

The Parental Influence on Their Children's Career Choices

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Abstract. This study explores the role of parents in shaping their children's career aspirations, with a specific focus on the impact of parental education and urban-rural divides on career guidance involvement. Data were collected from 5,000 parents across 200 schools in 17 regions and 3 cities using convenience sampling methods. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze respondents' demographic and academic backgrounds. The results reveal that parents with secondary education are more actively engaged in guiding their children's career decisions compared to those with higher education. Furthermore, a significant urban-rural divide exists, with rural parents demonstrating lower awareness and involvement in career guidance activities, potentially limiting career aspirations among rural students. Parental involvement peaks during middle school and declines as students approach higher education. These findings highlight the need for targeted career guidance interventions, particularly in rural areas, to ensure equitable support for all students. The study concludes by recommending strategies to increase parental engagement across different educational levels and geographical locations.



Keywords: Parental influence, career aspirations, education levels, urban-rural divide, career guidance.



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Introduction

The intergenerational transmission of professions, where children often follow in the professional footsteps of their parents, has been a pivotal element in preserving socio-cultural stability and family traditions as highlighted by Bamieh and Cintlesi (2021) [1]. Historically, according to the findings of Bryant et al., (2006), Leppel et al., (2001), Endendijk et al., (2024), this phenomenon has been shaped by familial ties, social capital, and economic incentives, leading children to pursue careers similar to those practiced by their parents [2; 3; 4]. This enduring pattern underscores the significant influence that family dynamics

and socio-economic factors exert on career choices.

Theoretical frameworks offer a robust understanding of how family context affects career development. Social cognitive career theory by Lent and Fouad (2011), Vygotsky's sociocultural theory (1978), and Bourdieu's concept of habitus (1993) all emphasize that career choices are deeply intertwined with individual, interpersonal, and cultural contexts, rather than being purely personal decisions [5; 6; 7]. These theories collectively highlight that family influences and socio-cultural factors play a critical role in shaping career aspirations.

Ginzberg's theory of career development (1951) is one of the earliest to address the impact of parental influence on career choices [8]. According to Ginzberg, children's career decisions during early childhood are often impulsive and heavily guided by their parents' professions and advice. This observation points to the crucial role that parents play in shaping initial career interests. Similarly, Gottfredson's theory of circumscription and compromise (1981) suggests that children narrow their career choices based on the professions and experiences of those around them, reflecting a tendency to mirror the social order observed in their family and community [9].

Both Ginzberg (1951) and Gottfredson (1981) identify an early stage of career development characterized by fantasy ideals, where children form career aspirations based on idealized images of the professional activities they observe in their family environment. This stage illustrates the significant impact of parental roles in shaping children's career perceptions and choices.

Supporting these theories, Aina and Nicoletti (2018) conducted a study among Italian university graduates to examine how the professions of parents influence their children's career paths [10]. The study found a strong correlation between parental professions and children's career choices, particularly among children of professionals in high-barrier fields such as medicine and law. This finding aligns with earlier research by Bryant, Zvonkovich, and Reynolds (2006), which demonstrated the substantial impact of parental involvement and professional background on children's career orientations throughout their educational journey.

Further reinforcing these findings, recent empirical research by Hayward et al., (2023) in the Chinese context emphasized the significant role of parental influence in shaping career choices, especially in higher socio-economic status families [11]. Findings have shown that having an entrepreneur as a parent can increase the likelihood of a child pursuing entrepreneurship by 30% to 200%. This indicates a strong correlation between parental profession and children's

career aspirations. However, Hayward et al., (2023) highlights that the influence of parental resources and expectations can be dual-faceted. Wealthier parents, for example, may steer their children toward more secure, traditional careers rather than entrepreneurial ventures. Additionally, the number of siblings can affect this dynamic; children with more siblings may receive less individual attention and resources from their parents, potentially increasing their likelihood of pursuing entrepreneurial careers.

These studies, including those by Chaffee and Plante (2022), Chen et al. (2023), Sheldrake (2020), and Parola and Marcionetti (2022), collectively underscore the lasting impact of parental influence and socio-economic background on career trajectories [12; 13; 14; 15]. They reinforce the crucial role parents play in shaping their children's professional paths, illustrating how family dynamics and resources significantly affect career decisions.

Career Guidance in a Globalized and Localized Contexts

In the context of globalization and the evolving job market, integrating parental influence into career guidance is increasingly relevant as highlighted by Gahramanov et al., (2020) [16]. Career guidance programs must address both global trends and the specific role of parents in shaping career aspirations.

For Kazakhstan, this alignment is crucial to meet both international and national priorities. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), developed by the United Nations in 2015, aim to tackle global challenges such as unemployment, poverty, inequality, and economic development [17]. To meet these goals Kazakhstan has introduced early career guidance in schools, specifically over 4,000 career counselors now help students to identify career paths aligned with the country's economic needs and future job market demands [18]. In support of this, new guidelines for career counselors have been developed by the

Center of Human Capital Development and Career Guidance at the Altynsarin National Academy of Education, ensuring continuous support for career counselors, parent, and schoolchildren. For example, the 2024 guide offers recommendations for working with the schoolchildren and their parents, by informing them about regional labor market needs and offering guidance on career opportunities [19]. By aligning with labor market needs, this system helps reduce unemployment and addresses inequality by providing targeted career guidance early on.

Effective career guidance in Kazakhstan should thus incorporate strategies that acknowledge the significant role of parental influence while aligning with both global and national development goals as emphasized by OECD (2024) [20]. This involves designing programs that help students navigate modern career pathways and adapt to the rapidly changing job market, while considering the foundational impact of family dynamics.

Current research highlights gaps in understanding the specific effects of parental factors on children's career choices in Kazakhstan. Studies like those by Kalyuzhnova and Kambhampati (2007) show that educated parents are more likely to support their children's academic pursuits, compensating for financial constraints through increased time investment in education [21]. Additionally, research by Balta et al., (2023) on STEM careers indicates that parental support and role modeling significantly influence students' interest in these fields [22].

Despite these insights, there remains a need for further exploration into how specific parental factors—such as parental education, place of residence, languages spoken—affect children's career aspirations and choices. Additionally, the impact of parental recommendations on students' educational and career decisions remains under-explored.

The purpose of this empirical study is to investigate how parental demographic factors, affect children's career trajectories

and to examine how career guidance programs can be tailored to incorporate these insights. By focusing on the role of parental influence, this research seeks to enhance the effectiveness of career guidance programs, ensuring they address both global development goals and the specific needs of local contexts, such as those in Kazakhstan.

To achieve the study's purpose, the following overarching research question and its associated sub-questions were formulated:

1. How do parents influence their children's career aspirations?
 - How does parental education impact children's career choices?
 - How does place of residence (urban vs. rural) affect the level of parental involvement in their children's career counselling activities?
 - To what extent do students receive career recommendations from their parents?

Materials and methods

Instrument

The technological card served as a key instrument for collecting qualitative data on parental involvement in their children's career choices and career guidance activities in educational institutions. This tool was specifically designed for parents or official representatives of students in grades 4, 7, 9, and 11. The requirement of at least 60% participation from parents in a given class ensured a robust representation of opinions.

The technological map included a range of questions aimed at gauging parental awareness of school career guidance events and the professional preferences of their children. The inclusion of open-ended questions allowed for the collection of nuanced feedback that can inform future school career counselling services. Through this systematic approach, the technological card not only gathers essential data but also fosters a collaborative dialogue between parents and educational institutions

regarding career development initiatives.

Participants and Data Collection

For this study, convenience sampling techniques were utilized to recruit participants. Convenience sampling as highlighted by Etikan, Musa, and Alkassim (2016) is a non-probability sampling method where participants are selected based on their easy accessibility and proximity to the researcher [23].

In this study, convenience sampling involved reaching out to parents through the technological card, as the researchers

were actively engaged in career counseling monitoring across the republic. The specific method of the technological card administration was sending an initial link to participants. The link was distributed over a period of one month, with follow-up reminders sent at two-week intervals to ensure adequate response rates.

Data was collected from a total of 5,000 parents across 200 schools located in 17 regions and 3 cities of regional importance. The survey prompted respondents to provide demographic and academic background information, which is summarized in Table 1 and Table 2.

Table 1. Demographic Information About Respondents

Demographic Information	Category	Number of Respondents
Place of Living	Urban	3,218
	Rural	1,782
Languages	Kazakh	1,871
	Russian	3,129

Table 2. Academic Information About Respondents

Academic Information	Category	Number of Respondents
Education	Secondary Education	2,550
	Secondary Specialized Education	563
	Higher education	1,504
	Postgraduate Education	58
	No Response	325

Data Analysis

Data analysis focused on examining the demographic and academic background information provided by respondents. Descriptive statistics were utilized to summarize the data and to interpret the findings, enabling insights into the educational and linguistic characteristics of the sample. Descriptive statistics as emphasized by Field (2013) are essential for presenting the basic features of the data

and providing a straightforward summary of respondent characteristics [24].

These analytical methods contributed to a comprehensive understanding of the respondents' educational and linguistic backgrounds, shedding light on career counseling needs and preferences. The insights derived from these analyses are crucial for tailoring effective career counseling strategies.

Results

Our overarching research question was about the parents' influence on their children's career aspirations. Findings for sub-question one related to the parental

education impact on children's career choices presented in Figure 1 show that there is a significant relationship between parental education levels and their involvement in their children's career choices.

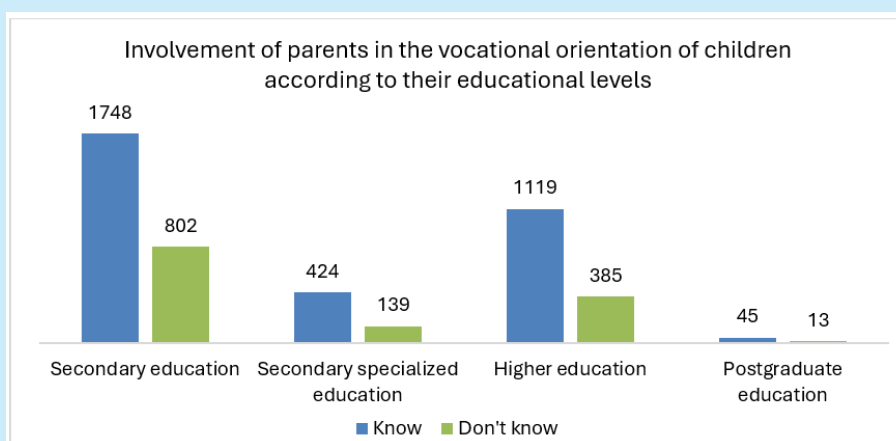


Figure 1 - Parental Involvement in Children's Vocational Orientation Based on Educational Levels

Parents with secondary education (N=1,748) were most involved, with a notable percentage aware of the career orientation of their children. In contrast, parents with postgraduate education showed the least involvement (N=45). The trend suggests that as parents' education levels increase, their awareness of and involvement in career guidance decreases, highlighting the

potential influence of parental education on their children's career orientation.

The analysis of the findings for sub-question two showed that there are clear differences in the awareness of parents in urban and rural areas regarding professional activities in their children's education (see Figure 2).

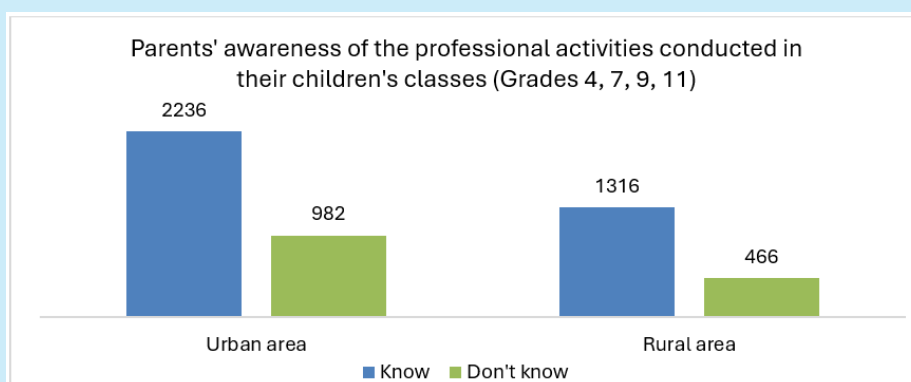


Figure 2 - Parents' Awareness of Professional Activities Conducted in Their Children's Classes by Area (Urban vs. Rural)

In urban areas, 2,236 parents were aware of their children's school career counselling activities compared to 1,316 in rural areas. Consequently, a larger proportion of rural parents (466) expressed that they were unaware of these activities compared to 982 urban parents. These findings indicate that respondents' place of living, particularly in rural regions, negatively impacts parents' involvement in their children's career

guidance, potentially limiting career aspirations in these areas.

The findings for sub-question three, as seen in Figure 3, show that the number of students learning about different occupations from their parents increases significantly in Grade 9 (N=1,527), followed by a decline in Grade 11 (N=808).

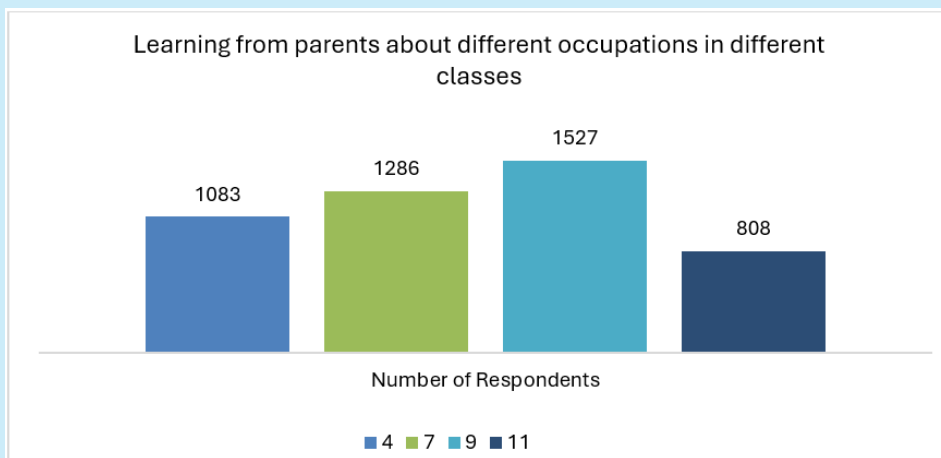


Figure 3 - Number of Students Learning from Parents About Different Occupations by Grade Level

This trend implies that parental involvement in career recommendations peaks during middle school and gradually decreases as students approach higher education or employment decisions. The fluctuations in parental guidance could reflect changes in students' autonomy or confidence in seeking advice from other sources.

Discussion

The data from this empirical study highlights the critical role that parents play in shaping their children's career aspirations, confirming the findings of previous research such as Balta et al., (2023); Bamieh and Cintlesi (2021), Bryant et al., (2006), Kalyuzhnova and Kambhampati (2007), Leppel et al., (2001), Endendijk et al., (2024).

Parents with secondary education demonstrated higher involvement in career guidance, aligning with the work of Mbagwu

and Ajaegbu (2016), who suggest that less-educated parents might overcompensate by closely engaging in their children's career decision-making processes [25]. Conversely, higher-educated parents may assume their children possess sufficient independence, reducing their direct involvement, as seen in studies by Viola & Daniel (2019) [26].

Differences between rural and urban areas also play a substantial role in influencing career aspirations. The results support the arguments of Prater et al., (1997), Guo (2024) and Han et al., (2023), who found that rural parents often lack access to career-related resources, thereby limiting their ability to guide their children [27; 28; 29]. The greater awareness of urban parents (Figure 2) corroborates findings from Farrugia (2014), emphasizing how urbanization and access to educational institutions provide students with better career guidance opportunities [30].

Lastly, the results on students receiving career recommendations from their parents show a peak in parental involvement during Grade 9 (Figure 3). This aligns with Ginzberg's (1951) and Gottfredson's (1981) developmental psychology theories suggesting that adolescence is a critical period when students rely on parental input for career-related decisions. The decline in parental guidance in later grades may be attributed to increased student autonomy and the availability of alternative sources of information, including school-based career services or peer influence such as Paul et al., (2021) and Wang'ombe (2020) [31; 32].

The study demonstrates that parents significantly impact their children's career aspirations, particularly through the lenses of education and place of residence. Policymakers and educators should focus on enhancing career guidance resources, especially for rural and less-educated parents, to bridge the gap and ensure all students have access to informed career advice.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study examined the role of parents in shaping their children's career aspirations, with a specific focus on how parental education and urban-rural divides impact career guidance. The findings demonstrate that parents play a significant role in providing career recommendations, though their involvement varies according to educational background and geographical location.

Parents with secondary education were more actively involved in their children's career guidance, suggesting that they may feel a greater responsibility to guide their children's career choices compared to more highly educated parents. This highlights the need for increased engagement from parents with higher educational levels, who may assume that their children can navigate career decisions independently. Interventions aimed at promoting consistent involvement across all education levels could provide more balanced career

guidance for students.

The divide between urban and rural areas also plays a crucial role, with rural parents showing lower awareness and involvement in career guidance activities. This disparity suggests that students in rural areas may have limited access to career-related information and opportunities, potentially restricting their career aspirations. Policymakers should prioritize the development of targeted career guidance programs for rural communities, ensuring equitable access to career resources.

Finally, the varying levels of parental influence across different stages of education indicate that parental involvement peaks in middle school but declines as students approach higher education. This points to the importance of reinforcing career guidance not only in schools but also within families, particularly as students transition to critical career decision-making phases in later grades.

In conclusion, enhancing parents' involvement in career guidance, especially in rural areas and across all educational levels, is essential for supporting students' career aspirations. Future initiatives should focus on bridging these gaps to ensure that all students, regardless of socio-economic background or parental education, receive the necessary support to make informed career decisions.

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Ата-аналардың балаларының мамандық таңдауына әсері

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Ы. Алтынсарин атындағы Ұлттық білім академиясы
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Аңдатпа. Бұл зерттеу ата-аналардың балаларының мансаптық ұмтылыстарын қалыптастырудағы рөлін зерттейді, ата-аналардың білім деңгейі мен тұрғылықты жерінің (қала-ауыл) кәсіби бағдарға қатысуына әсері ерекше назарға алынған. Деректер еліміздің 17 өңірі мен республикалық маңызы бар 3 қаласындағы 200 мектептен 5000 ата-анадан қолайлы іріктеу әдістері арқылы жиналды. Респонденттердің демографиялық және академиялық шығу тегі сипаттамалық статистика арқылы талданды. Нәтижелер орта білім алған ата-аналардың кәсіби бағдар жұмыстарына жоғары білімді ата-аналарға қарағанда белсендірек қатысатынын көрсетеді. Сонымен қатар, қала мен ауыл арасындағы елеулі алшақтық анықталды, ауылдық жерлердегі ата-аналар кәсіби бағдар қызметіне хабарлығы төмендеу және аз қатысқандығын көрсетеді, бұл ауылдық аймақтардағы оқушылардың мансаптық ұмтылыстарын шектеуі мүмкін. Ата-аналардың қатысуы орта мектепте ең жоғары деңгейге жетіп, оқушылар жоғары білімге жақындаған сайын азаяды. Бұл тұжырымдар барлық оқушыларға қолдау көрсету үшін кәсіби бағдарлауға бағытталған шаралардың қажеттілігін, әсіресе ауылдық аймақтарда ерекше назар аударуды талап етеді. Зерттеу нәтижелері түрлі білім деңгейлері мен географиялық аймақтарда ата-аналардың қатысуын арттыру бойынша стратегияларды ұсынады.



Түйінді сөздер: ата-аналардың ықпалы, мансаптық ұмтылыстар, білім деңгейі, қала мен ауыл арасындағы алшақтық, кәсіби бағдарлау.

Влияние родителей на выбор карьеры их детей

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Аннотация. Исследование посвящено роли родителей в формировании карьерных устремлений их детей, с особым акцентом на влияние родительского образования и места проживания (город-село) на участие в профессиональной ориентации. Данные были собраны у 5000 родителей из 200 школ в 17 регионах и 3 городах республиканского значения с использованием методов выборки по

принципу удобства. Для анализа демографического и академического происхождения респондентов использовалась описательная статистика. Результаты показывают, что родители со средним образованием более активно вовлечены в профориентацию их детей по сравнению с родителями, имеющими высшее образование. Кроме того, существует значительный разрыв между городскими и сельскими районами, при этом родители сельских районов демонстрируют низкую осведомленность и участие в деятельности по профессиональной ориентации, что потенциально ограничивает карьерные устремления среди обучающихся из сельских районов. Вовлечение родителей достигает пика в средней школе и уменьшается по мере приближения обучающихся к высшему образованию. Эти выводы подчеркивают необходимость адресных мероприятий по профессиональной ориентации, особенно в сельских районах, для обеспечения справедливой поддержки всех студентов. Исследование завершается рекомендацией стратегий повышения вовлеченности родителей в профориентационную работу независимо от уровня образования и места проживания.



Ключевые слова: влияние родителей, карьерные устремления, уровень образования, разрыв между городом и деревней, профессиональная ориентация.

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