



## STUDENTS' OPINIONS ON VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE: A CASE STUDY

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### Abstract:

The problem of employment is always a crucial problem and is the concern of most parents and school students. The survey on the perception of 40 students about vocational guidance was carried out in Nguyen Viet Dung High School in Can Tho City, Vietnam. Results show that students are very concerned about their future career; students have a proper perception of vocational guidance and recognize well factors which affect their career choice.

**Keywords:** career guidance, career orientation, vocational guidance, perception of a student, vocational education in secondary schools

### 1. Introduction

Nguyen Thi Nhung (2009), Bui Viet Phu (2009), Pham Kim Qui (2007), Pham Ngoc Linh (2013) proposed measures and how to organize vocational guidance activities for students, Le Thi Thu Tra (2006) proposed measures to manage vocational guidance activities in high schools; Truong Thi Hoa (2014) proposes a career consultation process for high school students.

Through the above documents, we see that vocational guidance is crucial for high school students; in Vietnam, the educational experts (2006) fully realized its role and

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importance, put a program on vocational guidance into in high schools. This program has been implemented in schools for many years ago; it included vocational guidance activities compulsory in schools with the following objectives:

After participating in vocational guidance activities in high school, students should achieve (Ministry of Education and Training, 2006):

A. About knowledge

- Understand the meaning and importance of choosing a future career.
- Know some necessary information about the local socio-economic development orientations, the country and the region, about the career world, the labour market, the vocational education system (professional and vocational secondary school), colleges and universities in the locality and the whole country.

B. About skills

- Self-assess of self-competence and family conditions in future career orientation.
- Find the job information and training background information necessary for yourself in choosing a career.
- Orientate and choose your future career.

C. About attitude

- Be proactive and confident in choosing a suitable job.
- Be interested and inclined to choose the right career.

We can completely agree that the above program is essential for high school students. The educational managers and teachers want their students to know how to choose suitable careers for themselves. But, on the students' side, the problem posed is that:

- What is the status of high school students' perception about current career orientation and vocational guidance which they were offered?

This is the question we find the answer to in this study.

This section should comprise a description of the general framework, definitions and principles, primary issues and controversies, background information and contexts, etc.

## 2. Theoretical background

### 2.1 The concept of vocational guidance

Vocational guidance is defined as follows:

**Definition 1:** Vocational guidance is the process of supporting students to choose, prepare for, and participate in a career that they are gifted. (Dictionary.com)

**Definition 2:** Vocational guidance is systematic efforts to assist individuals in choosing a suitable career or employment on the basis of the gift, education, etc. (U.S. National Library of Medicine).

### 2.2 Characteristics of vocational guidance

Ulfat Jan Huzafa Khan (2016) clarified the characteristics of vocational guidance as follows:

- 1) It is a process of helping the children to develop his potentialities to an optimum level.
- 2) It is a process of helping the person to impart occupational information, broadening his occupation horizon and stimulating his interest in vocational self-help.
- 3) It is a process of helping an individual to choose an occupation for life, to prepare for it and to place him against suitable jobs.
- 4) It is a process of helping the individual to evaluate his role in term of reality and practicability.
- 5) It is a process of helping the individual to achieve the vocational goal.
- 6) It is a process of helping the individual to attain satisfaction or happiness in achieving the goal.

### **2.3 Functions of vocational guidance in high schools**

Vocational guidance at Secondary School Stage has several functions, according to Education Poster, they include:

- Helping pupils to know themselves;
- Helping pupils to make the right choice;
- Guiding pupils to know what they need to prepare themselves for entry into their future careers;
- Helping pupils to choose t suitable jobs in their chosen field;
- Helping Help students get acquainted with the career applications of various subjects learned in high school;
- Help students get acquainted with their careers and requirements.

## **3. Material and Methods**

### **3.1 Survey subjects**

The population of the was compose by 40 students of Nguyen Viet Dung High School, Can Tho City, Vietnam

### **3.2 Survey method**

Questionnaire with 5-level Likert scale: (1) Strongly disagreed, (2) Disagreed, (3) Undecided, (4) Agreed, (5) Strongly agreed. It consists of 15 items of 4 parts as follows:

#### **A. Vocational guidance at Nguyen Viet Dung High School**

- 1) Vocational guidance regularly holds at the school.
- 2) Vocational guidance creates excitement for students.
- 3) Vocational guidance teachers care about students' career-oriented need.
- 4) Vocational guidance sessions provide sufficient information.

#### **B. Role of vocational guidance for students**

- 5) Vocational guidance is essential and necessary.
- 6) Vocational guidance affects the career choice of students.
- 7) Vocational guidance is necessary for students, but career advice is not necessary.

### C. Factors affect the career orientation of students

- 8) The family respects the career choice of students.
- 9) The family imposes a career choice of students.
- 10) Current academic performance of students influences on their career choice.
- 11) Employment needs of society affect career choice of students
- 12) Economic conditions of a student's family affect their career choice.

### D. Demands for vocational guidance of students

- 13) The school should invite expert of vocational guidance to guide students on how to make a career choice.
- 14) The family should spend a lot of time listening and talking about career choice for their children.
- 15) The school should organize extracurricular activities for vocational guidance

### 3.3 Data analysis

Descriptive statistics was used for analysing the data.

## 4. Results and discussion

**Table 1:** Current situation of the vocational orientation of Nguyen Viet Dung High School

Status on vocational guidance in Nguyen Viet Dung High School	Completely disagreed	Disagreed	Undecided	Agreed	Completely agreed
1. Vocational guidance regularly holds at the school.	2 (5%)	0 (0%)	7 (17.5%)	0 (0%)	31 (77.55%)
2. Vocational guidance creates excitement for students.	0 (0%)	1 (2.5%)	19 (47.5%)	16 (40%)	4 (10%)
3. Vocational guidance teachers care about students' career-oriented needs.	5 (12.5%)	0 (0%)	16 (40%)	19 (47.5%)	0 (0%)
4. The vocational training session provides sufficient information.	0 (0%)	3 (7.5%)	17 (42.5%)	20 (50%)	0 (0%)

The survey results in Table 1 show that the current status of vocational guidance at Nguyen Viet Dung high school is quite good. The percentage of students who agreed with regular vocational guidance is 77.5%, while the total rate of disagreeing is only 5%. Vocational guidance still has not created much interest for students: 47.5% of students were undecided that vocational guidance was exciting or not, 50% were feeling interested in vocational guidance, the remaining 2.5% were not interested. Teachers were still not concerned about the student's career-oriented needs: 12.5% of students said that the teacher was not interested in his students' need about career orientation, 40% were not sure and only 47.5% of students felt that the teacher concerned about the vocational need of them. The vocational training sessions were not really comprehensive for the students: 7.5% of students said that the information on occupation was not incomplete, 42.5% felt confused, only about 50% of students agreed with the amount of information provided.

Thus, it can be seen that vocational training takes place quite often at Nguyen Viet Dung High School. However, the vocational guidance session has not yet created interest for students, teachers have not much-paid attention to the needs of each student's career orientation, and information has not been provided adequately.

**Table 2:** The role of vocational guidance for students

The role of vocational guidance for students	Completely disagreed	Disagreed	Undecided	Agreed	Completely agreed
5. Vocational guidance is essential and necessary.	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	14 (35%)	23 (57.5%)	3 (7.5)
6. Vocational guidance affects the career choice of students	0 (0%)	1 (2.5%)	17 (42.5%)	20 (50%)	2 (5%)
7. Vocational guidance is necessary for students, but career advice is not necessary	1 (2.5%)	7 (17.5)	22 (55%)	10 (25%)	0 (0%)

The survey results in Table 2 reveals that most students think vocational guidance is essential and necessary: 57% of students agree, and 7.5% of students agree entirely, only 35% of students still felt undecided. Schools and teachers have contributed to their career orientation. The results showed that about 77.5% of students had attended vocational guidance sessions at high school, and 75% of students thought that these enrollment counselling sessions were useful. About the impact level of vocational guidance on career choice: 50% of students agreed with career counselling that affects career choice, 5% of students totally agree, 42.5% of students hesitated, only 2.5% disagree. Opinions about vocational guidance and career advice, 25% of students agree with being able to navigate a career without career advice, 17.5% disagreed and 2.5% strongly disagreed. Thus, the majority of students realize that vocational guidance is essential and necessary. Career counselling will influence their career choices later on. However, there are still some students who think that they can navigate a career without advice.

**Table 3:** Factors affecting career choice

Factors affect the career orientation of students	Completely disagreed	Disagreed	Undecided	Agreed	Completely agreed
8. The family respects the career choice of the student.	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (5%)	34 (85%)	4 (10%)
9. The family imposes a career choice of the student.	5 (12.5)	19 (47.5%)	5 (12.5%)	1 (2.5)	1 (2.5%)
10. Current academic performance of students influences their career choice.	0	4 (10%)	9 (22.5%)	26 (65%)	1 (2.5%)
11. Employment needs of society affect career choice of students	0 (0%)	1 (2.5%)	18 (45%)	13 (32.5%)	8 (20%)
12. Economic conditions of students' family affect their career choice.	0 (0%)	8 (20%)	19 (47.5%)	11 (12.5)	2 (5%)

What career in the future to choose is a difficult problem for everyone. Therefore, students need to receive the help of family, school and society; the influence of these agents is significant in the career orientation process of students. Parents and relatives greatly influence on the career orientation for students. Many students chose careers according to the wishes of their parents, their parents 'or relatives' jobs to easily apply for jobs when they graduate. Besides, they also follow the trend of friends. Some choose majors that are influenced by job value, and they want to be heard "calling", being "hot", easy to pass, easy to learn, easy to earn money ... rather than the job that society needs or according to their abilities. However, Table 3 shows that about 85% of the students said that the family should respect their wishes, and about 7.5% was dominated by the family and the family imposed their career choice. The survey results indicate that about students' current academic performance will affect their career choice: 65% agreed, 2.5% disagreed, and 22.5% of students wonder and only 10% of students disagree. The other aspect is that social employment needs affect career choices or not: 32.5% agree, 20% strongly agree, 45% agree, and only 2.5% agree. Finally, 27.5% of students agree that family economic conditions affect their career choices and 5% strongly agree, but 47.5% are confused, but up to 20% disagree.

**Table 4:** Student's vocational guidance demands

Student's career-oriented demands	Completely disagreed	Disagreed	Undecided	Agreed	Completely agreed
13. The school should invite experts of vocational guidance to guide students on how to make a career choice	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	8 (20%)	22 (55%)	10 (25%)
14. The family should spend a lot of time listening and talking about career choice for their children.	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	7 (17.5)	24 (60%)	9 (22.5 %)
15. The school should organize extracurricular activities for vocational guidance.	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	6 (15%)	18 (45%)	16 (40%)

Table 4 reveals that most students agree that the school should invite experts of vocational guidance to guide them in career choice: (55% agreed, and 25% completely agreed). Most students want their families to spend more time listening and talking to them (60% agreed, and 22.5% completely agreed). Most students suggest that schools should organize extracurricular activities on vocational guidance (45% of agreed and 40% totally agreed). From the above data, it is said that vocational guidance and career information in the current labour market is essential for high school students.

Through the survey, it can be seen that the majority of students want families to take time to listen to them. The school also needs extracurricular activities so that the

career orientation becomes lively to help them have a more objective view of their future career. Vocational guidance is the process of individuals or families, and the school guides individuals to identify and select future careers in the most appropriate way. Career choice is influenced by many external and internal factors. The external factors are influenced by the family, the school, and society; the internal factors are the students' own thoughts and feelings when deciding to choose a career. These factors are interrelated, influenced and interplayed. All of the above factors are related to the career orientation of students; in addition, the career orientation is also greatly influenced by the objective, subjective, market economy and the development of students.

## 5. Conclusion

The research results show that in Nguyen Viet Dung high school, students mostly have the right and reasonable perception of career value. Many students are aware of the importance of vocational guidance and the factors affecting their career choice. However, the reality is that at the present time, young people find it challenging to look for a job although they graduated university. Facing that status, some students became worried, confused and disoriented. Therefore, the students themselves, their families and the school need to have new approaches in vocational guidance for students.

Some suggestions are as follows:

- Schools, teachers, and families need to listen to their children's wishes.
- On the student's side, students need to be aware of their own conditions, home economics, interests and academic ability.
- On the school side, much attention should be paid to vocational guidance for students, organize extracurricular activities so that students can experience and learn many professions.

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