... ZAOULI N°13, Vol. 4, Mai 2026, pp. 157-172 ISSN : 2788-9343

Received: 03/07/2025 Accepted: 13/03/2026 Published: 22/05/2026

Towards Smart and Sustainable Guidance Systems: A Proposed Framework for Enhancing Digital Resilience and Quality of Working Life for Career Counselors"

Alia KHELIFI
Lecturer A.
Department of Psychology, Educational Sciences and Pedagogy.
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences.
Mohamed Lamine Debaghine University- Setif 2, Algeria.
Research Unit: URDRH.
Email: a.khelifi1@univ-setif2.dz

Abstract:
This article addresses the radical transformations in the structure of educational and career guidance, seeking to resolve the conflict between the ambitions of comprehensive digitalisation and the imperatives of human sustainability. It highlights the existing gap between hyper-algorithmic guidance systems and the quality of working life for practitioners, noting the risks of technological alienation and the erosion of boundaries between professional and personal spheres. The article introduces the concept of 'digital resilience' as a central pillar for enhancing psychological well-being and protecting emotional resources from digital burnout. By adopting a vision centred on the 'humanisation of technology', the article proposes alternative pathways that ensure the counsellor's sovereignty over their smart tools and the exercise of their right to digital disconnection, in an effort to move from a phase of reactive coping with technological pressures to a phase of creative management that places professional dignity and psychological well-being at the heart of educational development

Keywords: *Quality of working life, digital resilience, professional sustainability, psychological job security*

Résumé :
Cet article aborde les transformations radicales de la structure de l'orientation scolaire et professionnelle, en cherchant à résoudre le conflit entre les ambitions d'une numérisation généralisée et les impératifs de la durabilité humaine. Il met en évidence le fossé existant entre les systèmes d'orientation hyper-algorithmiques et la qualité de vie au travail des professionnels, en soulignant les risques d'aliénation technologique et l'effacement des frontières entre les sphères professionnelle et personnelle. L'article introduit le concept de « résilience numérique » comme pilier central pour améliorer le bien-être psychologique et protéger les ressources émotionnelles contre l'épuisement numérique. En adoptant une vision centrée sur « l'humanisation de la technologie », l'article propose des voies alternatives qui garantissent la souveraineté du conseiller sur ses outils intelligents et l'exercice de son droit à la déconnexion numérique, dans le but de passer d'une phase d'adaptation réactive aux pressions technologiques à une phase de gestion créative qui place la dignité professionnelle et le bien-être psychologique au cœur du développement éducatif

Mots-clés *: Qualité de vie au travail, résilience numérique, durabilité professionnelle, sécurité psychologique de l'emploi*

Received: 03/07/2025 Accepted: 13/03/2026 Published: 22/05/2026

Introduction

The contemporary world is undergoing a major structural transition that goes beyond mere traditional technological modernisation, settling at the heart of what is known as smart societies that place the human being at the centre of cyberspace. This radical shift has given rise to a new generation of practices termed 'Career Guidance 4.0', a concept that goes beyond the use of machine- , representing a philosophical and practical shift that integrates the power of big data with the guidance process, with the aim of providing real-time, accurate and highly personalised career support. At the heart of this rapidly evolving landscape, the guidance counsellor finds themselves faced with the inevitability of a "professional transformation"; a complex journey that is not limited to the accumulation of technical skills alone, but extends to reshaping the counsellor's professional identity, requiring them to strike a delicate balance between the efficiency of algorithms and the warmth of the human touch.

The relationship between these variables is one of conditional complementarity; building smart guidance systems without fortifying the practitioner professionally and psychologically inevitably leads to a form of professional and technical alienation. Hence, 'digital resilience' emerges as a crucial link, as the dynamic capacity that enables the counsellor to maintain their psychological balance and practical competence amidst the flux of technological changes. This flexibility goes beyond the concept of passive adaptation to reach a stage of "digital growth", where artificial intelligence tools are utilised as an enabling force

that frees the counsellor from routine burdens and grants them greater scope for professional creativity.

At the end of this journey, 'sustainable professional well-being' emerges as the ultimate goal and outcome of this integration. Sustainability in the counselling profession today means the counsellor's ability to give continuously without depleting their psychological resources or falling into the trap of digital burnout. It is a quality of life no longer tied to the physical workplace as much as it is to digital wellbeing, and the ability to transform intense information overload from a cognitive burden into a competitive advantage. Thus, the transition towards digitalisation in counselling becomes a strategic investment in 'humanising technology', to ensure the counsellor's balance and the sustainability of their professional impact in an ever-changing world.

The Problem:

The problem addressed by this study lies in the structural contradiction between the 'unbridled technological acceleration' imposed by digital work environments and the limits of 'psycho-professional readiness' among guidance counsellors. At a time when organisations are racing to adopt the 'Career Guidance 4.0' model — the procedural extension of the Fourth Industrial Revolution based on the integration of physical and cyber systems, artificial intelligence, and big data analysis to automate guidance services through an autonomous mechanism— the counsellor finds themselves in the quandary of balancing their professional performance with protecting their quality of life from the repercussions of digital burnout.

The relevant literature confirms that this excessive reliance on technology, in the absence of smart adaptation strategies,

Received: 03/07/2025 Accepted: 13/03/2026 Published: 22/05/2026

has given rise to a severe form of 'technostress'; as noted by Tarafdar et al. (2019, p. 308) that the intense flow of information reduces job satisfaction and continuously depletes practitioners' emotional resources. The rationale for this argument stems from the identification of a research 'sustainability gap'; whilst most previous academic efforts have focused on 'service computing' directed at beneficiaries, the 'digital well-being' of the counsellor themselves has remained a grey area and an unknown in research (Hirschi, 2018, p. 195).

This epistemological gap places the counsellor under the strain of the phenomenon of 'boundary blurring'; a state in which the temporal and spatial boundaries between professional duties and personal life dissolve as a result of constant digital connectivity. In this context, reports from the International Labour Organisation (ILO, 2022) indicate that the absence of clear protocols for 'digital disconnection' leads to the erosion of recovery periods, thereby transforming technology into a means of draining leisure time and undermining psychological stability (p. 25). Based on the above, there is an urgent need to formulate a theoretical framework that re-positions 'professional transformation' as a holistic growth process, centred on 'digital resilience' as a protective shield ensuring sustainable performance and quality of life (Nimmi et al., 2021, p. 115).

The fundamental strength of this proposition lies in its being a critical response to the requirements of the transition towards "Society 5.0" (Society 5.0); a forward-looking concept that seeks to build a hyper-intelligent society balancing technological development with the resolution of social problems through systems that place "human-centred

technology" at the centre. The focus here is on "human-centred" to ensure that digitalisation does not become a source of professional alienation.

Our rationale goes beyond a descriptive approach to adopt a forward-looking vision based on the need to establish 'psychological job security'; through the certainty that essential human capabilities, such as empathy and emotional intelligence, remain pillars that cannot be automated (Cedefop, 2022, p. 38). Accordingly, this study seeks to design a practical model that enables artificial intelligence to act as a lever for enhancing quality of life, transforming the guidance counsellor from a 'responder to machine pressure' into an 'architect of smart guidance systems'.

Based on this premise, the research problem can be formulated as the following key question:

"How can digital resilience act as a mediating variable to enhance the sustainable quality of working life for guidance counsellors within smart guidance systems?"

The following sub-questions stem from this main question:

1. What are the structural characteristics of Career Guidance 4.0, and how do they necessitate a redefinition of the roles of guidance counsellors?
2. What levels of digital resilience are required to cope with technostress and achieve successful professional adaptation?
3. How do smart guidance systems contribute to improving the quality of working life when combined with managerial and technical awareness?
4. What are the features of the proposed framework for building a career transition pathway that ensures the professional and psychological sustainability of counsellors ?

Received: 03/07/2025 **Accepted:** 13/03/2026 **Published:** 22/05/2026

Firstly: Objectives of the study

This study seeks to achieve the following strategic objectives:

1) Exploring the nature of the shift in the roles of guidance counsellors in the context of Career Guidance 4.0 technologies.
2) Analysing the role of 'digital resilience' as a defensive and developmental mechanism for coping with work-related stress in smart environments.
3) Identifying the determinants of sustainable work-life quality that ensure the continuity of the counsellor's professional contribution.
4) Developing a proposed theoretical framework that integrates technical empowerment and psychological well-being to enhance the career trajectory of counsellors.

Secondly: Significance of the Study

The significance of the study is evident on two levels:

- Theoretical significance: Enriching the Arabic and global literature with a modern approach linking counselling sciences and digital transformation, and highlighting emerging concepts such as 'digital resilience' in the context of service professions.
- Practical significance: Providing a framework for decision-makers and educational and professional institutions to design training programmes and work environments that support the 'humanisation of digitalisation', thereby reducing rates of occupational burnout and enhancing the efficiency of the counselling system.

Thirdly: Procedural Definitions

The study adopts the following procedural definitions:

1. Career Guidance 4.0

Is a guidance system that goes beyond traditional practice, relying on the integration of artificial intelligence and big data analysis in assessment and career decision-making processes, thereby requiring the counsellor to interact with hybrid digital environments characterised by high speed and constant availability.

2. Digital Resilience

The set of psychological strengths and adaptive skills possessed by the guidance counsellor, which enable them to cope with technical disruptions (such as system failures or complexities), manage technology-related stress, and transform digital challenges into opportunities for professional growth and innovation.

3. Sustainable Quality of Working Life (Sustainable QWL)

A state of integrated balance experienced by the counsellor, characterised by job satisfaction in a smart environment, the ability to separate professional and personal life amidst constant digital connectivity, and a sense of professional security and sustained contribution without depleting psychological resources.

4. The Career Counsellor

A professional practitioner responsible for providing educational and career support, who currently faces the need to redefine their professional identity to transition from the

Received: 03/07/2025 Accepted: 13/03/2026 Published: 22/05/2026

role of 'information source' to that of 'digital facilitator and expert in smart career path management'.

Theme 1: Career Guidance 4.0 (the fourth generation of guidance systems) and the re-engineering of roles

Career Guidance 4.0 represents the new 'paradigm' that transforms guidance from a periodic advisory service into an integrated digital ecosystem characterised by continuity and predictive intelligence.

First: Digital Guidance Architecture: From 'Matching' to 'Building Fluid Pathways'

In the traditional model (trait and factor theories), the focus was on career stability. The philosophy of Guidance 4.0, however, is based on 'Career Adaptability Theory' in a volatile environment.

- From static data to Big Data: Relying on annual career guides is no longer sufficient. Smart systems (such as the advanced O*NET system – Occupational Information Network) now analyse real-time data from global recruitment platforms (such as LinkedIn) to identify emerging skills before they are incorporated into academic curricula (Hooley et al., 2021, p. 112). For example, using tools such as ChatGPT or IBM Watson algorithms to analyse millions of CVs and compare them with the career paths of globally successful individuals, thereby providing the user with a 'predictive roadmap' rather than mere general advice.
- Digital complexity: The transformation here is not merely quantitative, but qualitative; Guidance 4.0 enables what is known as 'mass customisation', i.e. the

provision of a highly personalised service to thousands of people simultaneously (Kettunen, 2023, p. 15).

Second: Re-engineering the professional identity: the consultant as a 'cyber commander'

The role of the consultant is no longer threatened by automation; rather, it has been re-engineered to become the "human controller of artificial intelligence". This transformation manifests itself in three complex roles:

1) Digital Facilitator and Information Curator: In the face of information overload, the consultant becomes a 'filter' for digital noise. Their role here is to teach the client "professional information literacy"; that is, how to distinguish between jobs that will disappear and those that will evolve (Barnes et al., 2020, p. 45).
2) Scenario Architect: Using 'simulation' techniques, the advisor constructs 'digital twins' of the client's career path. Example: using virtual reality (VR) to enable a student to "experience" a full working day in a chemistry laboratory or in stock trading, after which the consultant analyses their behavioural and emotional responses during the experience.
3) Ethical & Digital Rights Guardian: With the rise of "algorithmic bias", the counsellor becomes the person responsible for protecting the client from unfair machine decisions. It is the counsellor who ensures that 'humanising data' precedes decision-making (Cedefop, 2022, p. 30).

Received: 03/07/2025 Accepted: 13/03/2026 Published: 22/05/2026

Third: Core Competencies: The Integration of Human and Artificial Intelligence

The professional transition requires a competency matrix that combines "behavioural awareness" and "technical empowerment":

- Digital Analytical Competence: The counsellor is not required to be a programmer, but rather a "digital results analyst". They must understand how recommendation algorithms work in order to be able to critique or support them in front of the beneficiary (Eriş, 2020, p. 9).
- Cyber-Empathy: This is the ability to build a strong "guidance alliance" across screens. Studies (Hirschi, 2018, p. 197) indicate that a successful counsellor in the digital age is one who can convey human warmth and trust through virtual communication interfaces, a concept known as "intense digital presence".
- Career migration guidance skills: As the labour market has become 'cross-border', the counsellor must possess digital cultural competence to help clients work in virtual international teams.

Theme 2 : Digital resilience as a mechanism for adaptation and growth

In this context, digital resilience represents the 'professional immunity' that protects the guidance counsellor from psychological burnout in a work environment characterised by an endless flow of information; it goes far beyond the mere ability to use technical tools.

First: The psychology of adaptation and coping with complex 'technostress'

In the context of Guidance 4.0, technostress is no longer merely a nuisance caused by equipment malfunctions; it has evolved into a complex psychological phenomenon known as 'information fatigue'. Guidance counsellors suffer from 'availability pressure', as digital platforms impose a fast-paced rhythm of response, leading to the depletion of cognitive resources. Studies (Tarafdar et al., 2019, p. 308) suggest that this type of stress stems from 'technical complexity', whereby the counsellor feels that their skills are in a losing race against time, requiring coping strategies that focus on the 'cognitive evaluation of the benefits of technology' rather than viewing it as a threat to professional control.

Second: Dimensions of digital resilience (the four-dimensional model of adaptation)

A counsellor's digital resilience is shaped by four key dimensions that enable them to turn a challenge into an opportunity for growth:

1) Technological Mindfulness: This is the ability to engage with digital tools consciously and purposefully, avoiding 'automatic immersion' in notifications, thereby protecting mental focus during the counselling session.
2) Rapid recovery from technical failure: This dimension comes to the fore when the platform crashes during an important counselling session; an agile counsellor is one who has a 'Plan B' and maintains emotional composure, thereby reinforcing the client's confidence in the counselling process (Nimmi et al., 2021, p. 116).

Received: 03/07/2025 Accepted: 13/03/2026 Published: 22/05/2026

3) Innovative adaptation: The ability to integrate emerging tools (such as large language models) into a sound educational context without fear of losing the human role.
4) Conscious digital boundaries: The skill of establishing 'personal governance' to manage messages and emails outside working hours, known as 'successful work-life separation'.

Third: Digital Psychological Capital (Digital PsyCap): The Psychology of Digital Empowerment

An in-depth analysis of resilience is based on the 'psychological capital' model, which encompasses (hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism). In the digital environment, these elements become a driving force; digital self-efficacy does not mean knowing how to operate the software, but rather 'the consultant's belief in their ability to solve complex professional problems using this software'. Hirschi (2018, p. 199) that counsellors who possess 'balanced technological optimism' are better able to explore the creative potential of artificial intelligence in analysing students' personalities, compared to their colleagues who adopt a negative 'technological determinism' view that sees the machine as a threat to their professional standing.

Fourth: Digital Resilience and the Process of Professional Growth

Recent trends (Cedefop, 2022, p. 42) confirm that digital resilience leads to what might be termed 'post-digital growth'; once the counsellor has overcome the phase of technological confusion, they discover that their guidance

capabilities have been enhanced by new horizons. For example, a counsellor who masters the use of 'learning analytics' finds themselves able to provide proactive interventions for students at risk of dropping out, something that previously required months of manual observation. This type of 'digital empowerment' enhances the counsellor's self-worth and transforms technology from an 'administrative burden' into a 'professional lever' that enhances their quality of work life.

Theme 3 : Sustainable Quality of Work Life (QWL)

For a career guidance counsellor, sustainable quality of working life (Sustainable QWL) represents a state of holistic well-being that enables them to continue contributing professionally without depleting their personal resources; in the digital age, this goes beyond satisfaction with salary or workplace to encompass 'sovereignty over one's digital space'.

In his study on the 'psychology of digital work', Mansour (2021) notes that quality of working life is achieved when the employee feels 'technological sovereignty', that is, their ability to control digital tools rather than be controlled by them, which reduces the severity of professional alienation.

First: The problem of "blurring" and the conflict of digital boundaries

In the context of the Guidance 4.0 environment, the counsellor faces a structural challenge in the form of "boundary blurring" between professional and personal life. As smart counselling platforms operate around the clock, counsellors are subject to what is known as 'expectations of constant availability', a social and technological pressure that

Received: 03/07/2025 Accepted: 13/03/2026 Published: 22/05/2026

obliges them to respond immediately to enquiries from students or management via digital media. Reports (International Labour Organisation, 2022, p. 25) indicate that the absence of clear 'disconnection protocols' erodes counsellors' recovery periods, transforming technology from a tool for professional liberation into a means of 'digital colonisation' of leisure time, which strikes at the very heart of occupational sustainability.

This argument aligns with the view of Al-Qahtani (2019), who asserts that the quality of working life is now threatened by the so-called 'digital invasion' of private life, where the flow of data outside working hours leads to the depletion of the 'psychological reserve' (Al-Qahtani, 2019, p. 45). for the employee, necessitating the establishment of clear regulatory boundaries to ensure the implementation of the 'right to digital disconnection' as a central mechanism for rebuilding the quality of working life.

Second: The burden of automation and the search for 'professional meaning'

The concept of sustainable quality is linked to the extent to which the consultant feels a sense of 'meaning' (Meaning at Work). With the introduction of artificial intelligence into report generation and data analysis, the consultant may develop a sense of being dispensable or reduced to merely a 'machine operator'. Here, the concept of 'supportive automation' stands in contrast to 'replacement automation'; sustainable quality ( ) is achieved when the counsellor feels that the intelligent system frees them from 'menial cognitive tasks' (such as filling in forms) so that they can devote themselves to the 'deep counselling relationship' (Human-to-

Human Connection). Hirschi (2018, p. 202) emphasises that sustainability lies in reinvesting the time saved into professional creativity and quality psychological support, thereby enhancing the counsellor's "human impact" and achieving professional fulfilment.

Third: Digital Wellbeing as an Employment Right

Digital wellbeing is no longer a luxury but has become a cornerstone of contemporary human resources policies. This wellbeing is achieved through a strategy of 'digital occupational mindfulness', which includes the counsellor's right to 'legal disconnection' and access to technological tools featuring 'human-centric design'. Studies (Nimmi et al., 2021, p. 119) indicate that organisations adopting the concept of "sustainable flexibility" succeed in significantly reducing rates of digital burnout by encouraging consultants to designate "tech-free zones".

Sustaining the quality of professional life necessarily entails creating a hybrid (physical and virtual) guidance environment that respects the counsellor's biological and psychological rhythms, and prevents their professional alienation or reduction to a mere 'node in a network' of blind data. In this context, we find that revising the guidance counsellor evaluation system to include indicators of digital well-being is a psycho-professional necessity proven by field research; Abu Zeid(2018, p. 142) in his study published in the Journal of Psychological Studies indicates that job satisfaction is closely linked to the extent to which an employee has control over their technical work tools and prevents them from becoming a source of psychological exhaustion

Applying this to our educational reality, we find that the continued absence of these criteria in 'performance

Received: 03/07/2025 Accepted: 13/03/2026 Published: 22/05/2026

evaluation forms' and field assessment systems perpetuates a state of 'quantitative stereotyping' that reduces qualitative guidance efforts to dry statistical figures. This is precisely what Al-Daba' (2020, p. 85) warned against, emphasising that working in digital environments that are not psychologically prepared accelerates the pace of "psychological burnout" and inevitably leads to a decline in the quality of guidance outcomes.

Based on the above, there is an urgent need to legislate the 'right to digital disconnection' as a preventive mechanism supported by modern psychological research; as Abdullatif (2021, p. 54) explains, the ability to disconnect from professional networks after official working hours is considered the primary driver of psychological resilience in the digital age.

Consequently, pedagogical inspection standards must be updated to shift from purely quantitative measurement to strategic qualitative measurement, whilst incorporating 'the quality of the digital work environment' as a fundamental requirement for success, thereby ensuring a sustainable balance between the demands of comprehensive digitalisation and the professional well-being of the counsellor.

Fourth: Psychological Job Security in the Age of Algorithms

Sustainable quality requires a minimum level of 'psychological job security'; that is, the counsellor's sense that the development of machines does not spell the end of their career. Sustainability here stems from the certainty that human capabilities such as 'emotional empathy' and 'complex moral judgement' are skills that cannot be

automated (Cedefop, 2022, p. 38). Counsellors who view Guidance 4.0 as a 'partner' rather than a 'competitor' have higher levels of satisfaction and are more willing to engage in long-term professional transformation processes, thereby ensuring the sustainability of the education and vocational system as a whole. In this regard

Awad's research (2022, p. 88) confirms that educational institutions which provide 'logistical and psychological support' to their counsellors during digital transformation contribute to raising organisational loyalty and reducing psychological turnover rates.

Theme 4 : Towards the Sustainability of Smart Guidance: The Proposed Framework

This proposed framework is based on a holistic vision aimed at bridging the gap between 'artificial intelligence' and 'human well-being', through a three-dimensional model that focuses on empowering the counsellor and safeguarding the quality of their working life

First: The dimension of self-empowerment and psycho-technical resilience

This level focuses on building the counsellor's 'psychological armour' through strategies that go beyond traditional technical training. The framework proposes the adoption of "Digital Mindfulness" programmes that train consultants on how to maintain mental focus in distracting work environments and manage "technological stress" through the development of digital psychological capital. The aim here is to transform the counsellor from a 'responder to technology' into a 'master of it', so that they possess the ability to assess when a smart tool is useful and when it becomes a

Received: 03/07/2025 Accepted: 13/03/2026 Published: 22/05/2026

burden on the counselling process—that is, to evaluate the tool's effectiveness, which enhances their sense of professional agency and reduces the anxiety resulting from automation (Hirschi, 2018, p. 202).

By setting aside 'Deep Work' hours during which the counsellor turns off all digital notifications to devote themselves to analysing complex cases, using artificial intelligence only at the stage of extracting initial indicators, this enhances their sense of professional agency

To transform the concept of 'Deep Work' from a mere theoretical proposal into a tangible professional practice within the framework of 'Career Guidance 4.0', a set of operational measures must be adopted to ensure the counsellor retains control over their mental time.

Why this measure?

In a digital guidance environment, the counsellor suffers from what is known as "chronic digital distraction" as a result of constant alerts (emails, platform notifications, instant messages). This distraction prevents the attainment of the 'flow' state necessary for analysing complex cases (such as students suffering from severe career-related distraction or learning difficulties).

The purpose of setting aside 'deep focus' sessions is to 'regain cognitive control', whereby artificial intelligence shifts from being a 'distraction' to a 'technical assistant' that is called upon at the advisor's discretion, rather than the other way round.

To implement "deep focus hours", the following steps can be followed:

1. Time Blocking:

- Set aside a fixed time slot (e.g. from 9:00 to 11:00 am) known as the "focus zone".
- Enter this period into the organisation's shared digital calendar as "Busy/Deep Focus", which prevents colleagues or management from booking meetings or interruptions during this time.

2. Technical Protocol (Digital Isolation):

- Enable "Do Not Disturb" mode on all work devices.
- Use of technology apps (such as Forest or Freedom) that automatically block social media and email platforms during these hours, to ensure there are no digital interruptions to the consultant's concentration.

3. Functional use of artificial intelligence (AI Integration):

- Limit the use of smart tools to the 'information preparation' phase only.
- Before the focus hour begins, the counsellor asks the AI system (such as ChatGPT or the organisation's proprietary data analysis algorithm) to generate a comprehensive summary of the student's situation, previous aptitude test results, and skill gaps.
- The counsellor enters the focus hour with a machine-generated 'focus worksheet', allowing them to devote their attention to the most important aspects: emotional analysis, linking variables, and developing a strategic vision for the case.

Received: 03/07/2025 Accepted: 13/03/2026 Published: 22/05/2026

4. Human Oversight:

- Exercising "professional sovereignty" by critiquing the machine's outputs.
- During the focus session, the counsellor reviews the indicators extracted by the AI; if, for example, the machine suggests that a student is "unsuitable for engineering", the counsellor uses their emotional intelligence and experience to analyse the student's circumstances and make a more humane and accurate decision.

Through these procedures, the counsellor feels:

- Independence: they decide when to use the technology and when to do without it.
- Self-efficacy: the ability to complete complex tasks to a high standard in less time.
- Reduced stress: the elimination of the pressure to respond immediately, thereby ensuring the sustainability of their professional well-being.

In summary, the 'deep focus hour' is not an escape from technology, but rather a reorganisation of the relationship with it, so that the machine remains in the role of 'statistical assistant' and the counsellor remains in the role of 'strategic expert'.

Second: The dimension of workplace design and digital wellbeing (humanising systems)

The framework proposes redesigning smart guidance platforms in accordance with 'Counsellor-Centric Design' standards. Instead of systems that increase cognitive load, these platforms should function as an "intelligent assistant" handling routine tasks (such as analysing raw data and

scheduling appointments), thereby granting the counsellor more time to engage in tasks of high human value. This level also involves implementing 'digital wellbeing' strategies within the system architecture, such as an 'auto-silence' feature for alerts outside working hours, to ensure the right to digital disconnection and achieve a sustainable work-life balance.

Example: Integrating an 'Administrative Chatbot' to answer students' frequently asked questions (such as registration dates or required documents), saving the counsellor the equivalent of 30% of their daily time, which can then be directed towards in-depth psychological and career counselling sessions. This type of 'purposeful automation' reduces technostress and achieves a sustainable balance between workload and resources (Tarafdar et al., 2019, p. 314).

Third: The dimension of institutional governance and sustainable ethical codes

At the institutional level, the framework proposes the drafting of an 'Ethical Charter for Sustainable Digital Guidance', which ensures the protection of the counsellor's professional identity and rights in the face of data dominance. This includes the need to provide continuous "Psych-Tech Support" within organisations, so that the counsellor is not left alone to face the technical or ethical dilemmas of artificial intelligence. Organisations must also include "psychological well-being indicators" in their periodic performance reviews, so that maintaining the counsellor's quality of life becomes a benchmark for the success of the organisation's digital transformation, rather than merely the number of digital services provided.

Received: 03/07/2025 Accepted: 13/03/2026 Published: 22/05/2026

Example: The organisation adopting a 'Right to Disconnect' policy after 4 pm, whereby the synchronisation of work-related messages is automatically disabled, whilst providing regular workshops to discuss the 'ethical dilemmas' faced by consultants whilst using algorithms, thereby ensuring a working environment that respects international human rights standards (ILO, 2022, p. 30).

Fourth: The Integrative Path (Hybrid Model) and the Future of Sustainability

Ultimately, the framework proposes adopting the 'Hybrid Guidance Model' as the optimal path to sustainability, where there is a balanced integration of face-to-face meetings and digital platforms. This balance protects the counsellor from "digital isolation" and preserves the essence of the guidance process as a quintessentially human relationship. The success of this framework hinges on institutions shifting from "forced digitalisation" to "conscious digitalisation", which views Career Guidance 4.0 as a means of unleashing the counsellor's creative energies rather than draining them, ultimately ensuring a sustainable quality of working life capable of meeting the challenges of the future.

Example: using digital platforms for initial assessments and aptitude tests, whilst reserving face-to-face interviews for building trust and discussing the beneficiary's emotional concerns. This balance protects the counsellor from 'digital isolation' and preserves the essence of the counselling process as a quintessentially human relationship, thereby raising levels of job satisfaction and achieving the desired sustainability (Nimmi et al., 2021, p. 121).

Conclusion

The shift towards "Career Guidance 4.0" is not merely a technical response to the demands of the digital age, but a re-formulation of the ethical and professional charter of the guidance process as a whole. The study revealed that the real challenge in a smart society lies not in the complexity of the algorithms used, but in the resilience of the counsellor's "human essence" in the face of the dominance of automation. Sustaining the quality of working life is no longer a professional luxury, but has become a structural necessity to ensure the effectiveness of guidance; a digitally exhausted counsellor will not be able to instil professional hope in service users.

Furthermore, "digital resilience" is not merely an additional technical skill, but a "psycho-professional shield" that grants the counsellor the ability to exercise their authority in an environment characterised by fluidity and complexity. The proposed model for the humanisation of digitalisation draws a clear distinction between "technology as a constraint" and "technology as an enabler", affirming that the future belongs to the counsellor who masters the art of marrying machine intelligence with the wisdom of human emotion.

In conclusion, this study opens up new horizons for re-examining training and development policies; the preparation of guidance counsellors must shift from a logic of 'digital literacy' to one of 'sustainable digital well-being'. The ultimate goal is not merely to build smart guidance systems, but to build "smart counsellors" who possess the awareness and ability to lead digital transformation without sacrificing

Received: 03/07/2025 Accepted: 13/03/2026 Published: 22/05/2026

their psychological balance or human values, so that career guidance remains, at its core, a human journey guided by vision rather than algorithms.

Strategic Recommendations

At the organisational level

- Modernise the sector's digital ecosystem (smart automation), transitioning towards "comprehensive administrative automation" by developing a specialised technical interface for the guidance counsellor within the "employee portal", thereby eliminating the duplication of tasks (paper-based and digital). The aim is to generate statistical reports and graphs automatically, thereby reducing the "administrative burden" and supporting the transition towards a "hybrid guidance model".
- Reform of the professional evaluation system (digital well-being indicators), through a review of pedagogical inspection criteria and the items in the "performance evaluation form" to move from purely quantitative measurement to "strategic qualitative measurement (", This includes incorporating the criterion of "quality of the digital working environment" and the availability of modern equipment as a prerequisite for professional success, whilst holding the institution responsible for providing the appropriate technical conditions.
- Legislating the 'right to digital disconnection' and issuing administrative regulations guaranteeing the consultant the right to stop responding to work-related

alerts outside official working hours, to ensure mental well-being and prevent digital burnout.

At the professional and training level

- Develop digital psychological capital by incorporating specialised training programmes in 'Digital Mindfulness' into continuing professional development plans; to enable the consultant to maintain their psychological balance and prevent feelings of professional inferiority in the face of smart systems, thereby reinforcing their confidence in 'human judgement' as the ultimate authority.
- Implementing the 'Ethical Critique Protocol' for data — that is, establishing the competence of "Algorithm Critique" as a core skill, whereby the consultant is granted full authority to review and amend the outputs of digital systems, and to incorporate human variables (such as socio-economic and emotional circumstances) that lie beyond the machine's cognitive scope.
- Updating training curricula (from technical to ethical) and shifting from traditional computer training (Word/Excel) to workshops on "the ethics of digitalisation and advisory intelligence", focusing on analysing and deconstructing "algorithmic bias" to ensure educational justice in guidance.

At the research and foresight level

- Establishing the "National Observatory for Psycho-Digital Vigilance" through the creation of a specialised research unit coordinated between the Ministry of Education and the university, tasked with building a

Received: 03/07/2025 Accepted: 13/03/2026 Published: 22/05/2026

database on the impact of digitalisation on mental health, and developing "standardised measures for the Algerian and Arab context" to assess digital burnout and digital resilience in Society 5.0.

- Encourage experimental studies that test the optimal blend of face-to-face and virtual counselling, and design "hybrid counselling" models to achieve the "optimal balance" that ensures technical efficiency without sacrificing human warmth and the emotional bond with the client.
- Adopting forward-looking intervention protocols by utilising the results of longitudinal research to develop preventive programmes that ensure counsellors adapt effectively to smart working environments, thereby striking a balance between the requirements of digital transformation and the sustainability of quality of working life

In terms of research and foresight (the scientific agenda)

The study recommends directing academic efforts and research institutions towards exploring the emerging fields brought about by digital transformation, through the following areas:

- Moving beyond traditional descriptive studies towards the development of standardised national measurement tools that investigate contemporary phenomena such as 'digital professional alienation' and 'professional sovereignty in the age of artificial intelligence', with a focus on developing measures of digital resilience tailored to the specific socio-professional context of Algeria.

- Encouraging experimental research aimed at engineering "balance protocols"; that is, research seeking to identify guidance tasks that can be fully digitised versus those that require exclusively "emotional presence", to ensure performance efficiency without sacrificing human warmth.
- Open up research avenues to study the evolving roles of guidance counsellors, from "information conveyors" to "intelligent support experts", and investigate the impact of algorithms on the integrity of guidance decisions, thereby ensuring the development of a forward-looking vision for the future of the profession in the face of rapid technological change.
- Support studies that track the impact of technology on practitioners' mental and physical health over extended periods (longitudinal research), rather than cross-sectional studies, to provide a database supporting long-term "digital prevention" strategies.

References

1. Abu Zeid, Medhat (2018). Job satisfaction and its relationship to the level of ambition among employees in service institutions. Journal of Psychological Studies, Egyptian Psychological Association, 28(2), 130–155.
2. Al-Dabaa, Fathi (2020). Occupational stress arising from digitalisation and psychological burnout among education sector employees. Journal of Psychological Studies, 30(1), 75–102.
3. Khalifa, Walid (2019). The psychology of work in

Received: 03/07/2025 Accepted: 13/03/2026 Published: 22/05/2026

virtual environments: An analytical study of indicators of psychological exhaustion. Journal of Psychological Studies, 29(3), 195–225.

4. Abdul-Latif, Hani (2021). Work-life balance in the context of digital transformation: A psychological perspective. Journal of Psychological Studies, 31(4), 40–65.
5. Awad, Samah (2022). Quality of working life in educational institutions. Journal of the Faculty of Education, Tanta University (or as per the faculty mentioned), p. 88.
6. Al-Qahtani, Fahad (2019). Work-related stress in the digital age. The Arab Journal of Management, Arab Organisation for Administrative Development, 39(2), p. 45.
7. Mansour, Ali (2021). The Psychology of Digital Management. Jordan: Dar Al-Fikr, p. 112
8. Barnes, S. A., et al. (2020). Artificial Intelligence in Career Guidance: Current Trends and Future Prospects. British Journal of Guidance & Counselling, 48(1), 40–52.
9. Cedefop (2022). Digital Transition in Career Guidance: Rethinking the Counselor's Role and Professional Development. Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.
10. Eriş, Y. (2020). Career Guidance 4.0: A New Approach to Career Counselling in the Digital Age. International Journal of Psychology and Educational Studies, 7(4), 7–12.
11. Hirschi, A. (2018). The Fourth Industrial Revolution: Issues and Implications for Career Research and

Practice. The Career Development Quarterly, 66(3), 192–204.
12. Hooley, T., et al. (2021). The Digital Challenge for Career Guidance: Systems, Practitioners, and Clients. Journal of the National Institute for Career Education and Counselling, 46(1), 110–118.
13. International Labour Organization (ILO). (2022). Digital Transformation and the Future of Work: A Human-Centered Approach to Quality of Life. ILO Publications, Geneva.
14. Kettunen, J. (2023). Career Centres of the Future: Embracing Digitalisation and Counsellor Identity. University of Jyväskylä, Finland.
15. Nimmi, P. M., et al. (2021). The Relationship between Digital Resilience, Job Performance, and Quality of Work Life. Journal of Management Studies, 12(2), 110–125.
16. OECD. (2021). Career Guidance for Adults in a Changing World of Work. OECD Publishing, Paris.
17. Tarafdar, M., et al. (2019). The Impact of Technostress on Job Satisfaction and Performance: A Review and Research Agenda. MIS Quarterly, 43(1), 301–319.