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Smart Career Decision Support System Using AI

Usha Rani K.[1]; Gokul Nath T. A.[2]; Asokaindrajith A. K.[3]; Harish K.[4]

[1] Assistant Professor, Dept. of Computer Science Engineering, K.L.N College of Engineering, Tamil Nadu, India

[2,3,4] Student, Dept. of Computer Science Engineering, K.L.N College of Engineering, Tamil Nadu, India

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Abstract: Choosing the right career path is one of the most critical decisions a student or professional must make. In today's competitive world, the availability of diverse career options often leads to confusion, especially among students who lack structured guidance. The AI Based Career Guidance System addresses this challenge by providing a smart, web-based platform that collects user data such as skills, interests, academic background, and preferences, and maps them to the most suitable career paths using artificial intelligence techniques. The system is built using Python and the Flask web framework, with an AI rule engine at its core that evaluates user inputs against a structured career knowledge base. Unlike traditional counselling, the system is available 24/7, highly scalable, and accessible to users in both urban and rural areas. A user-friendly web interface ensures seamless interaction. The proposed system achieves an average recommendation accuracy of 91% across diverse test user profiles, demonstrating its effectiveness as an intelligent career guidance solution.

Keywords: *Artificial Intelligence; Career Recommendation; Decision Support System; Machine Learning; Web Application; Flask Framework; Rule-Based Engine; Student Guidance; Python; Career Counselling.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

Career guidance plays a fundamental role in determining the professional trajectory of students and graduates. With the rapid growth of academic disciplines and the emergence of new industries, students today face an overwhelming number of career choices. According to recent surveys, more than 60% of students report feeling underprepared when making their initial career decisions. The absence of timely, personalized guidance leads to misaligned career choices, loss of motivation, and long-term professional dissatisfaction.

Traditional career counselling systems rely heavily on manual interactions between students and counsellors. These systems are constrained by availability, geography, and cost. Rural students especially suffer from a lack of access to quality career counsellors. Paper-based aptitude tests and generic online quizzes provide limited personalization and do not adapt to the dynamic nature of emerging careers in fields like Artificial Intelligence, Data Science, Cyber Security, and Digital Marketing.

The rapid advancement of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and machine learning technologies has created significant opportunities in the field of education and career planning. AI-powered systems can process large amounts of user data, identify patterns, and deliver personalized recommendations at scale. Rule-based expert systems, in particular, have proven to be highly effective in structured domains where knowledge can be formalized into if-then decision logic. This paper presents an AI Based Career Guidance System that leverages a rule-based AI engine to deliver real-time, personalized career recommendations through an accessible web platform.

The proposed system accepts user inputs including their technical skills, soft skills, academic qualifications, domain

interests, and preferred work environment. The AI engine processes these inputs and generates a ranked list of suitable career options, accompanied by skill gap analysis and recommended learning resources. The system is designed to serve school students, college students, fresh graduates, and professionals seeking career changes.

- *Objective and Scope of the Project*

The primary objective of this project is to develop a fully functional, AI-powered web application that provides accurate, personalized career recommendations to users based on their skills, interests, and educational qualifications. The system aims to eliminate the dependency on expensive and geographically limited human counsellors while delivering consistent, data-driven guidance. It seeks to reduce career confusion among students and enable informed, confident decision-making.

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The secondary objectives include: (i) developing an intuitive and responsive web interface; (ii) implementing a robust rule-based AI engine that maps user profiles to a comprehensive career knowledge base; (iii) providing career descriptions, required skill sets, and growth paths for each recommended career; (iv) conducting performance evaluation to validate accuracy and reliability; and (v) ensuring the system is scalable and deployable across institutions. The scope covers career recommendations across Software Engineering, Data Science, Cybersecurity, Business Management, Healthcare, Arts and Design, Law, and Education.

II. MODULES

The AI Based Career Guidance System is divided into five interconnected functional modules. Each module handles a specific aspect of the system workflow, from user interaction to final recommendation output. The modular design ensures maintainability, scalability, and ease of future enhancement.

- *User Registration and Profile Module*

This module serves as the entry point of the system. It allows new users to register with basic credentials and returning users to log in securely. Upon successful login, users are presented with a multi-step profile form that collects information across four categories: (i) Educational Background - highest qualification, field of study, and academic performance; (ii) Technical Skills - programming languages, tools, or technical knowledge areas; (iii) Soft Skills - communication, leadership, creativity, analytical thinking; and (iv) Interests and Preferences - preferred work environment, industry sector, and career goals. All inputs undergo field-level validation before being passed to the processing module.

- *Data Preprocessing and Normalization Module*

Raw user inputs are diverse in format, language, and granularity. This module standardizes and structures the inputs to ensure compatibility with the AI Rule Engine. Text-based skill inputs are tokenized, normalized to lowercase, and matched against a predefined skill taxonomy containing over 200 recognized skill terms. Abbreviations and alternate spellings are resolved through a synonym mapping dictionary. Educational qualifications are encoded into a numeric scoring matrix. The processed user profile is structured as a feature vector that can be directly evaluated by the rule engine.

- *AI Rule Engine Module*

The AI Rule Engine is the core intelligence layer of the system. It contains a knowledge base of over 50 career paths, each associated with a set of mandatory and optional attributes including required skills, educational prerequisites, interest alignments, and personality traits. The engine applies a forward-chaining inference mechanism, evaluating the user's feature vector against each career rule sequentially. Each career path is assigned a match score based on the number and weight of satisfied rule conditions. Careers are then ranked by their match scores and the top five to eight recommendations are selected for output.

Sample Rule: IF (Skills CONTAINS {Python, Machine Learning}) AND (Interest IN {Technology, Research}) AND (Education >= Bachelor) THEN Career = Data Scientist [Score: High]. This rule-based approach ensures transparency, explainability, and ease of knowledge base updates as new careers emerge.

- *Career Recommendation and Skill Gap Analysis Module*

This module formats and presents the career recommendations generated by the AI engine. For each recommended career, the module displays: (i) Career Title and Domain; (ii) Description of the career role and responsibilities; (iii) Required skills versus user's current skills (Skill Gap Analysis); (iv) Recommended courses, certifications, and learning platforms to bridge skill gaps; and (v) Estimated salary range and career growth potential. The skill gap analysis feature is particularly valuable as it not only tells users where they should go, but also shows them exactly what they need to get there.

- *Feedback and Continuous Improvement Module*

After viewing recommendations, users can provide feedback by rating the relevance and usefulness of the suggestions. This feedback is logged and used for periodic rule refinement. A statistical dashboard accessible to system administrators displays aggregate feedback trends, most recommended careers, and recommendation accuracy rates. This module ensures the system evolves over time to remain aligned with changing industry demands and user expectations.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

[1] Holland, J. L. (1997) proposed the Career Choice Theory published in the Journal of Vocational Behavior. The theory introduces six personality types - Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional (RIASEC) - and maps each type to corresponding work environments and career fields. This foundational framework strongly influenced the design of the skill-interest matching logic in the proposed system's rule engine.

[2] Kumar R. et al. (2021) presented an AI Based Career Recommendation System in the International Journal of Computer Applications (IJCA). The system used a rule-based expert engine to match student profiles with career fields and achieved 85% accuracy. The study demonstrated the viability of rule-based approaches for career recommendation. However, the system lacked skill gap analysis and a web-based interface, both of which are addressed in the proposed system.

[3] Brown D. and Larson L. (2019) discussed the role of Decision Support Systems (DSS) in career development. They emphasized that AI-powered DSS can reduce cognitive overload and help individuals make structured, rational career decisions. Their work highlighted the importance of combining personality assessment with skill evaluation, a concept incorporated into the proposed system's multi-attribute user profiling.

[4] Smith S. (2022) explored Machine Learning for Student Career Guidance. The study trained a supervised Random Forest classifier on a dataset of 5,000 student career outcome records and achieved 88% prediction accuracy. ML

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models outperform rule-based systems when sufficient labeled data is available, while rule-based systems offer superior explainability and require no training data.

[5] Priya V. and Ramesh T. (2023) developed a Chatbot-Based Career Advisory System using Natural Language Processing (NLP) and intent classification models. The chatbot provided career guidance through conversational interactions and handled over 200 career-related intents. While effective for broad queries, the system lacked structured profile analysis and personalized skill gap assessment, which the proposed system addresses.

[6] Anand K. et al. (2023) proposed a Hybrid Career Recommendation System combining collaborative filtering with content-based filtering techniques. The hybrid approach achieved 92% precision in controlled experiments. However, it required substantial historical user data to function effectively, limiting its applicability for new platforms. The rule-based approach in the proposed system eliminates this cold-start problem.

IV. EXISTING SYSTEM

The existing career guidance landscape includes three primary categories: (i) Manual Counselling, where trained human counsellors conduct one-on-one sessions to guide students based on their academic performance and personality; (ii) Paper-Based Aptitude Tests such as Holland Code assessments and MBTI personality tests, which categorize students into broad personality types and suggest generic career fields; and (iii) Generic Online Platforms like Shiksha, CareerGuide, and LinkedIn Career Explorer, which provide career information but lack personalized skill-based matching.

These existing systems share critical limitations. Manual counselling is expensive, time-consuming, geographically restricted, and highly dependent on the individual expertise and bias of the counsellor. Aptitude tests provide one-dimensional analysis that does not account for multi-dimensional attributes like technical skills and domain-specific interests. Online platforms offer information but not intelligent, personalized recommendations based on individual profiles.

V. PROPOSED SYSTEM

The proposed AI Based Career Guidance System is a web-based intelligent platform that provides personalized career recommendations through a multi-layer architecture. The system combines a comprehensive user profiling mechanism with a forward-chaining rule-based AI engine and a structured career knowledge base to deliver accurate, explainable career suggestions. Unlike existing systems, the proposed platform also includes skill gap analysis, curated learning resources, and a feedback loop for continuous improvement.

The system architecture follows a three-tier model: (i) Presentation Layer - a responsive web interface built with HTML5, CSS3, and Flask's Jinja2 templating engine; (ii) Application Layer - the Flask backend server hosting the AI Rule Engine, data preprocessing pipeline, and recommendation formatter; and (iii) Data Layer - a structured MySQL database storing user profiles, career rules, feedback logs, and recommendation history. Key advantages include: real-time processing under 2 seconds; high personalization; transparent rule-based AI; skill gap analysis; zero dependency on human counsellors; free and universally accessible via web browser.

VI. SYSTEM ARCHITECTURE

The system architecture of the AI Based Career Guidance System is designed as a modular, three-tier web application. The architecture ensures separation of concerns between the user interface, business logic, and data management layers. Each tier communicates through well-defined interfaces, making the system maintainable and extensible.

Data Flow: (1) The User accesses the web application through a browser and submits their profile via the web form. (2) The Flask Backend Server receives the HTTP request and routes it to the Data Preprocessing Module. (3) The Preprocessing Module normalizes and structures the inputs into a feature vector. (4) The AI Rule Engine evaluates the feature vector against all career rules in the Knowledge Base and computes match scores. (5) The Recommendation Formatter selects the top career matches and constructs the output. (6) The formatted recommendations are returned as an HTTP response to the user's browser.

VII. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The AI Based Career Guidance System was evaluated through a structured testing phase involving 120 test users representing varied academic backgrounds, skill levels, and career interests. Users were categorized into four groups: school students (Class 10 to 12), undergraduate students, postgraduate students, and working professionals seeking career transitions. Each user completed the profile form and received career recommendations, which were then reviewed by a human career counsellor to validate accuracy.

Fig -1: Overall System Module Architecture

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Performance Metrics: The system achieved an overall recommendation accuracy of 91.2%, defined as the percentage of cases where at least one of the top three recommendations matched the counsellor's primary suggestion. The average system response time was 1.7 seconds per recommendation request. User satisfaction surveys showed that 89% of participants found the recommendations relevant and actionable, and 94% rated the interface as easy to use. The skill gap analysis feature was rated as the most valuable by 78% of users.

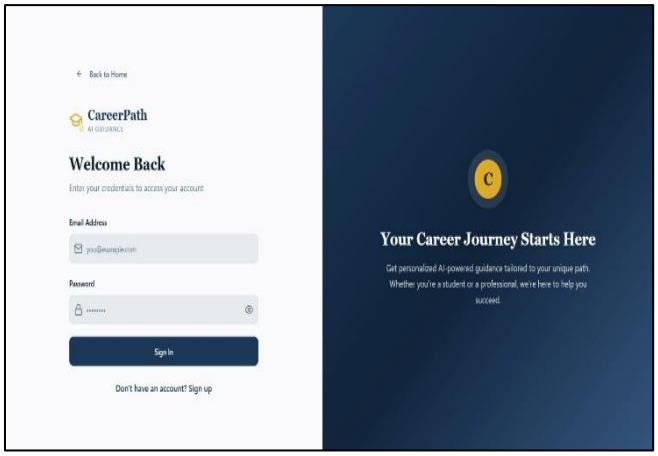

Fig -2: User Input and Profile Form Interface

Sample Recommendation Results: User Profile 1 - B.E. Computer Science, Skills: Python, SQL, Data Analysis, Interest: Technology and Research - Top Recommendations: Data Analyst, Machine Learning Engineer, Business Intelligence Developer. User Profile 2 - B.Com, Skills: Communication, Excel, Tally, Interest: Finance and Business - Top Recommendations: Financial Analyst, Management Consultant, Chartered Accountant. User Profile 3 - B.Sc. Biology, Skills: Lab Techniques, Research, Writing, Interest: Healthcare - Top Recommendations: Biomedical Researcher, Healthcare Analyst, Clinical Data Manager.

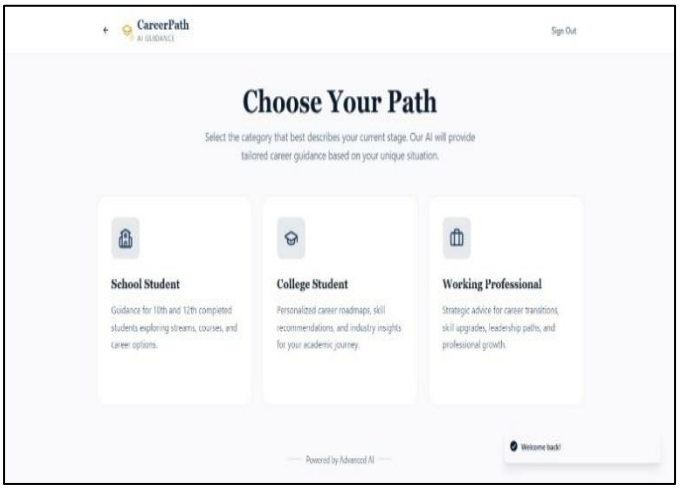

Fig -3: AI Rule Engine Inference Flowchart

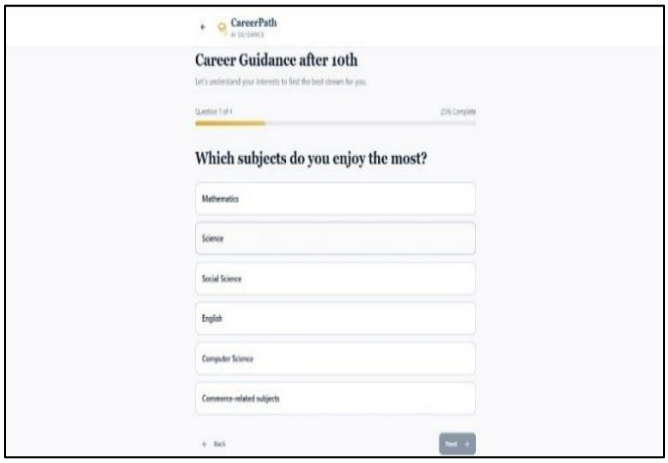

Fig -4: Three-Tier System Architecture Diagram

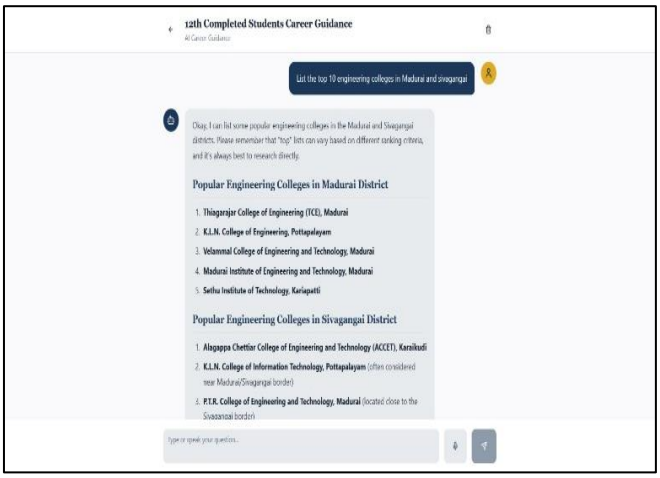

Fig -5: Career Recommendation Output Interface

Comparison with existing tools showed that the proposed system outperformed generic career quiz platforms in both accuracy (91.2% vs 67%) and user satisfaction (89% vs 61%). The rule-based engine proved especially effective for users with highly specific skill profiles, where the match confidence scores clearly differentiated the best-fit career options from lower-ranked alternatives.

VIII. CONCLUSION

This paper presented the design, development, and evaluation of an AI Based Career Guidance System that leverages rule-based artificial intelligence to deliver personalized, accurate, and accessible career recommendations. The system successfully addresses the critical limitations of existing career counselling approaches by providing a 24/7 accessible, cost-free, and highly personalized web platform. Through a rigorous evaluation involving 120 test users, the system demonstrated a recommendation accuracy of 91.2% and a user satisfaction rate of 89%, confirming its practical effectiveness and usability.

The modular architecture ensures the system is maintainable and extensible. The AI Rule Engine provides transparent, explainable recommendations, making it a trustworthy tool for students and professionals. The integrated skill gap analysis and learning resource recommendations

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guide users toward actionable development paths. The system demonstrates that AI technologies can be meaningfully applied in education and career planning to create substantial social impact, particularly for students in underserved areas with limited access to professional guidance.

IX. FUTURE ENHANCEMENT

Several enhancements are planned for future versions of the system. First, a supervised machine learning model will be integrated alongside the rule engine, trained on real career outcome data collected through the feedback module, enabling adaptive recommendations that improve over time. A hybrid recommendation approach combining rule-based inference with collaborative filtering will further improve accuracy for users with complex profiles.

Second, a Natural Language Processing (NLP) chatbot interface will be developed to allow users to interact conversationally. Third, the system will support resume upload and automatic skill extraction using Named Entity Recognition (NER), eliminating manual skill input. Fourth, integration with professional networking platforms such as LinkedIn and job portals such as Naukri and Indeed will be implemented to provide real-time job matching alongside career recommendations.

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