Development Support Systems. Career Guidance in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Ukraine*. ResearchGate.
- Cavas, B., Cakiroglu, J., Cavas, P., & Ertepinar, H. (2011). Turkish students' career choices in engineering: Experiences from Turkey. *Science Education International*, 22 (Special issue 4), 274-281.
- Creswell, J. W. (2005). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.
- Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Educational Research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research (4th ed.)*. Boston, MA: Pearson.

Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. Sage Publications.

Creswell, J. W., & Guetterman, T. C. (2021). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research*. Pearson.

Daen, M. H. (2018). Factors affecting grade 12 senior high school students in choosing course for tertiary education.

Dagley, J. C., & Hartley, D. L. (1976). *Career guidance in Georgia: A program development guide*.

Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan regarding some issues related to the payment of education expenses for compulsory migrants receiving education at paid basis in state higher education institutions of the Republic of Azerbaijan and at the master's level of the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences, https://frameworks.e-qanun.az/22/f_22948.html

Dick, T. P., & Rallis, S. F. (1991). Factors and influences on high school students' career choices. *Journal for Research in Mathematics Education*, 22(4), 281–292.

Dublin, B. C., Logrosa, A. A., Sosing, M. R. D., & Cornillez Jr, E. E. C. (2020). Factors influencing career preference of junior high school students for senior high school study. *TARAN-AWAN Journal of Educational Research and Technology Management*, 2(2), 1-12.

European Training Center. (2022). A review of national career development support systems: Career guidance in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Ukraine.

Fleming, J., & Zegwaard, K. E. (2018). Methodologies, Methods and Ethical Considerations for Conducting Research in Work-Integrated Learning. *International Journal of Work-Integrated Learning, Special Issue*, 19, 205-213.

Gati, I., Krausz, M., & Osipow, S. H. (1996). A taxonomy of difficulties in career decision making. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 43(4), 510-526.

Importance of career planning for high school students (explained with step-by-step process).

Vati. (2020, December 1).

Ivanova, T. (2015). Motivational factors influencing vocational choice of secondary school students. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 6(31), 1-6.

Kazi, A. S., & Akhlaq, A. (2017, December). Factors affecting students' career choice.

Klimov, A. Y., Zhigalik, M. A., & Titova, E. V. (2019). Development of a career guidance system in Russia: Topical problems. *Pedagogical Education: History, Present Time, Perspectives*.

Koçak, O., Ak, N., Erdem, S. S., Sinan, M., Younis, M. Z., & Erdoğan, A. (2021). The role of family influence and academic satisfaction on career decision-making self-efficacy and happiness. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18(11), 5919.

Korkmaz, H. (2015). Factors influencing students' career chooses in Science and Technology: Implications for High School Science Curricula. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 197, 966-972.

Kornbluh, M. (2015). Combatting Challenges to Establishing Trustworthiness in Qualitative Research. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 12, 397-414.

Lent, R. W., Brown, S. D., & Hackett, G. (1994). Toward a unifying social cognitive theory of career and academic interest, choice, and performance. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 45(1), 79-122.

Majidova, M., & Petrivska, E. (2023, December 20). Contribution of partner countries to EU youth wiki chapter III: Azerbaijan employment and entrepreneurship. EU4Youth Co-ordination and Support Project Consortium led by EY.

Meijer, Paulien & Verloop, Nico & Beijaard, Douwe. (2002). Multi-Method Triangulation in a Qualitative Study on Teachers' Practical Knowledge: An Attempt to Increase Internal Validity. *Quality and Quantity*. 36. 145-167.

Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2016). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. Jossey-Bass.

Mincer, J. (1996). Education and Unemployment. *The Journal of Political Economy*, 84(4), S94-S107.

Mishra, N., Ismail, A. A., & Al Hadabi, S. J. (2017). A major choice: Exploring the factors influencing undergraduate choices of Communication major. *Learning and Teaching in Higher Education: Gulf Perspectives*, 14(2), 54–72.

Mohajan, H. K. (2017). Two Criteria for Good Measurements in Research: Validity and Reliability. *Annals of Spiru Haret University, Economic Series*, 17, 59-82.

- Ohrimenko, Z., & Voronina, H. R. (2021). Career guidance in educational institutions in Ukraine: Development, challenges and solutions. *Theoretical Foundations of Pedagogy and Education*.
- Quiño, J. B. (2022). Factors influencing the career preference of senior high school students during pandemic.
- Remler, D. K. & Ryzin, G. G. V. (2015). *Research Methods in Practice: Strategies for Description and Causation* (2nd ed.). SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Schutt, R. K. (2012). *Investigating the social world: The process and practice of research* (7th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Sinel'nikova, N. A. (2021). Career guidance of school children in Russia. Belgorod State National Research University.
- Shumba, A., & Naong, M. (2016). The influence of family income on students' career choice at universities of technology. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, 27(4).
- Song, Y., Mu, F., Zhang, J., & Fu, M. (2022). The relationships between career-related emotional support from parents and teachers and career adaptability. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13.
- Theresa, L. D. (2015). *Factors that inform students' choice of study and career*. *Journal of Education and Practice* www.iiste.org ISSN 2222-1735 (Paper) ISSN 2222-288X (Online) Vol.6, No.27, 2015.
- Valiyev, A., & Babayev, A. (2021). Azerbaijani youth in transition: Is the State Youth Policy Effective Enough? *Journal of Eurasian Studies*, 12(2), 145–154.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

İcazə Məktubu

No _____

“ ” _____ 2024-cü il

MÜTDA-in
Direktor müavini, BŞTİ-nin
müdiri vəzifəsini icra edən
Nərmin xanım Hüseynovaya

Hörmətli Nərmin xanım,

Nəzərinizə çatdırmaq istərdik ki, ADA Universitetinin MAEM 2024 “Təhsilin İdarəedilməsi” ixtisası üzrə magistr proqramı ikinci kurs tələbələri Nigar Mirzəyeva və Nigar Camalova Qasımovanın apardıqları yekun tədqiqat işi (Exploring Factors Influencing Azerbaijani Public High School Students' Choice of Major/Azərbaycanın Dövlət Məktəblərində Təhsil Alan Yuxarı Sınıf Şagirdlərinin İxtisas Seçiminə Təsir Edən Amillərin Araşdırılması) üçün 70 №-li məktəbliseyin, 167 №-li tam orta məktəbin və Ağdam rayon 33 №-li tam orta məktəbin 10 və 11-ci sinif şagirdləri (hər məktəbdən 5 şagird olmaqla), onların valideynləri (hər məktəbdən 3 valideyn olmaqla) arasında və hər məktəbin idarə heyətindən bir nəfər ilə müsahibə keçirilməsi tələb olunur. Müsahibənin məqsədi Azərbaycanda dövlət orta məktəb şagirdlərinin ixtisas seçimlərinə təsir edən faktorları, həmçinin şagirdlərin karyera yollarını araşdırmaqda və əsaslandırılmış qərarlar qəbul etməkdə kömək etmək üçün dövlət məktəblərinin istifadə etdiyi metod və yanaşmaları araşdırmaqdır.

Bu məqsədlə tədqiqatın aparılması üçün şəraitin yaradılmasını Sizdən xahiş edirik.

Əməkdaşlığa görə təşəkkürümüzü bildiririk.

Hörmətlə,
Ülviyyə Mikayılova,
APPENDIX B

RAZILIQ FORMASI

Müsaibin adı :

Tədqiqat işinin adı : Azərbaycan Respublikasının Ümumi Orta Məktəblərində Şagirdlərin İxtisas Seçiminə Təsir edən Faktorların Araşdırılması

Tədqiqatçıların adları : Nigar Mirzəyeva, Nigar Camalova Qasımovə

Tədqiqatçıların məlumatları əlaqə : nmirzayeva16582@ada.edu.az
njamalova16716@ada.edu.az

Tədqiqat işinin məqsədi:

Bu tədqiqatın məqsədi ikitərəflidir. Birincisi, Azərbaycanda dövlət orta məktəb şagirdlərinin ixtisas seçimlərinə təsir edən müdaxilələri araşdırmaq. İkincisi, şagirdlərin karyera yollarını araşdırmaqda və əsaslandırılmış qərarlar qəbul etməkdə kömək etmək üçün dövlət məktəblərinin istifadə etdiyi metod və yanaşmaları araşdırmaq.

İştirakçı

Mən, aşağıda imzamlı təsdiq edirəm:

1.	<i>Müsaibə məlumat vərəqini oxudum. Bununla bağlı sual vermək imkanım olub və istənilən suala məni qane edən cavablar verilib.</i>	
2.	<i>İştirakımın könüllü olduğunu və müsahibədən 2 həftə sonra iştirakımı geri götürməkdə və ya bəzi ifadələrimi geri götürməkdə sərbəst olduğumu başa düşürəm.</i>	
3.	<i>Tədqiqatla bağlı tezislərdə, hesabatlarda, nəşrlərdə və təqdimatlarda müsahibəmdən anonim sitatların istifadəsinə razıyam.</i>	
4.	<i>Mənə razılıq formasının surəti və müsahibin məlumat vərəqi təqdim olunub.</i>	
5.	<i>Mən başa düşürəm ki, məlumat ADA universitetinin nizamnaməsinə uyğun olaraq təhlükəsiz şəkildə saxlanılacaq.</i>	
6.	<i>Müsaibənin səs yazısı ilə razıyam.</i>	

7.	<i>Mən e-poçt ünvanıma göndərilmək üçün bu tədqiqat hesabatının xülasəsinin surətini almaq istədim: _____</i>	
----	---	--

*İştirakçının adı:**İştirakçının imzası:**Tarix:**Tədqiqatçıların adları:**Tədqiqatçıların imzaları:**Tarix:**Nigar Mirzəyeva**Nigar Camalova Qasımova*

APPENDIX C

Müsahibə Protokolu:**Azərbaycan Respublikasının Ümumi Orta Məktəblərində Şagirdlərin İxtisas Seçiminə****Təsir edən Faktorların Araşdırılması****1. Giriş**

Müsahibəçi bu bölmədə tədqiqatın məqsədini və adını bildirəcək, Azərbaycan Respublikasının ümumi orta məktəblərində təhsil alan şagirdlərin ixtisas seçimlərinə təsir edən faktorların araşdırılmasını vurğulayacaq. Qeyd olunan girişdə istifadə olunan tədqiqat metodunu və tələbələrin karyera qərarlarını verən faktorları anlamağın önəmini vurğulayacaq.

2. Məqsəd

Bu tədqiqatın məqsədi ikitərəflidir. Birincisi, Azərbaycanda dövlət orta məktəb şagirdlərinin ixtisas seçimlərinə təsir edən müdaxilələri araşdırmaq. İkincisi, şagirdlərin karyera yollarını araşdırmaqda və əsaslandırılmış qərarlar qəbul etməkdə kömək etmək üçün dövlət məktəblərinin istifadə etdiyi metod və yanaşmaları araşdırmaq. Bu metod və yanaşmaları

tədqiq etməklə biz Azərbaycan dövlət məktəblərinin təhsil kontekstində tələbələrin karyera axtarışına və qərar qəbul etmə prosesinə dəstək olmaq üçün effektiv strategiyalar haqqında anlayışlar əldə etməyi hədəfləyirik.

3. Razılıq/İcazə Forması

Müsaibədən əvvəl iştirakçılara tədqiqatın məqsədini, iştirakın könüllü xarakterini, məxfilik və anonimlik zəmanətlərini izah edən məlumatlandırılmış icazə sənədləri veriləcəkdir. İştirakçılar iştirak etmək istəyirlərsə, onlardan razılıq sənədlərini imzalamaları tələb olunacaq.

4. Prosedur

Azərbaycanın dövlət orta məktəblərindən iştirakçıları seçmək üçün məqsədli seçmə üsulundan istifadə olunacaq. Valideynlər, inzibati işçilər və yuxarı sinif şagirdləri tədqiqatda iştirak etməyə dəvət olunur. İştirakçılar razılaşdıqca, müsahibələr audio yazıya alınacaq və təhlil üçün mətn formasında yazılacaq.

Şagirdlər üçün tərtib olunmuş müsahibə sualları:

- 1) Zəhmət olmasa, özünüzü təqdim edin.
- 2) Hansı ixtisas sahəsi sizi maraqlandırır və niyə?
- 3) Sizcə, ixtisas seçimi edərkən hansı amilləri nəzərə almaq vacibdir?
- 4) Seçiminizi etməzdən əvvəl istədiyiniz ixtisas və onun yaratdığı imkanlarla bağlı necə araşdırmalar etmisiz və ya edəcəksiniz?
- 5) Ailəniz gələcək ixtisas seçimi ilə bağlı qərarınıza necə təsir edir?
- 6) Dostlarınız gələcək ixtisas seçimi ilə bağlı qərarınıza necə təsir edir?

- 7) İxtisas seçimi ilə bağlı qərarınızın formalaşmasında mühüm rol oynayan hər hansı təcrübə və ya söhbətlərinizi təsvir edə bilərsinizmi?
- 8) Məktəb rəhbərliyi və müəllimləriniz sizin ixtisas seçiminizlə hansı formada maraqlanırlar?
- 9) Məktəbinizdə şagirdlərin ixtisas seçiminə dəstək məqsədilə hansı tədbirlər həyata keçirilir?
- 10) Özünüzün yararlandığınız belə tədbirlərdən birini nümunə göstərə bilərsiniz?
- 11) Sizin təhsil aldığınız dövrdə məktəbinizdə öz sahəsində uğurlu olan hansı şəxslərlə görüşlər təşkil olunub (öz təcrübələrini və məsləhətlərini sizinlə bölüşmək məqsədilə)?
- 12) Belə görüşlərin sizə ixtisas seçimində necə kömək etdiyini/edəcəyini düşünürsünüz?
- 13) Məktəbinizin sizə ixtisas seçimi ilə bağlı hansı formada dəstək göstərməsini istərdiniz?
- 14) İxtisas seçimi prosesi ilə bağlı bizimlə bölüşmək istədiyiniz başqa hansı məqamlar var?

Məktəb rəhbərliyi və müəllimlər üçün tərtib olunmuş müsahibə sualları:

- 1) Zəhmət olmasa, özünüzü təqdim edin.
- 2) Zəhmət olmasa, məktəbinizdə ixtisas seçimi ilə bağlı şagirdlərə dəstək xidmətləri haqqında ümumi məlumat verə bilərsinizmi?
- 3) Şagirdlərə müxtəlif ixtisas seçimləri və təhsil imkanları haqqında məlumat vermək üçün hansı resurslar və proqramlar mövcuddur?
- 4) Məktəb rəhbərliyi bu proqramların həyata keçirilməsini necə dəstəkləyir?
- 5) Şagirdlərə karyera məsləhətləri təklif edərkən hansı konkret amilləri nəzərə alırsınız?
- 6) Valideynlərin övladlarının ixtisas seçimi və onların bu prosesdəki rolu ilə bağlı məlumatlandırılması istiqamətində hansı addımları atırsınız?

- 7) Siz əmək bazarının tələblərini ixtisas seçiminə dəstək proqramlarınıza necə daxil edirsiniz?
- 8) Məktəbinizin şagirdlərə müxtəlif ixtisas seçimləri ilə tanış olmasını təmin etmək üçün hər hansı tərəfdaşlıq və ya əməkdaşlığı təsvir edə bilərsinizmi?
- 9) Müşahidələrinizə əsasən, şagirdlərin ixtisas seçimi ilə bağlı qərarlarına ən çox təsir edən amillər hansılardır?
- 10) Məktəbinizdə ixtisas seçimi ilə bağlı proqramların effektivliyini artırmaq üçün hansı təkmilləşdirmələri və ya əlavə resursları görmək istərdiniz?

Valideynlər üçün tərtib olunmuş müsahibə sualları:

- 1) Zəhmət olmasa, özünüzü təqdim edin.
- 2) Bir valideyn olaraq, övladınızın ixtisas seçimi ilə bağlı qərar qəbul etmə prosesində nə dərəcədə iştirak edirsiniz?
- 3) Övladınız üçün mövcud olan müxtəlif təhsil və ixtisas seçimləri haqqında necə məlumat əldə edirsiniz?
- 4) Övladınızın ixtisas seçimi ilə bağlı maraqlarını necə qiymətləndirirsiniz?
- 5) Övladınızın ixtisas seçimi və ya təhsil sahəsi ilə bağlı qərar qəbul etmə prosesinə öz təsirinizi necə dəyərləndirirsiniz?
- 6) Övladınızın oğlan və ya qız olması onun gələcək ixtisas seçiminə nə dərəcədə təsir göstərir?
- 7) Sizcə, övladınızın həmyaşıdları onun gələcək ixtisas seçiminə necə təsir göstərir?

- 8) Şagirdləri ixtisas seçimində istiqamətləndirməkdə məktəbin rolunu necə qiymətləndirirsiniz?
- 9) Məktəb heyəti və ya müəllimlərlə övladınızın ixtisas seçimi ilə bağlı hər hansı söhbətiniz olubmu? Əgər olubsa, bu, nə dərəcədə effektiv olub?
- 10) Sizcə, övladınızın akademik nailiyyətləri onun ixtisas seçimi ilə bağlı qərarlarına necə təsir edir?
- 11) Sizcə, məktəb şagirdlərə ixtisas seçimləri ilə bağlı qərarlar qəbul etməkdə hansı üsullarla daha yaxşı kömək edə bilər?