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Educational and Vocational Guidance and the Context of the Personal Project of High School Students

Najia Amini¹, Youssef Sefri², Abdelhak Chakli², Mohamed Radid²

¹Laboratory of Physical Chemistry of Materials, Faculty of Sciences Ben M'sik, Hassan II University, Casablanca, Morocco

²Laboratory of Information and Education Sciences and Technologies, Faculty of Sciences Ben M'sik, Hassan II University, Casablanca, Morocco

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Abstract: Building a mature professional project in a world where change is a lived reality presents a significant challenge. Faced with the constant updating of education programs to align with the fast-paced and unpredictable job market, a high school student reveals a genuine need for assistance in developing a suitable career choice. Given the necessity for efficient guidance, multiple stakeholders come into play: families and close persons, peers, educational institutions, and career advisors. This study aims to develop career guidance for learners to empower them to interpret their environment and discover and control their resources. We conducted a survey involving seventy-five high school students to investigate the development of students' projects as they engage with two crucial institutions in their lives: the family and the school, in addition to various information sources provided by the students. Our subsequent focus is on how these elements intersect with individual characteristics. Employing a quantitative approach, we conducted structured interviews to understand the influence of various stakeholders on the students' project development. The analysis and interpretation of the obtained results underscore the paramount role of families in shaping the projects of two-thirds of the students in our sample while assigning limited influence on the educational institution and the school career guidance system. This study enabled us to uncover students' professional preferences and identify the various sources of information deemed reliable when making career choices.

Keywords: context, high school student, career guidance, personal project, sources of information.

教育和職業指導以及高中生個人專案的背景

摘要：在一個變化已成為現實的世界中建立一個成熟的專業專案是一項重大挑戰。面對不斷更新的教育計劃，以適應快節奏和不可預測的就業市場，一名高中生表示真正需要幫助來製定合適的職業選擇。鑑於有效指導的必要性，多個利害關係人開始發揮作用：家庭和親密的人、同儕、教育機構和職業顧問。本研究旨在為學習者提供職業指導，使他們能夠解釋自己的環境並發現和控制自己的資源。我們對 75 名高中生進行了一項調查，除了學生提供的各種資訊來源外，還調查了學生在與生活中兩個重要機構（家庭和學校）打交道時的計畫發展。我們接下來的重點是這些元素如何與個人特徵交叉。我們採用量化方法進行結構化訪談，以了解各個利害關係人對學生專案開發的影響。對所獲得結果的分析和解釋強調了家庭在製

定樣本中三分之二的學生的項目方面發揮著至關重要的作用，同時對教育機構和學校職業指導系統的影響有限。這項研究使我們能夠發現學生的職業偏好，並確定在做出職業選擇時被認為可靠的各種資訊來源。

关键词：背景、高中生、職業指導、個人專案、資訊來源。

1. Introduction

Despite the efforts to ensure quality education and equal opportunities [1], career guidance in Morocco is increasingly striving to meet students' needs. The mass character of educational cycles coupled with the limited number of career advisors makes it complicated to provide adequate support and assistance to students [2].

Hence, considering its influence on an individual's future, career guidance remains a fundamental concern and a substantial responsibility shared by the student and their environment. During their secondary education, students face crucial decision-making situations on the one hand and a lack of information on the other. Consequently, they encounter difficulties in formulating an appropriate career choice that aligns with their abilities, capacities, and the job market's offerings.

This gap in the guidance system intensifies the influence of contextual factors because it prevents an effective guidance system from providing adapted assistance and advice. Therefore, their environment influences students' projects and choices, and their actions to realize their goals are motivated by their families and school, and it would seem appropriate to investigate their background and informational sources.

In this context, several questions arise:

- How do the family and its close environment shape the student's project?
- How much value is placed on the school institution in students' projects?
- What sources do secondary school students consider reliable when making career choices?
- Do students in urban and rural settings seek information about their personal and professional projects similarly?

To comprehend the context of personal project development, a survey was conducted in two colleges and three high schools in rural and urban areas within the Mohammedia province. Eighty students were involved, yielding seventy-five responses.

2. Literature Review

2.1. The Project in Career Guidance Practices

Career guidance is a lifelong process that involves students, their families, and numerous adults seeking to

transition their professional lives. Career guidance must be at the forefront of education and employment policies to bridge the gap between the qualifications offered by education and those demanded by the job market, which ensures that schools can supply qualified personnel according to the demands of the job market.

According to [3], orientation is enabling individuals to become aware of their characteristics and develop them to make educational and career choices throughout their lives, done with the dual aim of contributing to societal development and personal fulfillment.

[4] defines school career guidance as the range of social, psychosocial, and psychological processes directed toward students' specific educational paths. These processes become distinct career guidance when specialized paths predominantly prepare students for certain professions over others.

Changes in the working world and social variations, particularly, due to individualizing lifestyles, influence career guidance practices. This shift is evident from a counseling-based approach, a face-to-face psychological practice aimed at helping students find optimal educational and career solutions, to an educational orientation. This pedagogical practice equips all students with the skills needed to independently make choices and navigate throughout their lives [5]. The goal of career guidance is not just to guide learners toward a situation seen as an end but to empower them to interpret their environment and discover and control their resources.

Effective school and career guidance is the key to a successful and fulfilling professional life. A higher education degree, even with excellent grades, does not guarantee a smooth transition from the familiar world of education to the unfamiliar and complex realm of the job market. Successful entry into the workforce requires more than school-acquired skills; it demands flexibility, mobility, autonomy, and lifelong orientation abilities.

The project concept is a suitable way to make students active participants in their futures and responsible for their actions. A project is an effective tool for reducing the risk of failure and enhancing the quality of integration. Forming and realizing a project provides a sense of purpose to students' lives, allowing them to bridge the gap between their studies and their

future, connecting their present to what lies ahead.

It was not until the 1940s that the term "project" gained an "action" dimension. According to Sartre, all our projects revolve around a fundamental project: the way we choose to exist in the world. [6] defines a project as "a remedy to surpass a current state characterized by shortcomings: unemployment rates, lack of competitiveness, academic failure, anxiety about the future."

However, projecting into the future requires a strategy. As a project is an action, students might encounter resistance during its execution. [7] assumed that a project cannot be reduced to an objective and the means to achieve it. While the objective stimulates and guides students' activities, once implemented, the intended project can take different turns from its original plan.

Integrating the project approach into the educational system ensures the active engagement of students in a process that encourages them to mobilize their motivational energy to take ownership of their academic situation.

3. Method

3.1. Sampling and the Procedure

Our research unfolded in two stages using a quantitative approach based on structured interviews:

- A preliminary survey involved six career counselors aimed at gaining insights into the professional experiences of the personnel responsible for guidance within the Moroccan educational system to develop an investigative plan;

- Structured interviews were conducted to gain insight into the world of high school students and to address the questions posed by our research problem, organized around specific themes. Table 1 illustrates the distribution of participants according to gender, place of residence, and level of study.

Table 1 The participant characteristics

Levels of study	Urban		Rural	
	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
	1 AC	4	4	4
3 AC	5	4	5	5
1ys	4	5	4	4
Terminal	5	5	4	5
Total	18	20	18	19

3.2. Data Analysis

Descriptive and inferential analyses of the data collected used SPSS 26.

4. Results

45% of the students in our sample developed their professional project based on a model existing within their close circle (neighbors, peers, cousins, and others), compared to 31.67% who did not recognize

any influence from a family member or close acquaintance. Meanwhile, we identified a rate of 23.33% of students influenced by their family (parents or siblings).

Table 2 Influence of family and close circle

	Effective	Percentage	Valid %
No recognized influence	24	31.67%	31.67%
Recognized family influence	18	23.3%	23.3%
Influence of the close circle	33	45%	45%
Total	75	100%	100%

According to the survey results, we observed that the proportion of students influenced by their educational institution is limited: 81.67% of the students in our sample reported that there is no influence from the educational establishment on their choice of education and decision-making, whereas 18.33% of students confirmed the influence of the educational institute, specifically the effect of their teachers.

Table 3 Influence of the educational institution

	Effective	Percentage	Valid %
No recognized influence	62	81.7%	81.7%
Recognized family influence	13	18.3%	18.3%
Total	75	100%	100%

Table 4 shows the variable "Influence of the educational institution" and gender cross-tabulating. The distribution of 18.33% of students influenced by their school between boys and girls is 11.67% for girls and 6.66% for boys.

Table 4 Crossing of the "influence of the educational institution" variable and gender

Levels of study	Gender		Total
	Girls	Boys	
No recognized influence	35	26	61
Recognized family influence	5	9	14
Total	40	35	75

Students attending middle school or high school require information regarding their educational orientation or career path in the following manner:

- 53.33% through their family and close circle;
- 20% from their educational institution;
- 16.67% believe they have no source of information;
- 6.67% gather information from media (Internet, TV, etc.);
- 3.33% minority seeks information from professionals in the desired field.

Table 5 Sources of information used by the students

	Effective	Percentage	Valid %
Family, close circle, and relatives	40	53.3%	53.3%
Institution	15	20%	20%
Media (Internet, TV, etc.)	5	6.7%	6.7%
Desired career field professionals	3	3.3%	3.3%
No response	12	16.7%	16.7%
Total	75	100%	100%

In the urban setting, 63.33% of students consider family the primary source of information, compared with 43.33% in the rural one. Meanwhile, 10% of students seek information from educational institutions in the urban context, whereas this rate rises to 30% in the rural context.

Table 6 Variables of residence and source of information crossing

	Urban	Rural	Total
Family, close circle, and relatives	12	7	19
Institution	2	7	9
Media (Internet, TV, etc.)	0	3	3
Desired career professionals	1	0	1
No response	2	1	3
Total	17	18	35

5. Discussion

5.1. Interpretation of the "Influence of Family and Close Circle" Variable

Regarding the impact of close family and immediate circle on career orientation, we recorded a rate of 45% for the influence exerted by the close circle and 23.33% for the family influence. Adding these two rates together, we obtain a cumulative rate of 68.33% for the effect of the family and immediate circle. This proportion of 68.33% aligns closely with previous findings, which reported a percentage of 63% [8]. Family and close circle remain a determining factor in students' career aspirations.

5.2. Interpretation of the "Influence of the Educational Institution" Variable

Regarding the influence of the educational institution on students, we observe that most respondents (81.67%) from our sample do not acknowledge any impact from their educational establishment. 18.33% of students state that their educational institution played a significant role in their decision-making process for career orientation and choice. This rate of 18.33% appears rather low, reflecting that the educational institution has minimal influence on our students' career decisions. Previous studies on the role of teachers [8] explain this influence.

Among the reasons that can explain the low influence of the school is that teachers consider themselves unqualified to guide students; their roles are primarily limited to teaching, followed by education.

Career guidance is a challenging task and a weighty responsibility. Additionally, the difficulty in interpreting the uncertainties of the job market adds complexity.

The cross-tabulation of the variable "Influence of the educational institution" and gender reveals that the proportion of girls influenced by their school is higher than that of boys.

5.3. Analysis of the "Source of Information" Variable

In our pursuit to gauge the impact of the environment on information-seeking, we conducted a comparative analysis of the "Source of Information" and "Environment" variables, yielding insightful findings:

In urban contexts, there is a heightened reliance on family and close circle to acquire information as opposed to rural environments. This discrepancy can refer to the elevated educational attainment of parents in urban areas vis-à-vis those in rural locales.

Concerning educational institutions, students in rural regions turn to their teachers for information, compensating for the dearth of available guidance within their familial spheres.

Across both urban and rural demographics, the family remains the primary source of information for our surveyed students, accounting for 53.33%. Educational institutions follow at 20%. This trend echoes a comparable study [8] that emphasized that "students predominantly depend on immediate family for information, supplementing their understanding with diverse sources for comprehensive insights. Schools, however, rank fourth in this hierarchy."

Media claims the fourth spot, constituting 10% of rural areas and 3% of urban localities, which culminates in an overall usage rate of 6.67%, where students resort to the media (TV, Internet, and others) to source information. Despite the ubiquitous use of social media by students, this figure might seem modest. Using media for career guidance remains limited (6.67% in 2018, contrasting with 3% in 2006) despite rapid shifts in the professional landscape and the paucity of information concerning various vocations.

Considering the swift transformations within the professional landscape and the paucity of career-related information, slightly over 6% of students have sought firsthand exposure by visiting workplaces aligned with their desired professions to garner insights.

A notable 16.67% of students, irrespective of their urban or rural context, underscored the importance of a reliable information source during their decision-making process for career orientation.

However, despite this evident information shortfall, none of the surveyed students had previously availed themselves of the services offered by provincial

information and guidance centers for career advice.

6. Conclusion

In summary, we can assert with confidence that family and close relationships have a direct impact on the personal projects of approximately two-thirds of the individuals in our sample. Therefore, family and close social networks play a pivotal role in shaping Moroccan students' decision-making processes regarding their field of study.

Turning our attention to the influence of the educational system, we noticed that, despite students investing a substantial amount of their time in school, the impact of teachers on the participants was relatively limited. An intriguing observation was that this influence was more notable among girls than boys. According to the students, the primary function of the school is to deliver high-quality education. Gender appears to play a role in shaping career choices.

Although students access various information sources, their primary sources are family and close acquaintances, followed by the educational institution. This pattern holds in both rural and urban settings. However, students in rural areas exhibit a higher inclination to seek information about academic choices and career paths within the school environment, which differs from their urban counterparts.

The limited and not representative number of participants does not make it possible to generalize the study results. The survey can only confirm the significant influence of the family on students' projects and the limited role of the school.

As recommendations, we propose enhancing the school curriculum with activities that enable students to explore self-awareness and be open to the professional world (such as workplace visits, internships, documentary screenings, organizing video conferences with industry professionals, etc.). Simultaneously, it is essential to equip students with the skills to navigate self-directed career exploration and information acquisition. All these efforts emancipate students from the sway of their immediate environment and enhance their opportunities to develop appropriate career aspirations.

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