

Methodology of career orientation of students for the transition to the Technical Vocational Baccalaureate

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this research is to elaborate a system of pedagogical actions to develop the Vocational Orientation of the students of Higher Basic Education for the transition to the Professional Technical Baccalaureate, and at the same time to improve the accompaniment of the teacher towards the student, with strategies that help in the professional choice. The research is descriptive, documentary, with a qualitative approach, using the inductive-deductive method, techniques such as surveys and documentary analysis were used. The lack of important information to choose a career is revealed as an essential problem, this is linked to the main objective of the research.

Keywords: Vocational orientation; Vocational orientation; Technical high school; Technical high school; Pedagogical actions; Methodological design; Vocational orientation; Methodological design

Introduction

Important events in life are marked by the end and the beginning of stages, one of them is the culmination of the Higher Basic level, since it is where students begin to question

themselves about their future, both academic and labor, giving way to think about their tastes and interests and, therefore, to the choice of a career according to their affinities, aptitudes and personality.

For this reason, it is essential to know the importance of vocational guidance in tenth grade students who will choose their career for the transition to high school, this pedagogical process will prevent the student's confusion at the time of choosing a career, and after that, it will also prevent school dropout.

Currently, the tenth years of basic education face a major problem: the choice of a career for the transition to the baccalaureate. This choice is not an easy task, since at the moment of choosing what to study, factors such as aptitudes, interests, contexts and motivations intervene.

Therefore, it is necessary that the student has the opportunity to have access to a system of pedagogical actions that allow him/her to make good decisions about his/her life project in a more conscious, clear and structured way.

The lack of pedagogical actions aimed at Vocational Guidance in tenth grade students is an educational problem that demands a solution and thus helps students to choose a career that contributes to their academic development and their labor, personal and social future in the BTP.

According to the above, the main objective of this article is to elaborate a system of pedagogical actions to develop the vocational orientation of students in the Upper Basic School for the transition to the Technical and Vocational Baccalaureate.

Among the specific objectives are the following:

- To determine basic concepts in correspondence to vocational orientation.
- To analyze the needs of the students of Upper Basic Education regarding vocational orientation for the choice of the Technical Professional Baccalaureate, through the application of surveys and/or interviews.
- Design a vocational orientation methodology that allows the implementation of active and participative pedagogical strategies that help students in the transition to the Professional Technical Baccalaureate.

- Constantly monitor the implementation of teaching strategies, learning methods and educational activities through evaluation instruments that measure the impact of pedagogical actions.

Development

Vocational guidance can contribute on a large scale and effectively to the life project of tenth grade students. It can be taken as an initiative to put an end to the various reasons why young people feel oppressed by not being satisfied with their chosen career and thus avoid discontinuity in high school and therefore to higher studies and even more to have problems in the insertion into the world of work. That is why it is very important to accompany and respect the decisions and changes of opinion of the student throughout the process.

Having a sense of life is fundamental to develop as human beings, and the right choice of our professional career contributes to achieve that purpose. Having a career that we are passionate about will make our personal and professional life successful, pleasant and with a direction of constant growth. On the contrary, studying and pursuing a career that we do not like, even if we are good at it, will only generate stress, anxiety and frustration in our lives. (Soledispa *et al.*, 2020)

The process of choosing a career is not easy. Many times we confuse our skills and interests with our vocation; however, they are not the same thing. When we feel vocation for a professional career, we also experience a strong desire to learn more, improve every day and enjoy to the fullest every moment we spend exercising our profession. (Sellan, 2017)

In Ecuador, in the year 2023 there is a university dropout rate of 20.46%, which varies according to the institution, despite having a high number of enrolled students, few university students manage to complete their careers to the fullest, because they do not have sufficient guidance for the choice of their career. (Delgado, 2024)

Student dropout in higher education is a serious social problem of high impact worldwide, being more evident in developing countries such as Ecuador, where

dropout rates at the university level are around 40%. Factors related to the availability of places, the careers on offer, institutional policies, personal and family factors, socioeconomic situation, play a determining role in academic dropout, as many students face an unknown and unsatisfactory reality in many cases. (Avila *et al.*, 2024, p. 13)

The poor choice of a university career is due to the fact that, beyond their aptitudes and interests, young people are motivated by economic, cultural and prestige issues or pressure from parents and friends. Choosing what career to study is undoubtedly a very important step for the academic, professional and personal development of young people. However, the risks of a bad choice are multiple and range from frustration to school dropout and later underemployment.

Choosing a career is not a decision that is made from one day to the next, it is a process, and as such it is necessary to follow a series of steps that allow young people to reflect not only on what career they are going to choose, but also to develop a life project in which the career is part of their economy. Therefore, it is essential to work not only with the students, but also with the family because it is the main guide. (Venegas, 2022)

Many authors define vocational guidance as a process that helps and guides the person in the choice of a profession or career.

According to (García-Pisco & Loor-Salmon, 2021), vocational guidance can be understood as: “A process of help in the choice of a profession, the preparation for it, the access to the labor exercise of it and the subsequent evolution and progress” (p. 5).

Vocational guidance is a process that uses aspects of psychology and pedagogy to help a person know themselves better, identify their life goals and the careers that best suit their personality, interests and abilities. (CEDUK, 2023)

Vocational and Professional Guidance constitutes an alternative to provide spaces for the recognition of strengths and weaknesses of children, adolescents and young people who are within the education system, from the identification of protective factors and threats, which should be used to support and generate actions within the construction of comprehensive life projects and individual decision making. (MINEDUC, 2015)

Vocational guidance, is very important and plays a fundamental role in the professional success of each of the students who seek professional success, for this process to be

positive, it is necessary that there is cooperation between vocational counselors and parents. (Velásquez, 2020)

Guidance and vocation

Guidance is a process integrated to the curriculum, with emphasis on the principles of prevention, development and attention to diversity and in the affective-emotional, school and vocational areas of the student, with the objective of perceiving their real and potential aptitudes for a better understanding of their socio-educational situation and making relevant decisions, in areas of their personal, social and professional development. (Molina, 2025, p. 8)

Vocation is the self-discovery of people to consider their own identity, their aspirations and the path they aspire to for their profession, career or activity. From this personal direction, the choice of a career should be centered on this internal process. For such reason, the probabilities of success are greater, with an enriching and appropriate transition in the beginning of a new university leaving aside the desertions. (Cruz, 2017)

The vocation will depend on the level of motivation and satisfaction that comes from within, from the heart, from the illusion and ideals of a person towards the fulfilled duty but has not feel it an obligation. This in turn becomes deficient when there is not enough predisposition to perform well their professional work. (Alberto & Muriel, 2021)

A person's vocation is composed of various aspects that vary according to individual aptitudes and characteristics. The main ones are:

Personal tastes: those things and activities that bring pleasure and provide a sense of satisfaction and comfort.

Individual interests: These refer to the topics that arouse curiosity and motivate research, learning or development in certain areas.

Skills: These are the abilities or skills that allow efficient performance in certain activities. They may include aspects such as creativity, self-confidence, problem-solving ability, autonomy and ease of learning about a subject.

Other aspects are personality and social factors.

Vocational and career guidance according to the social-critical approach

There are various approaches to vocational guidance that help students choose an appropriate career and make more informed decisions aligned with their interests, skills and career goals (Naranjo, 2021) . These include the following:

- Rights approach: It is based on respecting and listening to the opinions of each student in vocational matters, without being imposed to a contrary decision.
- Well-being approach: Sees students as individual beings with their own needs and should be given opportunities.
- Inclusive approach: It encompasses attention with quality, equity and belonging to the specific and common needs of the entire student body.
- Pedagogical approach: It considers the articulation of previous experiences, the concepts developed and the technological and didactic resources inside the classroom through the recognition of distinction, support, group work with active community participation, as all these will help to enhance the development of personal life projects of each student.

The Student Counseling Department (DECE) is responsible for providing professional counseling services to students within the framework of their educational experience. It is the entity in charge of providing spaces where students can express their emotions, discomfort, opinions, feelings, etcetera.

Within its functions, the DECE promotes the formation of competencies for individual, family and citizen development, these competencies are concretized in decision making, strategies for conflict resolution, peaceful coexistence and recognition of risk situations. (Velásquez, 2020)

The proper development of a Vocational Guidance plan requires the active participation of all the actors involved, i.e., authorities, teachers, grade or course tutors, DECE professionals, students and families. This process should not be understood as the sole responsibility of the educational institution or the DECE professionals, since it is a process that is built throughout the school life of the student and where internal and external factors, stakeholders, national reality, among others, must be mediated.

It is understood then that these professionals will be in charge of developing the Professional Vocational Guidance plan for each student they are in charge of and that, in addition, it should be chronologically designed to establish a continuity in the development of the students' life project and the completion of the process that consists

in the choice of a professional career to study or the link to the labor world in the areas that are of their interest. (MINEDUC, 2015)

In correspondence with these particular purposes the research focused on a methodological design is qualitative, which allowed the collection of practical data in a clear way from the chosen population. It is descriptive and documentary, with the objective of creating a system of pedagogical actions to guide the students' vocation, describing its design and participatory activities. A deductive method was also used, which starts from general criteria to understand specific aspects of an institution. It allowed the analysis of the educational reality from the perspective of the actors involved and thus generate proposals for improvement in the vocational guidance process in the IBE.

The following techniques and instruments were used for this purpose:

The survey: Through this technique it was possible to obtain data from a group of students where their criteria and opinions on the subject were obtained through questionnaires.

Documentary analysis: This technique made it possible to investigate and analyze important information for the fulfillment of the research objective through consultations in reliable internet sources.

For the development of this work, we took as population the students of General Basic Education of the Intercultural Bilingual Community Education Unit “Nueva Frontera”, located in the province of Orellana, parish Dayuma, of the Tiputini River Commune of the Nueva Frontera sector; It has 160 people including adults, youth and children, with their own traditions and customs that are rooted in the Kichwa Nationality, which has allowed them to engage in agricultural production as the primary economic livelihood of their homes and in turn depending on the labor supply promoted by the oil companies within their territory.

In the parish of Dayuma, Nueva Frontera sector, there is evidence of 80 young men and women aged 14 and 15 years, who are chosen 100% as a sample for the research study through the application of a survey.

The first question to be answered was: Do you feel that your culture is respected in the school environment?

The results showed that, of the total number of students surveyed, 67% feel that their culture is respected in the school environment, which indicates that within the Intercultural Bilingual Educational Unit “Nueva Frontera” the different cultures are valued and the customs and traditions of their students are taken into account in the various school activities and personal opinions.

Sixteen percent consider that their culture is always respected in the school environment, while 17% stated that “Sometimes”.

Question 2 of the survey was related to the importance for the respondents of continuing their studies at the baccalaureate level after completing high school.

In this sense, the results reveal that 83% of the people surveyed agree that it is important to continue studying in high school after completing high school, showing that the majority of high school students will continue with the study process at the high school level.

However, there are 6% who consider their continuity to be of little importance, which is why work should be done with this small group of students to make them aware of the importance of continuing their studies, so that they can then make a better decision.

Meanwhile, 11% consider it very important.

In the analysis of the results of question number 3 referring to the different career options available, it could be seen that only 11% of the students of higher basic education know all the different career options available, on the contrary, 67% know only some of these options, which shows that the majority of young people are uninformed and this is the biggest problem of the research. A better dissemination of this topic is suggested to whoever it may concern.

On the other hand, 5% answered “None”.

Question number 4 was aimed at answering whether the respondents would like to work in the same area as their parents.

In this aspect, it was noted that 100% of the respondents do not feel identified with the activities of their parents, which indicates that, in their totality, the students want to continue in a career according to their aspirations and interests and that they can develop with peace of mind in the chosen area. At the same time, it is evident that the students of higher basic education aspire to study a higher level career when they finish high school.

On the other hand, half of the students surveyed, corresponding to 50%, would be very interested in receiving additional vocational guidance at school, indicating that they feel the need to recognize their abilities and aptitudes in order to make good decisions and a correct career choice when continuing with high school. Therefore, a good system of pedagogical actions is required for the development of motivation and vocational orientation.

With respect to the interest for the first year of high school, which responds to the last question of the survey, it could be observed that among the three options to mark (**Technical, Science, I have not decided yet**), there is a slight difference, which indicates that the answers given by the respondents are distributed proportionally, it is worrying that 33% still have not decided which career to follow, for this reason, a better motivation and vocational orientation is needed to help this group of young people to choose a career.

System of pedagogical actions for the development of motivation and vocational orientation for the higher basic level.

Taking into account the results obtained, the authors of this research propose a system of pedagogical actions framed in three central axes necessary for the development of motivation and vocational orientation for the higher basic level, especially in the tenth year of General Basic Education (see Table 1).

Table 1. Matrix of the system of pedagogical actions

Axes	Objective	Activities	Factors factors	Factors Factors	People involved	Evaluation strategies
Self-knowledge knowledge	Identify the different learning styles of each student to define how they best acquire knowledge.	Presentation of the different learning styles Plan exercises that have various learning styles Feedback	Skills		Students DECE	Ensure that each student identifies with his or her learning style. Self-evaluation
Information axis	To provide information about the different Baccalaureate options offered in the country.	Presentation of the different Options offered in the country. Informative workshops Research	Personality Interests Skills Values	Context sociocultural Family Local environment Educational offer and work environment	Students DECE Family	Workshop evaluation Dialogue with students
Decision-making axis	Consider aspects such as skills, interests, strengths, weaknesses in order to reflect and be prepared for good decision making.	Decision-making questionnaire	Identity Personality Skills Interests Values Experiences Significant experiences	Socio-cultural context Family Local environment Educational offer and Work environment	Students Teachers DECE	Individual orientation Follow-up of the decision taken

Source: Self elaboration based on (MINEDUC, 2015).

In order to guarantee an adequate implementation and follow-up of the system of pedagogical actions, it is suggested to follow the following phases:

Phase 1: Diagnosis of the Educational Institution.

- Economic, cultural and social context of the Institution's students.
- Recognize the main interests of tenth grade students.
- Register of students attending classes
- Activities, didactic resources available to the educational institution for their proper application.

Phase 2: Planning

- Establish schedules
- People who will be in charge and the correct place for its application.
- Establish activities for each axis throughout the year.
- Time of duration

Phase 3: Sensitization

- Inform the educational community in a timely manner about the activities to be developed.
- Emphasize the importance of implementing a system of pedagogical actions.

Phase 4: Implementation

- Involve the stakeholders in the implementation.
- Implementation of the system: This activity should be carried out within the current school year.

Phase 5: Evaluation and follow-up

- Conduct a permanent evaluation to verify the fulfillment of objectives.
- Evaluate by means of pedagogical tools, such as a verification matrix.
- Apply surveys or with the evaluation strategies given in the matrix.

Conclusions

Clear concepts were identified that facilitated the understanding of the research process on the topic discussed, which also provides the reader with a clear vision for future use. The survey conducted with students in the Upper Basic School indicates that vocational orientation is crucial and necessary to make wise decisions about the choice of a career in the transition to the Technical Baccalaureate.

A system of educational actions was created with activities that involve the key people of Básica Superior allowing them to make good decisions in the transition to the Technical Vocational Baccalaureate, enriching the process and making it more effective. The monitoring process and constant evaluation of the pedagogical actions ensured the achievement of the objectives, correctly addressed the challenges and minimized decision problems, contributing to the achievement of expected educational results.