



Analysis of career attitudes and ethnic identity of modern youth: implications for education and career counselling

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Abstract. *Introduction.* In the context of the polyethnic metropolises of the Russian Federation, the interaction between ethnic identity and the career-related orientations of young people assumes particular theoretical and practical significance. This is due to the intensification of intercultural contact and the shift towards a subject-centred approach to designing life and professional trajectories in early adulthood. *Aim.* The study aims to identify the structural components of ethnic identity and career orientations among contemporary youth residing in two polyethnic regions of Russia – St Petersburg and Kazan – and to analyse their variability in relation to individual psychological and sociocultural factors. *Methodology and research methods.* The empirical foundation of the study comprised a sample of 323 respondents aged 18 to 35 years. The diagnostic battery included the “Types of Ethnic Identity” inventory, the “Express Scale for Assessing Ethnic Identity Salience”, and the “Express Scale for Assessing Feelings Related to Ethnic Belonging”. Career orientations were measured using the “Career Crafting Assessment” questionnaire and the “Career Anchors Inventory”. Statistical data were analysed using factor analysis, correlation analysis, and comparative analysis. *Results.* The analysis confirms the multidimensional nature of ethnic identity as a construct comparable in complexity to the system of career orientations. Six factors integrating career and cultural value dimensions were identified within the empirical framework. It was established that constructive (positive) forms of ethnic identity are positively associated with proactive and adaptive career behaviour strategies, whereas diffuse, ambivalent, or hypertrophied forms are linked to rigid and restricted patterns of professional self-determination. *Scientific novelty.* The structural profiles of ethnic identity and career orientations were systematically compared in a Russian sample drawn from two regions differing in ethnocultural context. Gender differences were evident, with women significantly more oriented towards prosocial and altruistic-service values in their careers, whereas men tended to focus on solving complex, non-trivial professional tasks. At the same time, ethnic identity may both reinforce fundamental gender patterns and act as a moderator of their substantive content. *Practical significance.* The findings refine and enhance existing theoretical models of professional development by incorporating cultural, ethnic, and gender dimensions. The results emphasise the necessity of implementing culturally sensitive approaches in career counselling practice, higher and further professional education programmes, and the human resources policies of organisations operating within multicultural environments.

Keywords: ethnic identity, career orientations, proactive behaviour, youth, subject-based design of professional trajectory, polyethnic region, intercultural differences, gender differences, career counselling

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Анализ профессиональных установок и этнической идентификации современной молодежи: вклад в образование и профессиональное консультирование

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Аннотация. Введение. В условиях полиэтничных мегаполисов Российской Федерации взаимодействие этнической идентичности и профессионально-карьерных ориентаций молодежи приобретает особую теоретическую и прикладную значимость, что обусловлено интенсификацией межкультурных контактов и переходом к субъектному проектированию жизненного и профессионального маршрута в раннем взрослом возрасте. Цель. Исследование направлено на выявление структурных компонентов этнической идентичности и карьерных установок у современной молодежи, проживающей в двух полиэтничных регионах России (Санкт-Петербург и Казань), а также на анализ их вариативности в зависимости от индивидуально-психологических и социокультурных факторов. Методология, методы и методики. Эмпирическая база исследования сформирована на выборке из 323 респондентов в возрасте 18–35 лет. Диагностический комплекс включал в себя методику «Типы этнической идентичности», «Шкалу экспресс-оценки выраженности этнической идентичности» и «Шкалу экспресс-оценки чувств, связанных с этнической принадлежностью»; для измерения карьерных ориентаций применялись «Опросник для оценки проактивного конструирования (крафтинга) карьеры», а также «Опросник якорей карьеры». Статистическая обработка данных выполнялась с использованием методов факторного, корреляционного и сравнительного анализа. Результаты. Проведенный анализ подтверждает многомерную природу этнической идентичности как конструкта, сопоставимого по сложности с системой карьерных ориентаций. В эмпирической структуре выделены шесть факторов, интегрирующих карьерные и культурно-цен-

ностные измерения. Установлено, что конструктивные (позитивные) формы этнической идентичности положительно ассоциированы с проактивными и адаптивными стратегиями карьерного поведения, тогда как диффузные, амбивалентные или гипертрофированные формы сопряжены с ригидными и ограниченными паттернами профессионального самоопределения. *Научная новизна.* На российской выборке из двух различных по этнокультурному контексту регионов системно сопоставлены структурные профили этнической идентичности и карьерных установок. Показано, что гендерные различия проявляются в том, что женщины значимо чаще ориентированы на про-социальные и альтруистически-служебные ценности в карьере, тогда как мужчины – на решение сложных, нетривиальных профессиональных задач; при этом этническая идентичность может как усиливать базовые гендерные паттерны, так и выступать модератором их содержательного наполнения. *Практическая значимость.* Полученные данные уточняют и дополняют существующие теоретические модели профессионального развития за счет включения культурно-этнического и гендерного измерений. Результаты обосновывают необходимость внедрения культурно-чувствительных подходов в практику карьерного консультирования, программы высшего и дополнительного профессионального образования, а также в кадровую политику организаций, функционирующих в мультикультурной среде.

Ключевые слова: этническая идентичность, карьерные ориентации, проактивное поведение, молодежь, субъектное проектирование профессионального маршрута, полиэтнический регион, межкультурные различия, гендерные различия, карьерное консультирование

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Introduction

In Russia's multicultural and multi-ethnic metropolitan areas (such as St Petersburg and Kazan), young people simultaneously construct their professional trajectories and make sense of their ethnic belonging. This makes the intersection of ethnic identity and career orientations a critically important domain for education and career guidance systems. The relevance of this topic is driven by several factors. First, the growing intensity of intercultural contact in educational settings and labour markets – particularly in Russia's multi-ethnic metropolitan areas such as St Petersburg and Kazan – has elevated the importance of cultural competence, tolerance, and flexibility as essential resources for young people navigating professional environments. Second, there has been a noticeable transition from traditional, linear career models towards proactive career construction (career crafting). In this emerging paradigm, young individuals actively design their professional paths based on personal values, identities, and priorities, making the role of subjective meaning-making central to career development. Third, the risk of marginalisation or the formation of diffuse and conflictual forms of ethnic identity presents a critical concern. Such identity configurations may constrain

career agency by narrowing perceived occupational options, reinforcing avoidance behaviours, and reducing confidence and initiative.

In the context of rapid societal transformation, driven by technological progress, new professional paradigms, and the integration of automated systems, the study of human psychological adaptation has become increasingly important. These changes occur against a backdrop of wider societal shifts, including technological advancement, evolving professional landscapes, and growing automation. For young people, the intersection of identity exploration and career attitudes is especially consequential, as they face labour market entry under conditions of declining motivation, reduced resilience, and limited awareness of personal contribution.

Cultural, ethnic, and religious contexts function as key forces in shaping worldviews, self-concepts, and developmental trajectories – particularly during youth, a critical period for identity formation. Contemporary society, however, is characterised by a growing tension between traditional expectations regarding professional aspirations and the new realities of career development, which demand adaptability, autonomy, and self-directed growth. These contradictions outline the conceptual background for examining how identity and career attitudes are shaped among youth today.

Thus, examining how specific forms of ethnic identity (constructive vs diffuse/extreme) are linked to proactive, or conversely constraining, career orientations is highly relevant both for the psychology of education and for career counselling practice. The proposed topic offers several important innovative contributions: integration of two research domains – ethnic identity and career behaviour are usually studied separately. Here, the focus shifts to their interrelation: a multidimensional structure of ethnic identity is considered (constructive, diffuse, conflictual, and hyper-identity forms). Proactive career orientations are analysed in parallel (career crafting, career anchors, and orientations towards development, service, power, stability, etc.).

Together, these factors underscore the importance of examining how specific forms of ethnic identity – constructive versus diffuse or extreme – relate to proactive or constrained career orientations. Such an inquiry holds significant value for both the psychology of education and the practice of career counselling, offering a foundation for more culturally sensitive, empirically grounded approaches to supporting young people in multi-ethnic urban environments.

Literature Review

Contemporary youth perceive, interpret, and respond to the world in fundamentally new ways, as N. M. Kropachev, S. D. Gurieva, A. V. Maltseva et al. [1] point out. A. V. Maltseva and N. E. Shilkina [2] confirm that defining feature of their identity formation is access to diverse information sources and life trajectories, creating a dynamic and evolving worldview rather than a fixed and predetermined reality. Central to this developmental process are self-determination, existential

meaning, and personal identity, which shape behavioural patterns, social interactions, and professional aspirations.

J. Potter [3] argues that, career building is a multifaceted process that involves acquiring knowledge, technical competencies, adaptability, initiative, and interpersonal skills. In modern society, influenced by postmodern cultural trends, there is increasing emphasis on self-actualisation and the authenticity of professional experience. Within this context, analysing how career attitudes are shaped by the interaction of individual self-determination and sociocultural factors, particularly ethnic identity, becomes crucial for understanding professional development in multicultural societies.

Classical career models have significantly contributed to the understanding of professional growth, career anchors, and agency, as demonstrated by E. H. Schein [4, 5], J. P. Briscoe, D. T. Hall and R. L. F. DeMuth [6], and J. M. Crant [7]. However, they rarely take into account sociocultural contexts and identity-based motives, which are crucial for linking career development with identity formation. Recent theoretical advances emphasise that identity is not only a personal construct, as M. L. Savickas [8] argues, but also a sociocultural one, influenced by collective values, traditions, and expectations, as D. Oyserman [9] points out. Ethnic identity plays a central role in this respect, encompassing psychological dimensions such as belonging, identification, emotional attachment, and perceptions of interethnic boundaries, as well as cultural dimensions, including shared practices, language, and historical heritage, as discussed by G. U. Soldatova [10], N. Petrović [11], M. Z. Booth, E. M. Curran, C. J. Frey et al. [12], and S. D. Brow, K. A. Unger Hu, A. A. Mevi et al. [13].

Z. S. Akbieva and Z. G. Gamzatova [14] argue that positive ethnic identity can support career growth, while ethno-isolationism, ethno-egoism, and ethnofanaticism may hinder it. Y. H. Kim and N. Y. Choi [15] confirm that cross-cultural studies show that ethnic identity mediates career development: constructive identity fosters curiosity and self-efficacy in decision-making [15], but other authors, for example A. Newman, I. Nielsen, R. Smyth et al. [16] believe that diffuse or extreme forms obstruct adaptive strategies. C. Baker [17] argues that, these dynamics are particularly important in volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) environments, where professionals must balance adaptability with the preservation of cultural identity.

R. M. Oosthuizen, M. Coetzee and F. Mntonintshi [18] confirm that career preferences and metacompetencies vary across age and ethnic groups. Moreover, factors such as industry characteristics, career stage, and demographic variables strongly influence career attitudes. N. V. Volkova and V. A. Chiker [19] highlighted the contextual dependence of career orientations on professional fields and demographic profiles, while N. V. Vasina, M. V. Buchatskaya and M. V. Kapranova [20] demonstrated close links between career attitudes and professional activity content, motivational structures, personality traits, and social orientation.

Ethnic identity itself manifests in diverse forms, ranging from hyperidentity (ethnophanatism, ethnoegoism, ethnoisolationism) to hypoidentity (ethnonihilism, ethnic indifference). These variations serve as indicators of both the psychological state of society and the condition of inter-ethnic relations, as S. D. Gurieva [21] highlights. Evidence from Serbia shows that political shifts affect inter-ethnic relations, which in turn shape ethnic self-identification and attitudes towards out-groups, as discussed by G. Bašić [22], M. Biro, V. Mihić, P. Milin et al. [23], M. Biro and P. Milin [24], J. Đurić [25], and J. Živković [26].

N. V. Vyazova and V. M. Melekhova [27] demonstrated that understanding “one’s place in the world” fosters stability and security, thereby shaping attitudes towards personal and professional growth. N. V. Murashchenkova, V. V. Gritsenko, N. V. Kalinina et al. [28] confirmed the links between cognitive and emotional components of ethnic, civic, and global identities and the migration activity of students seeking career alignment and professional self-determination. Yet, there remains a gap between the growing body of empirical research on identity, adaptation, and acculturation processes, and the development of theoretical models capable of systematising these findings and clarifying the mechanisms connecting identity with career orientations, as T. A. Kinunen and S. D. Gurieva [29] argue.

Accordingly, this study aims to identify the structure of ethnic identity and career attitudes among contemporary youth and to analyse their manifestations in the context of individual and sociocultural characteristics. The hypotheses are: (1) viewing ethnic identity as a multidimensional construct will yield factor groupings that can be examined in relation to youth career attitudes; (2) sex differences exist in levels of ethnic identity and career attitudes; (3) the expression of ethnic identity, proactive career behaviour, and career attitudes differs across types of ethnic identification.

Methodology, Materials and Methods

Participants and procedure. The study was approved by the St Petersburg State University Ethics Committee (Protocol No. 115-02-6, 18 September 2024) and conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki (1964, latest revision). It was supported by St Petersburg State University (project code 124032600013-2). Data were collected via an online survey (Google Forms). Participants were informed about the study’s objectives, procedures and confidentiality guarantees, and provided electronic informed consent. Participation was voluntary and anonymous.

The study included 323 respondents aged 18–35 years ($M \approx 25$), including 154 participants from St Petersburg (99 female, 55 male) and 169 from Kazan (111 female, 58 male). The sample showed a relatively balanced distribution between the two cities, although women and younger participants (18–24 years) were predominant. Recruitment was based on convenience sampling among students and young professionals through student groups, social media, and professional contacts. The sample is non-representative, as it was formed based on the accessibility of respondents, in accordance with the objectives and goals of the study. In this regard,

the results should be interpreted as reflecting the characteristics of this particular sample, rather than the entire population. Random selection, stratification, and quota control were not applied; therefore, the sample is regarded as a non-probability convenience sample, and statistical representativeness is not claimed.

Assessment of sample bias was conducted to ensure correct interpretation of the results. According to Petrostat¹ data, the population of young people aged 18–35 in Saint Petersburg is 677,661; according to Tatarstanstat², in Kazan it is 365,224. The calculation of the minimum sample size using the simple random sampling formula ($Z = 1.96$; $p = 0.5$; $\varepsilon = 0.08$) yielded $n \approx 151$ approx. and $n \approx 151$ for both cities; the finite population correction is negligible. The study included 154 respondents in Saint Petersburg and 169 in Kazan. Comparison with the target populations revealed a gender bias: the proportion of women in the samples (64% and 66%) exceeds the population figures (53% and 52%). The samples are not representative for estimating absolute population parameters, but the use of snowball sampling aimed to identify relationships rather than to produce population estimates. For such correlational purposes, this kind of bias is acceptable provided that gender is controlled for in the analysis. A margin of error of 8% and a sample size of about 150 respondents are standard for pilot and correlational studies.

Supplementary Table A reports the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. City of residence was recorded for descriptive purposes only and was not included in hypothesis testing.

Instruments. A set of standardised and adapted psychodiagnostic tools was used to assess ethnic identity, career attitudes, and proactive career behaviour. All instruments were administered in Russian via an online questionnaire, using validated versions for Russian-speaking populations. Internal consistency was satisfactory, with Cronbach's α ranging from .72 to .89.

Socio-demographic questionnaire. A researcher-developed form collected self-reported sex, age, education, city of residence, ethnicity, socio-economic status, and marital status. Education, income, and marital status were recorded for descriptive purposes only and excluded from the main analyses.

Ethnic identity. Three instruments were applied:

- *Types of Ethnic Identity Scale* by G. U. Soldatova [10]: 30 items, 5-point Likert, assessing six identity forms: ethno-nihilism, ethno-indifference, normative (positive) identity, ethno-egoism, ethno-isolationism, and ethno-fanaticism.
- *Scale of Rapid Assessment of Ethnic Identity Expression* by A. N. Tatarko and N. M. Lebedeva [30]: evaluates the degree of ethnic identity salience on a 5-point Likert scale.
- *Express Assessment Scale of Feelings Related to Ethnicity* by A. N. Tatarko and N. M. Lebedeva [30]: 8 items, 5-point Likert, measuring emotional aspects of ethnic identity (e.g. pride, comfort, tension).

¹ https://78.rosstat.gov.ru/storage/mediabank/14001024_%D0%92%D0%BE%D0%B7%D1%80%D0%B0%D1%81%D1%82-%D0%BF%D0%BE%D0%BB%20%D0%BD%D0%B0%D1%81%20%D0%A1%D0%9F%D0%B1%202024.pdf

² [https://16.rosstat.gov.ru/storage/mediabank/%D0%95%D0%B6%D0%B5%D0%B3%D0%BE%D0%B4%D0%B%D0%B8%D0%BA_2024%20%D0%BD%D0%B0%20%D1%81%D0%B0%D0%B9%D1%82\(1\).pdf](https://16.rosstat.gov.ru/storage/mediabank/%D0%95%D0%B6%D0%B5%D0%B3%D0%BE%D0%B4%D0%B%D0%B8%D0%BA_2024%20%D0%BD%D0%B0%20%D1%81%D0%B0%D0%B9%D1%82(1).pdf)

Career attitudes and behaviour, two instruments were employed:

- *Questionnaire for Assessing Proactive Career Construction (Crafting)* by J. Y. Lee, C. L. Chen, E. Kolokowsky et al. [31]: assesses proactive career behaviour across four dimensions: expansion beyond the work environment, use of relationships, reflection on the role of career, and task expansion.
- *Career Anchors Inventory* by E. H. Schein [4]: identifies dominant career motivations across nine anchors: professional competence, managerial competence, autonomy, job security, residential stability, service, challenge, lifestyle integration, and entrepreneurship [4].

Statistical methods. Analyses included exploratory factor analysis (EFA, Varimax rotation), descriptive statistics, frequency distributions, Mann–Whitney *U* tests, and Spearman’s rank-order correlations (ρ) to examine intergroup differences and variable associations. Given that several variables were measured on ordinal (Likert-type) scales, non-parametric tests were selected to avoid assumptions of normality and homogeneity of variance. To complement significance testing, effect sizes (Cohen’s *d*, *r*, and Cliff’s δ) were calculated to assess the practical significance of group differences. Sampling adequacy was evaluated with the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) measure, and Bartlett’s test of sphericity confirmed suitability for factor analysis. All analyses were conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics 26.0 and Microsoft Excel.

Results

For clarity, findings are presented according to the study’s hypotheses: (H1) the factor structure linking ethnic identity and career attitudes, (H2) male–female differences in ethnic identity and career attitudes, and (H3) associations between ethnic identity, proactive career behaviour, and career attitudes.

Factor Structure Linking Ethnic Identity and Career Attitudes

Hypothesis 1 predicted that treating ethnic identity as a multidimensional construct would yield factor groupings relevant to youth career attitudes. To test this, we examined whether indicators of ethnic identity and career attitudes formed coherent latent structures. An exploratory factor analysis (EFA, Varimax rotation) was conducted to identify the joint factor solution. For ease of interpretation, the extracted components are hereafter referred to as *factors*.

Internal consistency of the instruments was satisfactory (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .72-.89$). Sampling adequacy was confirmed (KMO = .837), and Bartlett’s test of sphericity was significant, $\chi^2 (231) = 5223.32, p < .001$ (Table 1).

Table 1

Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin Measure and Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity

Measure	Value
Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin measure of sampling adequacy	.837
Bartlett’s test of sphericity	$\chi^2 (231) = 5223.32$
<i>p</i> -value	< .001

A six-factor solution was retained, explaining 72% of the variance. The factors were interpreted as: (1) Work and Career Development, (2) Centripetal Forces, (3) Business and Challenges, (4) Positive Emotional Connection to One's People, (5) Stable Work and Life, and (6) Integration and Autonomy (see Table 2 for brief descriptions). Full loadings are provided in Supplementary Table B.

Table 2

Factors and descriptions

Factor Name	Description
1. Work and Career Development	Represents career advancement, recognition of work as a positive value, expansion beyond immediate tasks, and active engagement in professional activities.
2. Centripetal Forces	Defined by ethno-isolationism, ethno-egoism, and ethno-fanaticism combined with low ethno-indifference, reflecting ethnic exclusivity and in-group favouritism.
3. Business and Challenges	Captures entrepreneurial orientation, managerial competence, willingness to face challenges, and autonomy.
4. Positive Emotional Connection to One's People	Indicates positive ethnic identity and emotional belonging to one's group, negatively associated with ethno-nihilism.
5. Stable Work and Life	Reflects professional competence and perceived stability across work and life domains.
6. Integration and Autonomy	Represents the integration of work and personal life, coupled with autonomy and overall life stability.

The identification of six distinct factors supports Hypothesis 1, demonstrating that the multidimensional conceptualisation of ethnic identity permits the identification of meaningful groupings linked to youth career attitudes.

Male–Female Differences in Ethnic Identity and Career Attitudes

Hypothesis 2 predicted sex-based differences in ethnic identity and career attitudes. Given that several variables were measured on ordinal (Likert-type) scales, the Mann–Whitney *U* test was employed to minimise assumptions regarding normality and homogeneity of variance. To complement significance testing, we calculated effect size indices suitable for nonparametric data (*r* and Cliff's *δ*). For ease of interpretation, Cohen's *d* was additionally reported, as it provides a widely recognised benchmark for evaluating the magnitude of group differences, despite being based on parametric assumptions.

Mann–Whitney *U* tests (Table 3) showed that:

- (1) Male participants scored higher on ethno-fanaticism ($p = .019$) and showed a trend towards higher ethno-isolationism ($p = .057$);
- (2) Female participants reported stronger proactivity (“going beyond work tasks”) and greater service orientation ($p = .010$), while men were more oriented towards challenge-seeking and solving intractable problems ($p < .05$).

Table 3
 Results of the Mann–Whitney *U* test comparing ethnic identity and career attitudes between male and female participants

Variable	Female (N=210) Mean Rank	Male (N=113) Mean Rank	<i>p</i>	Effect size (<i>r</i>)	Cohen's <i>d</i>	Cliff's δ
Ethno-isolationism	154.92	175.16	.057*	.11	0.21	–0.11
Ethno-fanaticism	153.14	178.47	.019	.15	0.30	–0.15
Going beyond work tasks	169.47	148.12	.049	.12	0.24	0.12
Service	174.74	138.33	.010	.18	0.36	0.18
Challenge	153.17	178.42	.020	.14	0.28	–0.14

Note. **p* < .10 indicates trend-level significance. Effect-size heuristics: *r* ~ .10 small, ~.30 medium; Cohen's *d* ~0.2 small, ~0.5 medium; Cliff's δ $\pm$ 0.11 small, $\pm$ 0.28 medium. Signs of δ reflect the direction of the female–male difference.

Effect sizes ranged from small to approaching moderate. For instance, the difference between men and women in Service orientation showed a small-to-moderate effect (*d* = 0.36, δ = 0.18), pointing to a practically meaningful tendency towards stronger prosocial orientation among female participants.

These findings support Hypothesis 2, confirming that levels of ethnic identity and career attitudes differ by sex.

Associations Between Ethnic Identity, Proactive Career Behaviour, and Career Attitudes

Hypothesis 3 stated that the expression of ethnic identity, proactive career behaviour, and career attitudes would differ depending on the type of ethnic identification. To test this, we used Spearman rank-order correlations between indicators of ethnic identity, proactive career behaviour, and career attitudes (Table 4).

Table 4
 Correlations of ethnic identity types with proactive career behaviour and career attitudes

	Ethno-ni- hilism	Norm	Eth- no-egoism	Eth- no-isola- tionism	Ethno-fa- naticism	EI severity	Emotional coloring
Proactive career strategies							
Outside the work environ- ment	-.24**	.29**	-.16**			.22**	
Utilisation of rela- tionships	-.24**	.25**	-.13*		-.12*	.18**	.16**

Reflection on the role of work and career	-.16**	0.21**	-.16**	-.12*		.11*	.12*
Going beyond work tasks	-.16**	.18**				.19**	
Expression of proactivity	-.21**	.26**	-.15**			.14*	.14*
Career attitudes							
Management	-.13*	.20**				.21**	.23**
Autonomy							
Work stability		.15**			.25**	.15**	.24**
Stability of residence			.24**	.15**			
Service	-.12*	.17**	-.16**	-.13*			
Challenge	-.15**	.16**				.21**	.18**
Life integration	-.15**	.20**	-.15**				
Entrepreneurship		.11*					.13*

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

As shown in Table 4, diffuse or extreme forms of ethnic identity (ethno-nihilism, ethno-egoism, ethno-isolationism) showed negative correlations with proactive career behaviour ($r_s \approx -.12$ to $-.24$, $p < .05$), indicating lower engagement in career development. By contrast, positive ethnic identity (normative and emotional components) was positively associated with proactive strategies such as relationship utilisation, reflection on the role of work, and overall proactivity ($r_s \approx .18$ – $.26$, $p < .01$).

Regarding career attitudes, ethno-nihilism was negatively associated with management, service, challenge, and life integration, while ethno-egoism and ethno-isolationism were linked reduced service orientation but increased residential stability. Positive ethnic identity was positively related to management, work stability, challenge, and entrepreneurship ($r_s \approx .11$ – $.23$, $p < .05$).

Taken together, these findings support Hypothesis 3, indicating that constructive forms of ethnic identity are associated with proactive and growth-oriented career attitudes, whereas diffuse or extreme forms correlate with reduced proactivity and weaker service orientation.

Discussion

This study contributes to research on identity's role in career development by examining three hypotheses.

Factor Structure Linking Ethnic Identity and Career Attitudes

The study confirmed Hypothesis 1, showing that a multidimensional view of ethnic identity aligns with career attitudes through a six-factor structure (72% explained variance). The profiles comprised: *Work and Career Development*, *Business and Challenges*, *Centripetal Forces*, *Positive Emotional Connection to One's People*, *Stable Work and Life*, and *Integration and Autonomy*. These findings extend prior research by S. D. Gurieva, E. A. Yumkina, E. A. Vasina et al. [32] and highlighted by N. A. Fouad and A. M. Byars-Winston [33], where ethnic identity was mainly considered a contextual variable.

Our data show that ethnic identity comprises both resource-oriented and restrictive forms. The factor *Positive Emotional Connection to One's People* serves as a resource enhancing self-efficacy and career adaptability, consistent with SCCT, as proposed by R. W. Lent, S. Brown and G. Hackett [34], and with models of identity-based motivation and adaptability, as proposed by G. V. Gushue [35], D. Oyserman [9], and M. L. Savickas [8]. Conversely, *Centripetal Forces* reflect the restrictive effects of ethno-isolationism and ethno-fanaticism. In SCCT terms, such orientations act as constraints (contextual barriers) that limit career opportunities, reduce openness to multicultural settings, and impede adaptability. Thus, ethnic identity is neither wholly positive nor negative but shapes both supportive and restrictive career paths.

The career-oriented factors *Work and Career Development* and *Business and Challenges* reflect aspirations towards growth, competence, entrepreneurial engagement, and the ability to overcome difficulties. These aspects correspond to the concept of professional identity development, in which self-efficacy and proactivity, as proposed by R. W. Lent, S. Brown, and G. Hackett [34], are central to achieving career goals. Although relatively autonomous, in our factor model they coexisted with ethnic orientations, suggesting that career and cultural attitudes may be structured within a broader system of identity in which different domains of the self mutually reinforce one another.

Finally, the factors *Stable Work and Life* and *Integration and Autonomy* show that youth career attitudes encompass not only aspirations for advancement but also values of security, balance, and coherence between personal and professional domains. This result underscores that ethnic identity and career orientations together constitute a multidimensional framework, in which some components promote mobility and adaptability, while others reinforce values of stability and harmony – a distinction reflected in the work of C. Yao and I. McWha-Hermann [36], and S. Kim, M. Hood, P. A. Creed et al. [37]. Thus, we refine existing models by adding a dimension of stability and integration within the context of ethnic identity.

Male-Female Differences in Ethnic Identity and Career Attitudes

Our findings support Hypothesis 2, confirming sex differences in ethnic identity and career attitudes, though the differences require nuanced interpretation. Male participants showed higher ethno-fanaticism and a tendency towards stronger ethno-isolationism ($p = .057$), while females more often displayed prosocial orientations, including service- and helping-focused attitudes and proactive behaviours beyond formal roles. Men, by contrast, leaned towards challenging trajectories involving complex problem-solving.

Observed differences were small-to-moderate ($d = 0.20\text{--}0.36$), aligning with research showing women value flexibility and relational aspects of work, while men emphasise advancement, status, and external rewards confirmed by M. Jost and S. Möser [38]. Unlike previous studies that were limited to analysing general sex differences, our research demonstrated that specific components of ethnic identity are differentially associated with the career orientations of men and women.

These results, interpreted through the lens of social role theory as developed by A. H. Eagly and W. Wood [39], reflect enduring cultural expectations: cooperative tendencies among women and agentic tendencies among men. Yet our findings refine this model: ethnic identity not only reproduces gendered scripts but also modifies them – tending to enhance prosociality among women, while in men, in some cases, reinforcing ethnocentric orientations. This suggests role expectations alone are insufficient, underscoring the need for an intersectional perspective.

This pattern aligns with the intersectional framework introduced by K. Crenshaw [39], which was originally developed in the context of legal inequalities but has since been extended to areas such as education, work, and career development. Recent studies demonstrate that race, sex, and socioeconomic status interact to shape career trajectories and expectations, as argued by P. H. Collins and S. Bilge [40], and E. Linos, S. Mobasser, and N. Roussille [41], reinforcing our conclusion that intersecting identities dynamically influence career attitudes. Our study adds to this evidence by showing that such interactions are already evident in youths' career attitudes.

Recent research further highlights this point. Among American and Latine youth, a strong ethnic identity has been associated with higher career expectations and aspirations in STEM fields, as demonstrated by T. LeBlanc, J. R. Arvizu-Sevilla, A. B. Loyd et al. [42]. Concurrently, women from ethnic minority groups face a “double barrier”, as described by S. Y. Chao and K. B. Wilson [43], as well as a “motherhood penalty” within platform-based employment contexts, as evidenced by P. Kim, S. Sawyer, and M. Dunn [44]. Our findings extend these conclusions by demonstrating that the intersection of ethnic identity and sex is reflected not only in objective barriers but also in subjective career attitudes. This dual influence highlights the necessity of developing career development models that address sex and ethnic-cultural dimensions not separately but as intersecting identities shaping opportunities and constraints in youth career trajectories.

Ethnic Identity and Proactive Career Behaviour

Hypothesis 3 was supported by the data: the expression of ethnic identity, proactive career behaviour, and career attitudes varied across types of ethnic identification. Positive forms, especially emotional and expressive components, were associated with proactive strategies such as leadership, entrepreneurship, problem-solving, and professional stability. By contrast, extreme identifications (e.g. ethno-fanaticism, ethno-egoism) and low levels of identification (ethno-nihilism) were negatively associated with proactive career behaviour and with career attitudes emphasising service, integration, and management.

These results can be interpreted by D. Oyserman [9] within the framework of Identity-Based Motivation theory, which posits that identity shapes how goals are construed as feasible and meaningful. When young people perceive their ethnic belonging positively, they are more likely to construe career challenges as opportunities aligned with their self-concept, thereby fostering proactive engagement. Conversely, diffuse or extremist identities limit autonomy and narrow perceived opportunities.

This interpretation is consistent with Career Adaptability theory (M. L. Savickas [8]), which emphasises confidence, concern, control, and curiosity as key career resources. Our findings suggest that positive ethnic identity strengthens these adaptive resources, whereas ethno-nihilism and ethno-fanaticism weaken them. Our study extends this perspective by showing that such identity patterns are reflected not only in social behaviour but also in youth career strategies.

An additional layer of understanding comes from research demonstrating that internal orientations, including identity, are not static but may shift in response to contextual factors and life events, as A. Y. Zinina, S. D. Gurieva and O. U. Gogitsaeva [45] demonstrate. In this regard, according to A. V. Maltseva, N. E. Shilkina and S. D. Gurieva [46], young people with a positive ethnic identity are more likely to show initiative in pursuing professional goals, reinforced by a clear sense of the role of work in their life projects. Such orientations may enhance resilience and goal-directed motivation when entering new stages of the labour market.

Overall, ethnic identity emerges as a multidimensional construct, shaping career attitudes and behaviours, creating both opportunities and barriers. These findings underscore the importance of culturally sensitive career counselling and targeted support for ethnically diverse youth.

Several limitations should be noted. First, the respondent group was formed from young adults living in St Petersburg and Kazan and was not intended to represent the broader youth population. This limits the generalisability of the findings to other cultural, demographic, or socio-economic contexts. Second, the cross-sectional design prevents causal inference; longitudinal, more diverse studies are needed. Third, the joint factor analysis of identity and career indicators may have yielded hybrid factors; future research should test alternative analytic strategies and include additional contextual variables such as socioeconomic status or experiences of discrimination.

Conclusion

This study analysed the relationship between ethnic identity and career attitudes among contemporary youth in Russia, using two multi-ethnic urban contexts as examples. By treating ethnic identity as a multidimensional construct, we identified a six-factor structure that integrates cultural and career orientations, thereby refining and extending existing models of career development. The results showed that constructive forms of ethnic identity promote proactive career behaviour, leadership orientation, and adaptability, whereas diffuse or extreme forms of identity limit career opportunities and reduce engagement. Sex analysis showed women more often emphasised prosocial and service orientations, men – complex challenges; ethnic identity both reinforced and modified these differences. Thus, understanding career development requires taking into account the intersection of ethnic and sex identity.

Overall, ethnic identity is a key element of career development in diverse contexts. Practically, this means that career guidance, counselling, and human resource programs should incorporate culturally sensitive approaches that account for both ethnic and sex identity. For educational institutions, this may involve designing courses and training that strengthen career adaptability and intercultural competence. For organisations and employers, it emphasises the importance of implementing equal opportunity policies, preventing discriminatory barriers, and supporting positive forms of identity as a resource for professional growth. For state institutions, it calls for the development of youth and employment policies that simultaneously promote mobility while preserving the value of cultural integration.

Practical Significance and Contribution to Youth Career Counselling

The findings of this research can be applied in career counselling, educational practice, and organisational development, particularly in multi-ethnic and multi-religious urban settings. Their practical value lies in enabling culturally sensitive approaches that support young people's professional development in the following ways.

1. Advancing Culturally Sensitive Career Counselling.

The study provides a framework for tailoring career counselling to different types of ethnic identity: for young people with a diffuse or conflictual ethnic identity, counselling should prioritise strengthening self-acceptance, fostering a sense of belonging, and expanding perceived career opportunities. This approach helps mitigate identity-related constraints on career agency; for those with a constructive ethnic identity, this identity can be leveraged as a resource for proactive career behaviour oriented towards multicultural professional environments. These differentiated strategies allow practitioners to move beyond one-size-fits-all models towards more precise, identity-responsive interventions.

2. Enhancing Career Guidance and Counselling Methodologies.

The results support the adaptation of existing career guidance and counselling tools by integrating ethnocultural considerations. This includes identifying and

addressing culturally sensitive topics that may influence career decision-making, motivation and self-concept. Practitioners can use these insights to reframe cultural background as a meaningful variable in career development rather than a peripheral factor.

3. Informing Educational Programmes and University Practices.

The findings provide a foundation for developing targeted educational interventions, such as: career crafting courses that include dedicated modules on the role of cultural and ethnic identity in shaping professional goals and strategies; university climate initiatives that benefit from framing ethnic and cultural diversity as a resource for learning and collaboration, thereby reducing intercultural tensions. Furthermore, the results serve as a basis for training teachers and psychologists to work effectively with ethnoculturally diverse groups, emphasising how identity issues intersect with academic motivation and career planning.

4. Bridging Disciplines for Holistic Practice.

By integrating perspectives from educational psychology, ethnopsychology, and career psychology, this study demonstrates that ethnic identity is not merely a marker of cultural background but a structural factor shaping how young people perceive, evaluate, and construct their professional futures. This interdisciplinary framework equips counsellors, educators, and organisational development specialists with a more comprehensive and culturally attuned toolkit for supporting youth in complex, multicultural environments.

In sum, the practical significance of this research lies in its capacity to translate empirical findings into actionable strategies – from individual counselling sessions to institutional programmes – thereby enhancing the relevance, effectiveness, and cultural adaptability of career support for young people in today's diverse urban settings.

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