VNU Journal of Science: Education Research

Journal homepage: https://js.vnu.edu.vn/ER

Original Article

Factors Affecting Career Choices of Students in Private High Schools in Ho Chi Minh City

Truong Tan Dat[1], Tran Quoc Giang[2,*]

Dong Thap University, Dong Thap, 783 Pham Huu Lau, Ward 6, Cao Lanh, Dong Thap, Vietnam

Abstract: This article comprehensively examines the factors influencing career decisions of students in private high schools in Ho Chi Minh City. Using both qualitative and quantitative research methods, the study reveals that students' career choices are shaped by personal factors, such as passion, self-assessment abilities, independence, and are strongly influenced by family, school, and social environment. The family plays a crucial role in providing guidance and financial support, enabling students to pursue desired career paths. Schools, through career counseling programs and extracurricular activities, offer opportunities for students to explore and gain a deeper understanding of the requirements of various professions. The social environment, especially the influence of media and peers, contributes to shaping career role models and industry trends. The study also indicates that in a growing economy, students increasingly consider factors such as salary, employment opportunities, and career growth potential. Consequently, the article proposes support strategies involving families, schools, and the community to foster sustainable career orientation for students, aligning with the demands of the modern labor market.

Keywords: Career orientation, influencing factors, private high school, labor market, career counseling.

1. Introduction

In shaping a career, the career choices of high school students represent a strategic step with profound impacts on their lives and future personal development. This is especially true for students in private high schools in Ho Chi Minh City, a dynamic and diverse educational environment. Here, career decisions require careful consideration due to the interplay of influences from family, school, society, personal factors, and the labor market. In the context of strong globalization and digital transformation, career selection goes beyond traditional fields, expanding into new areas that demand complex skills and highlight the flexibility of the workforce [1-3]. Therefore, understanding the factors affecting students' career decisions has become an urgent need, not only to provide better guidance for students but also to ensure long-term engagement and growth in their chosen professions [4-6].

As Vietnam's leading economic hub, Ho Chi Minh City offers a wealth of diverse career opportunities, providing high school students with access to new and modern professions. Private schools in this city have unique approaches to developing their curricula, particularly emphasizing career counseling and skill development for students. They are often exposed early to career-related information, participate in specialized extracurricular activities, receive guidance from experienced teachers, and engage with innovative educational models [7-9]. Throughout this process, families play a significant role in providing financial support, guidance, and expectations for their children's careers, creating clear impacts on students' career choices. In the information era, students easily access success models through media, social networks, and entertainment platforms. They are often attracted to "hot" careers that society values for their potential growth and income. These influences may sometimes lead students to choose careers based on trends rather than personal interests and capabilities, resulting in a mismatch between students' desires and family expectations [10-12]. Thus, studying and analyzing these influencing factors will provide a comprehensive view of the career selection process for high school students, particularly those in private schools in a major city like Ho Chi Minh City.

Although many factors influence students' career decisions, personal factors, including passion, self-awareness of abilities, and independence, are foundational in shaping their career paths. A student who is clear about their interests and abilities is more likely to make suitable choices and be less influenced by external factors [5, 7, 11]. However, these personal factors do not exist independently and are often influenced by family expectations, school counseling, and social career trends [13-15]. Particularly in the ever-evolving labor market of Ho Chi Minh City, new skill requirements and increasing competition present significant challenges for students, necessitating careful preparation and a clear

understanding of influencing factors to make accurate and sustainable career decisions.

Understanding the factors affecting career choices is important not only for students but also as a basis for families and schools to develop appropriate support strategies. Parents can adjust their approach, providing guidance and opportunities for children to explore and affirm their personal strengths. For schools, especially private high schools, building and implementing career counseling programs will help students gain a deeper understanding of careers, equip them with essential skills, and foster early career-oriented thinking [9, 11, 16]. This study will also contribute to helping schools develop effective solutions to support students in career selection, ensuring they have a solid foundation and confidence as they step into the modern labor market.

Aiming to analyze the factors affecting career decisions of students in private high schools in Ho Chi Minh City, this article provides an in-depth view of the role of each factor in forming and guiding students' career choices. It also offers practical recommendations to support students in choosing career paths that align with their personal attributes, meet societal needs, and adapt to future labor market developments.

2. Literature Review

Career choice is a critical decision in every individual's development journey, particularly for high school students as they face significant thresholds in their careers and lives. This decision not only directly affects their academic progress but also shapes their professional future, forming a foundation for personal success. Research has shown that students' career choices are influenced by various factors, including family support, school guidance, social environment impacts, personal characteristics, and economic factors from the labor market [6-8].

Family is considered one of the most influential factors in students' career decisions. Ta Van Qui and Chau Hai Thi [6] analyzed the

critical role of families in providing guidance and financial support, enabling students to pursue careers that require considerable educational and training costs, such as medicine, engineering, or business. Parents often play a key role in guiding their children based on personal perspectives and family cultural values, which can serve as motivation but may also create pressure if parental expectations do not align with students' interests and abilities. Other studies suggest that families should strike a balance between providing direction and respecting their children's freedom in career choices to help them achieve sustainable career development [6, 9].

Schools, as formal educational institutions, also play a significant role in career orientation. Le Thi My Linh and Khong Van Quy [8] emphasized that career guidance programs with active teacher support can help students better visualize potential professions, such as teaching, engineering, or business. Career counseling programs at schools often include activities such as company visits, internships, and workshops to give students real-world exposure and help them develop necessary skills. However, Nguyen Thi Linh [9] points out that in many Vietnamese schools, particularly in central and economically challenging regions, career guidance programs are underfunded, resulting in inadequate information and support for students. This underscores the need to enhance career guidance programs to better meet the needs of students, especially in private schools in economic developed areas like Ho Chi Minh City [8, 12].

The social environment and community also significantly affect students' career decisions. Tran Kim Nhung and Le Thi Thanh Linh [16] analyzed the roles of factors such as social media, successful role models, and prevalent societal perspectives on career choices. In the modern context, social media has increasingly become a powerful source of inspiration, providing rich information about professions and successful figures such as

entrepreneurs, scientists, or artists. These factors help students broaden their perspectives on potential careers but may also create unrealistic expectations and societal pressure as they strive for similar success. To mitigate these negative effects, support from families, schools, and communities is necessary to guide students in receiving information in a balanced and practical manner [16-18].

Personal factors, including passion, self-assessment of abilities, and independence, are crucial in enabling students to make suitable career decisions. John L. Holland's theory [7] highlights the importance of matching personal characteristics with career types, where students need to clearly recognize their abilities to choose appropriate professions, such as teaching, engineering, or management. Confidence and self-assessment abilities are foundational elements that help students remain committed to their choices and develop long-term connections with their selected careers. Other studies have shown that a lack of self-assessment and self-discovery skills can lead to unsuitable career choices, wasting resources and personal potential [7, 19].

In the context of globalization and digital transformation, the labor market has become a crucial factor in shaping students' career orientations. Salary, benefits, and job opportunities are among the top criteria students consider when choosing a career. Guo Xiaojie and colleagues [17] conducted research in China and found that students tend to choose professions like information technology, communications, and healthcare due to their growth potential and high job opportunities. These fields not only provide stable incomes but also meet market demands in the technology-driven era. Other studies have emphasized that updating labor market information and participating in practical training courses can help students better understand skill requirements, thereby making more informed career choices aligned with development trends [20, 21].

Previous studies have employed various approaches to analyze factors considering

career decisions. Guo Xiaojie and colleagues [22] combined quantitative and qualitative methods to gain deeper insights into students' career needs and perceptions. Research by Gati Itamar and colleagues [21] focused on developing theoretical frameworks to classify and analyze career decision-making styles, showing that decisions based on scientific and clear understanding often yield better outcomes.

In conclusion, studies have demonstrated that students' career choices are influenced by multiple interwoven factors. To help students make sustainable career decisions, collaboration among families, schools, and communities is essential to support the development of self-assessment skills, accurate self-perception, and understanding of the labor market. This article builds on previous research, delving deeper into career fields and providing practical solutions to support students in making career choices that align with their personal aptitudes and the demands of the modern labor market.

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Research Design

This study employs a mixed-methods design to comprehensively combine quantitative and qualitative data, providing an in-depth and holistic perspective on factors influencing career choices among high school students at private schools in Ho Chi Minh City. The quantitative method utilizes surveys to collect data from key groups, including school administrators (SA), teachers (T), parents (P), students (S), and employers (E). The qualitative method involves in-depth interviews to complement and clarify findings from the quantitative data, offering personal insights from the study participants [23-25].

3.2. Population and Sampling Framework

The research population includes students, school administrators, teachers, parents, and employers associated with private high schools in Ho Chi Minh City. As a major economic hub with a dynamic educational landscape, the city hosts numerous private schools varying in size,

educational approach, and career orientation strategies. The sampling framework is drawn from a list of representative private schools, including Tue Duc School, Lac Hong School, Van Lang School, Duc Tri School, and Dinh Thien Ly School. These schools were selected based on specific criteria: active participation in career guidance activities, meeting basic student population requirements, and representing the educational context of Ho Chi Minh City.

3.3. Sampling Method

A stratified sampling method combined with random sampling was utilized to ensure the highest level of representation among the study's target groups. Specifically, the population was stratified into five main groups: school administrators (SA), teachers (T), parents (P), students (S), and employers (E). This stratification ensures that each group is fully and proportionately represented in the survey, accurately reflecting diverse perspectives on the research topic. Within each stratum, participants were randomly selected from the list of private high schools in Ho Chi Minh City. This process minimizes bias and enhances the generalizability of the study results. A total of 550 participants were surveyed, with a gender balance of 45% male and 55% female. Schools were selected from various districts across the city to ensure the sample reflects diverse economic, social, and educational environments. This approach not only enhances representativeness but also provides a robust foundation for analyzing differences among participant groups, highlighting the factors influencing students' career decisions in a comprehensive and nuanced manner.

3.4. The Survey Structure

The survey structure was designed to ensure representativeness and reflect diverse perspectives from the related stakeholder groups. A total of 550 participants were involved, including 50 school administrators (SA), 200 teachers (T), 100 parents (P), 150 students (S), and 50 employers (E). Gender distribution was balanced, with 45% male

(248 participants) and 55% female (302 participants). Within each group, the gender distribution was as follows: school administrators had 60% male and 40% female, teachers had 40% male and 60% female, parents had 40% male and 60% female, students maintained a balanced 50% male and 50% female ratio, and employers had 46% male and 54% female.

This allocation ensures diversity in the dataset, allowing the study to clearly reflect different perspectives and experiences across the target groups. Furthermore, the even participation from these groups enhances objectivity and strengthens the generalizability of the research findings. The summary table of respondent characteristics provides an overview of the sample structure, demonstrating the careful planning and selection of survey participants. This ensures that the research conclusions are based on reliable and balanced data.

Table 1. Research subjects and survey sample

Research Subjects	Sample Size (N)	Male (N)	Male (%)	Female (N)	Female (%)
School Management Board (SMB)	50	30	60%	20	40%
Teachers (T)	200	80	40%	120	60%
Parents (P)	100	40	40%	60	60%
Students (S)	150	75	50%	75	50%
Employers (E)	50	23	46%	27	54%
Total	550	248	45%	302	55%

3.5. Survey Tools and Questionnaire Content

The survey instrument was developed using a 5-point Likert scale to evaluate the degree of influence of key factors on students' career decisions. The questionnaire was meticulously designed, encompassing five primary criteria, each reflecting a significant group of influencing factors (Table 2). First, the family influence criterion examines the role of financial conditions, parental guidance, and expectations in shaping students' career choices. Second, the school influence criterion assesses the support provided by teachers, career guidance programs, and extracurricular activities, focusing on how these elements help students explore and better understand career options. Third, the social environment criterion considers factors such as media, career trends, and peer influence, emphasizing the role of external environments in broadening awareness and shaping career aspirations. Fourth, the personal factors criterion centers on students' passions, self-assessment of abilities, and motivation for development, highlighting the importance of self-awareness in career decision-making. Lastly, the economic and labor market criterion evaluates the impact of salary prospects, job opportunities, skill requirements, and career advancement potential on students' career choices. This comprehensive tool not only facilitates the collection of detailed data but also ensures inclusiveness, providing a robust foundation for analyzing and drawing conclusions about the factors influencing students' career decisions [23, 26].

3.6. Quantitative Analysis Method

Quantitative data in this study were analyzed using SPSS software, applying appropriate techniques to ensure accurate and reliable results. Descriptive statistics were first employed to determine the mean (M) and standard deviation (SD) of each research factor. These descriptive statistics illustrate general trends and data dispersion, providing an overview of the impact of influencing factors on career decisions. Next, analysis of variance (ANOVA) was utilized to compare differences among groups, including school administrators, teachers, parents, students, and employers. ANOVA assessed the statistical significance of differences between groups, particularly regarding factors such as family roles, school influences, and social environment impacts.

Finally, multivariate regression analysis was employed to identify relationships between independent factors and their degree of influence on career decisions. This method not only clarifies the impact level of each factor but also provides a scientific basis for developing predictive models and recommendations to improve career guidance for students [23, 25, 27 28].

Table 2. Survey tools and questionnaire content

Survey Criteria	Evaluation Content	Scale	(Cronbach's Alpha)
1. Influence of Family on Career Choice	Evaluates the role of family resources, finances, and career perspectives	5-point Likert Scale	> 0.7
2. Influence of School on Career Choice	Assesses the impact of teachers, career counseling programs, and extracurricular activities	5-point Likert Scale	> 0.7
3. Impact of Social Environment and Community	Evaluates the influence of media, social trends, and peer relationships	5-point Likert Scale	> 0.7
4. Influence of the Student's Own Perspective	Assesses students' self-awareness, personal passion, and motivation for career development	5-point Likert Scale	> 0.7
5. Influence of Economic Factors and Labor Market	Evaluates the impact of job opportunities, salary and benefits, skill requirements, and career advancement opportunities	5-point Likert Scale	> 0.7

3.7. Qualitative Analysis Method

Qualitative analysis was conducted through 25 semi-structured in-depth interviews with representatives from five target groups: five school administrators, eight teachers, four parents, five students, and three employers. The interviews focused on exploring personal experiences, perspectives on the roles of schools, families, and social environments, and employers' expectations regarding the skills and qualities students should possess. The interviews were designed with flexibility to encourage participants to share naturally and in detail. For instance, one student stated: *"The counseling sessions at school helped me better understand job requirements, giving me more confidence in making career decisions"* (S1). Similarly, a teacher remarked: *"The current career guidance program provides useful information, but more hands-on activities are needed to give students deeper insights into various professions"* (T3). Interview data were coded and analyzed using content analysis. Prominent themes such as family influence, the role of schools, and labor market impacts were clarified, offering in-depth perspectives to complement the findings from the quantitative analysis.

The study employed a stratified random sampling method to ensure high representativeness, reflecting comprehensive perspectives from stakeholders, including school administrators, teachers, parents, students, and employers. The data collection process for both quantitative and qualitative methods was comprehensive, forming a basis for understanding the factors influencing career decisions among students in private high schools in Ho Chi Minh City. The integration of quantitative and qualitative analyses provided not only an overview of the impact levels of each factor but also illuminated nuanced insights into personal experiences and participant perspectives. The use of multivariate regression in quantitative analysis and content analysis in qualitative research created a strong foundation, enabling the study to address the initial research questions and offer practical recommendations to enhance career guidance effectiveness in private high schools. These findings contribute significantly to designing strategies that support students in making career choices aligned with the demands of the modern labor market.

4. Research Results

4.1. Current Status of Family Influence on Career Choice

Family plays an important role in influencing students' career choices, providing both motivation and a certain level of pressure. The factor "Financial support from family" has the greatest impact, with a mean (M) of 4.5 for teachers (T), 4.3 for students (S), and 4.1 for parents (P), and a Sig value of 0.01. This financial support allows students to confidently choose fields that require higher costs,

expanding their career opportunities. One student shared, "My family always encourages me to pursue medicine and promises financial support" (S2). "Career guidance from parents" is also a significant factor, with a mean of 4.2 for T, 4.1 for S, and 4.0 for P, and a Sig value of 0.02, indicating that parents play a role in suggesting and advising on promising careers. A parent noted, "I want my child to go into information technology because of its growth potential" (P1). However, some students wish for more independence in their career choices, free from family expectations.

Table 3. Family Influence on Career Choice

Factor	Mean T	SD T	Mean S	SD S	Mean P	SD P	Sig	Rank
Family resources supporting career	4.0	0.5	3.9	0.7	3.8	0.9	0.06	4
Career perspectives from previous generations	3.8	0.8	3.7	0.9	3.6	0.8	0.07	6
Financial support from family	4.5	0.6	4.3	0.5	4.1	0.7	0.01	1
Role of parents in career decision	4.2	0.6	4.1	0.6	3.6	0.8	0.03	5
Family expectations	4.3	0.4	4.2	0.5	3.8	0.9	0.03	3
Career guidance from parents	4.2	0.5	4.1	0.6	4.0	0.8	0.02	2
Family career tradition	3.9	0.7	3.7	0.8	3.5	0.9	0.04	7
Advice from relatives	4.1	0.5	4.0	0.6	3.9	0.7	0.05	8
Overall Average	4.13	0.57	4.0	0.65	3.79	0.81	0.04	

The factor "Role of parents in career decisions" also shows variation, with a mean of 4.2 for T, 4.1 for S, and 3.6 for P, and a Sig value of 0.03. While parents are influential, many students feel pressured by these expectations. A student expressed, "I feel pressured when my parents expect me to take over the family business, even though I am more interested in creative fields" (S3). Some students view family expectations as motivation, while others feel restricted from exploring new career paths. The overall mean for T is 4.13, S is 4.0, and P is 3.79, with a Sig value of 0.04, reflecting the clear influence of family, though differences in perception remain. These results highlight the need to balance family guidance with individual aspirations, helping students achieve harmony in their career choices.

4.2. Current Status of School Influence on Career Choice

The combined analysis of the regression model and qualitative data provides deep

insights into the factors influencing students' career decisions. Regression results reveal that career counseling from teachers has the strongest influence ($\beta = 0.42$, Sig = 0.001). The central role of teachers is reflected in their ability to provide information and guidance, helping students clarify their career orientation. A student shared: *"The counseling sessions with teachers at school helped me better understand my career options and feel more confident in making decisions"* (S1). This highlights the importance of training and developing teachers' counseling skills to enhance their effectiveness. Career guidance programs ($\beta = 0.38$, Sig = 0.003) and career-related extracurricular activities ($\beta = 0.34$, Sig = 0.004) further confirm the value of well-organized and practical activities in expanding students' career awareness. A teacher stated: *"We strive to create extracurricular activities like career fairs to give students real-world exposure to various professions"* (T5). These activities not

only increase students' awareness of the labor market but also build their confidence when faced with career choices. Factors such as career guidance materials from schools ($\beta = 0.29$), guidance from the education council ($\beta = 0.27$), and internship programs ($\beta = 0.25$) play supportive roles. A parent commented: *"We need more support from schools to provide detailed materials and information about careers, which can help us better guide our children"* (P3).

Table 4. School influence on career choice

Factor	Regression Coefficient (β)	Confidence Interval (95% CI)	Sig	Rank
Career counseling from teachers	0.42	[0.36, 0.48]	0.001	1
Career guidance programs	0.38	[0.31, 0.45]	0.003	2
Career-related extracurricular activities	0.34	[0.27, 0.41]	0.004	3
Career guidance materials from schools	0.29	[0.23, 0.35]	0.006	4
Guidance from the education council	0.27	[0.20, 0.34]	0.015	5
Internship programs	0.25	[0.18, 0.32]	0.018	6
Participation in subject-specific clubs	0.23	[0.16, 0.30]	0.022	7
Self-assessment of students' abilities	0.19	[0.12, 0.26]	0.037	8

Although internships have a relatively lower impact, they offer significant practical value by helping students understand job requirements more thoroughly. Factors such as participation in subject-specific clubs ($\beta = 0.23$) and self-assessment of abilities ($\beta = 0.19$) indicate potential for improvement if implemented systematically. A student shared: *"Participating in the robotics club helped me realize my interests and abilities in the technology field"* (S2). This suggests that programs focused on developing soft skills and self-exploration should be prioritized in career guidance systems. The results underline the importance of collaboration between teachers, schools, and families as key elements in guiding students' career decisions. Combining qualitative data with regression analysis not only clarifies the relationships between factors but also provides valuable insights for optimizing career guidance programs in private high schools in Ho Chi Minh City.

4.3. Current Status of Social and Community Environmental Influence

The regression analysis results indicate that the influence of social media has the greatest impact on students' career decisions, with a regression coefficient of $\beta = 0.41$ (Sig = 0.001). Social media provides rich and easily accessible information, shaping students' perceptions of careers and offering strong inspiration. A student shared: *"I've learned a lot from success stories on social media, which has helped me identify my career goals"* (S3). Ranked second is social career trends ($\beta = 0.39$, Sig = 0.003), reflecting the direct influence of economic and societal changes. This demonstrates that emerging or highly relevant professions often attract students' interest. Successful societal role models also play a significant role ($\beta = 0.35$, Sig = 0.005), as prominent individuals in society serve as sources of inspiration and motivation for students. A parent commented: *"The successful role models on social media have given my child clearer career direction"* (P5). Factors such as career workshops outside school ($\beta = 0.33$) and societal perspectives on professions ($\beta = 0.31$) are also notable, highlighting students' need to gain deeper insights into the practical requirements of careers through direct experiences and community sharing. Other factors, including peer counseling on career choices ($\beta = 0.30$), information from social networks ($\beta = 0.28$), and participation in community activities ($\beta = 0.26$), while having relatively lower impacts, remain important in shaping career decisions. A student remarked: *"Participating in community activities helped me realize the value of the work I want to pursue"* (S4). The research results emphasize the significant role of the social environment in supporting career orientation, particularly as private high schools need to develop more appropriate career guidance programs.

Table 5. Influence of Social and Community Environment

Factor	Regression Coefficient (β)	Confidence Interval (95% CI)	Sig	Rank
Influence of social media	0.41	[0.34, 0.48]	0.001	1
Social career trends	0.39	[0.31, 0.47]	0.003	2
Successful societal role models	0.35	[0.27, 0.43]	0.005	3
Career workshops outside school	0.33	[0.25, 0.41]	0.007	4
Societal perspectives on professions	0.31	[0.23, 0.39]	0.010	5
Peer counseling on career choices	0.30	[0.22, 0.38]	0.015	6
Information from social networks and media	0.28	[0.20, 0.36]	0.020	7
Participation in community activities	0.26	[0.18, 0.34]	0.030	8

4.4. Current Status of Student's Own Influence on Career Choice

Personal factors play a decisive role in students' career choices, serving as a foundation for choosing a suitable career path. Among these, "Personal passion" is considered the most impactful factor, with a mean (M) of 4.6 for teachers (T), 4.5 for students (S), and 4.3 for parents (P), and a Sig value of 0.01. This indicates that personal interests and passion are primary motivators for students in selecting a career, often overriding external influences from family or society. One student expressed, "My passion for creative work drives me to pursue design, even though my family has other expectations" (S1). Passion is seen as a driving force that encourages students to stay committed to their chosen profession over the long term. "Self-assessment of abilities" is the second most influential factor, with M values of 4.5 for T, 4.3 for S, 4.2 for P, and a Sig value of 0.02. A clear understanding of personal strengths enables students to choose careers that align with their capabilities, helping them avoid decisions made under external pressure. A teacher commented, "When students accurately assess their own abilities, they tend to make more realistic and sustainable career choices" (T2). Understanding one's abilities is a foundational factor that helps students effectively plan and develop their careers. Additionally, "Awareness of career trends" is also significant, with M values of 4.4 for T, 4.2 for S, 4.1 for P, and a Sig value of 0.03. Staying informed and understanding career trends help students choose fields with promising future prospects. A student shared, "I'm interested in fields like technology and media because I believe they have strong growth potential" (S3). Lastly, "Independence and decision-making ability" also has a notable impact, with M values of 4.1 for T, 4.0 for S, and 3.8 for P, and a Sig value of 0.06. Independence gives students confidence in career selection, especially when pursuing less conventional careers or those that may not receive full support from family. However, independence usually complements rather than serves as the main driver of personal career decisions. The overall results, with a mean of 4.28 for T, 4.1 for S, 4.0 for P, and a Sig value of 0.04, confirm the crucial role of personal factors in career orientation. Elements such as passion, self-awareness of abilities, and independence help students establish a clear career path and ensure sustainable development for their future.

4.5. Current Status of the Influence of Economic and Labor Market Factors on Career Choice

The Chi-square analysis results indicate that economic and labor market factors significantly influence students' career choices, with all tested factors having a Sig. value < 0.05. Among these, salary and benefits of professions emerged as the most influential factor (Chi-square = 15.21, Sig. = 0.001). This underscores that attractive income and benefits play a decisive role in attracting the attention of students, parents, and even schools.
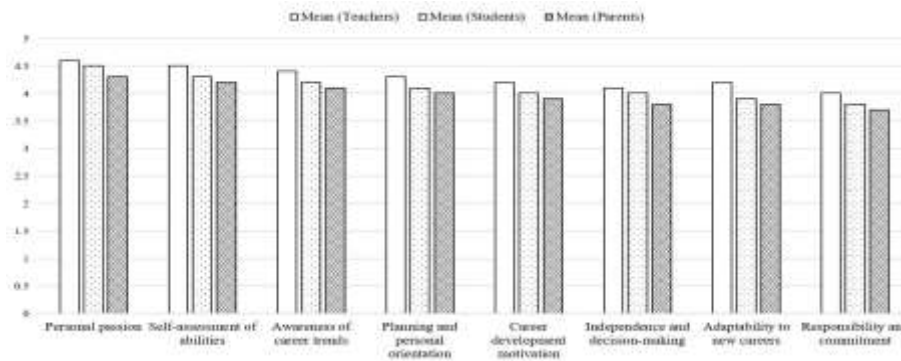
Figure 1. Influence of student's own factors on career choice.

Table 6. Influence of economic and labor market factors on career choice

Factor	Chi-square	df	Chi-square/df	Sig.	Rank
Salary and benefits of professions	15.21	3	5.07	0.001	1
Job opportunities in industries	12.84	3	4.28	0.002	2
Skill requirements from the labor market	11.56	3	3.85	0.003	3
Career development trends	9.78	3	3.26	0.008	4
Promotion and advancement opportunities	8.92	3	2.97	0.011	5
Labor market information	7.64	3	2.55	0.018	6
Competitiveness in industries	6.34	3	2.11	0.025	7
Impact of economic policies	5.22	3	1.74	0.038	8

An employer remarked: "Salary and benefits are key factors when students and families evaluate a potential career, especially in industries requiring high-level skills" (E3). Ranked second is job opportunities in industries (Chi-square = 12.84, Sig. = 0.002), reflecting the strong interest of students and parents in the likelihood of securing employment in specific industries after graduation. The third most important factor is skill requirements from the labor market (Chi-square = 11.56, Sig. = 0.003), highlighting the need to develop professional skills to meet the demands of an increasingly competitive labor market. A teacher observed: "Practical skill training in schools should be prioritized to help students confidently enter the job market" (T7). Other factors, such as career development trends (Chi-square = 9.78, Sig. = 0.008) and promotion and advancement opportunities (Chi-square = 8.92, Sig. = 0.011), were also highly rated, indicating that students and parents consider not only current job opportunities but also long-term career prospects. Labor market information,

industry competitiveness, and the impact of economic policies, although having lower levels of influence, still play crucial roles in career decision-making. These findings highlight the necessity of providing comprehensive information and appropriate guidance for students to help them better understand the labor market and make practical and strategic career choices.

5. Discussion

5.1. Evaluation of Factors Influencing Students' Career Choices

High school students' career choices are influenced by a variety of factors, each contributing uniquely to shaping their career orientation. These factors include family support, the influence of school, the impact of the social environment, personal attributes, and, finally, the economic and labor market context.

Firstly, family influence plays a critical role in students' career decisions. Financial support, guidance, and expectations from family can

provide powerful motivation or, conversely, create pressure in career selection. Families often support students financially, allowing them to pursue careers that require substantial educational and practical investment. Additionally, parents usually guide their children based on their own experiences and values, passing on what they believe to be the best career choices. However, this can lead some students to feel restricted, choosing careers to meet family expectations rather than following their own interests. Striking a balance between guidance and personal freedom is key to enabling families to support students effectively, creating conditions for them to grow in alignment with their abilities and aspirations.

Secondly, the school's influence is substantial, as it provides a structured environment for career development after family. Career counseling programs and teacher support play an especially crucial role. Teachers, as primary sources of detailed career information, offer practical advice based on each student's abilities, interests, and potential. School career programs often include counseling sessions, extracurricular activities, and internships that help students understand job requirements and prepare them for the realities of the working world. These real-world experiences provide knowledge, help students develop skills, build networks, and enhance soft skills. While these programs are highly valued, students still express a desire for more practical activities to reinforce and solidify their career decisions.

Thirdly, the influence of the social and community environment is another key factor in shaping career choices. In today's world, social media plays a major role in conveying information about different professions, broadening students' perspectives, and providing successful role models. Students tend to choose professions highlighted by the media or those pursued by their peers, fostering expectations of future success. However, some students also recognize that social media can create unrealistic role models and add pressure to achieve similar success. Successful individuals, such as entrepreneurs, artists, or scientists, provide strong inspiration, encouraging students to pursue careers that promise advancement and personal success. Peer support and encouragement also help boost students' confidence in their decisions.

Fourthly, personal factors are indispensable in students' career choices. Passion, personal interests, and self-assessment are critical factors in the career selection process. Passion for a particular field helps students remain dedicated and prepared to face challenges in both study and work. When students accurately assess their abilities, they make decisions that align with their strengths and conditions, avoiding choices based solely on family or societal influences. For many students, selecting a career that matches their interests and capabilities helps them establish long-term engagement and growth in their chosen field. Independence and decision-making ability also contribute by instilling confidence in students, enabling them to make bold yet fitting career choices.

Fifthly, economic and labor market factors have a growing influence on students' career decisions, particularly in a rapidly developing economy. Students increasingly focus on practical aspects such as salary, benefits, skill requirements, and promotion opportunities in various fields. Salary and comprehensive benefits are among the top criteria for career selection, providing students with security when investing time and effort in a field that offers stable income. Moreover, job opportunities in high-demand sectors also influence students' careful consideration when making choices. Labor market skill requirements provide students with a clear direction in their studies, fostering competitiveness and motivating them to meet employer expectations. Modern fields such as information technology, media, healthcare, and business attract significant student interest due to their strong growth potential and broad employment opportunities.

These discussions highlight that students' career choices are multifaceted, shaped by a balanced combination of family support, educational guidance, social context, personal factors, and economic realities. Understanding and navigating these influences enable students to make well-informed, sustainable career decisions that align with both personal goals and market demands.

5.2. Recommendations and Suggestions

Based on the factors influencing career decisions among high school students at private schools in Ho Chi Minh City, it's evident that an effective career guidance plan requires close collaboration among families, schools, communities, and the students themselves. To best support students in their career choices, the following recommendations focus on practical solutions that create a balanced career guidance environment, helping students maximize their personal abilities while meeting labor market demands.

Firstly, families should guide careers through supportive and flexible accompaniment. Families play a vital role in shaping students' career orientations and perceptions. Therefore, parents should focus on accompanying, encouraging, and supporting their children rather than imposing personal views. Parents should listen to and understand their children's interests, passions, and abilities, guiding them to choose careers that balance personal aspirations with market realities. Family activities such as discussing careers, attending school counseling sessions with children, or encouraging them to engage in job experiences can establish a harmonious career foundation. By exploring various professions together, parents and students can gain a comprehensive and realistic understanding of career options, ensuring that the final decision reflects not only family expectations but also the student's abilities and ambitions.

Secondly, schools need to diversify and improve the quality of career counseling programs. Schools are key supporters of students' career orientation. To ensure students receive accurate and varied information about professions, schools should invest in quality career guidance programs. Counseling sessions should focus on providing practical knowledge and career skills while helping students develop soft skills such as communication, problem-solving, and self-assessment. Schools should also organize practical experience activities, such as internships, company visits, and seminars with industry experts, giving students opportunities to engage in real work environments. Furthermore, teachers need training in career knowledge and labor market trends to offer practical and relevant advice, helping students make well-rounded career decisions.

Thirdly, the role of social media and community should be positively and objectively promoted. Social media increasingly influences career information and role modeling. However, the rapid growth of social platforms can also promote unrealistic success models, creating societal pressures on students. To avoid negative impacts, community organizations and educational media channels should actively provide objective, accurate, and multi-dimensional information on various careers. Authentic success stories, interviews with industry experts, and career-focused educational content in media help students gain a realistic understanding of different fields, fostering balanced perspectives when making career choices. Schools can also collaborate with these organizations to build a healthy media environment, guiding students to selectively receive and evaluate career information.

Fourthly, students should be encouraged to develop self-assessment and self-discovery skills. Personal factors are crucial in career choices, so schools and families should support students in developing self-assessment and self-discovery skills. Personality tests, soft skills courses, and relevant extracurricular activities can help students identify their interests, passions, and abilities more clearly. Schools should also incorporate career guidance content

into the curriculum to enhance students' decision-making abilities, boosting their confidence when choosing careers. Developing self-assessment skills helps students find suitable career paths and establishes a foundation for them to sustainably and effectively realize their potential.

Fifthly, schools should strengthen partnerships with businesses to stay updated on labor market requirements. Schools should establish strong relationships with companies and labor organizations to provide students with real career experiences and keep them informed about market demands. Collaborating with businesses offers internship opportunities and helps students understand each field's requirements and trends, guiding their studies and skill development accordingly. These collaborations can include seminars, short-term training programs, and internships. Business involvement gives students opportunities to observe, experience real work environments, and assess their abilities, preparing them to confidently enter the labor market.

5.3. Limitations of the Study

Although this study on career choice factors for high school students at private schools in Ho Chi Minh City provides valuable data and in-depth analysis, it has certain limitations. Firstly, the study only focuses on private schools in Ho Chi Minh City, a developed economic area with a strong private education system, which may not fully reflect the career trends and choices of high school students nationwide, particularly in rural areas or cities with different characteristics. Secondly, the primary data collection methods used were surveys and in-depth interviews, relying on the honesty and natural responses of participants. This introduces a risk of bias, as students may feel influenced by social expectations or opinions from parents and teachers, potentially limiting the accurate evaluation of actual influences on career choices. Thirdly, the factors affecting career choice can change over time and with economic and social conditions.

This study was conducted at a specific point in time, while labor market conditions and career trends are constantly shifting. Therefore, ongoing studies are needed to keep results current and comparable. Nevertheless, this research provides a reliable data foundation and a multidimensional view of the influences on career decisions, contributing significantly to developing appropriate career guidance solutions for high school students in Ho Chi Minh City.

6. Conclusion

This study reveals that career choices among high school students at private schools in Ho Chi Minh City are shaped by various interwoven factors, including family support and guidance, school impact, social environment influences, students' personal attributes, and the development of the labor market. Family provides both mental and financial support, and career guidance; however, if family expectations don't align with students' abilities and interests, they can create pressure and hinder personal potential. Schools, through career guidance programs and experiential activities, play an essential role in providing information and necessary skills, helping students better understand career fields and market demands. The social environment and media expand students' awareness and help shape career role models, though they may sometimes foster unrealistic expectations. Meanwhile, personal factors such as passion, self-assessment, and adaptability serve as critical motivators, driving students to select fields that align with their interests and unique potential. This research offers valuable analytical insights for families, schools, and communities to help students develop sustainable career orientations that meet both personal needs and labor market trends in the modern economic context.

References

[1] Central Committee Resolution No. 29-NQ/TW, Dated November 4th, 2013, on Comprehensive Renovation of Education and Training.

[2] Ministry of Education and Training, Experiential Activities and Career-oriented Experiential

Activities, Issued with Circular No. 32/2018/TT-BGDĐT, December 26th, 2018.

[3] Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, Project Career Education and Career Orientation for High School Students 2018-2025, Decision No. 522/QĐ-TTg, May 14th, 2018.

[4] B. V. Phu, Organizing Career Guidance for High School Students under the Socialization Approach, Ph.D. Thesis in Educational Management, University of Education, Hanoi, 2009.

[5] Ministry of Education and Training, Circular No. 31/2017/TT-BGDĐT Guidance on Psychological Counseling for Students in High Schools, Hanoi, 2017.

[6] Ministry of Education and Training, Decision 522/QĐ-TTg Approving the Project Career Education and Career Orientation for High School Students 2018-2025, Hanoi, 2018.

[7] T. V. Qui, C. H. Thi, Factors Affecting High School Students' University Choices, Journal of Science & Technology Development, University of Technology, VNU-HCM, Vol. 15, 2009.

[8] J. L. Holland, Theory of Careers and Self-directed Search, Journal of Career Counseling Psychology, Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1993.

[9] L. T. M. Linh, K. V. Quy, Factors Influencing High School Students' University Choices in Vietnam: Survey Evidence 2020, PHENIKAA University, 2020.

[10] N. T. Linh, 12th Grade Students' Evaluation of Career Education in High Schools in Southeastern Provinces, Journal of Science, Ho Chi Minh City University of Education, Vol. 7, 2017.

[11] MOJES: Malaysian Online Journal of Educational Sciences, Vol. 1, No. 3, 2018, pp. 14-19.

[12] H. V. Dang, T. H. Nguyen, V. S. Pham, T. T. Le Ho, Factors Affecting Career Guidance and Counseling for Middle School Students in North Central Vietnam, American Journal of Educational Research, Vol. 10, No. 9, 2022, pp. 553-559.

[13] L. D. Hung, Career Counseling Needs of High School Students in Ho Chi Minh City, Ph.D. Thesis in Psychology, Academy of Social Sciences, 2018.

[14] N. T. B. Phuong, T. Luong, L. T. B. Bay, N. T. Nhi, N. H. Nam, T. H. Phuoc, D. T. B. Quyen, D. C. Vinh, Study on Career Counseling for 10th Graders in Non-public High Schools in Ninh Kieu District, Can Tho City, Journal of Education, Vol. 23, No. 5, 2023, pp. 53-57.

[15] N. T. T. Han, Current State of Career Counseling at Some High Schools in Ho Chi Minh City, Journal of Science, Ho Chi Minh City University of Education, Vol. 25, 2011, pp. 116-120.

[16] T. T. T. Mai, Operations of Psychology - Education - Career Counseling Rooms in High Schools, Journal of Science, Ho Chi Minh City University of Education, Vol. 19, 2010, pp. 124-129.

[17] T. K. Nhung, L. T. T. Linh, Evaluation of Factors Influencing Career Orientation of High School Students in Nghe An, Journal of Education, No. 431, Issue 1, 2018, pp. 27-53.

[18] X. Gu, M. Tang, S. Chen, M. L. T. Montgomery, Effects of a Career Course on Chinese High School Students' Career Decision-Making Readiness, 2020, https://doi.org/10.1002/cdq.12233.

[19] C. Hou, Y. Wu, Z. Liu, Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Mediates Social Support's Effect on Career Adaptability: A Longitudinal Study, Social Behavior and Personality: An International Journal, Vol. 47, No. 5, 2019, pp. 1-13, https://doi.org/10.2224/sbp.8157.

[20] J. Wang, R. Guo, M. Liu, X. Zhang, L. Ren, M. Sun, S. Tang, Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy and Professional Commitment among Master Nursing Students, Western Journal of Nursing Research, Vol. 40, No. 3, 2018, pp. 327-345, https://doi.org/10.1177/0193945916682236.

[21] I. Ado, Career Guidance, Student Participation and its Implications for Kano, Nigeria, MOJES: Malaysian Online Journal of Educational Sciences, Vol. 1, No. 3, 2018, pp. 14-19.

[22] R. Gati, R. Gadassi, R. M. Cohen, Career Decision-Making Profiles vs. Styles: Convergent and Incremental Validity, Journal of Vocational Behavior, Vol. 81, No. 1, 2012, pp. 2-16, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2012.03.004.

[23] V. B. Trinh, Methods of Conducting Scientific Research Topics, Ho Chi Minh City University of Education, 2005.

[24] T. H. Pham, Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Methods in Social Science Research, Journal of Science, Vol. 7, 2006, pp. 181-189.

[25] H. H. Nguyen, T. D. Nguyen, V. P. Nguyen, T. P. L. Duong, Scientific Research Methods, Thu Dau Mot University Textbooks, 2020.

[26] M. T. Huynh, Research Methods. Lectures, Ho Chi Minh City University of Education, 2012.

[27] C. R. Kothari, Research Methods: Methods and Techniques, New Age International, 2004.

[28] A. V. Mai et al., Introduction to Quantitative Data Processing, Thanh Hoa University of Culture, Sports and Tourism, 2022.

[29] D. T. Le, Research Methods Used in Scientific Research in Business Administration, Journal of Science, Vol. 58, No. 12, 2014, pp. 250-257.