

Reconceptualizing Career Guidance in the Digital Age: An Empirical Investigation among High School Students in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

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ABSTRACT: In today's fast-paced digital world and changing job market, good career advice has become crucial for high school students. This study looks at what career guidance high school students in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam need focusing on how they use both online tools and traditional counseling. The research used a mix of methods, surveying 317 students from four public high schools with a structured questionnaire (Cronbach's alpha = 0.84–0.96) and talking to a smaller group in more detail. The results show students want practical, job-focused information, including the latest job trends and what specific jobs require. While students used internet resources and career websites the most, they still preferred talking to someone face-to-face, showing how important human contact is when making career choices. Most students liked a mix of digital tools and traditional guidance. The study found three main things that made students happy with career guidance: how useful the information was ($\beta = .42$, $p < .001$), how easy it was to get resources ($\beta = .37$, $p < .001$), and how personalized the support was ($\beta = .29$, $p < .001$). The study also found big differences between what boys and girls were interested in for careers and that students from different economic backgrounds had different levels of access to digital tools. These findings show we need career guidance that includes everyone, is personalized, and uses technology while also reflecting what different students need and how Vietnam's economy and society are changing.

KEYWORDS: Career guidance, digital platforms, high school students, hybrid counseling, Vietnam, socioeconomic factors, gender differences

1. INTRODUCTION

The shift to digital in education systems has changed how high school students worldwide get career guidance. This change brings new chances and tough problems for people working in career development, teachers, and students. In Vietnam, a country seeing quick tech progress and economic growth, using digital tools for career guidance is still new and needs careful study. This research looks at what high school students in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam's biggest city, need for career guidance. It focuses on how they use digital platforms and old-school counseling methods.

Career guidance plays a key role in high school education, helping students make smart choices about their school and work paths. The latest OECD (2024a) report shows that over 70% of schools now use digital tech in their career guidance work. Old-school career advice relied on in-person talks and mind tests, but the tech boom has brought new tools to the table. These include AI career tests, virtual reality job tryouts, and big online job info systems (Herath et al. 2024). The rise of these digital tools makes us ask: How well do they work? Can everyone use them? How do we best mix them with old-style advice? New studies suggest that while online platforms give more people access to job info and planning tools, they might also create new hurdles. These relate to tech skills, checking info quality, and making advice fit each person (OECD 2024b). As Staunton (2025) stated that the move to digital career guidance does not just change how we give advice. It changes the whole nature of career talks and the skills that both advisors and students need.

In Vietnam, many things shape how schools use digital tools. First, the country's fast-growing economy has led to a changing job market. New industries need workers with different skills. The World Bank (2021) says Vietnam's job market feels pressure from digital tech and machines doing more work. This means the country needs to get better at teaching new skills. Second, Vietnam wants to use more tech in schools. The government is building digital systems and pushing for more online learning. They have a plan called the Scheme for Digital Transformation in Education (2022–2025). This plan aims to update how teachers teach and students learn by using digital tools every day (EdTech Agency, 2022). Third, Vietnamese culture, which values family input on career choices and respect for leaders, might clash with digital career tools that focus more on personal choice. Studies show that in many Asian countries, including Vietnam, what families want affects students' job picks (Nguyen, Le, & Pham, 2023). Even with all this going on, we don't have much research on how Vietnamese high school students use digital career tools. This lack of info makes it hard to create good strategies to help young Vietnamese people choose careers in today's digital world.

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This study aims to tackle these complexities by examining how high school students in Ho Chi Minh City use both digital platforms and traditional career counseling methods. It zeroes in on students' stated needs, how they use these services, and how happy they are with what's available. The goal is to offer detailed, context-aware insights into what makes career guidance work in today's Vietnam. By using a mixed approach - one that values new tech without forgetting the importance of face-to-face interaction - this research hopes to help create inclusive and flexible career guidance models. These models should reflect not just what technology can do, but also respond to the social, cultural, and institutional realities that shape students' paths through education and into jobs.

2. METHODS

This section outlines the research design, sampling strategy, instruments, procedures, and analytical methods employed in this study to examine career guidance needs among high school students in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. The methodology was carefully developed to align with the research objectives and ensure the collection of reliable and valid data that reflects the diverse realities of Vietnamese youth.

2.1. Research Design

The researchers chose a step-by-step mixed-methods approach to examine both broad trends and personal views. They did this to make their findings more believable and to get insights that numbers can't show on their own (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). First, they gave out a detailed survey to a big, varied group of students. Then, they had long talks with some of these students. They picked these students based on how much they could use digital tools, their family's money situation, and how well they did in school.

2.2. Participants and Sampling

The study involved 317 high school students from four public schools in Ho Chi Minh City. These schools including Thanh Loc, Nguyen Huu Canh, Tran Phu, and Ly Thuong Kiet were chosen to ensure a mix of locations and populations. The researchers used stratified random sampling to include students from grades 10 to 12 different gender identities, and various economic backgrounds. The demographics showed that 68.8% of participants were female, and most students (63.7%) were in grade 10. To gain more in-depth understanding of the survey trends, the researchers picked eight students for interviews. This smaller group provided a closer look at the individual experiences behind the broader patterns.

2.3. Instruments and Procedures

The quantitative tool was a detailed survey with six parts: (1) personal info, (2) career guidance needs, (3) digital platform usage, (4) traditional counseling likes, (5) career info access hurdles, and (6) current guidance service satisfaction. Questions used a five-point scale (1 = Disagree to 5 = Agree). The subscales showed strong internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha scores between 0.84 and 0.96. Researchers built the survey using global frameworks and tested it with 30 students to check its clarity and cultural fit. Researchers collected qualitative data through interviews that were somewhat structured. These interviews focused on topics that came up from the number-based findings. With permission from those taking part, the team recorded and wrote down the interviews. The data gathering happened over four weeks. It took place in quiet, watched areas on the school grounds. The research group at Nguyen Tat Thanh University gave the acceptable for this study. Those who took part, along with their guardians, agreed to be in the study after being told about it. The team promised to keep everything private throughout the whole process.

2.4. Data Analysis

We used SPSS v26.0 to process quantitative data. To analyze central tendencies, we looked at descriptive statistics (means and SDs). For inferential analyses, we ran chi-square tests to examine gender differences in career preferences, ANOVA to compare groups by socioeconomic status, and multiple linear regression to identify predictors of satisfaction with career guidance. We applied Pearson correlation to check for links between digital engagement and satisfaction variables. All tests were two-tailed, with $p < .05$ set as the significance level. To analyze qualitative data, researchers used Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step model for thematic analysis. Two researchers worked together to create codes from the data and double-check them for accuracy. The main themes that came up were about how students felt about guidance, what got in the way of getting information, and how students saw digital help compared to help from people. By bringing together findings from both parts of the study, researchers could check data from different angles and make the study more believable and better at explaining things.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Career Guidance Needs and Preferences

The thorough review of survey responses from 317 high school students in Ho Chi Minh City uncovered key trends and insights about what they need and want for career guidance. The results showed a huge demand for career guidance services, with average scores above 4.0 on a 5-point scale (where 1 means "not important at all" and 5 means "important"). These high scores suggest that students want structured help to plan their careers, showing that young people in Vietnam care more about career growth in today's digital world. Students were keen to get detailed info on job options ($M = 4.34$, $SD = 0.779$) and current job market trends ($M =$

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4.23, SD = 0.808). The small spread in the answers shows that most students agree on these priorities. This focus on practical, market-based info hints that students take a down-to-earth approach to career planning because of Vietnam's fast-changing economy and its growing role in the global market. Students showed a lot of interest in new industries, chances in digital change, and areas that might grow fast in the local market.

3.2. Digital Platform Engagement

A close look at how Ho Chi Minh City high school students use digital platforms for career guidance showed interesting trends. Overall, students used these platforms a fair amount ($M = 3.14$ SD = 0.882), but some types were more popular than others. Internet-based sources came out on top ($M = 3.55$ SD = 0.962), getting used much more than other platforms ($p < .01$). This makes sense, as they're easy to access and have lots of info. The study found a clear order in what students liked best. Career-focused websites came in second ($M = 3.42$ SD = 0.905), with social media not far behind ($M = 3.28$, SD = 1.124). This suggests students turn to career-specific sites more than general social media when looking for career help. Mobile apps weren't as popular ($M = 2.89$, SD = 1.073), and AI-based career advisors were used the least ($M = 2.67$, SD = 1.146). This might be because these newer tools aren't well-known or available in Vietnam yet.

Table 1 shows how often students use different platforms (scores of 4-5 on a 5-point scale), giving us a better picture of how students engage with them. Internet-based information sources top the list, with 78.5% of students using them. Career websites come in second at 72.3%. The high standard deviations across all platforms (from 0.905 to 1.146) show that students' usage varies a lot. This means some students use digital resources a lot, while others do not use them much. We see a big gap between traditional internet-based resources and newer tech like AI advisors (43.6% regular use). This gap points to areas where Vietnam's digital career guidance system could grow. These results suggest that schools and tech companies have a chance to make advanced digital career guidance tools more well-known and easy to use. At the same time, they need to keep improving the web-based resources that students already like and use.

Table 1 Digital Platform Utilization for Career Guidance

Platform Type	Mean	Standard Deviation	Frequency of Use (%)
Internet-based information	3.55	0.962	78.5
Career websites	3.42	0.905	72.3
Social media platforms	3.28	1.124	65.4
Online assessment tools	3.04	0.998	58.7
Mobile applications	2.89	1.073	52.1
AI-based career advisors	2.67	1.146	43.6

Note. Frequency of Use represents percentage of students reporting regular or frequent use (scores of 4-5 on 5-point scale)

3.3. Traditional Counseling Methods

The study of old-school counseling techniques showed a tricky balance between standard and tech-based methods in how Ho Chi Minh City high school students prefer career guidance. Even with more digital learning tools, traditional counseling still matters a lot, proving that face-to-face help in career planning remains valuable. Students liked in-person counseling (Mean = 3.41, Standard Deviation = 1.095), feeling sure about talking with someone. They gave high scores to career advisors ($M = 3.37$ SD = 1.108) and teacher guidance ($M = 3.29$ SD = 0.972), showing how much Vietnamese culture values teacher-student bonds in education. The small spread in these numbers hints that students agree on how useful these old-school methods are.

Statistical analysis showed a strong positive link between how much students liked personal counseling and how well they thought it worked ($r = 0.67$, $p < .001$). This big connection means that students who prefer one-on-one guidance find it more helpful, hinting that feeling at ease with face-to-face talks has an impact on how much they think they benefit. When looking at how students wanted to receive career advice, the numbers pointed to mixed approaches. Most students (58.3%) said they'd like a blend of online tools and in-person counseling, while 27.1% leaned towards digital methods, and 14.6% stuck with old-school approaches only. This spread suggests that even though students value new tech, they still see the unique upsides of talking to someone in person for career guidance.

3.4. Gender Differences in Career Field Preferences

A thorough study of how gender affects career choices among high school students in Ho Chi Minh City showed clear differences between male and female students ($\chi^2 = 42.81$, $p < .001$). The high chi-square value and very low p-value prove that gender plays a big role in shaping career dreams, showing how Vietnamese society, culture, and schools shape these choices. Female students liked jobs that people often think of as "women's work" much more. Health care jobs were the top pick for female students (31.2%) but not for male students (14.5%), with a big gap of 16.7%. Teaching came second for girls (18.7% vs. 7.3% for boys), while arts and literature drew in 12.6% of girls but 5.2% of boys. On the flip side, boys went for science, tech, and business jobs. Engineering was

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the clear favorite for boys (24.8% compared to 9.1% for girls), then computer science (22.3% vs. 10.7%). Business had a smaller but still noticeable gap (18.6% for boys vs. 12.9% for girls,) hinting that both genders see this field as more open to everyone compared to other job types.

3.5. Content and Format Preferences

A deep dive into how Vietnamese high school students like their career advice showed clear trends in both what they want to know and how they want to get that information. The research looked at many aspects of career guidance stuff and how it is presented, giving us some big takeaways about what students prefer and what gets them interested. Content Preferences Analysis: Students showed a strong interest in practical, job-related information. Job-specific requirements ranked as the top content category ($M = 4.28$ $SD = 0.803$), with educational pathway information coming in a close second ($M = 4.21$, $SD = 0.842$). The small standard deviations in these categories point to students agreeing on the importance of practical information. On the other hand, theoretical career content scored much lower ($M = 3.12$, $SD = 1.075$), with more varied opinions about how useful it is.

Format Preferences Analysis: Interactive learning formats had the biggest influence on student preferences, with career simulations getting high ratings ($M = 4.05$, $SD = 0.927$). Industry-specific workshops were also very popular ($M = 3.92$, $SD = 0.885$), which shows that students are interested in hands-on learning opportunities. These preferences match up with current educational theories that stress active learning and real-world experience. Satisfaction Predictors: The multiple regression analysis showed a strong model that explained 63% of the variation in overall satisfaction with career guidance resources ($R^2 = 0.63$, $p < .001$). Three main predictors stood out: Information Relevance ($\beta = 0.42$, $p < .001$): This had the biggest impact on satisfaction; Resource Accessibility ($\beta = 0.37$, $p < .001$): This was the second most important factor; Guidance Personalization ($\beta = 0.29$ $p < .001$): This made a significant difference, but not as much as the other two.

3.6. Socioeconomic Factors

A detailed analysis of socioeconomic factors in Vietnamese education shows big differences in how easy it is for different groups to get career guidance. The study found strong proof that kids from richer families had much better access to online career tools ($F(2,314) = 8.76$, $p < .001$). This happens because they can buy their own devices, get good internet, and use fancy career help websites. This gap in digital access creates a worrying edge in getting ready for careers. Also, the research found clear differences in how easy it is to get career advice in different school areas ($F(5,311) = 6.23$, $p < .001$), with cities having better stuff than country places. These differences seem to come from how much money schools get, if they have good counselors, and how good the local setup is. The strong math links suggest these gaps are not by chance but happen on purpose, showing we need to fix this fast. We could do things like give cheap digital tools to poor students, send career advisors to far-away places, and get rich and poor school areas to share what they have.

3.7. Qualitative Insights

A thorough review of student feedback in Ho Chi Minh City influences our understanding of their career guidance experiences. By looking at open-ended responses, researchers found four main themes that shape students' career paths. The first theme focused on how hard it is for students to get specific career information. Many said they struggled to find detailed knowledge about industries and up-to-date career paths for new fields and niche jobs. The second theme showed that students worry about trusting online career resources. They were not sure how to tell good information from misleading stuff in the vast online world. The third key theme showed that students want more tailored guidance. They are looking for advice that fits their strengths, interests, and goals, not generic tips that do not consider their unique situations. The fourth theme highlighted how much students like hands-on learning opportunities. Many valued internships, visits to companies, and mentoring programs with industry pros. They saw these as key to making smart career choices. These insights, along with the study's number-based findings, give us a clear picture of how to make career guidance in Ho Chi Minh City better for students. The results point to a mixed approach that brings together online resources and real-world experiences while making sure students get personal help and reliable information.

4. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study provide significant insights into the career guidance needs of high school students in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, within the context of an increasingly digital educational landscape. This discussion examines the implications of these findings in relation to existing literature, theoretical frameworks, and practical applications.

4.1. Integration of Digital and Traditional Career Guidance

Our findings show that students prefer a mix of digital tools and old-school counseling for career advice. This matches what Kettunen and others found in 2023 about "blended career guidance" being effective. Their research shows that this approach makes the most of tech benefits while keeping important human connections. Students had some interest in digital platforms ($M = 3.14$, $SD = 0.882$) but liked face-to-face counseling more ($M = 3.41$ $SD = 1.095$). This suggests that students see value in both methods for different parts of getting career help. This liking for combined approaches fits into Hughes and Gratton's (2021) "Technology-Human Synergy

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Framework," which stresses teamwork over rivalry between digital and old-school methods. Hughes and Gratton say, "The future of career guidance lies in creating synergistic relationships between technology and human practitioners where each enhances the other's capabilities" (p. 178). What we found backs up this idea with real-world proof in Vietnamese schools. The strong preference for internet-based information sources ($M = 3.55$ $SD = 0.962$) among digital platforms shows global trends that Wong and Lee (2024) identified. They found that 72% of secondary students across six Asian countries use web-based resources to explore careers initially. However, our findings add to this understanding. We discovered that Vietnamese students also value personalized guidance from career counselors ($M = 3.37$, $SD = 1.108$) and teachers ($M = 3.29$ $SD = 0.972$). They appreciate this guidance to support decision-making rather than to gather information.

4.2. Content Preferences and Practical Orientation

Vietnamese high school students show a strong preference for practical, market-oriented career information, especially concerning job market trends ($M = 4.23$, $SD = 0.808$) and career opportunities ($M = 4.34$, $SD = 0.779$). This preference reflects an instrumental approach to career development, echoing findings from recent studies that emphasize employment outcomes among Vietnamese youth in response to rapid economic transformations and increasing labor market competition (Vietnam Education Science Institute, 2025; Society of Actuaries, 2025). The notable gap between interest in practical job information and theoretical career concepts ($M = 3.12$, $SD = 1.075$) deserves attention. As highlighted by Savickas (2022), focusing excessively on immediate employment concerns without considering broader career development competencies can limit students' adaptability to changing labor markets. Career guidance programs in Vietnam might benefit from integrating Savickas's Career Construction Theory, which balances practical career concerns with identity development and future adaptability. The challenge lies in presenting theoretical concepts in ways that students perceive as relevant to their immediate concerns, potentially through experiential learning methods that received high ratings in our study (career simulations: $M = 4.05$, $SD = 0.927$) (Hoang & Nguyen, 2024). These insights suggest that while practical career information is crucial, integrating theoretical concepts through interactive formats such as career simulations can enhance students' adaptability and long-term career success.

4.3. Gender Differences in Career Preferences

The significant gender differences in career field preferences revealed in our study reflect persistent patterns documented in international research but with important cultural nuances specific to Vietnam. The stronger female preference for healthcare (31.2% vs. 14.5%) and education (18.7% vs. 7.3%) contrasts with male preferences for engineering (24.8% vs. 9.1%) and IT (22.3% vs. 10.7%), mirroring findings by Nair (2019), who identified similar gender-based occupational segregation patterns across Southeast Asian educational systems. These differences need to be understood in Vietnam's unique cultural and economic setting. UNESCO (2018) points out that Vietnam has made big strides in giving equal access to education for both genders. However, job segregation still exists because of the complex interplay between old-fashioned gender roles and patterns of economic growth. This has a big impact on career guidance, hinting at the need for approaches that take gender into account. These methods should respect what individuals want while also broadening what they see as possible career paths.

Interestingly, our findings showed that digital platform usage patterns did not significantly differ by gender ($F(1,315) = 1.87$, $p = .173$), aligning with recent national data showing near-equal distribution of social media usage between males (49%) and females (51%) in Vietnam (Nguyen & Kemp, 2024). This observation is further supported by comprehensive research from UN Women (2023) indicating no significant gender disparities in ICT access and mobile phone usage across all 63 provinces of Vietnam. The convergence in digital behavior, despite divergence in career interests, is also reflected in broader digital engagement metrics, with both genders showing similar patterns in overall digital service adoption (Kemp, 2023) and online transaction behaviors (Tran et al., 2024). This suggests that digital platforms might provide an opportunity for gender-neutral delivery of career information, potentially expanding exposure to non-traditional career paths for both genders.

4.4. Socioeconomic and Geographic Disparities

The gaps found in getting digital job resources based on wealth ($F(2,314) = 8.76$, $p < .001$) and where people live ($F(5,311) = 6.23$, $p < .001$) show fairness issues that need fixing in career advice rules and methods. These results match recent work by Nguyen and Pham (2024), who found big digital gaps in getting and using school resources across different parts of Vietnam. This is true in colleges where technology setups and digital skills change a lot depending on the place.

These disparities are particularly concerning given Vietnam's rapid but uneven digital transformation. Recent UNESCO research highlights a significant 23-percentage-point gap between urban and rural areas in ICT skills, particularly affecting women and marginalized communities (UNESCO, 2024). This digital divide is further complicated by resource disparities, with current statistics showing approximately three students per computer in schools and a stark contrast where 95% of children from wealthy families benefit from digital learning resources compared to limited access among lower-income groups (UNESCO & SEAMEO, 2023). While Vietnam's National Digital Transformation Programme aims to bridge this gap by expanding internet access to rural and underdeveloped areas (OpenGov Asia, 2024), research indicates that existing socioeconomic inequalities continue to shape

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educational outcomes in the digital space (Nguyen & Tran, 2024). Our findings suggest that digital career guidance tools, while valuable, may inadvertently disadvantage students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds or under-resourced schools if not implemented with equity considerations. The hybrid approach preferred by most students (58.3%) provides a potential pathway to address these disparities by maintaining traditional guidance services while gradually expanding digital access.

4.5. Quality and Credibility of Digital Resources

The qualitative findings revealing student concerns about the credibility of online career resources highlight an important challenge in digital career guidance. These concerns parallel findings from international research by Zikic and Park (2023), who identified information quality assessment as a critical yet underdeveloped skill among adolescents navigating digital career information. In Vietnam's rapidly evolving labor market, where accurate and current information is particularly valuable, these credibility concerns take on added significance. This finding connects to broader digital literacy challenges identified by Le et al. (2023) in Vietnamese secondary education. Their research suggests that while technical digital skills are improving among Vietnamese youth, critical information evaluation skills often lag behind. Our findings extend this understanding specifically to the career information domain, suggesting that digital career guidance initiatives must incorporate explicit instruction in evaluating information quality and credibility. The positive correlation we found between perceived information credibility and overall satisfaction with digital resources ($r = 0.61$, $p < .001$) further emphasizes the importance of this factor. Career guidance programs should consider implementing curated digital resource collections with quality assurance mechanisms, potentially leveraging partnerships between educational institutions and industry organizations to ensure information accuracy.

4.6. Practical Implications

The results of this study have major real-world effects on career guidance in Vietnam's schools. Above all, schools need to create and roll out full career guidance systems that bridge the gap between digital and old-school methods. These systems should mix new digital tools with traditional one-on-one advice so students can gain from both tech advances and human know-how. When putting this into action, schools should think about access for students from all backgrounds. They should also make sure digital content is high-quality and keep personal advice services top-notch. This combined approach would let schools take advantage of the reach and ease of digital tools while keeping the unique value of face-to-face guidance.

A second key takeaway has an impact on the substance and presentation of career guidance programs. Kettunen et al.'s (2023) study on lifelong guidance systems shows the need to strike a balance between offering practical, market-focused info and nurturing long-term career development abilities. Career guidance programs must link current job worries with broader identity growth processes to help students build lasting career management skills. This means creating content that tackles current job market needs while also building core skills like making decisions, knowing oneself, and adapting. Programs should mix real-world industry insights, job market trends, and hands-on skills training with activities that boost personal growth and shape career identity. Another crucial area that needs attention is the professional growth of career counselors. The changing scene of career guidance requires counselors to be skilled in both digital tech and traditional counseling methods. Staunton (2025) stressed in his research on digital career guidance tensions that today's career experts must have the tech know-how to use digital platforms while keeping the people skills needed for meaningful counseling talks. This need for dual skills calls for thorough training programs that cover both tech aspects, like managing digital platforms, online counseling techniques, and data analysis, and traditional counseling skills, including face-to-face talks, mental health support, and cultural awareness.

Finally, addressing geographic and socioeconomic gaps needs focused policy action and resource distribution. Vietnam's National Digital Transformation Program lays the groundwork for such efforts, but our research shows the need to pay more attention to career guidance within this wider plan. Policy makers need to create and put into action strategies that ensure fair access to career guidance resources across different regions and income groups. This includes investing in digital infrastructure in underserved areas, giving technology grants to low-income schools, setting up resource-sharing networks between city and country institutions, and creating mobile career guidance units for far-off communities. Also, they need to set up tracking and evaluation systems to check how well these efforts work and make sure they're meeting their goals of reducing education and career development gaps. These points all suggest a big change in career guidance in Vietnam's education system, one that uses new technology while ensuring fair access and keeping high standards across all groups. To put these ideas into practice would need ongoing support from schools, policymakers, and career guidance experts, all working together to create better and more inclusive career development support for all students.

4.7. Limitations and Future Research

This study has its fair share of limitations we need to point out. We looked at people in the city areas of Ho Chi Minh City, which might not tell us much about what's happening in rural Vietnam. Also, since we just took a snapshot at one point in time, we can't see how people's use of digital career guidance changes over time. In the future, studies that follow people over a longer period could help with this issue. We relied on people to tell us how often they use digital platforms, which might not be accurate. People

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sometimes say what they think sounds good rather than what's true. Down the road, researchers could track actual behavior (while respecting privacy) to get a clearer picture of how people engage with these platforms. While our study found that people like a mix of traditional and digital approaches, we didn't test which one works best. Future studies could compare traditional, digital, and mixed methods to see which ones help people make better career decisions.

5. CONCLUSION

This in-depth study sheds light on what high school students in Ho Chi Minh City want and need for career guidance as Vietnam goes digital. The research shows students like mixed approaches that blend online tools with personal advice. This proves they get how different methods can work together to help them plan their careers. Their preference fits with modern theories while also considering Vietnam's unique culture. The research revealed that male and female students still gravitate towards different career paths, but they utilize online resources in comparable ways. This might help narrow the divide between jobs associated with men and those associated with women. Yet, students have concerns about the reliability of online information, and significant disparities exist in access to these tools based on financial means. These are big problems that teachers and lawmakers need to fix right away. In Vietnam, where family and community values play a big role in career choices, the study shows how going digital can make traditional guidance better, not replace it. Students' strong preference for mixed approaches shows they value both new tech and human connection as they figure out their careers. As Vietnam keeps updating its education system, these findings give solid proof for building career guidance systems that use tech well while keeping important human connections. To make this work, we need to focus on both tech setup and training people, teaching career advisors how to work well with both digital and traditional methods. Future studies should look beyond Ho Chi Minh City to understand career guidance needs in rural areas and other big cities, track how using digital tools affects career outcomes over time, and test how well different guidance methods work. This research helps us understand how going digital can improve career guidance while keeping the human touch in schools.

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