

Self-Study Approach Model to Promote Career Development for Adolescents

Diāna Karpušenko Mg. Ed.;  **Vija Dišlere** Dr. paed.
Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies, Latvia
diana.karpusenko@gmail.com; vija.dislere@lbtu.lv

Abstract: Access to career support services and education is an important part of modern life. An essential step in the process of researching and planning potential career aspirations and careers for adolescents is self-study. The aim of the study is to develop a Self-Study Model to Promote Career Development for Adolescents and to carry out its expert evaluation. The model was developed based on the studies of scientific literature and authors' work experience. An expert evaluation of the Model was carried out with the participation of 5 experts in the field of career counselling, pedagogy and psychology. In general, expert assessments of the overall Model rating (115 points) are close to the maximum possible rating (125 points). Using the self-exploration model, adolescents acting independently and self-efficiently, performing the tests and tasks included in the model, applying self-directed career development management, can meet their career development needs individually, make informed and self-appropriate choices for further studies or career path, that match their unique strengths and interests. The model can be useful for adolescents and teachers-career counsellors.

Keywords: adolescents, career counselling, career development, self-study approach.

Introduction

Career is important for a people throughout their life, because it is an important part of personal life, and that requires continuous improvement. Career planning begins in childhood and continues throughout life. Parents play an important role in creating the foundations of their child's career planning and trying to realize their hopes and visions for their child's future. However, during life, it becomes more and more important that the children's own choices and actions correspond to their expectations and wishes regarding the choice of a future profession.

A person's value system is the basis for choosing an occupation or profession. If a person's values are clearly defined, it can help to make decisions and develop their professional identity. It also reduces indecisiveness about the future (Jigau, 2007).

This study addresses the problem of the lack of career guidance, related to the fact that there are not enough career counsellors in all schools. Therefore, it is thought how the school could introduce the self-study approach in career development support for elementary school students, and to explore the benefits of using the self-study approach in this context. As adolescents from nature have been given a desire to learn and be active, it would be desirable for the school to actively promote adolescents' natural self-cognitive desire by organizing various events, for example, as part of career education classes, a career counsellor can offer a variety of self-cognitive tests, invite representatives of professions to meet with students so that adolescents can question them, arrange shadow days and excursions to companies and institutions.

The study aims to develop a *Self-Study Model to Promote Career Development for Adolescents* and to carry out its expert evaluation.

Methodology

The study has been developed at the Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies at the Institute of Education and Home Economics within the framework of the Master's study program *Career Counsellor*. The model was developed based on the basis of scientific literature studies and authors' work experience.

Research question: whether and how the self-study model developed by authors to promote career development for adolescents, which is intended for students of grades 7-8 of elementary school, meets the stated goal.

Research tasks:

- analysing the scientific literature on the approach of self-study in career education;
- development of the model;
- an expert assessment of the model.

Participants: five experts with experience in fields related to career counselling, pedagogy or psychology were interviewed to assess the self-study model.

Materials or Measures: the model has been developed and expertly evaluated in 2023. The statistical calculations used the computer program SPSS, Friedman Test (Friedman Test..., 2019).

Procedure: correspondence in the Internet and face-to-face meetings were used for communication. The self-study model and its description were electronically sent to the experts. The questionnaires were completed without communication between the experts.

Results and Discussion**Literature review on the self-study approach in career education**

Access to career support services and education is an important part of modern life. At a time of socio-economic change, when job prospects may be uncertain and the risk of social exclusion may increase, career development support is particularly important. It is necessary to realize that everyone is responsible for their own education and career direction. Flexible career development support can improve the quality of the education system, reduce the number of early school leavers, motivate young people to engage in science and technology development, promote the choice of professions in demand on the labour market and the acquisition of appropriate skills, as well as facilitate the transition from education to the labour market (Karjeras izglītības īstenošanas..., 2015; Bandura 1982).

Adolescence is a key transition period characterized by significant physical, psychological and social changes that encourage increased self-study and self-assessment (Jankowski et al., 2015; Bandura, 1988).

Self-study is a process in which an individual actively tries to understand themselves and their values, motivations, personality, interests, skills, and wishful thinking. It is recommended that this self-study process be used in career development to help determine what type of job or career corresponds to values, interests, and skills of teenagers. *Self-help*, or self-care, is a conscious activity, involvement that contributes to maintaining one's health and well-being in personal and professional life. On the other hand, self-management is an action that promotes monitoring and management of one's own activities, including learning, being able to realize one's desires, needs, manage one's thoughts, emotions and behaviour, set realistic goals and make responsible decisions (Mārtinsone et al., 2021).

Significant research into career education related processes has been conducted by many researchers (Cohen-Scali et al., 2018; Greenhaus et al., 2018; Brown et al., 2016; Savickas, 2015; Patton et al., 2014; Brown et al., 2013; Sharf, 2013b; Knoff, 2003), building a meaningful understanding of self-study self-help, self-regulation, and career significance.

It is during adolescence that the foundations are laid for finding one's place in the adult world. An important aspect to consider before the age of 14 is the hobbies and activities that the adolescents are most interested in. Becoming an adult is a process full of emotional and social suffering, which should be made as interesting and exciting as possible in order to accept changes and raise self-confidence, and this would contribute to the transformation of a teenager into a stable personality (Geida, 2019).

The process of self-study has the potential to promote the kind of self-confidence and self-reflection that are invaluable in career development. For example, writing your own experience stories, developing self-reflection skills, a values clarification activity, knowing your willingness to work independently or better in a team, helps teenagers build a connection between their values and work choices (Mazur et al., 2012; Swanson et al., 2015).

Career support measures in schools and career counsellors' experience in raising awareness of children's and adolescents' careers and career education programs have been written by various scientists (Lindo et al., 2022; Hutchison et al., 2016; Knight, 2015; Gysbers, 2013; Sharf, 2013a; Turner et al., 2013; Wilkerson et al., 2013; Akos et al., 2011; Clemens et al., 2010; Lerner et al., 2009), who have experience in designing adolescent careers.

Discovering yourself means getting to know your personality. It involves thinking about one's likes and dislikes and what one wants to achieve in life. When you discover more about yourself, you can also discover your core principles and life potential. The self-study process can be divided into four parts (Eads et al., 2022): confidence, awareness of interests, hopes and dreams, discovering a career that suits one's personality and goals, as it can help one feel satisfied at work.

There are many psychological and pseudo-psychological tests and questionnaires freely available on the Internet that anyone can complete for free or for a fee: intelligence tests, personality measurements, and occupational interest tests. In general, such tests can be considered a useful part of psychological self-help, but there are concerns about the misuse of online tests for criminal purposes (Barak, 2011). Therefore, it is important to trust school educators and career counsellors, who recommend appropriate and useful resources to use.

The main benefits of the self-study for career development are as follows (Eads et al., 2022):

- one's strengths and weaknesses are clarified;
- excitement and interest are revealed;
- gained greater self-confidence about one's life;
- motivators for career success are identified;
- a basis has been found to implement one's newly realized values in their life;
- gained the opportunity to make the best choices to achieve their goals and achievements;
- the possibility of discovering potential careers that were not previously thought of;
- clarity is found about the career that corresponds to one's own career goals;
- have the courage to decide where you want to continue your education or go to work.

When choosing a profession, a person actually chooses a way of self-realization (Super et al., 2001).

S. Fukuyama (1989) claims that the ability to choose a profession is linked to the ability to choose it rationally, considering the key conditions, such as self-esteem, knowledge of the profession and professional practice.

The purpose of the self-study approach to career development is to understand yourself and your life better, and thus create positive changes and achieve personal and professional goals. The research conducted by the aforementioned scientists and the personal work experience and research of the authors (Karpušenko, Dišlere, 2023; Karpušenko, Baltušīte, 2022; Racene, Dislere, 2019) created the theoretical basis for the development of the *Self-Study Model for Promoting Career Development for Adolescents*.

Self-Study Model to Promote Career Development for Adolescents

Based on the findings obtained in the theoretical analysis of the study about the needs of the adolescent's career development and self-study skills, which depend on the adolescents' conscious and purposeful progress towards making a career decision, A Self-Study Model for Promoting Career Development for Adolescents was established (Figure 1).

The model aims to promote career development for adolescents through a self-study approach to realise their potential, following their abilities and talents, the pupil would move towards autonomous career decision-making.

Tasks of implementation of the model:

- to provide support to the adolescents so that they can learn about their self through self-study, to find out their abilities, talents, strengths and weaknesses by completing the tasks included in the model, thereby improving their self;
- to show what should be done to choose further education, explore professions and choose an occupation that reveals the essence of a person, and the adolescents would feel in harmony with themselves;
- to promote the adolescents' self-criticism and self-analysis capacity in order to improve self-efficacy;
- to encourage seeking help from a career counsellor or teachers on career topics, if the need arises.

Target audience of the model: 8th grade students. The model is intended for elementary school students, the teenage years, when adolescents are rapidly approaching the moment of making their first important decisions - the choice of an educational institution, which is currently complicated by the choice of secondary school learning models. Often, a pupil does not even think about further education until graduation from primary school, not to mention a purposeful analysis of a career decision and a conscious move towards it.

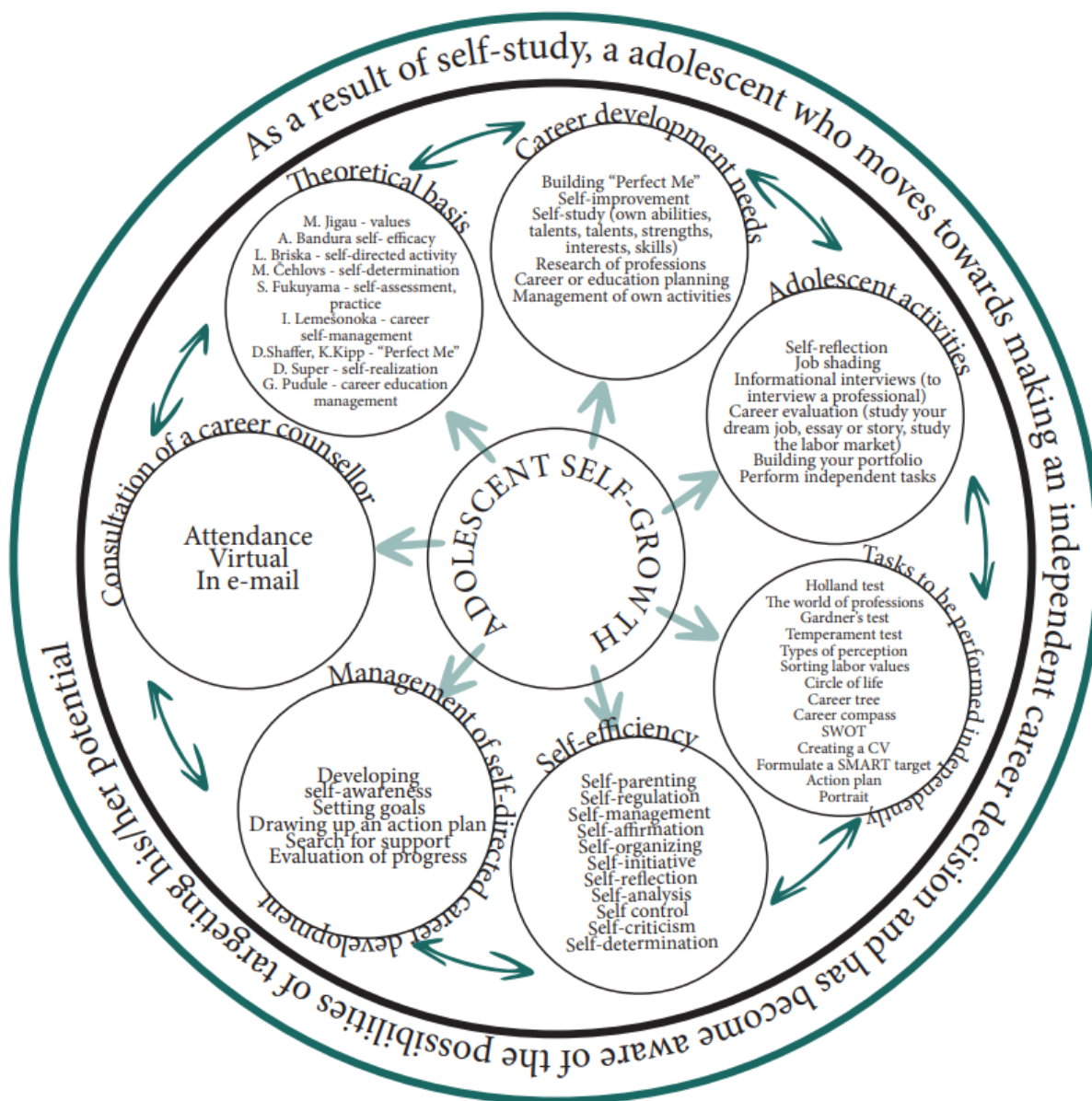


Figure 1. Self-Study Model for Promoting Career Development for Adolescents
(authors' construction)

Methods used: independent work. An adolescent can do self-study on his own by acting electronically, fulfilling recommended tasks, but the pupil needs a source of motivation, an assistant who doesn't need to be approached and feel uncomfortable about ignorance.

Location of implementation of the model: each pupil performs the tasks individually, independently, at home, in a cafe, in library or in a freely chosen place where the Internet is available.

Content of the model: the core elements of the developed model (Figure 1), crystallized in theory analysis and authors' work experience, are arranged in circles representing the various components of the adolescent's self-growth, which, when viewed in conjunction, are an important prerequisite for the pupil's future career development:

- theoretical basis – findings of scientists, guidelines developed by the state and personal experience of the authors, which theoretically justify the idea of the model (Vadlīnijas karjeras atbalsta..., 2022; Lemešonoka, 2017; Briska et al, 2018; Ieteikumi Klases stundu..., 2016; Shaffer et al., 2013; Pudule, 2013; Čehlovs, 2008; Jigau, 2007);
- career development needs (Karpušenko, Dišlere, 2023, 116)– obtained as a result of the analysis of the theory and research, by means of which it is understood the conditions and factors that are necessary and contribute to the progress of the career development of the pupil;
- adolescent's activities – basic tasks that facilitate self-study by a teenager and progress towards conscious career decision making;
- tasks to be carried out independently - tests, methods and tasks promoting self-analysis for solving the career development needs of adolescents through self-study, which, when carried out independently, the teenagers will be aware of their opportunities and will be able to purposefully exploit their potential;
- self-efficiency – a person's belief in his abilities to cope with difficulties and succeed in a certain field, skills developed by the authors as a result of theory and research analysis, summarized in a questionnaire (Karpušenko, Dišlere, 2023, 116), which the teenagers need to know and use for self-discovery and career development;
- management of self-directed career development – management skills to be developed by the adolescents;
- consultation of a career counsellor – as a result of self-study, a teenager may need help, that can be obtained from a career counsellor on career topics that have raised questions and receive support.

Expert evaluation

To assess the importance and usefulness of the *Self-Study Model for the Promoting Career Development for Adolescents* (Table 1) for independent progress of adolescents in career decision making, it was referred to experts for evaluation. It was essential for the authors to find out whether the model is useful for elementary school students, and whether it encouraged them to move independently towards making a career decision.

Table 1

Expert Evaluation of Self-Study Model to Promote Career Development for Adolescents (n=5)

Experts						Indicators of descriptive statistics					Σ
Criteria	E1	E2	E3	E4	E5	Me	Mo	Xmin	Xmax	A	
K1	4	5	4	5	5	5	5	4	5	1	23
K2	4	4	5	4	5	4	4	4	5	1	22
K3	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	1	21
K4	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	1	24
K5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	0	25
Me	4	5	5	5	5	Me – median, the average variable value of an ordered empirical distribution Mo – mode, the value of the most frequent variable in the distribution Xmin – the smallest value of the variable Xmax – the largest value of the variable A – amplitude, the difference between the maximum and minimum values of the variable Σ – amount					
Mo	4	5	5	5	5						
Xmin	4	4	4	4	4						
Xmax	5	5	5	5	5						
A	1	1	1	1	1						
Σ	22	23	23	23	24						

Experts were asked to assess the model on the basis of five criteria (K):

K1: The model meets the goal - as a result of self-study, adolescents have become aware of the possibilities of targeted use of their potential, who is moving towards making an independent career decision.

K2: The independent tasks and activities included in the model are suitable for adolescence.

K3: The independently performed tasks offered in the model improve the self-study skills of teenagers and foster awareness of their potential.

K4: The own-initiative tasks and activities used in the model contribute to the achievement of the planned goal.

K5: The model is generally good enough to guide a adolescent towards making an independent career decision.

Experts (Table 1) are marked with the letters E1-E5, while the aforementioned criteria, according to which the support model was evaluated, are marked with the letter K and the order number of the criterion. Numbers from 1 to 5 indicate the degree of expert assessment for each statement, from 5 - completely agree to 1 - completely disagree.

The collected data (Table 1) shows that the most common value (Mo) is 5 - a rating that confirms that the developed model fully meets the criteria. An assessment of the findings leads to the conclusion that there is consensus among experts.

In order to find out whether the differences between experts' assessments of the self-study model for promoting career development for teenagers are statistically significant, the survey findings were processed using the Friedman test. The following statistical hypotheses were put forward:

H0: there are no statistically significant differences between expert assessments;

H1: there are statistically significant differences between expert assessments.

Friedman's test was used for data processing (Table 2).

Table 2

Distribution of expert rating ranks (Friedmann test, n=5)

Experts	Mean Rank
E1	2.50
E2	3.00
E3	3.00
E4	3.00
E5	3.50

Since the $p\text{-value} = 0.736 > 0.05$, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected with a probability of 95%, this means that there are no significant differences in the experts' assessments. The maximum number of points that could be expected in the expert judgement is 125 points. A total of 115 points have been obtained in the expert evaluation. Based on the experts' assessment, which reaches 92% of the maximum possible number of points, it can be concluded that the *Self-Study Model for Promoting Career Development for Adolescents* is recommended in school career education activities.

Conclusions

A self-study approach to young people's career development aims to help adolescents understand their interests, skills, values and personality traits and to make thoughtful decisions about their future education and career paths that fit their unique strengths and interests, creating more satisfaction and fostering success. This approach encourages young people to engage in activities such as self-reflection, job shadowing, informational interviews and career assessments to gain a deeper understanding of themselves and the types of career that suit them.

When implementing the *Self-Study Model*, adolescents can choose and perform the recommended tests and tasks independently in career-related issues and only approach a career counsellor if necessary. Because teacher-career counsellors aren't enough for all schools, the *Self-Study Model* is a recommended solution.

All enrolled experts consider the *Self-Study Model for Promoting Career Development for Adolescents* to be good enough and appropriate for the objective it pursues, so that the adolescent is directed towards making a career decision independently, there are no significant difference in the opinions of experts (p - value is 0.736).

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