

ABSTRACT

This doctoral dissertation addresses the topic *The Choice of Vocational Secondary School from the Perspective of Graduates*, which constitutes a significant issue within the field of social sciences, particularly in the discipline of pedagogy.

The main objective of the study was to examine the factors influencing the choice of vocational secondary schools from the graduates' perspective. The dissertation aligns with current research directions and practical needs, responding to the growing demand for understanding the decision-making processes of young people, assessing the effectiveness of career guidance, linking vocational education with the labor market, and supporting educational policy.

The research involved a detailed analysis of the factors influencing the choice of vocational secondary schools, based on the opinions of graduates. Both quantitative methods (a questionnaire survey) and qualitative methods (interviews with teachers) were applied. The study followed a positivist research paradigm and was conducted between April and May 2024.

The collected research material covered 129 students attending vocational secondary schools in the city of Poznań, which enabled the formulation of highly generalizable conclusions. The results showed that students often made decisions about school choice based on the opinions of others. The study revealed a significant problem regarding the lack of knowledge among young people about the opportunities offered by the Polish education system and about the professions they chose. The research also indicated that career counseling is currently not popular among students, mainly due to its insufficient implementation at the primary school level. A particularly positive aspect of the findings was that most respondents demonstrated at least partial knowledge of their educational path.

In terms of the key factors influencing the choice of vocational secondary school, the most frequently indicated were professional interests (nearly 59%), career development prospects (approximately 50%) and the potential for substantial income (almost 39%).

This research holds importance on both theoretical and practical levels. From a theoretical perspective, the dissertation adds to the academic discourse in the field of pedagogy.; on the other hand, it offers a potential basis for developing new standards in the recruitment process for vocational secondary schools and improving the methods of promoting such schools.

In conclusion, this dissertation provides important insights for educators, psychologists, and teachers, enabling more informed and effective decision-making in the promotion of vocational secondary schools. At the same time, it highlights the need for continued research into the factors influencing the choice of educational institutions at various levels, which may contribute to the further development of the field.

Keywords: Vocational education, determinants of high school choice, graduate, role concept, Third Wave Concept, Technopoly, pragmatism, rational choice theory