



Research Article

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Received: 12 October 2023 / Accepted: 23 December 2023 / Published: 5 January 2024

The Impact of the Presentation of the Profession of the Older Generation on the Choice of Profession of the Primary School Pupils and on the Intergenerational Connection

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.36941/jesr-2024-0002>

Abstract

Nowadays, we are witnessing demographic changes that are having a significant impact on intergenerational relations. The ageing of the population and the generational alienation are key factors that require new activities to establish intergenerational cooperation. The presentation of the professions of the older generation to primary school pupils is one of the segments, which brings together representatives of both the younger and older generation. A questionnaire survey was administered to 200 primary school pupils. The data were collected and statistically analysed using a quantitative methodology. It was found that introduction of professions by the older generation to primary school pupils had an impact on facilitating career choices and better intergenerational cohesion.

Keywords: presentation of professions, choice of profession, intergenerational integration

1. Introduction

The demographic structure is changing; long-term population projections show an increase in the share of the elderly population in the developed world (Eurostat 2018). As a response to the widening generational gap the scientific community (Phillips et al., 2010; Brečko, 2021) emphasises intergenerational cooperation as one of the foundations of intergenerational cohesion, which leads to understanding and tolerance between generations. Therefore, intergenerational cooperation can be

defined as a mechanism that promotes interaction between the older and younger generations through participation in organised activities. One of the activities is to introduce primary school pupils to different professions in the context of intergenerational learning. Young people meet a person who has practised a particular profession or professions. The elderly explain to the youth what it takes to acquire a particular profession, and they could try out, or at least observe, the work they would do as part of their profession.

The Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs (2006) emphasises the importance of the involvement of the older generation in the work of schools, especially those older generations who are willing to transfer their experience, knowledge, and competences to the younger generation, which enables the creation of the conditions for development of co-creation and cooperation between the younger and older generations. By enabling the cooperation with other institutions, schools open the possibilities for young people to their wider social space, where they can learn to respect diversity, cooperate more widely, develop social skills, and not only acquire knowledge and be creative, but also contribute to overcoming the negative effects of the individualisation of the individual in modern society (Komotar 2011; Yan, 2020).

Survey of Ule conducted in 1988 in Slovenia on 538 young people aged 14 to 27 showed that when asked how young people comprehend older people, almost a quarter of all respondents believed that young and old live in completely different worlds, unable to understand each other or are in constant conflict. Therefore, young people are unable to benefit from the source of knowledge and experience that older people have, while older people are deprived from the source of love, vitality, and technological know-how that young people have. The Office for Macroeconomic Analysis and Development of the Republic of Slovenia (2017) stresses the need to ensure quality ageing for all generations, especially through intergenerational cooperation and integration. Fivush et al. (2011) point out that the quality of life and the future of the next generations depends on cooperation and coexistence between generations.

Hammer (2001) says: "learn to work together, with others", pointing to the importance of a critical-constructive relation. The rise of knowledge, information and communication technology and the culture of innovation consequently requires modernisation of the organisation of schools, the guidance processes of primary school pupils, as well as an approach and a way of enabling social actors to select educational pathways that will enable them to respond to change innovatively (Lubis et al., 2022). Kump (2008) and D'Allura (2019) point out that "in a society that is constantly changing due to new technologies and the increased mobility of people, it is extremely important that people have the opportunity to base their future on an understanding of the past". Older, experienced people, willing to share their knowledge, often talk about memories of work as a dream, which they pass on to young people as a motivational challenge. This is undoubtedly the added value of intergenerational cooperation in schools.

The Eurobarometer survey "Intergenerational Solidarity" (2009), in its section "The role of public services in promoting intergenerational solidarity", points out that schools should encourage better relations between young and old, and that local authorities should encourage initiatives and associations to bring young and old together more closely. More than six out of ten European Union citizens disagree that their government is raising awareness of better understanding between young and old in a good and effective way (Eurobarometer: 'Intergenerational solidarity' 2009). It would therefore be important to offer the possibility of involving older people in schools as career counsellors, which would also open the opportunity to develop intergenerational connection, despite the changes brought by the technological revolution, it puts the human, his or her welfare and well-being in the centre. In a study on teachers' reactions to the presence of older people in classrooms, Goulet et al. (2009) found that older people established a special relationship with young people, their presence also strengthened interactions (Hauley-Hague et al., 2016) and had a very positive effects on pupils' behaviour. Not only did the elders have a positive impact on classroom relationships, but they also had a positive impact on the whole school, which contributed to a good, healthy school climate.

The European Together Old and Young (TOY) study (2014), funded by the European Commission under the Lifelong Learning Programme, makes a similar point: the older generation is ageing well in the context of intergenerational connection with the younger generation. Intergenerational networking enables older generation to:

- be and feel mentally and physically active and useful;
- be and be valued;
- be and can contribute;
- have fun and can entertain others;
- develop self-confidence and respect;
- care for and be part of the future of the younger generation.

The intergenerational connection between the older and younger generations have influenced young people to feel comfortable in the company of the elderly, which has contributed to:

- maintaining and strengthening regular contact with the older generation; socialising is important as it slows down the pace of everyday life for the younger generation (compared to the fast-paced daily life they often have with their parents),
- learn about the past, traditions, and old games (Cortellesi & Kernan 2016).

In addition to the above-mentioned impacts on both generations, intergenerational networking reduces stereotypes about age (Wu, 2022), reveals and exposes the younger generation to the different stages of the life cycle, and introduces them to the values of sharing, solidarity, respect, and acceptance.

Based on the defined problem and the purpose of the research, the aim of the research is to investigate how the presentation of the older generation's professions influences primary school pupils' choice of profession as a prelude to the start of their career paths. Another question that arises is what can both the older and the younger generation gain.

2. Methodology

The research was carried out using quantitative analysis methods. The inductive-deductive method was used, which is based on reasoning from the particular to the general or vice versa - from the general to the particular, and the analytical method, which is used to break down phenomena into their individual parts and study them (Ambrož & Colarič-Jakše, 2015). SPSS version 20 was used for the statistical processing of the data. The resulting data were transcribed into a computer database. Using quantitative statistical methods, parameter estimates were calculated using the analysis, synthesis, and generalisation method. The measurement characteristics of the rating scale (reliability and validity) were established by calculating Cronbach's alpha coefficient. Basic statistical processing of the data (frequency distributions, descriptive statistics, and contingency tables) was carried out, followed by factor analysis to determine whether the observed variables could be combined and explained by a smaller number of variables - factors - to describe the association between the variables (Jesenko & Jesenko 2007). To determine the feasibility of used factor analysis, we used two statistical tests: the Bartlett's test of sphericity and the Kaiser-Meyer Olkin test, which determines the adequacy of the sample for factor analysis. Next, the principal components method was used to extract the factors, i.e. the combinations of variables that explained the most variability. A scree plot was used to check how many factors were reasonable to include in the model. This was followed by an analysis of the total value or communalities. A commonality of 1 means that the factors (variables) explain all the variability in the model. Pearson's correlation coefficient, which measures the degree of association between variables, was used to determine the relationship between the independent and dependent factors (variables). Factors (variables) that were eliminated in the factor analysis were used in the regression analysis. Multiple regression analysis was used to measure the influence of the independent (explanatory) variables on the dependent (response) variable, i.e. the results of the measurement were used to confirm or reject the hypotheses. Data were collected by means of a questionnaire. A pilot survey was conducted with 30 members of the younger generation to test the

quality of the questionnaire. The pilot study was used to determine the feasibility of the survey and the respondents' reactions to the content and time structure of the survey. Some questions needed to be more clearly and precisely defined or completed after data processing. The data were collected using a questionnaire. The questionnaire was personally distributed to 200 primary school pupils attending the 8th and 9th grade. Before starting the survey of primary school pupils, the consent of the head teachers at the primary schools and the written consent of the parents of the respondents were obtained. After approval, the questionnaires were personally taken to each classroom and the purpose and structure of the questionnaire were explained to the pupils in detail, also their anonymity was guaranteed. 200 completed questionnaires were collected. The respondents agreed to participate in the survey. The ethical principles of The World Association for Public Opinion Research (WAPOR, 2011) were followed in the administration of the survey.

2.1 Description of the instrument

Based on the theoretical construct, own measurement instrument was developed - a survey questionnaire. The compilation method to summarise the findings of renowned national and international scholars was used. Using the method of analysis, their findings were broken down into simpler, constituent parts, the essential building blocks of the theoretical construct of intergenerational learning in the career choice of primary school pupils. The questionnaire contains 14 questions, divided into several thematic sections. Several different scales were used to measure the views of the younger generation. Nominal, interval, and ordinal scales were used, which are used to measure phenomena in the social sciences. The questionnaire consists of demographic data about the respondents - gender, age and the grade attended (8th or 9th grade of primary school), followed by questions about the reasons for the decision and the choice of school after the 8th year. The next question measured primary school pupils' views on the influence of the older generation on their decision to choose a career or to continue their education, and on intergenerational connections with the older generation in terms of the older generation giving advice on career choices and career paths, using Likert scale statements. This was followed by questions on learning about professions - where and how they learn about professions and schools that train for a particular profession, and whether they would like to see different presentations. Furthermore, it was investigated whether presenting the professions of the older generation from their own experience "in person" would have helped respondents to make a better decision about their choice of profession and their career path. This was followed by a question regarding the need for an additional elective subject "Choice of Profession" in the curricula of primary schools, where older people would present their professions and help young people to choose and decide on their future career path through intergenerational cooperation. The reliability of the questionnaire was established by Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient. In question 14 on the attitudes of the surveyed primary school pupils towards the presentation of professions represented by members of the older generation, 8 statements were made. The reliability value was 0.846, which qualifies as "good" reliability and internal consistency of the individual factors.

2.2 Description of the sample

The sample consisted of 200 primary school pupils in 8th and 9th grade. The survey included primary schools in the Central-Slovenian region. After obtaining the prior consent of the primary school authorities and the parents of the pupils surveyed, a survey of pupils in 8th and 9th grade was carried out in four randomly selected primary schools. 97 girls and 103 boys answered the questions. The youngest respondent (1 or 0.5%) is 12 years old, the majority of primary school pupils surveyed is 13 years old (106 or 53%), followed by primary school pupils aged 14 (79), representing 39.5% of the total respondents, and 7% or 14 pupils are aged 15 years old. 59% or 119 of all respondents attend 8th grade and 41% or 81 students attend 9th grade.

3. Results

The study investigated whether the presentation of the older generation's professions influences the younger generation's choice of profession and what impact it has on intergenerational cohesion.

63% of primary school pupils believe they could make better career choices if they were introduced to the profession by personal experience of the older generation. 50% of all respondents would like to bind with the older generation through a presentation of their profession and experiences. More than half of the respondents (62% or 124) would like to have an elective subject in primary school on "Choice of Profession".

Furthermore, a Likert scale (8 items) was used to determine the attitudes of primary school pupils towards the presentation of the profession of the older generation. The reliability coefficient for the above statements on the presentation of the profession of the older generation was (Cronbach's Alpha) 0.846. This value indicates good reliability and allows the variables to be combined. The reliability test showed that a single factor structure is the most appropriate (KMO = 0.851), which means that the indicators form a single component. The component is (I would be happy to listen to what they have to say; I would find it interesting, different; I would learn something; I would find it easier to decide on a career, school; I would meet role models for my own age; I would have a positive attitude towards the older generation; I would feel good around the older generation; I would learn about the experiences and wisdom of the older generation). We called the component "introducing the profession of the older generation to primary school pupils".

Table 1: Correlation matrix of the factors of enrolment in the eighth or ninth grade of primary school, the desire for different presentations of professions, the presentation of professions by the older generation, and the desire for the elective subject "Choice of Profession" - Pearson's correlation coefficient according to the respondents of the younger generation

		Which grade of primary school do you attend?	Would you like to see other ways of presenting professions, schools?	Imagine your profession being passed on to you by an older generation through their own experience	Would you like to have an elective subject at school "Choice of Profession", where you would learn about professions?
Which grade of primary school do you attend?	Pear.Corr.	1	0,128	0,085	0,137
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0,072	0,231	0,054
	N	200	197	200	199
Would you like to see other ways of presenting professions, schools?	Pear.Corr.	0,128	1	0,148*	0,167*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,072		0,038	0,019
	N	197	197	197	196
Imagine your profession being passed on to you by an older generation through their own experience.	Pear.Corr.	0,085	0,148*	1	0,174*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,231	0,038		0,014
	N	200	197	200	199
Would you like to have an elective subject at school "Choice of Profession", where you would learn about professions?	Pear.Corr.	0,137	0,167*	0,174*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,054	0,019	0,014	
	N	199	196	199	199

Source: The authors

Calculating the Pearson correlation coefficient, a weak correlation between "older generation's presentation of professions" and the desire for the elective subject "Choice of Profession" ($r = 0.174$) and a weak correlation between the desire for "different presentation of professions" and the desire for the elective subject "Choice of Profession" ($r = 0.167$) (Table 1) can be seen.

Table 2: Interaction between regression coefficients on the older generation's presentation of professions and young people's ease of decision-making for further education or career

Model	Unstandardised regression coefficient		Standardised regression coefficient	t	Sig.
	B	Std. error	Beta		
1	Constant			14,163	0,000
	Introducing the profession of the older generation		-0,355	-5,326	0,000

Dependent variable: facilitating young people's decision to pursue further education or a career.

Source: The authors

Table 3: Summary of the linear regression model: the impact of the older generation's presentation of professions on young people's ease of decision-making for further education or a career

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. estimation error
1	0,355	0,126	0,121	0,45287

Legend: R² - coefficient of determination

Source: The authors

The percentage of explained variance is 12.1%, which means that the independent variable explains the dependent variable well. The regression analysis carried out shows that primary school pupils think that **the presentation of professions of the older generation** (-0.355) has an impact on **young people's ability to make decisions about further education or careers**.

Table 4: Interaction between regression coefficients of the older generation's profession presentation and the choice of the elective subject "Choice of profession"

Model	Unstandardised regression coefficient		Standardised regression coefficient	t	Sig.
	B	Std. error	Beta		
1	Constant			13,490	0,000
	profession presentation by the older generation		-0,323	-4,786	0,000

Dependent variable: choice of the elective subject "Choice of Profession"

Source: The authors

Table 5: Summary of the linear regression model: the impact of the presentation of the profession of the older generation on the choice of the elective subject "Choice of Profession"

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. estimation error
1	0,323 ^a	0,105	0,100	0,46134

Legend: R² - coefficient of determination

Source: The authors

The percentage of explained variance is 10.0%, which means that the independent variable explains the dependent variable well. From the regression analysis carried out, it can be seen that primary school pupils think that **"Presentation of the professions of the older generation"** (-0.323) has an

impact on the choice of the elective subject "Choice of Profession".

Table 6: Interaction of regression coefficients on the presentation of the profession of the older generation and the association with the older generation

Model	Unstandardised regression coefficient		Standardised regression coefficient	t	Sig.
	B	Std. error	Beta		
1 Constant	2,039	0,234		8,731	0,000
1 Presentation of professions	-0,211	0,044	-0,324	-4,738	0,000

Dependent variable: connection to the older generation

Source: The authors

Table 7: Summary of the linear regression model: the impact of the presentation of the older generation's profession on the association with the older generation

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. estimation error
1	0,345 ^a	0,119	0,105	0,47417

Legend: R² - coefficient of determination

Source: The authors

The percentage of explained variance is 10.5%, which means that the independent variable explains the dependent variable well. From the regression analysis carried out, it can be seen that primary school pupils think that "Presentation of the older generation's profession" (-0.324) has an impact on "Connection with the older generation".

4. Discussion

Science has documented that a thorough preparation for a career orientation is 90% of the success itself (Maurer et al., 2017). Such preparation, of course, requires an in-depth approach, leading to reflection on what kind of challenge appeals to the young person, what kind of experience he or she wants, based on which experiences and memories he or she is attracted to such a challenge, and, finally, whether it is a career orientation for which he or she has the right skills.

The way we approach the younger generation is also important. It is a question of whether the knowledge transferer has the appropriate communication and professional skills, whether he or she is able to awake the young person's interest in the short as well as in the long term. It is a question of delivering knowledge in a constructive way that allows the younger generation an equal position in the communication. The strategy for presenting the profession should therefore be important and should be adapted to the level of knowledge and readiness of young people to learn of different professions. It would therefore be more than welcome to obtain additional information on educational programmes and professions also through the presentation of the professions of the expert older generation - i.e. those older people who have been successful in their profession. This would strengthen intergenerational connection, as primary school pupils would develop positive interpersonal relations in addition to knowledge about professions. The results of the survey confirm the above, but the question arises as to which members of the older generation are willing and able to communicate their experience and knowledge in a way that will be interesting, helpful, and beneficial for the younger generation when deciding on a career. Therefore, it would be worth to further explore the criteria used by young people to decide on their own career paths and the actual impact

and effectiveness of presenting careers by the older generation.

We are talking about the fact that we are living in a time of change - especially global change. We are talking about the fact that the share of younger people is decreasing - we have one of the lowest proportions of young people in the population, while the proportion of older people is rising, therefore we are confronted with new challenges. Given the fact that longevity is rising, and it is essential to take care of the quality ageing of the elderly, we need well-educated young people who will be able to do their part in taking care of this largest minority in society. We are therefore talking about the importance of appropriate approaches to the presentation of professions, so that they are able to gear towards deficit professions. At the same time, the reintegration of the elderly requires an organisation that does not reintegrate the elderly at the expense of employment possibilities of the younger population; it is therefore a question of making the best use of the structural and human capital of all generations. This is the only way for older people to develop vitality on the one hand and contribute to the social capital of society on the other. Such a targeted presentation of professions (for life) to young people justifies the decision to place the presentation of professions (an elective subject) in primary schools, because only this would contribute to the familiarization and popularization of the profession among young people.

This suggests that the "desire for a different presentation of the profession and schools" (58.5%) of the younger generation needs to be considered. This means that primary school pupils are not satisfied with the most established, routine approaches. They want more. They want an experiential, highly professional, even scientific presentation of the kaleidoscope of professions that have existed in the past and that are going to challenge new professions in the future. The individuality of young people, their desire for progressive integration, for freedom and equality, and the likelihood that they will be introduced to an employable profession are of extreme importance for their career choice.

From the results of the frequency distribution of the statements in the "intergenerational integration" strand of the younger generation, it can be concluded that, in the aspect of intergenerational issues, intergenerational integration as a presentation of the profession (50.0%) is one of the factors for systematic education and training of the younger generation. It is the connection of the generations that will enable the transfer of knowledge and experience on one hand, and insight into ageing and old age on the other. Relationships between young and old are often recognised as strained - it is worrying that no change for the better is expected (Sato et al., 2012). Appropriate strategies, methods and forms of intergenerational coexistence will need to be developed (Flogie et al., 2013). In our research, we focus on the development of relevant pedagogical strategies where presentations of professions could be one of the ways to realise intergenerational coexistence. Intergenerational cooperation is also important because of the multiplicity of changes, which are not only political but also social and personal. We are also witnessing this problem on the Slovenian level, whereby it can be linked to poor intergenerational integration and multifaceted professional insight. We are making lump-sum decisions that do not in any way encourage young people to engage in intergenerational cooperation. The quality of life for all is diminished, with drastic consequences not only for intergenerational relations and the effects of work processes, but also for the extremely slow pace of building bridges between the generations.

The frequency distribution of the statements in the "elective subject - Choice of Profession" strand of the younger generation is based on these facts. More than half of the respondents (62%) would like to have an elective subject "Choice of Profession" in primary school, where they would learn about professions. This means that young people are not satisfied with the information they receive about professions in their current practice and that they would want a different, innovative approach of learning about and presenting professions. Introducing the older to the younger generation in the context of the elective subject "Choice of Profession" would also provide insights and knowledge about the generations and represent one of the new forms and methods of work in intergenerational pedagogy. The paradigm of participative management emphasises the importance of involving all generations in work processes, as the development of new approaches requires the experience of the old and the curiosity of the young. This can be stimulated by the elective subject

"Choice of Profession".

The foregoing is also supported by the results of the descriptive statistics of the statements in the "importance of introducing the older generation's profession to primary school pupils" strand of the younger respondents, where the average statement is that "young people would be happy to listen to older people". Respondents were of the same opinion that the presentation of the profession of the older generation to primary school pupils is important, as it conveys the importance of knowledge and experience that represent a successful career path, and, at the same time, it is an opportunity to transfer knowledge from one generation to another. The presentation of the profession was identified as a successful way of connecting generations and intergenerational knowledge. The new configuration of professions should be based on a matrix similar to the network of elements of previous family forms, based on survival, social and economic foundations (Kristančič, 2005) and on the standpoints of the respondents of the younger generation.

From the summary of the key findings and results of the survey conducted among 8th and 9th grade primary school pupils, in the final stage, we used statistical modelling to build a model of the presentation of the profession of the older generation on primary school pupils' career choices and intergenerational connection.

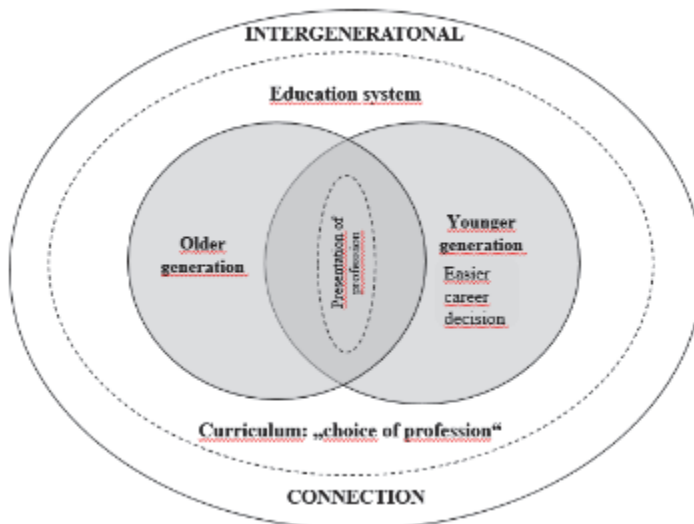


Figure 1: Model of the impact of the presentation of the profession of the older generation on primary school pupils' career choices and intergenerational connection from the perspective of primary school pupils

Source: The authors

The figure illustrates the importance of presentation of the profession by the older to younger generations, which eases their career choices and intergenerational connection. Interestingly, the same argument can be found in a study (Aemmi & Moonaghi, 2017) where the authors identify the impact of the transfer of knowledge, skills and competences or wisdom, norms, and values between generations. They found that intergenerational learning is one of the opportunities for lifelong learning and sharing of knowledge and experiences among generations. The authors (Sanchez et al., 2017) also note that the transfer of knowledge and experience is an effective means of acquiring new skills and enhancing children's self-activity, as well as an opportunity for young people to learn about and for old age. This shapes their awareness and influences the way they age and if they age

successfully and well. The authors argue that primary schools are ideal contact points for the establishment of genuine intergenerational relations leading to a better intergenerational connection. The results of our research confirm these facts.

According to primary school pupils the presentation of the profession by the older to the younger generation also impacts the connection with the older generation. Intergenerational learning is more than just learning. It emphasises reciprocity, transmission of values, joint participation and encourages intergenerational activity, challenging assumptions, judgements and responding to the phenomena of ageism (Costa et al., 2019). Intergenerational learning changes intergenerational relations, leading to a better connectedness between generations, which is also in line with Knapp & Stubblefield's (2010) research on the impact of intergenerational learning on changing younger generations' attitudes towards age and ageing. The authors argue that intergenerational learning has contributed to a more realistic view of ageing and fostered more positive attitudes towards older people among the younger generation. Blieszner & Artale (2010) argue that the younger generation highlighted the benefits of intergenerational learning as service learning in choosing their own career paths and in overcoming myths and stereotypes about age and ageing, suggesting that intergenerational learning is one of the most important factors in connecting with the older generation. These facts confirm the findings of our survey among primary school pupils.

5. Conclusion

The demographic and social changes affect all generations. As longevity increases, we often see a rise in alienation and individualism. The new configuration of attitudes calls for a new network of education, including at the primary school level. We will call it a matrix since it contains elements of previous forms of education up to new forms of knowledge transfer. Generations differ in their thinking, habits and values, and each generation represents a rich source of knowledge and experience that provides a useful basis for the development of the next generation. This justifies the inclusion in the primary education system of an optional subject called 'Choice a Profession', which would enable primary school pupils to learn about different professions from members of the older generation. Through presentations of the older generation's profession, primary school pupils would gain a concrete set of valuable information, skills, and experience, which would help to empower them to make a better career choice and further education. Through the presentation of professions an intergenerational dialogue is created, resulting in intergenerational learning and a change in attitudes towards the older generation, resulting in a greater connection between the younger and the older generation.

This new approach is not just an investment in knowledge, but a move towards a new, systematically restructured curriculum that would present young people with the possibilities in a new, plastic, and interesting way for their development through a career path. By all means, the introduction of a new subject is a higher level of complexity in addressing the problem of young people's professional orientation. It is about new algorithms that would reinforce the connections between generations and stimulate often forgotten sources of knowledge and experience.

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