

## **INTEREST TEST AS AN INSTRUMENT IN THE PROCESS OF PROFESSIONAL ORIENTATION**

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### **Abstract**

The present situation in Georgia brings new challenges and priorities all concerning all areas of life in society. The challenges and priorities pointed out many problems. They are particularly new forms of structure of education and labour mobility, economy, employability, new occupations and qualifications, increased unemployment especially among young people, impact of demographic trends on labour supply, economic and migration policy, multicultural environment. Their solution also means to put greater emphasis on quality of education and vocational training. Equally significant is the improvement of educational opportunities at all levels adaptation of skilled labour, information on trend at labour market.

Nowadays, vocational training still remains to be an unattractive and undesirable field in Georgia as in a post-Soviet Country. According to EUVEGE, the proportion of 20-24-year-old people representing the majority of students enrolling in vocational training organizations is only 1.19%. (EU Technical Assistance to VET and Employment Reforms in Georgia, 2016). Despite the high rate of unemployment in Georgia, companies have difficulty in filling job openings, as skills of unemployed young people do not meet the requirements of labour market. Growing demands for skilled workers cannot be met by vocational education. Most young people are either university graduates with different professional skills, or untrained workers. And the percentage of those between these two areas is very low.

In order to ensure harmonization of requirements of the labour market in Georgia and the interests of unemployed young people and private sector, a paradigm shift is needed in various aspects, which is directly related to both vocational orientation and vocational training. For this, however, one should promote a transition between the general schools and the economy. Such transition may be provided by professional advice.

**Keywords:** Professional orientation, interest test, professions, students

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Nowadays, vocational training still remains to be an unattractive and undesirable field in Georgia as in a post-Soviet country. According to EUVEGE, the share of 20-24-year-old people, who represent the majority of students enrolling in vocational training centres, is only 1.19% (EU Technical Assistance to VET and Employment Reforms in Georgia, 2016). Despite the high rate of unemployment in Georgia, companies have difficulty in filling job openings, as skills of unemployed young people do not meet the requirements of labour

market. Growing demands for skilled workers cannot be met by existing vocational education. Most young people are either university graduates with different professional skills, or untrained workers. And the percentage of those between these two areas is very low.

In order to ensure the harmonization of requirements of Georgian labour market, the interests of unemployed young people and private sector, a paradigm shift is needed in various aspects, which has a direct relationship with both vocational orientation and vocational training. For this, however, a transition between a transition between secondary schools and economy should be promoted, and such transition may be achieved with the help of career planning and career guidance specialists.

One of the important tools of reducing unemployment especially among young people, is efficient counseling service and the training of career counsellors for new specific performance challenges.

The main aims of the research are:

Improvement of counselling in the process of choosing an education, a field of study and career choice with a special view to help the young people in the integration of labour Market.

The target group is:

Young people 14-18 years, who need help in finding out their strengths and weaknesses, interests and inclinations.

## **2. MAIN TEXT**

Everyone - and especially students know that profession is important in everyone's life. Professional orientation and decision-making process in this respect may take a long time. Each person has his or her talents and inclinations, so they are good at particular professions. These special skills and inclinations can be brought to light or better perceived by means of consultants or test procedures.

Helping students define and realize their spheres of interests is one of the significant components of career guidance. Defining spheres of interests and realizing strengths and weaknesses still remains to be a challenge for Georgian students due to the lack of career guidance, no inclusion of students in relevant activities, no support and development of career guidance.

Nowadays there is only one interest test in Georgia, so-called Holland test. It was developed in 1977 by American psychologist John Holland. It represents a self-assessment career guidance tool based on John Holland's theory of vocational personalities and work environments. However, the test is quite long and time-consuming and young people run out of patience before finishing it. Therefore, there is a need to introduce a self-assessment test tailored to young people's needs and inclinations, which will help students to define their interests and make realized career choices.

Under the auspices of "School as a place of learning a profession" implemented within the frames of the German government funded project "Vocational Training and Partnership in the South Caucasus", so called interest test was translated from German and it adapted into Georgian. It includes questions from eight different fields: data and things, dealing with people, literature and arts, science and research, organizing and management, creative and social activities. The test was piloted and administered to secondary-level students of private schools of Georgia in March, 2017. In total, 100 students participated in the survey. These private schools were: "AC School", "St. Georg School", "Georgian - American School" and "Tamarioni".

With this interest test an attempt is made to assist the students in planning and selecting their future professions. On the basis of nearly 90 self-assessment questions, an individual interest profile will be drawn up for the pupils, adapted to Georgian environment. Based on the interest test, the students will discuss their weaknesses and strengths. Pupils receive their personal interest profile and an overview of all related professions.

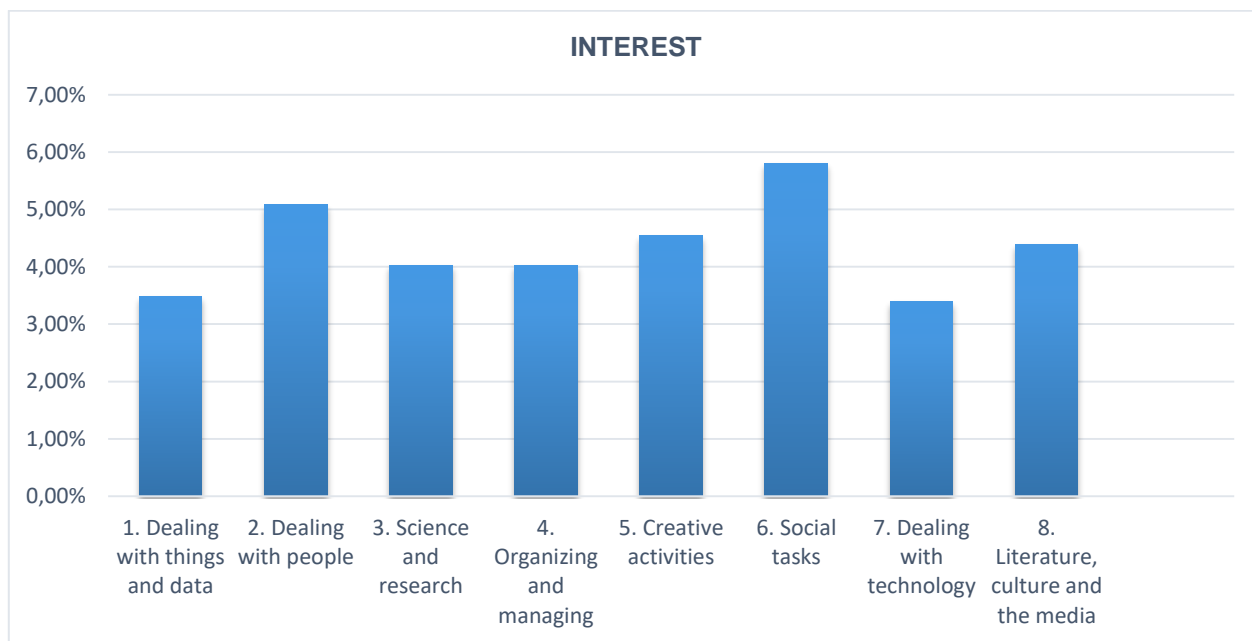
The students were asked to choose interests most appropriate for them. Through the summing up of chosen options we can define professions in which students can succeed (according to different spheres). The main objective of the interests test is to allow students analyse their interests, strengths and weaknesses, inclinations and skills themselves. As a result students define relevant and fitting professions which they may have thought about before. However, test results may show the professions to them, they have never paid attention to before.

The whole procedure of testing and summing up of results takes 15-20 minutes. The procedure is not exhausting and students participated with readiness and enthusiasm. They were especially interested in the

process of finding out professions most fitting them. Some were happy to find desirable professions in the list of suggested professions. Others got the professions they had never thought about before, but had to think about them as a result of the interest test.

Let us see how the interests of the pupils are distributed:

Diagram 1.



As the diagram shows, the highest interest was revealed in social career including the following activities:

1. Identifying peoples problems and assisting them;
2. Giving advice to people in need, providing counseling services;
3. Teaching children with disabilities and mental health problems;
4. Helping socially vulnerable children in solving school problems;
5. Teaching and tutoring children and adults;
6. Helping people in critical situations, raise awareness of human rights.

The lowest interest was shown in technical careers. As the survey shows students are not interested in activities like:

1. Studying construction drawings;
2. Drawing electromechanical schemes;
3. Understanding/designing technical support of musical center;
4. Developing laboratory equipment;
5. Monitoring energy supply system;
6. Understanding the structure of a computer resource center.

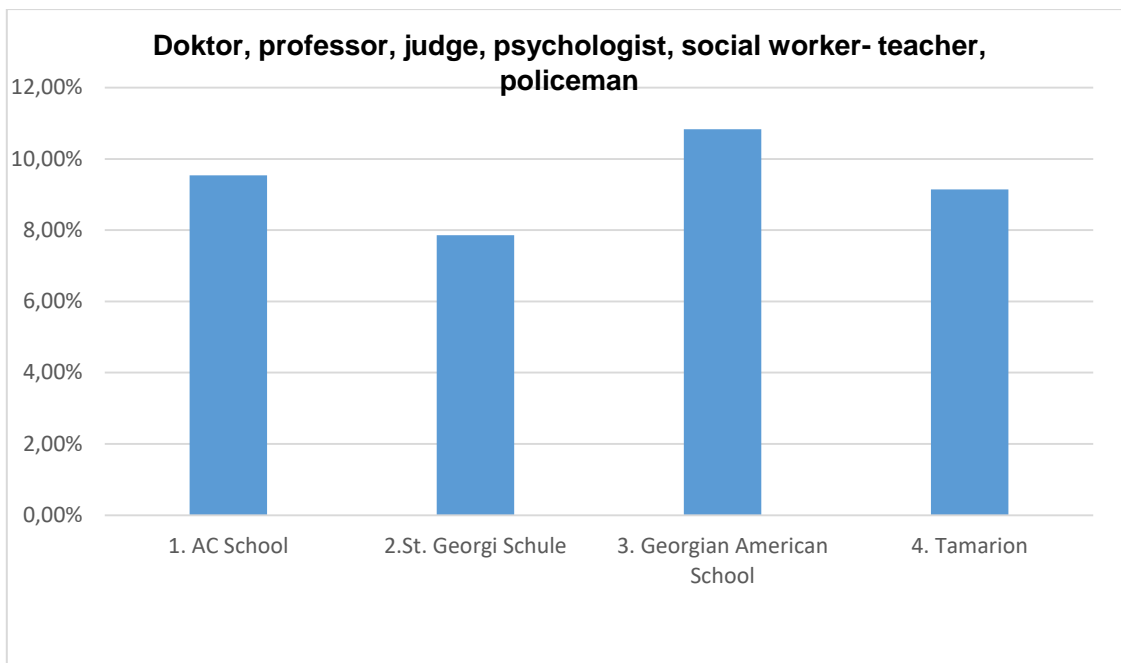
Interest test results showed the following most desirable professions:

1. Doctor
2. Social worker- teacher
3. Professor
4. Psychologist
5. Judge

- 6. Policeman
- 7. Career consultant

For the most desirable professions see diagram 2.

Diagram 2.

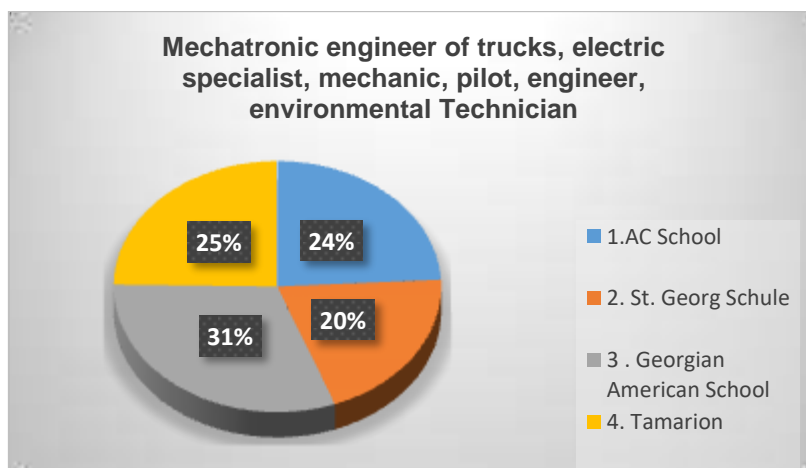


The least desirable professions fell into the following directions:

- 1. Mechatronic engineer of trucks
- 2. Electric specialist
- 3. Mechanic
- 4. Pilot
- 5. Engineer
- 6. Environmental Technician
- 7. IT specialist

The least desirable professions see Diagram 3.

Diagram 3.



To sum up the results of self-assessment interest test, we can say that academic education remains to be a main focus of Georgian school-children. However, it is noteworthy that projects supported by the German government have significantly increased students' motivation and interest in professional education. We hope that the project "school as a place of learning a profession" implemented within the framework of the project "Vocational Training and Partnership in the South Caucasus" financed by the German government will help Georgian adults to better understand their interests, raise their self-awareness and make realized decision.

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