

## Learning Methods for Supporting Professional Development of Young People: the Contribution of Teachers and Parents

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**Abstract.** *Children and adolescents develop optimally when their most important socialization contexts work together constructively. This study examines the extent to which in the area of vocational guidance, in addition to the support provided individually by parents and teachers, the explicit inclusion of parents by teachers also has a positive effect on the career choice of young people. 127 young people from seventh to ninth grade school classes were questioned by questionnaires on how they see themselves supported by their parents and teachers in the process of choosing a career and to what extent their teachers include parents in school career orientation. The adolescents also reported on their current occupation-related exploration and planning behavior as well as their occupation-related self-efficacy. It turned out that the adolescents explored more, planned better and were more self-sufficient when they felt supported by their parents and teachers and their parents were included in the teachings.*

**Keywords:** Adolescents' career preparation, collaboration of teachers and parents.

### Introduction

Young people are intensively concerned with the question of which occupation they want to take. Addressing this issue takes place in a longer-term process characterized by various activities of the adolescents. Above all, the search for information about oneself and about the professional world (exploration), one's own safety to handle this process adequately (self-efficacy) and the planning of the process (job-related planning) are important. The above-mentioned aspects help young people, at the end of their schooldays, to decide on a post-school education that suits their interests and abilities as well as the possibilities of their attainable environment<sup>1</sup>. However, the search for and processing of this job-related information is highly demanding given the diversity of training opportunities. Not all young people are therefore able to explore appropriately or consistently pursue their professional goals<sup>2</sup>.

Various studies have shown that parental support significantly contributes to young people successfully completing the process of vocational orientation<sup>3</sup>. Teachers, too, encourage a discussion of their professional future if they are perceived by their students as being supportive and interested in their future. However, support services provided by parents and the school in this process have

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<sup>1</sup> Christopher P. Cerasoli, Jessica M. Nicklin, Michael T. Ford, "Intrinsic Motivation and Extrinsic Incentives Jointly Predict Performance: A 40-Year Meta-Analysis," in *Psychological Bulletin*, CXL (2014), no. 4, p. 980-1008

<sup>2</sup> P. Hart, "The reality of relationships with young people in caring professions: A qualitative approach to professional boundaries rooted in virtue ethics," in *Children and Youth Services Review*, LXXXIII (2017), p. 248-254.

<sup>3</sup> C. Callahan, "Promoting second-order historical domain knowledge through recursive and collaborative professional development," in *The Journal of Social Studies Research*, VIII (2018), no. 3, p. 287-297.

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so far mostly been considered separately<sup>4</sup>. Moreover, the potential added value of cooperation between both socialization bodies<sup>5</sup>, which are so central to young people, has not yet been examined in terms of career orientation. Our contribution seeks to close this gap, building on the "theory of ecological socialization" by Ungar<sup>6</sup>. Bronfenbrenner points out that the cooperation of development contexts is particularly conducive to individual development processes. A study of regular high school students examines how it helps young people when teachers and parents work together on career guidance issues.

Parental home and school as central development contexts

1 Development of adolescents in their social environment Ungar<sup>6</sup> describes the development of adolescents as a result of a constant confrontation of the individual with his direct and indirect environment. He assumes that the successful development of a person is dependent on the support and assistance of different areas of life and is particularly encouraged if positive links exist between the areas of life (eg parents and teachers). Concretely referring to the contexts<sup>7</sup> parental home and school different studies show that in the sense of Ungar<sup>6</sup> a close cooperation results positive consequences for the children. Children and adolescents then provide school services commensurate with their cognitive abilities, taking school contents seriously, developing a positive attitude toward school learning and the institution of school as a whole and increasing their satisfaction in the classroom.

2 Relationship between home and school

In principle, parents and teachers are willing to work together in everyday school life and also consider cooperation to be important in general. , However, lack of agreement and expectation and perception differences between parents and teachers are often complained. If there is a need for direct contact, a) counseling by teachers is often unsatisfactory for parents, b) parents' initiatives are partly interpreted by teachers as interference and c) encounters from both sides as a whole rare and short. Issenberg<sup>8</sup>, after analyzing several studies, highlights several

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<sup>4</sup> Kimberly G. Harmon, Jonathan A. Drezner, Matthew Gammons, "American Medical Society for Sports Medicine position statement: concussion in sport," in *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, IIII (2013), no. 1, p. 15-26.

<sup>5</sup> L. Roberts, Young, Long S. J. H., G. Hewitt, G.F. Moore, "Sexual health outcomes for young people in state care: Cross-sectional analysis of a national survey and views of social care professionals in Wales," in *Children and Youth Services Review*, LXXXIX (2018), p. 281-288.

<sup>6</sup> M. Ungar, "The differential impact of social services on young people's resilience," in *Child Abuse & Neglect*, LXXVIII (2018), p. 4-12

<sup>7</sup> T. Botagariev, S. Kubieva, N. Mambetov, G. Zherkechbaeva, Z. Suleimenova, Y. Zhetimekov, A., Gabdullin, Zh. Azamatova, "Determining Factors and Ways to Improve Physical Education for the First and Second Year Female Students," in *Astra Salvensis*, VI (2018), no. 11, p. 517-530.

<sup>8</sup> S. B. Issenberg, W. C. McGaghie, E R. etrusa, ER. "Features and uses of high-fidelity medical simulations that lead to effective learning: a BEME systematic review," in *Medical Teacher*, XXVII (2005), no. 1, p. 10-28.

reasons for teachers' reluctance to involve parents more in their work<sup>9</sup>. The restraint results mainly from the fact that the teachers feared that the inclusion of parents would lead to their interference in their own tasks<sup>10</sup>. Furthermore, the teachers often do not know to what extent parents are interested in working together and how they are involved in the families' educational needs. All in all, the present research shows that in many schools the cooperation between the school and the parents is not very conscious and therefore it is experienced as unsatisfactory for most participants. Both parents and teachers want more contact and support from the other side.

### **Material & methods**

**Sample** The present study is part of an intervention project with the aim of actively involving parents in school career orientation. Regular teachers were trained to design two evenings on the topic of "preparation and follow-up of the internship" in such a way that adolescents could prepare the internship individually with their parents, undertake targeted planning activities and systematically reflect on their internship experience. This project was aimed especially at pupils of mainstream schools in Thuringia and their parents. In this way, teachers' reports from their own practice as well as the results of their own qualitative preliminary studies have taken into account that parents of regular high school students often do not take part in events within the context of school career orientation. Therefore, school efforts in this area are not taken up within the family.

Adolescents were asked before starting (about 2 weeks) and after the end (about 1 week) of the measure, how they perceive the commitment of teachers and parents for their career orientation and how active they themselves are currently in the process of vocational orientation, they were also asked to what extent they perceive their teachers' efforts to engage parents in matters of school career orientation.

The results reported here are based on the questionnaire data of the adolescents at the first measurement point that took place before the intervention. 127 young people took part in the survey. Of these, 52% were female, on average, the adolescents were 14.8 years old (SD = 1.16) and attended seventh, eighth, and ninth grades of mainstream Thuringian schools. The survey took place between February and April 2016.

Teacher-related support was recorded using a specially developed tool. The original scale focuses on two aspects of school culture that address an orderly learning environment and learning supportive orientations and social relationships. In the present study, the original items were reworded from the perspective of vocational orientation. The modified scale has been shortened by one item. The reliability of the now six-item scale (for example, "our teachers also take care of

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<sup>9</sup> I. Smanov, A. Boranbayeva, K. Berkimbayev, K. Arymbayeva, K. Azhibekov, "Approaches to Online Learning: a Study of the Factors affecting Teachers in a Fully Online Faculty," in *Astra Salvensis*, VI (2018), no. 11, p. 631-640.

<sup>10</sup> O. Budzinskaya, "Competitiveness of Russian Education in the World Educational Environment," in *Astra Salvensis*, VI (2018), no. 11, p. 517-530

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when a student has problems with their career choices") was at an alpha of .90. Inclusion of parents in school activities of vocational orientation through initiative of the teachers. In order to cover the parents' involvement in school activities of vocational orientation, the scale "cooperation of parents and mathematics teachers" was adapted. The original scale covers the promotion of self-determined forms of learning in mathematics lessons, supported by parents and teachers. The items were redrafted in such a way that now the focus was on the cooperation between parents and teachers on the professional development of the adolescents. The reliability of the modified seven-item scale (e.g., "Our teacher / teacher encouraged my parents to think about choosing a career with me") is very good with an alpha of .88.

## Results

Before taking a closer look at the importance of social support for the young people's vocational orientation process, briefly comment on the mean values of the scales considered in the study in Table 1.

Table 1: Mean and standard deviations of the scales included in the study

	M	SD
Exploration	2.9	.65
Planning	2.9	.53
Self-efficacy	2.9	.51
Occupational support for parents	3.2	.65
Vocational support for teachers	2.7	.78
Parental involvement by teachers	2.6	.72

Overall, the mean scores, which are empirically above the theoretical mean scores of 2.5, reflect that the majority of adolescents receive the support they receive from parents and teachers, and the willingness of their teachers to include parents in school career guidance, as tend to rate rather high. It also shows that the majority of the young people themselves actively explored, deliberately proceeded with the planning of their career choices and experienced themselves as relatively self-effective. However, the standard deviations of the scales make it clear that the adolescents differ considerably in the perception of their own activities and social support. Separate analyzes, which are not reported here, show that the surveyed male and female adolescents were very similar in their assessments.

### Link between parent and teacher support and youth development

In order to assess the extent to which support from parents and teachers and parenting by teachers in the field of Vocational Orientation was helpful for young people's employment development, bivariate correlations were calculated. Table 2 shows the results in overview.

Table 2: Bivariate relationships between parent and teacher support and youth work-related activities (n = 213)

1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Exploration	-				
2. Planning	.43 ***	-			
3. Self-efficacy	.37 ***	.45 ***	-		

4. Parental support .	.31 ***	.28 ***	.45***	-	
5. Teacher support	.25 ***	.29 ***	.48 ***	.25 ***	-

Note: \*\*\* p <.001.

It is in line with our expectations that adolescents, who perceived their parents as supportive, also explored intensively, planned their career choice more systematically and experienced themselves as more self-effective. The same applies to the support of the teachers. Conversely, this also means that adolescents who felt less supported by parents and teachers also pushed their career choices less intensively. In addition, the correlation coefficients reflect that the support of teachers and parents perceived by the youths is significant but not very large. This indicates that the help of both major socialization partners was largely independent for the adolescents.

#### Importance of parent involvement in school career orientation

Educational Young Personnel Instructors to determine to what extent the fact that teachers include parents in school career guidance is beneficial beyond the already known positive links between parent and teacher support and youth career guidance, regression analyzes were carried out. Separate exploration, planning activities and self-efficacy were included in these as criteria. Predictors were parent support (step 1), teacher support (step 2), and teacher involvement (step 3). These were successively included in the regression to understand changes in the predictive power of each predictor by the addition of the other as well as in the enlightened variance. Table 3 shows the results for the exploration behavior of the adolescents. First, in the second step of the regression analysis it becomes clear that the joint consideration of the two support sources can explain more variance in the exploration behavior of the adolescents than if the parents are regarded as the sole source of support (step 1). This point to the above-described independent positive effect of the two educational partners for the vocational orientation of young people. Step 3 answers the question to what extent the involvement of parents in school-based vocational orientation by teachers is an additional benefit for young people. As expected, the inclusion of parents further elucidates further variance in the exploration behavior of the adolescents. In other words, the adolescents also benefited from the fact that, in addition to the support of their parents and teachers, their teachers actively endeavored to explicitly involve parents in school-related careers. The fact that in the third step the effect of teacher support no longer becomes statistically significant is due to the fact that teacher support and parent involvement by teachers are closely related ( $r = .51$  \*\*\*). This could indicate that teachers who supported their students also had a greater tendency to involve parents in school for the benefit of their children.

The results of the regression analysis for the systematic planning of the young again show the largely independently perceived positive support by teachers and parents. The fact that teachers involve parents in school career orientation is also positively associated with the systematic planning of adolescents. However, teacher support and parent involvement are hardly independently associated with more active planning of adolescents. The positive effect of parent involvement on

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the systematic planning of adolescents appears to be largely due to the fact that teacher support promoted systematic planning and was closely linked to parental involvement. Overall, in the model, which takes into account both parent and teacher support as well as parent involvement, no more variance of the youthful planning behavior is explained.

Regarding the self-efficacy of the adolescents, a similar picture emerges with regard to systematic planning (see Table 3).

Table 3: Importance of Teacher / Parent Support and Parental Inclusion for Adolescent Occupational Self-Efficiency - Correlations, Beta Weights and Enlightened Variance (n = 205)

self-efficacy					
	r	B	SE	B	Beta Change in R <sup>2</sup>
1st step					
Occupational support of the parents	.43 ***	.33	.05	.43 ***	.18
2nd step					
Occupational support of the parents	.43 ***	.26	.05	.34 ***	
Occupational support of the Teachers	.47 **	.26	.04	.39 ***	.32
3rd step					
Occupational support of the parents	.43 ***	.23	.05	.31 ***	
Occupational support of the Teachers	.47 ***	.22	.04	.33 ***	
parent involvement	.40 ***	.08	.05	.12 .33	.33

Note: \*\* p <.01, \*\*\* p <.001.

First of all, it is noticeable that with 33%, a relatively large proportion of the differences between the young people surveyed in their occupation-related self-efficacy can be explained by taking into account the questions of parent and teacher support as well as parent involvement. The positive relationship of parent involvement with the self-efficacy of adolescents appears to be due to the fact that teacher support is also positively related to self-efficacy and at the same time closely related to parental involvement. Overall, this does not explain the variance of youthful self-efficacy in the overall model.

### Conclusions

The aim of the present study was to investigate the role of home and school in tackling the key development task for young people to engage in future employment. On the one hand, based on earlier studies, it was considered what each socialization instance individually contributes to the support of important components of the career choice of young people. On the other hand, following developmental psychological considerations on the importance of the interaction of socialization contexts for the individual development of adolescents, it was examined how it is particularly helpful for the vocational orientation of young people when they experience that their parents are in school activities for vocational orientation be involved. This involvement was operationalized as a teacher-initiated exchange with parents about current school career orientation

activities. With regard to a cooperation process that is much more complex and more reciprocal, this is only a partial aspect. However, this reflects a scholastic reality in which work with parents is defined as the task of teachers, but which is perceived to a great extent by teachers.

Overall, these differential findings suggest that future research in the field of youth career guidance may help to capture both parental and teacher support in understanding youthful career orientation processes and providing starting points for the optimal advancement of adolescents. In addition, it seems expedient for the theoretical understanding of school support in the career orientation process, for the education and training of teachers but also to obtain systematic starting points for the stimulation of cooperation between parents and school, the teacher-initiated involvement of parents stronger to take a look.

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