

To cite this article: Hoang Thanh Tung and Nguyen Tran Gia Han (2024). CURRENT TRENDS IN CAREER CHOICE OF YOUTH: A CASE STUDY OF VIETNAMESE YOUTH, International Journal of Education and Social Science Research (IJESSR) 7 (3): 01-18 Article No. 930, Sub Id 1449

## CURRENT TRENDS IN CAREER CHOICE OF YOUTH: A CASE STUDY OF VIETNAMESE YOUTH

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.37500/IJESSR.2024.7301>

### ABSTRACT

Choosing a career helps young people determine their future direction, thereby helping them focus their efforts and time on specific goals, from studying to developing skills. The study examines the career orientation of young people today, the steps in the career orientation process, and considers occupations that provide potential jobs for young people in the future. Using the desk research method along with conducting a sociological survey with 896 survey forms collected from Vietnamese young people about the level of priority for choosing a career, factors affecting career choice and potential careers for young people, the results show that young people prioritize to choose jobs with a working environment that promotes interaction; jobs with stable salaries, consistent with abilities and opportunities for career advancement. Careers that young people consider to have great potential include marketing, doctors and nurses, artificial intelligence and content creation. From the research results, the authors have a number of exchanges and discussions with the School/Family/Society and with Students/Students to make career orientation for young people more effective.

**KEYWORDS:** Occupation, trend, choice, youth, Vietnam

### INTRODUCTION

The world is witnessing rapid change associated with globalization and world economic fluctuations. This means that the labor market must also change and evolve to adapt to the times. Experts' forecasts show that the Vietnamese labor market will undergo strong changes in the coming years. Traditional and outdated professions will gradually be replaced by new fields consistent with modern trends. (ehou.vn, 2023)

The career choice trends of young people today have many changes compared to the past. Instead of just focusing on hobbies and salaries, young people also prioritize creative jobs, associated with technology... and many other trends. (codegym.vn, 2023)

Society is increasingly developing the career choice trend of young people is also more concerned than before. Gen Z generation is always aiming for newer, highly experiential careers. In particular, it shows one's own qualities and personality. (oto.edu.vn, 2023)

However, according to statistics, in 2021, the number of graduates working in the right field of training is 56%, the remaining number is only related to the training field is 25%, or even not related to the training field is 19%. Statistics from the Ministry of Labor, War Invalids and Social Affairs, in the second quarter of 2022, the recruitment trend of the labor market for human resources with university degrees is 49.7%, college and intermediate level is 30%, 5%; Meanwhile, the demand for job seekers with university degrees is 61.1%, college and intermediate level is 33%. (tuoitre.vn, 2022)

Statistics show that there is a significant gap between labor supply and demand in terms of both qualification structure and training expertise. This partly reflects inadequacies in career guidance and streamlining in educational institutions as well as the self-orientation and career selection process of learners. (Nam Du, 2022)

In this study, the research team examined the career choice trends of Vietnamese youth using desk research and sociological survey methods to address research questions:

- What is the priority level of young people regarding factors affecting career orientation?
- How is the career orientation process for young people implemented?
- What factors influence young people's career choice trends?
- What professions offer potential jobs for young people in the future?

## **2. Career choices of youth nowadays**

Career orientation for the future will be the foundation to help young people have a basis for success. In the labor market there are many professions and occupations. This brings opportunities to workers, but also makes the selection process difficult. Choosing a career is choosing a career orientation that is suitable for you and has opportunities for development. (jobsgo.vn, 2021)

### ***2.1. Career orientation for young people***

*Choose a career according to new trends.* It can be seen that nowadays young people no longer orient themselves to traditional professions such as banking, teaching, lawyers... Instead, choosing new majors such as Digital Marketing, Logistics, IT... with increasingly open job opportunities. In addition, professions such as car repair technician, refrigeration technician, chef, baker, bartender, barista... are also increasingly sought after by many young people. (oto.edu.vn, 2023)

*Choose a job that promotes freedom and creativity.* In the current era of technological development, generation Z easily grasps information and learns more. This helps you have better knowledge and ability to multitask. Career orientation for young people will follow jobs that promote freedom, without being forced to impose stereotypes or be constrained by 8 hours in the office. We are witnessing a new career era gradually forming from Gen Z's changes in employment orientation. (oto.edu.vn, 2023)

*Choose an environment that promotes interaction and affirms personality.* A youthful, modern, and creative working environment will be of great interest and choice to the young generation in the future. Besides, open space encourages connection, helping you develop your personal bravery and express your personality. Over time, career choice trends seem to have completely changed compared to previous generations. New emerging industries with strong development potential have been attracting the attention of young people. Gen Z is showing independence in career direction and taking control of their future. (oto.edu.vn, 2023)

### **Box 1. The importance of the future orientation process**

The process of establishing a clear plan and vision for the future path plays an extremely important role for students. By clearly understanding your own direction, you will be able to differentiate and prioritize the most important things first. In the opinion of the research team, when you think carefully about what you want to achieve in the future and choose a career you love and are passionate about, you will feel more excited about continuing upcoming career path.

Whether the future orientation process is successful or not depends not only on the students but also other factors such as family, friends, interests, economic conditions and business needs. Support and guidance from predecessors is an extremely important part of providing necessary experience that young people do not yet understand.

To reduce the number of students who feel discouraged and have the intention of changing the whole process from the moment of making a decision, universities have had many forms of counseling for students at the university and at the government. You study in high school, but many of you still haven't clearly determined what major you should choose or what school you should go to, so when it comes time to register your aspirations, you make immature decisions.

*Source: Referenced from VOV.vn (2023)*

***Steps in the career orientation process.*** There are 8 steps in the career orientation process that students need to understand (Nam Du, 2022). Specifically:

*Step 1:* Determine what you want to do (what you like to do, what you like, the values that bring happiness).

*Step 2:* Identify abilities that can do well (health, qualities, talents and other abilities).

*Step 3:* Learn about the professional world in the desired field (profession/job, working environment, working conditions).

*Step 4:* Find out the standards of the occupational field (health requirements, skills...).

*Step 5:* Find out the difficulties you face (yourself, family, job opportunities).

*Step 6:* Evaluate the optimal choice (consistency between requirements and abilities, agreement between family aspirations and child's wishes, agreement between opportunities and family circumstances).

*Step 7:* Register for an education and training program (determine the training level, reputation of the training facility, conditions and advantages of the training facility).

*Step 8:* Stay positive (make efforts to achieve goals, spend a lot of time experiencing the profession and learning from predecessors).

## **2.2. Factors influencing young people's tendency to choose a career**

*Besides knowing clearly what they like to do and what they want to do in the future, young people also need to consider factors that influence their final decision.*

**First is still preference**, putting your interests first will help you be more motivated to learn. This means that when you pursue the path of your dreams, you will have a relatively sustainable motivation, as opposed to trying to force yourself to study a career that you do not love.

**Second are talents and strengths**, Choose and study the fields you know well and are good at. Each person will have their own talents and different ways of expressing them. No one can understand yourself better than you. Therefore, before deciding, you need to know clearly what your talents are and whether they are suitable for that career or not. Don't choose a career just to please someone. You will not be able to stick around for a long time, nor will you be successful if you do not have talent in that field. (amcollege.edu.vn, 2023)

**Social needs are the third thing**, as well as one of the most important factors in choosing a major. Society will have high demand for occupations such as trade and services (67.61%); followed by the industry - construction sector (30.89%) with an estimated human resource need of 4.83 million workers who will have jobs. (congthuong.vn, 2024)

In ManpowerGroup Vietnam's 2024 salary guide, there has been a significant increase in demand for green jobs and green skills across occupations in recent years. Therefore, about 70% of businesses globally have been actively recruiting for positions requiring green skills. In Vietnam, according to data calculated in November 2023, the manufacturing and processing sector is the industry with the highest demand for green job recruitment, with a rate of up to 33%. According to Navigos experts, workers need to continuously update market news, recruitment trends, grasp employer requirements, proactively learn to develop and demonstrate good problem-solving skills, effective communication, foreign languages and adapting to change... Especially grasping new working trends, knowing how to

apply AI to work to improve labor productivity... (congthuong.vn, 2024)

Besides, *other factors* is equally important as the contestants' health, family and appearance. There are many professions that require good health, stamina, and fitness, such as pilots, soldiers, nurses, and doctors. Jobs that require special appearance standards such as reporters, models or actors.

### ***Gender affects career choice***

Men are more likely to graduate from STEM fields so men may have higher incomes (glints.com, 2023). When interacting with the surrounding environment, people often perceive women as having more empathy and optimism than men. That's why professions related to society and people often welcome women. Furthermore, in terms of building relationships and creating a sociable environment, women are increasingly entering politics-related professions, it is women's empathy that creates a solid trust with others.

Women in Vietnam have achieved great achievements in these professions such as Ms. Nguyen Thi Kim Ngan, former Chairwoman of the National Assembly, former Vice President Dang Thi Ngoc Thinh or Governor of the State Bank of Vietnam Nguyen Thi Hong are typical figures who show that not only men but also women are increasingly being used in positions that were previously occupied only by men. GS. Vuong Tien Hoa believes that each individual's ability to succeed depends on their qualifications and passion because most professions are suitable for all genders. (baophapluat.vn, 2019)

#### **Box 2: Studying art can help you get a job in the future?**

Among many reasons why young people have to reconsider their decisions, economics is probably the biggest reason. In Vietnam, the majority of students after graduating from university face the race to find a job and, more importantly, find a job that will bring long-term financial benefits. This is of course a big challenge, because it is difficult to find a job, which leads to highly creative university degrees becoming a barrier to young people's path to finding success. With statistics released every year, most of them point to traditional professions, young people have almost no opportunity to pursue their passions.

Market demand in Vietnam for industries such as fashion design and art-related professions is still quite small, so people always think “how can I make money by studying art”. With the development of artificial intelligence (AI), the future of increased demand for design professions seems unlikely.

*Source: Compiled by the research team*

### 2.3. *These professions provide potential jobs for young people in the future*

**Traditional professions.** Professions expected to bring many job opportunities and potential for sustainable development in the future for young people include: business, marketing, tourism and hospitality, education, and e-commerce, software engineers, architecture, computer science, logistics...

**Professions related to health care.** Professions related to the field of health care and public health such as: Doctors, nurses, nurses, physiotherapists... Improved quality of life is also the time when people care more to health care services. Furthermore, many countries are gradually entering a period of aging populations, so disease prevention and treatment is even more important. And this is also one of the professions with high salaries today. (dec.neu.edu.vn, 2023)

**Careers related to artificial intelligence (AI).** One of the professions that young people today are interested in is fields related to Artificial Intelligence (AI). This is one of the emerging industries in Vietnam, which makes the Vietnamese Government even more promote the development of this industry to try to keep up with world trends and the speed of development and popularity of AI.

**Psychology.** Psychology, like AI, is also an industry that is becoming increasingly interesting to young people. For the Gen-Z generation, psychology and mental health are becoming increasingly important. With trends spreading across social networks about issues related to mental health and prevention and treatment measures, psychology is becoming increasingly popular. According to a report by the Ministry of Health, currently, the rate of people suffering from mental health diseases accounts for about 14.9% of the population, meaning there are nearly 15 million people, including anxiety disorders, depression is a group of diseases with a quite high incidence rate (VTV.vn, 2023)

**Careers related to the field of content creation.** What's more is the content creation field, which is one of the most popular industries as of late, especially in the midst of and after the worldwide pandemic. Companies and organizations developing this industry such as TikTok and Facebook are the largest corporations in the above field. The field of content creation is popular with young people because of its new, youthful nature and expression of personality. These are the potential qualities that the Gen Z generation has "ingrained in their blood". (dec.neu.edu.vn, 2023)

**Careers related to cybersecurity.** Careers related to cybersecurity are extremely diverse but also require many skills and a solid knowledge basis. Cyber security industry is also known as information technology security industry or electronic information security industry (hotcourse.vn, 2024). The Cyber Security industry is still a relatively new industry but is attracting more and more attention from young people. In the age of digital transformation, billions of Vietnamese people's personal information are bought and sold by cyber criminals (vnexpress.net, 2023), due to the above concerns that the cybersecurity industry is increasingly developing.

The cybersecurity industry includes different fields of study based on NSA standards, students need to learn data analysis, general computer programming, cloud telephony, cyber risks, defense in

cyberspace, etc.

**Careers related to renewable energy.** Electricity consumption is increasing, along with the structural shift from traditional energy to renewable energy, causing the need for human resources to increase sharply in recent years. Therefore, renewable energy is becoming a field of study that many young people are interested in. The energy sector in general and renewable energy in particular in both Vietnam and the world are always in a “thirsty” state of human resources, thereby opening up job opportunities for Electrical Engineering Engineers and Industrial Recycled energy Engineers. (iuh.edu.vn, 2023)

### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To research “Current career choice trends of young people: Case study of Vietnamese youth”, the research team used two research methods including desk research (reviewing documents published in the media) and sociological surveys (collecting answer sheets from Vietnamese generation Z youth). The data will be compiled and analyzed using Excel and SPSS software.

**Desk research methods**, the research team reviewed documents on young people's career orientation, steps in the career orientation process, factors affecting young people's tendency to choose a career, and professions that provide potential jobs for young people in the future... through the Google Scholar search engine and youth-related information sites. From there, the research team developed a survey form to conduct a sociological investigation on the career choice trends of Vietnamese youth today.

**Sociological investigation methods**, the research team conducted a preliminary survey and discussed with young generation Z people in Vietnam who are interested and wondering about career orientation. Discussion using a preliminary questionnaire with content about career orientation and current career choice trends of young people. Discussion members are free to give their opinions on relevant aspects to complete the survey. The preliminary study sample size was 20 people. Preliminary research results were used to complete the research questionnaire. After completing the survey, the research team sent and collected the survey using the link on Google Form ([https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScEey3GyIgvuQk7rdAbLmZDGI\\_4pKB2-Tfa6XWADjiFOYnjpA/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScEey3GyIgvuQk7rdAbLmZDGI_4pKB2-Tfa6XWADjiFOYnjpA/viewform)) with a target audience of generation Z youth in Vietnam.

The data collection method conducted by the research team is based on the convenience sampling method and the “snowball” method - the method of finding the next subject based on the suggestion or introduction of the subject just surveyed) to ensure sufficient sample size as required. The number of survey questionnaires received was 896, which were taken into consideration and analyzed for career choice trends of young people.

The research team used a 5-point Likert scale for some survey questions, including:

1. Very non-priority/Very uninfluential
2. No priority/ No influence

3. No comments/Normal
4. Priority/Influence
5. Very priority / Very influential

In order to evaluate the level of judgment of survey participants, the team determined the distance value and average value of each content included in the survey, and determined the average score within the response threshold.

**Distance value = (Maximum - Minimum) / n = (5-1)/5 = 0.8**

Evaluation thresholds based on average score value:

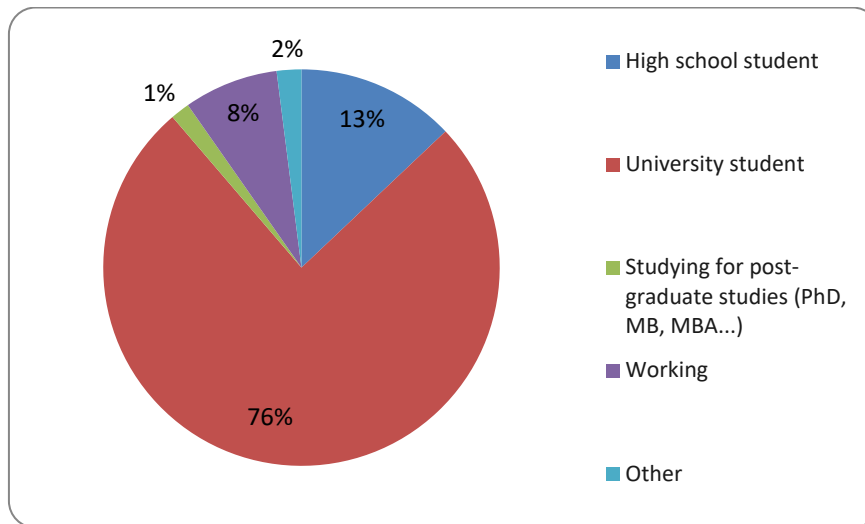
- + 1.00 - 1.80: Very non-priority/Very uninfluential
- + 1.81 - 2.60: No priority/ No influence
- + 2.61 - 3.40: No comments/Normal
- + 3.41 - 4.20: Priority/Influence
- + 4.21 - 5.00: Very priority / Very influential

With questions about the tendency to consider whether young people of generation Z in Vietnam “Yes” or “No” perform the behavior, to determine the behaviors that are often performed and the behaviors that are rarely performed by young people. Currently, it is the basis for discussions to support young people in the process of orienting and choosing a career suitable to their personal abilities and social needs.

#### **4. Survey results on young people's career choice trends**



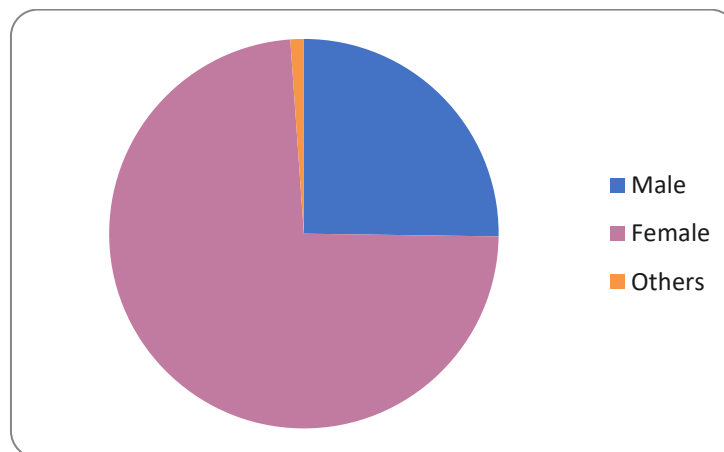
**Figure 1. Occupation of survey participants**



*Source: Survey results*

There were 896 people participating in the survey, of which 679 were students (76%), 116 were high school students (13%), 69 were working (8%), and were studying for post-graduate studies (PhD, MB, MBA...) are 14 people (2%) and some other cases (18 people, 1%).

**Figure 2. Gender of survey participants**



*Source: Survey results*

The majority of survey participants were female, 660 with 226 male and a small portion were other subjects with 1.1% (10 people).

**Table 1. Priority level for career choice**

	1	2	3	4	5	Average score value	Evaluation	Order of priority
Follow new trends	35	40	307	322	192	3.67	Ưu tiên	3
Promote freedom and creativity	40	16	188	371	281	3.93	Ưu tiên	2
Choose a work environment that promotes interaction	34	11	157	344	350	4.08	Ưu tiên	1

Of which 1. Very non-priority; 2. No priority; 3. Normal; 4. Priority; 5. Very priority

Source: Survey results

Survey results show that young people give top priority to choosing jobs with a working environment that promotes interaction. Next are jobs that promote freedom and creativity, and the third priority is following new trends.

**Table 2. Factors influencing career choice**

	1	2	3	4	5	Average score value	Judgment	Order of influence
Opportunities for career advancement	26	15	151	377	327	<b>4.08</b>	Influential	3
Jobs suitable to abilities	23	15	150	342	366	<b>4.13</b>	Influential	2
Meet social needs	20	28	229	371	248	<b>3.89</b>	Influential	5
Suitable for health	25	20	185	346	320	<b>4.02</b>	Influential	4
Matches appearance	35	67	322	284	188	<b>3.58</b>	Influential	8
Family factors	51	84	342	250	169	<b>3.45</b>	Influential	10

Stable salary	19	14	132	347	384	4.19	Influential	1
Suitable working hours	28	28	166	347	327	4.02	Influential	4
Social status	31	56	304	306	199	3.65	Influential	6
Gender advantage	48	76	346	255	171	3.47	Influential	9
Freelance or hired work	31	61	314	282	204	3.62	Influential	7

In which 1. Very uninfluential; 2. No influence; 3. Normal; 4. Influence; 5. Very influential

Source: Survey results

Survey participants said a stable salary is the most important factor in choosing a future career. The number shows that 384 people think that a stable salary is a very influential factor, the average priority score is 4.19/5. At levels two and three are occupations that are suitable to your abilities with an average impact point value of 4.13/5 and an average career advancement opportunity with an impact level of 4.08/5.

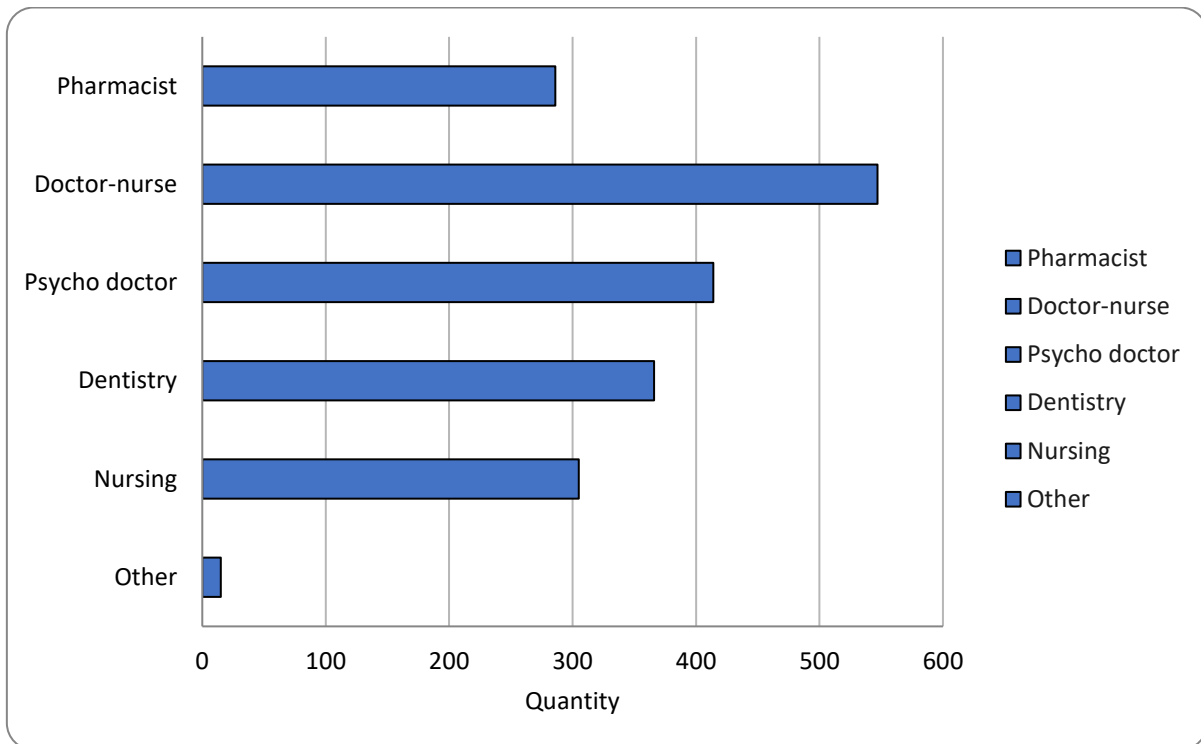
Figure 3. Traditional professions offer a lot of potential



Source: Survey results

The number of people choosing the above traditional professions shows that Marketing is the profession that still offers the most potential for young people. Even higher than Import-Export/Logistics, in second place, an industry that is also a priority for many young people.

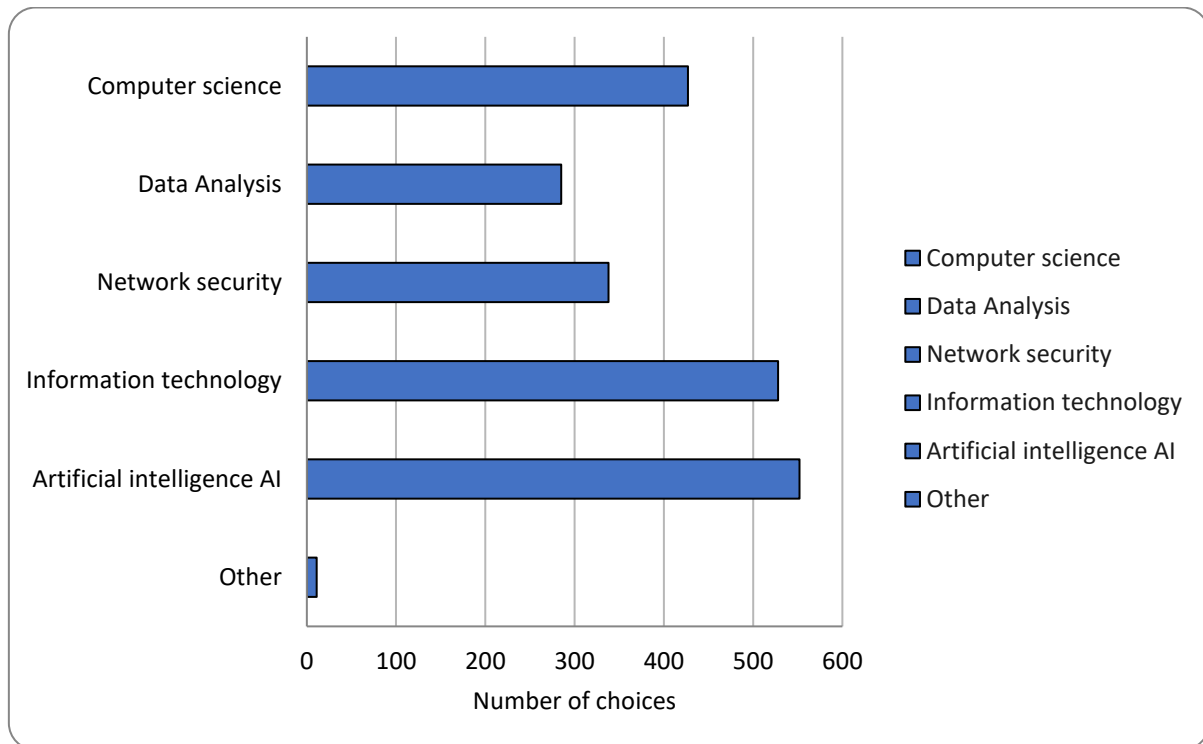
**Figure 4. Healthcare-related professions offer a lot of potential**



*Source: Survey results*

In first place is the profession of Doctor - Nurse, one of the most important professions anywhere with 547 votes. In second place is the Psychiatrist. The rise of the movement to take closer care of mental health is of increasing interest to young people, which is why psychologists have a relatively high number of choices with high rates of 414 choices. The third position is Dentistry, which may be due to the recent attention to aesthetics and oral health.

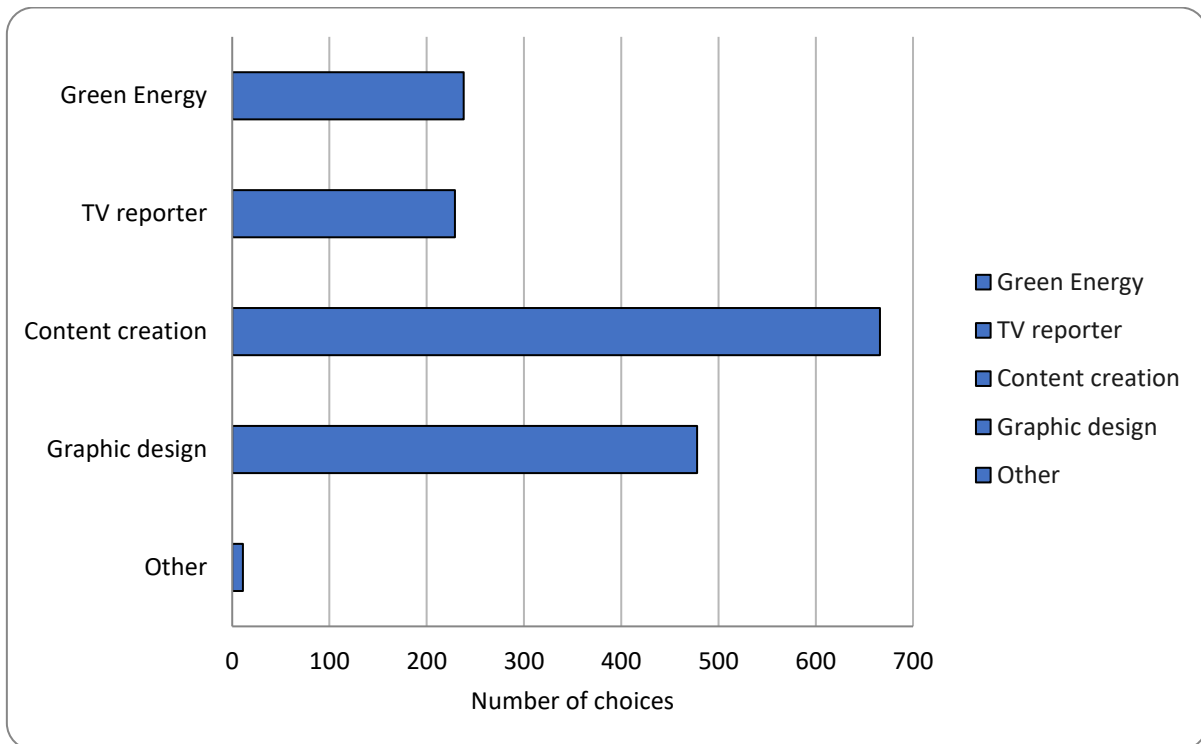
**Figure 6. Technology-related professions offer a lot of potential**



*Source: Survey results*

Survey results show that “AI” is the technology-related industry with the most votes with a number of 552. With the development of AI tools such as GPT Chat and QuilBot, the formation of the above number is not too surprising. In second place is “Information Technology”, one of the extremely important professions in the age of digital transformation, with 528 votes. In third place is computer science, this industry has 427 choices, is also one of the extremely popular industries with young people today, many young people around the world in general and Vietnam in particular chose “Computer Science” for the future because of the high demand for technology. And fourth place is the “Cyber Security” industry, consumers are increasingly paying more attention to security safety on all online trading platforms and even social media sites.

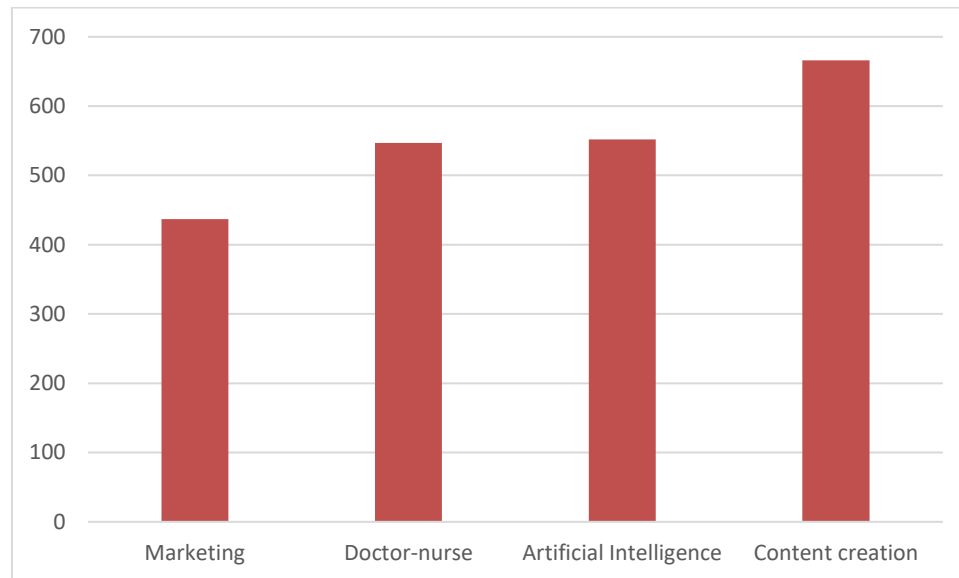
**Figure 7. Other professions offer a lot of potential**



*Source: Survey results*

Content creation is the industry with the highest number of choices at 666. This is not a completely new industry, but after the pandemic it has become extremely prominent among young people and is a potential industry because inherent flexibility. Furthermore, the content creation industry is considered by many people to be a profession “*Light work, high salary*” Because of the above prejudice and the large number of people wanting to pursue this industry, it leads to a high number of choices from survey participants.

**Figure 8. Summary of occupations that bring a lot of potential to young people**



*Source: Survey results*

The occupations listed in Figure 8 have the highest number of choices among all industries. This is a rather surprising rate but not unexpected by the research team. Content creation is still one of the professions that brings a lot of potential to young people.

## 5. Some exchanges and discussions

### *For School/Family/Society*

*In order for career orientation for young people to be effective, schools, families and society can take the following measures:*

**Create a supportive environment:** Schools should provide career counseling support services, including individual counseling, reference materials and career workshops. Families also need to play an important role in creating a supportive environment, by listening and encouraging their children's interests and career goals.

**Provide diverse information:** Schools, families and society should provide young people with diverse information about professions and career opportunities. This may include business tours, interviews with industry experts, and online career resources.

**Develop soft skills:** In addition to professional knowledge, developing soft skills is also very important. Schools and families can assist in developing skills such as communication, time management, and teamwork, through co-curricular activities and projects.

**Create real opportunities:** Providing real-world opportunities, such as internships, volunteer work, or career-related extracurricular programs, helps young people better understand job fields and build networks in your profession.

**Encourage exploration:** Families, schools and society should encourage young people to participate in activities to explore and learn about their interests. This helps them discover and develop their career goals naturally.

### For Students

*For effective career orientation, students can take the following steps:*

**Self-study:** Start by learning about yourself, your interests, skills and values. This helps you better understand what you want and what you can bring to a job.

**Research professions:** Explore different careers by reading books, searching the internet, or participating in career discussions and seminars. Learn about job requirements, growth opportunities, and salaries in the fields you're interested in.

**Participate in extracurricular activities:** Participate in co-curricular activities, clubs or projects related to your field of interest. This gives you the opportunity to apply and develop your skills in a real-life environment.

**Seek work experience:** If possible, look for internship or temporary work opportunities in your field of interest. Practical experience will help you better understand the job and determine whether it is right for you.

**Build a network:** Make friends and connect with people who have experience in the industry you are interested in. Attend networking events, seminars and conferences to get to know and learn from experienced people.

**Set goals and take action:** Set short- and long-term goals for your career, then plan and take action to achieve them. Adjust and redirect your plan as needed to ensure you're moving further along your career path.

### CONCLUSION

Career orientation helps each person determine their career direction and goals. This helps them focus their efforts and time on developing the skills and knowledge needed for the job they want. Learning about professions, career opportunities and job requirements helps each young person have the opportunity to choose a career that suits their abilities, interests and personal goals. Career orientation motivates each young person to develop the necessary skills for the desired job. Continuous learning and upgrading is important to maintain and develop your career. A clear career goal helps young people be motivated to complete the necessary steps to achieve their goals. It also provides clear guidance on



the specific steps young people need to take to get closer to their goals. When young people work in a field, they are passionate about and competent in, they often tend to feel satisfied and successful in their work. Career guidance helps create a fit between the individual and the job, thereby facilitating personal growth and success.

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