

**UNDERSTANDING THE PRACTICE OF CAREER GUIDANCE IN THE  
PALESTINIAN COMMUNITY INSIDE ISRAEL: CONCEPTS AND CHALLENGES**

**By**

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## ABSTRACT

The practice of career guidance in the Palestinian community inside Israel is a relatively recent phenomenon which became prominent after the emergence of approximately 30 career guidance centres across the country. The development of career guidance in a context that is characterised by continuous social underdevelopment, injustice and discrimination raises many questions around the effectiveness of career guidance and its role in fighting unemployment as well as the extent to which career guidance services can deliver results on the ground – within the Palestinian community. In the twenty-first century, we need to consider the changing social structures and contexts in which career guidance is practiced (Arthur, Collins, McMahon & Marshall, 2009). Such challenging environment interferes with the practice and its deliverables making it more difficult for Palestinian practitioners. Hence, in the light of such challenges, there exists a great need to determine the effectiveness of the services by focusing on a number of areas such as; the types of career guidance interventions used; the kind of challenges Palestinian practitioners are faced with; the theoretical framework for career guidance; the future needs and skills of career guidance practitioners. To achieve these objectives, the study interviewed a sample consisting of (N=8) Palestinian career guidance practitioners, who were drawn using convenience and snowballing sampling, using a qualitative approach; semi-structured interviews. The results showed that Palestinian career guidance practitioners understood the role and function of career guidance and used a wide range of useful interventions that correspond to those in international literature. However, they were critical of Holland-based assessment that was used considering it to be incompatible with the Arab community. Participants further reported that they were faced with a spectrum of challenges that are multi-faceted in nature and felt that the key to having effective career guidance with concrete outcomes, is by dealing with it on a policy level.

Participants further made recommendations for the future training of career guidance practitioners around job market knowledge, understanding the socio-political context. Specific recommendations were made to guidance and structural limitations that exist due to the treatment of the state.

**KEY WORDS:** Career guidance, policy challenges, discrimination, career guidance deliverables, career guidance interventions, local context, practitioners, training needs.



## DECLARATION

I declare that “Understanding the practice of career guidance in the Palestinian community inside Israel: concepts and challenges” is my own work. All the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

Mohammad Sami Mahamid

January 2017

Signed:.....



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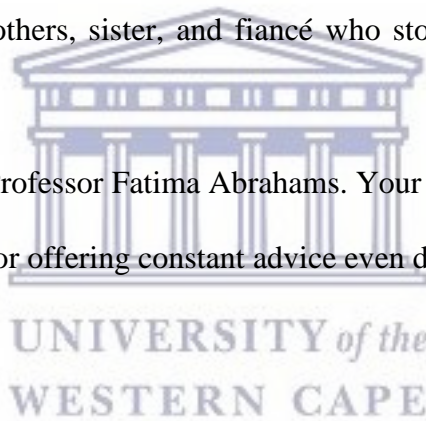
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Firstly, I would like to extend my gratitude to the Almighty for making this work possible and for being on my side in difficult times.

To my parents, thank you for your unconditional support and patience. Thank you for every minute you spent longing for my return to my beloved home. Your support has always left indelible marks that I shall always cherish.

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I dedicate this work to my beloved family and fiancé who mean the world to me. I also dedicate this work to the Palestinian people who are struggling for justice, equality and freedom...

*“Our freedom is incomplete without the freedom of the Palestinians”*

-Nelson Mandela-

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## CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Introduction

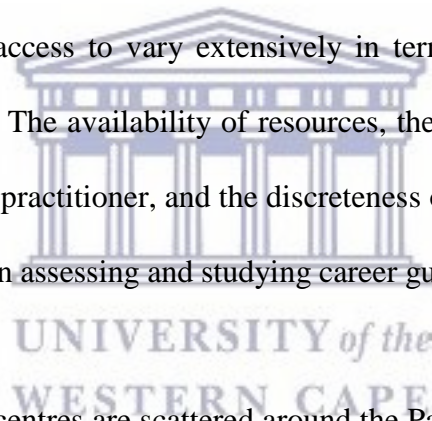
In one way or another, people have always been engaged in giving advice and guidance to each other throughout history in an informal way. Nowadays, however, the world is a much more complex place in which guidance is more systematic and formal. In a globalised world and a fast-growing working environment, the day-to-day challenges are continuously on the rise. The practice of career guidance is heavily influenced by changes in the workplace, politics, social conditions, globalisation and fluctuating economies. Arthur, Collins, McMahon and Marshall (2009) maintain that in the twenty-first century, we need to consider the changing social structures and contexts in which career guidance is practised. One cannot separate the role of career guidance from social injustice. In Australia for example, Edith Onian's advocacy for social reforms included concerns about the employment of youth and career guidance for school graduates as well as establishing professional training for social welfare workers (Barham, 2013). What is notable about Edith Onian's advocacy was her capacity to draw attention to the social and employment challenges faced by young people, and to mobilise resources to address social circumstances (Barham, 2013).

Social underdevelopment arising from political injustice and discrimination raises many questions around the effectiveness of career guidance and its role in fighting unemployment, as well as the extent to which career guidance services can be of benefit. One such case of socio-economic underdevelopment is the Arab or the Palestinian community inside Israel. The Arab minority constitutes about 20% of the general population in Israel and constitutes 18% of the working-age population, but comprises only 13.1% of the labour force. Arabs are generally employed in occupations and industries at the bottom of the wage scale. The Israel Democracy Institute Report (IDIR) (2013) indicates that discrimination in the labour market within Israel

plays a major role in the challenges that Palestinian citizens face in integrating into Israeli society. According to this report, security is used as a pretext by the state to preclude the integration of Palestinians across a wide range of jobs while there is no justification for doing so. Palestinian workers and employees are underrepresented in the public sector (IDIR, 2013). Furthermore, Miaari, Nabwani, and Khattab (2011) concluded that conditions have gone even worse since 2004 in that wage gaps between Jews and Arabs have risen. According to the Israel Democracy Institute (2013) the wage per hour in 2009 was estimated at 27 Shekels for Arabs and 44 Shekels for Jews. Flug and Keisar (2001) found that this disparity between Arabs and Jews is attributed to wage discrimination and a limited supply of jobs. Another factor that could explain this disparity is the lower return for qualifications received by Arab workers as compared to Jews (Asali, 2006). Zussman and Friedman (2008) added that such disparity could also be linked to a decrease in the number of Arabs who pursue higher education in high-earning careers. The rate of young Arabs studying at universities is much lower than that of Israeli Jews, and those who do enrol to universities rarely choose scientific and technological majors (IDIR, 2013). In addition, according to the Israeli Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labor (2005), even Palestinians who hold university degrees differ from Jews who have comparable degrees with respect to employment, as most Palestinians with university degrees are in community oriented occupations such as teachers, healthcare practitioners or community services, rather than in the business sector. With this said, it seems that attaining a university degree may be insufficient for bridging the wage gap between the Palestinian population and the Jewish population in Israel.

Although a lot of progress has been made in the field of career guidance around the world, in some communities it remains far from being at high standards. Khateeb (2016), who is the head of al-Fanar Career Guidance and Employment Board in the Palestinian community, in a TV

interview, argues that an alarming phenomenon being observed is that many graduates in the Palestinian community are finishing university, and instead of working in the field for which they studied, they find themselves engaged with other kinds of work. This raises questions about whether the students receive effective career guidance whether in school or college or by specialised centres. A systematic literature review of research, conducted by Bimrose, Barnes and Brown (2005), concluded that when assessing the effectiveness of career guidance it is crucial to take into consideration the complex inter-relationships and various variables; the way individuals differ regarding their personal circumstances such as gender, age, ethnicity and attainment, the contexts in which they operate vary in relation to their domestic situation, their mobility, geographical location, labour market conditions, and the career guidance interventions that they have access to vary extensively in terms of the type, intensity and duration of the interventions. The availability of resources, the specific needs of clients, the experience and training of the practitioner, and the discreteness of provision are also variables that should be considered when assessing and studying career guidance (Bimrose et al., 2005).



A number of career guidance centres are scattered around the Palestinian community to fill in the gap thereof. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (hereafter referred to as OECD) (2004), career guidance has become a widely-recognised useful tool to improve labour market supply, address skills shortages and increase the quality of human capital. Furthermore, career guidance is likely to be instrumental in improving the efficiency of the linkage between the education system and the labour market, while also enhancing the equality of opportunities for individuals. The way in which career guidance is delivered might help to articulate students' learning demands and meet their needs, contribute to higher-education accessibility and completion, as well as improve the match between supply and demand in the labour market (OECD, 2004).

There has been considerable research studies on career counselling and career guidance in the international arena. Theories of career development such as the Holland theory and the theory of work adjustment are commonly used worldwide and thus held as theoretical frameworks for conducting career guidance. Whilst there is a global trend of using such frameworks, according to Van Esbroick and Jim (2008), there is a need for building localised models of career guidance to better address the needs of local communities. Developing sound localised career guidance models is linked to having a better understanding of the context as well as the role of career guidance practitioners that find themselves in a specific context.

This study will not gain the perspective of service beneficiaries but rather service providers.

This is because the provider's perspective will determine the standards used and challenges from a professional perspective. 'Career guidance'; 'career counselling'; or 'vocational guidance'? While there may be differences between them, the terms are used interchangeably in this paper. Other terms that will be used interchangeably are: Palestinians and Arabs. The overarching research question in the present study is: What are the existing challenges in the practice of career guidance in the Arab Palestinian community inside Israel?

To better understand the context in which the research is conducted there is a need to define the Palestinian community inside Israel.

## **1.2. The Palestinians in Israel**

Upon the establishment of the Israeli state on Palestinian soil in 1948, while hundreds of thousands of Palestinians got killed, transferred or fled, other Palestinians, namely those living in Israel now, found themselves living under a military rule up until the late 1960s (Pappe, 2011). After 1967, unlike their fellow Palestinians living in the Gaza strip and the West Bank

who fell under occupation during the six-day war in 1967, they were eventually granted the Israeli citizenship and lived within the borders of Israel formed in 1948 (Pappe,2011). Those Palestinians were given different types of labels namely: Israeli Arabs, the Palestinians within, the Palestinians of the 1948 or Arabs of 1948. They now comprise 20.8 % of the population inside Israel amounting to 1,771,000 (Central Bureau of Statistics of Israel, 2016). Despite being granted the Israeli citizenship, they are still subject to what Pappe (2011) calls a dual system of laws which were passed upon the establishment of the state in 1948, and which continue to affect the Palestinians in Israel till this day. Pappe (2011) argues that the Palestinians inside Israel are still faced with subtle forms of discrimination in various ways that can be found across education, housing, land and employment.

### **1.3. The Problem Statement**

The rationale of the study takes its strength from the pressing need to explore the role of career guidance practitioners in the Palestinian community inside Israel. In the context of Israel, the Palestinian minority is held back by a number of factors related to the treatment of the state (IDIR, 2013). However, despite the perceived obstacles, there has been an emerging trend of career guidance services in this community and it is growing at a slow pace. Often times, at face value, the practice is narrowly understood and often loosely structured. The service is delivered through private practitioners, schools, colleges as well as centres designed for the purpose of career guidance. With that said, this study attempts to unshadow the realities of such practitioners and unpack the practice of career guidance in order to: determine how career guidance practitioners define the concept of career guidance in their context, explore the challenges practitioners are faced with; determine the types of interventions used, determine if the practice is guided by theoretical frameworks, and to make recommendations for the future training of career guidance practitioners. In other words, it is an attempt to determine whether career guidance practitioners are effectively prepared for taking this role in the light of the huge

socio-economic gaps, and challenges, existing between the Jewish and Palestinian community inside Israel.

While there is research on career guidance in Israel, there seems to be a lack of research in this area when it comes to the Palestinian community inside Israel. There is a need to draw attention and to make recommendations related to the field in which Palestinian practitioners are operating, which may then serve to invite more studies aimed at researching this area. After all, the practice of career guidance should be guided by sound theoretical foundations, proper resource allocation, conducive state policies, and the skills required that are ought to guide and aid practitioners in their endeavours and lead to development in the field while taking into account the local context. The development of career guidance requires a set of theoretical frameworks with universal validity and applications, but at the same time requires culture-specific and localised models that may well be used to shed light and explain career development issues and phenomenon from a local perspective.

Hence, the value the research will add: identifying the gaps in terms of knowledge and practice and give recommendations in the hope to contribute to advancing career guidance at a local level in the Palestinian community living inside Israel.

#### **1.4. The Objectives of the Study**

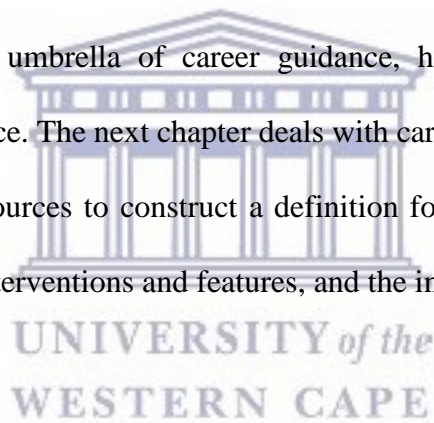
The main purpose of this endeavour is to embark on research to:

- Determine how career guidance practitioners define the concept of career guidance in their context.
- Explore the challenges Palestinian practitioners are faced with.

- Determine what of type career guidance interventions are used based on the ones identified in the literature.
- Make recommendations for the future training of career guidance practitioners in career guidance skills.
- Determine if the practice is guided by theoretical frameworks.

### **1.5. Conclusion**

This section focused on career guidance, its implications, and the environment in which career guidance exists, that is in the context of the Palestinian community inside Israel. While the importance of career guidance has been established, there is a need to uncover the nature of services provided under the umbrella of career guidance, how it is conducted and the implications for career guidance. The next chapter deals with career guidance, mainly drawing from different international sources to construct a definition for career guidance but also to understand career guidance interventions and features, and the implications thereof.





## CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1. Introduction

The previous chapter covered issues pertaining to the context of career guidance in the Arab community as well as the status of Arab/Palestinian citizens in Israel. Understanding contextual or local issues surrounding career guidance is of critical importance if we are to understand career guidance as a practice. While this chapter gives a more detailed account of the context in which the practice of career guidance exists, it also deals with career guidance from an international perspective, especially countries that hold membership in the OECD of which Israel is a member. The OECD is an intergovernmental economic organisation with 36 member countries, whose aim is to stimulate economic progress and world trade. Given that career guidance is a dynamic and evolving process and thus a practice that is subject to change, there is a need to consider how career guidance is practiced across different settings. With that said, defining career guidance and its context serves to set the parameters in order to distinguish between universal dimensions and context-specific dimensions of career guidance.

### 2.2. Career Development

Career development refers to “a life-long process of managing learning, work, and transitions in order to move toward a personally determined and evolving preferred future” (Hiebert, Borgen and Schobe, 2011, p. 1). Some individuals are capable of managing their career life effectively, but others need assistance, especially as economic, occupational, and social change keep escalating and getting more complex. In order for individuals to be assisted meaningfully, career service providers need to possess the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required for assisting people to develop meaningful lifelong learning plans that are in line with their career paths (Hiebert et al., 2011). Career guidance thus helps people to improve their lives and develop the necessary tools to cope in a world that is subject to constant changes.



### 2.3. What Is Career Guidance?

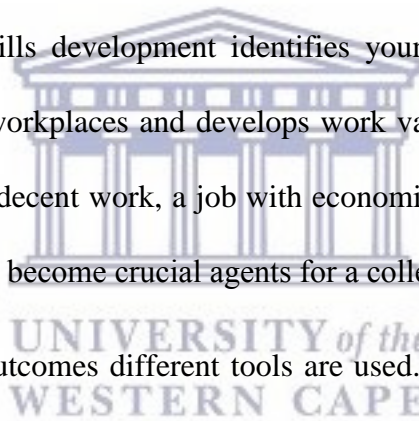
In their review of the definition of career guidance in 37 countries, Watts and Sultana (2004, p.19) define career guidance as a group of services aimed at assisting individuals “of any age and at any point throughout their lives, to make educational, training and occupational choices and to manage their careers”. They also note that there are different types of activities which the term covers:

“The services may be on an individual or group basis, and may be face-to-face or at a distance (including helplines and web-based services). They include career information (in print, ICT-based and other forms), assessment and self-assessment tools, counselling interviews, career education and career management programmes, taster programmes, work search programmes, and transition services” (Watts & Sultana, 2004, p.106).

Career guidance aims to assist individuals and enable them to make more informed decisions; it helps them understand the world of work to know the required skills; and it opens students' eyes to career options which they may not have been aware of (Holman, 2014). Similarly, Savickas (2005) states that career interventions should enable clients to better understand their own life themes and vocational personality. A study of Gushue, Scanlan, Pantzer and Clarke (2006), targeting Korean international undergraduate students enrolled in U.S. universities, found that when students had a better defined sense of their interests, abilities, and goals and were actively engaged in activities related to career exploration, they tended to have greater self-confidence in making career-related decisions.

The OECD (2004, p.19) shares similar yet more compressive views on what career guidance entails: “Career guidance helps people to reflect on their ambitions, interests, qualifications and

abilities. It helps them to understand the labour market and education systems, and to relate this to what they know about themselves. Comprehensive career guidance tries to teach people to plan and make decisions about work and learning. It further makes information about the labour market and about educational opportunities more accessible by organising it, systematising it, and making it available when and where people need it". The OECD's view which suggests that career guidance teaches clients how to plan and make decisions about work and learning, means that career guidance is seen not only as tool by which to help clients understand themselves and the market, but also in relation to skills development. In the same way, Cheng (2015) concluded that "skills development bridges the learning and economic gain of a young person and makes him or her immediately employable. It also seeks to equip the young with sustainable employability. Skills development identifies young people's feasible transition processes from education to workplaces and develops work values, helping them to learn to become active participants in decent work, a job with economic, social, physical, and mental work values, and to eventually become crucial agents for a collective sustainable future".



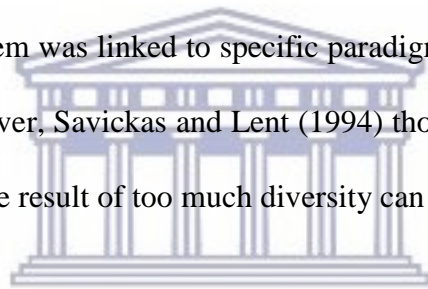
To achieve career guidance outcomes different tools are used. While interviews are still the central tool, career guidance also includes a wide range of other services such as group discussions; electronic and printed information; school lessons; structured experience and helplines (OECD, 2004). The services may be provided to individuals across a wide range of settings like schools, universities, employment services, private service providers; businesses, and community (OECD, 2004). Evidence from the OECD (2010) suggests that when effective career guidance is provided independently and impartially for youth, it helps individuals in terms of transitions into education, training and employment.

According to Bimrose, Barnes and Hughes (2005), in a study on the effectiveness of career guidance, practitioners and experts thought that guidance was useful when it is comprised of the following elements:

- Working towards positive outcomes for clients by “exploring and challenging client perceptions together with giving direction, and a new awareness of learning or employment opportunities” (Bimrose et al., 2005, p.3).
- “Giving clients access to networks, information and knowledge enabling them to feel better informed and better able to progress” (Bimrose et al., 2005, p.3).
- “Encouraging constructive change in the client” (Bimrose et al., 2005, p.3) with focus on boosting self-confidence, developing skills and understanding, and motivating clients.
- “Providing the client with a positive experience” (Bimrose et al., 2005, p.3) by giving them the opportunity to reflect and engage in in-depth discussions, and by reassuring them, and working towards goal clarification and progress.
- Continuity over a period of time as well as bringing about positive change.

McCrone, Southcott, Featherstone, Macleod and Dawson (2013) provide further insight on the features of a career guidance programme. They identify two important aspects. Firstly, professionals need to be approachable and discuss a wide range of issues beyond the immediate ones covered. The second aspect is that individuals need to be encouraged to be actively involved in career exploration and problem solving activities to have a better understanding of themselves and the opportunities available.

Walt and Van Esbroeck (1998) noted that career guidance's meaning could differ depending on the context as well as the language. They maintain that cultural and linguistic differences could potentially affect terms as basic as counselling and guidance. They further qualified their argument by giving an example of how the term could cover a different set of services or activities in Germany. In German 'guidance' means *Beratung*. The term *Beratung* is used to describe activities and tasks different to those commonly known. Interestingly, the diversity within the global career guidance community is not only related to cultural and linguistic differences but is also related to the many splits in vocational psychology and guidance (Savickas & Baker, 2005). The split came about as a result of the distance between career guidance practitioners and academic researchers (Herr, 1996). Different paths were followed by career theorists, each of them was linked to specific paradigms (International handbook of career guidance, 2011). However, Savickas and Lent (1994) thought that while such diversity may have benefits, the ultimate result of too much diversity can cause chaos in the field.



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Career guidance is based on a number of disciplines such as psychology; education; sociology; and labour economics. While psychology is traditionally considered the major discipline that laid the theoretical and methodological tenets of career guidance, career guidance now is delivered by people with a very wide range of skills and qualifications (OECD, 2004). While some people are specialists in the field, others are not. Some receive extensive training; others did not. Career guidance training programmes are still mainly focused on developing skills in providing help in one-to-one interviews. On the other hand, psychological testing is now becoming less central in many countries as counselling theories are moving away from an emphasis on the practitioner as expert to viewing practitioners as facilitators of individual choice and development (OECD, 2004). McMahon and Patton (2000) advocate the use of a constructivist approach whereby emphasis is placed on the need to engage with the client in an

effective dialogue and ensuring the quality of the counsellor-client relationship by playing a more facilitative role. Krumboltz (1998, p.560) similarly states that the goal of career guidance practice should be to "help people create satisfying lives for themselves". He suggests that in order to achieve that, career practitioners should be facilitators of continuous learning and advocate for open-mindedness rather than decisiveness.

#### **2.4. Career Guidance Interventions**

As stated previously, career guidance is comprised of a variety of interventions aimed at assisting individuals in order to help them make choices pertaining to educational, training and occupational ends (Watts & Sultana, 2004). A number of career guidance interventions that are used were identified in the literature consulted. A longitudinal study that followed through with clients, who used guidance services, over a five-year period, has provided evidence for effective one-to-one interventions; it was concluded that this type of intervention has been found to be useful (Bimrose, Barnes & Hughes, 2008).

The findings from Bimrose et al. (2008) suggest that the characteristics of useful guidance identified were predominantly as follows:

- Providing access to specialist knowledge,
- providing insights,
- supporting positive outcomes and experiences,
- Promoting constructive change,
- Focus and clarification and,
- Motivating, increasing self-awareness and self-confidence and structuring opportunities for reflection and discussion.

However, interestingly, disadvantaged individuals found this type of intervention to be of limited value unless practitioners had specialist knowledge of their circumstances and needs. Others such as Smith, Lilley, Morris and Krechowicka (2005), in a systematic literature review, identified several authors who highlight the relevance and significance of career education and guidance programmes. Individual interviews, group-work sessions and access to career-related knowledge were found to have a positive impact on the development of students' career-related skills. In addition, they reported that it is important to integrate such programmes with the wider curriculum, for example in schools. This might serve to determine the impact of career education and guidance programmes on young people's skill development as well as their transition.

A meta-analysis, which reviewed 46 studies, conducted by Whiston, Sexton and Lasoff (1998), presented evidence suggesting that career interventions are effective across most age groups. The study also found individual guidance to have the biggest effect, while group counselling and classroom interventions came second in terms of effectiveness. Interventions that did not incorporate the use of counselling sessions or counsellor interventions were found to be least significant. Whilst, computer-based interventions were found to be most cost-effective. Regarding the use of technology, the OECD (2010) recommends that career practitioners need to be able to make use of a wide range of information and web-based resources. Howieson and Semple (2013), by the same token, concluded that technology and help lines have a significant potential to make careers information and guidance more accessible, but also stressed that it needs to be combined with other interventions.

Liu, Huang and Wang (2014), in a meta-analysis study on the effectiveness of career interventions, reported that job search interventions were most effective when they dealt with practical transition skills, behavioural and motivational issues. The most effective activities identified in the meta-analysis were: teaching job search skills, improving the presentation of

CVs and recruitment related documents, improving self-presentation and career image, and encouraging proactivity and goal setting.

Another form of intervention that can be carried out, according to Graverson and Van Ours (2008), is to conduct follow up activities or monitor the aftermath of interventions. They found that ongoing monitoring and counselling increased the likelihood of successful job outcomes by 30%. Similarly, Walton, Sanderson, Botterill and Halliday (2003) found that regular phone calls from professionals to clients for the purpose of checking how things are can help to ensure the sustainability of their progression.

The OECD (2010, p. 85), in their career guidance review report, observed that “Individual career guidance should be part of a comprehensive career guidance framework, including a systematic career education programme to inform students about the world of work and career opportunities”. The OECD further concluded that schools should play a role in encouraging an understanding of the world of work from an early age, coupled with visits to workplaces and being exposed to workplace experiences. Similarly, Watson and McMahon (2005), in their research review, concluded that careers education is considered optimal when interventions are personalised and targeted at individuals’ needs from an early age. They observed, however, that there is a lack of literature pertaining to high-quality interventions aimed at individuals of an early age such as primary school pupils.

In their evaluation of a wide range of interventions and establishing their relevance thereof, Hiebert, Borgen and Schober (2011) noted it is important to take into account the needs of clients before developing interventions. Accordingly, needs assessment should precede the interventions in order to identify the most suitable interventions to best serve the client’s needs.



## **2.5. Career Guidance: Policy Making and Deliverables**

Policy making is an important factor to consider especially where service and clients' needs are concerned. In the last decade, an increasing number of organisations and countries have recognised the need for career guidance and counselling services (Hiebert & Bezanson, 2000; OECD, 2004). In 2002 - 2004, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, European Commission, and World Bank joined efforts to conduct a comprehensive study on career guidance in 36 countries. The countries included developing countries, Eastern European countries, and more developed countries (OECD, 2004). One of the conclusions reached was that career guidance is a private but also public responsibility, and is linked to deliverables such as lifelong learning, labour market integration, social equity, and sustainable employment. Another conclusion was that career guidance needs to be available to individuals at any age and at any point in life, in order to assist them in making educational, training, and occupational choices, and to enable them to better manage their careers. Additionally, One common theme that emerged consistently from the several international forums on career development and public policy, held over the past several years, is the agreement that client needs can be met most effectively by policy makers and practitioners working together to provide quality services (Hiebert & Bezanson, 2000; OECD, 2004).

Mayston (2002), a leading economist from York University, argues that high quality career guidance can make positive changes to the functioning of labour markets and contribute to a reduction in the extent of social exclusion. Accordingly, career guidance can make contributions to human capital beyond what it would have been in the absence of career guidance. While career guidance is argued to positively influence policies and markets, the question which is worth looking at, in return, is in what way does the policy of the state influence career guidance? Hodkinson, Sparkes and Hodkinson (1996) argue that effective



career guidance interventions should provide a safe place for people to assess their state of readiness for decision-making and career progression. Again, one should consider policy factors to be able to see the bigger picture regarding the context in which such career interventions take place.

In dealing with the state policies affecting career guidance and the perceived “efforts” made by the state to address career guidance, one needs to look beyond career guidance. Career guidance is inspirable from a wide range of policies and practices that could directly or indirectly interfere with achieving the desired goals of career guidance. Efforts have been made by the Israeli state to improve career guidance in the Arab community. The Israeli government has put in place a number of initiatives in order to boost educational attainment in the Arab community (OECD, 2010). The OECD recognised the initiative of the government in building partnerships to help integrate disadvantaged groups into the labour market. One example is a programme called “TEVET”, a programme designed to help young people in disadvantaged groups and assist them to find employment through career guidance and employment programmes (OECD, 2010). At the same time, the OECD (2010) review of labour market and social policies in Israel points to the alarming differences and disparities existing between the Jewish and Arab education systems as one of the factors causing poverty in the Arab Palestinian population inside Israel. Other factors that were found to cause poverty included inadequate policies to include minorities as well as labour market discrimination by individual employers (OECD, 2010). In such a case, it would then make sense to ask the question: to what extent does the Israeli government provide a safe place for people to assess their state of readiness for decision-making and career progression?

In a more recent OECD review, the OECD (2013) showed that despite positive developments in terms of labour force participation, Israel’s social policy is still problematic for Arabs. 27%

of 16-24 year-olds in Israel are outside the labour market and not in education, the highest rate among OECD countries (OECD, 2013). Arabs of all others are overrepresented in this category due to high poverty rates in the Arab community (OECD, 2013). Unemployment is dramatically higher among Arabs than among Jews, and the rate of labour force participation among Arab women is among the lowest in the world (Adalah, 2011). Arabs also have a limited access to colleges, universities and vocational programmes. Poverty; unemployment; low income earning capacity and problems in the education system are all problematic for the Arab community. Furthermore, according to Adalah (2011), there is limited employment opportunities in Arab towns and villages as the state is failing to locate employment-generating industrial zones in the Arab towns and villages, concentrating them in Jewish towns and villages. In the light of what has been mentioned, the OECD recommended that state should make more serious affirmative action efforts in relation to Arabs (OECD, 2013).

Furthermore, looking at the most recent report produced by the OECD (2016, p.3), regarding addressing the Arab Palestinian community inside Israel amongst other disadvantaged groups, the report again found that “the quality of education, especially for Arabs, is [still] poor, and these groups are not well integrated into the labour market, resulting in widespread poverty”.

Based on the results, the OECD recommended the following:

- Increase education funding for disadvantaged groups.
- Develop vocational education and training more fully for young adults

According to Adalah (2011), the state has consistently failed to take adequate and effective action to address poverty among the Palestinian Arab minority in Israel. Where it has initiated development programs targeting the Arab minority, the state has tended to implement them

partially, gradually, or not at all (Adalah, 2011). Despite some efforts made by the state, there seems to be absence of a concrete well-guided attempt to deal with poverty as a factor that interferes with achieving career guidance deliverables. This type of paradoxical behaviour may well be explained by Irving's observation (Irving, 2011). He argues that there are concerns that career education, rather than focusing on the development of people, may become sites of oppression fuelled by political and employment agendas. In conjunction with Irving, Borg (2003) points to the fact that with government taking initiatives to demonstrate responsibility for its citizens follows the risk of guardianship or paternalism. Career guidance, according to this view, may become at the same time at risk of being a social control mechanism (Plant & Thomsen, 2011). Thomsen (2012) adds that even if such initiatives arise from the best of intentions, when aimed at certain groups in society, they are often based on assumptions about their general needs. In other words, they may not necessarily speak to the needs of people from a client's viewpoint.

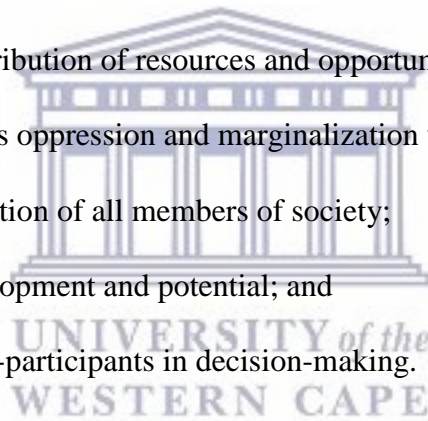
Another factor that may interfere with career guidance deliverables is the military service. According to Adalah (2011), the Israeli military service is one way in which Palestinian citizens in Israel are discriminated against and excluded from the job market. This is done by the use of the military service as a requirement for employment, often when there is no relation between the nature of the work and military experience. The inclusion of army service in job specifications may have a discriminatory effect on Palestinian citizens of the state, as they are exempted as an ethnic group from serving in the army due to their Palestinian national identity (Adalah, 2011).

The policy challenges and structural conditions, mentioned thus far, require serious efforts aimed at the revisiting of career guidance in the Arab community and the extent to which it can deliver effectively. Such challenges constitute important variables which ought not to be ignored as far as attaining career guidance outcomes is concerned. According to Blustein,

Kenna, Gill and DeVoy (2008) it is time to consider what guidance practices may offer to people who do not have equal access to mechanisms through which sustainable employment and prosperity are attained. Guidance practices tend to place more focus on the notion of preferred lifestyles, while not paying much attention to the realities of people who consider work as a basic means of survival (Blustein, 2006; Richardson, 2000). The fact of the matter is that there are many people who are disadvantaged based on factors such as ethnicity, social class, religion, ability, gender, (Arthur & Collins, 2011; Flores, 2009; Pope, 2011).

Five principles have been highlighted to illustrate how social justice is critical for career guidance practice (Arthur et al., 2009):

- Fair and equitable distribution of resources and opportunities;
- Direct action to address oppression and marginalization within society;
- Inclusion and participation of all members of society;
- Fostering human development and potential; and
- Engaging people as co-participants in decision-making.



Arthur (2014) proposes that oppression across societies requires career guidance practitioners to view career guidance from individual, organisational, and societal lens. If structural issues remain unchallenged it may lead to normalising the difficult social conditions (Arthur, 2014). Career guidance practitioners should be involved in examining the challenges that may affect the lives of their clients (Arthur, 2014). Focusing on skills, interests and talents of the individual may open up opportunities, but each client's journey is different in that some journeys are more difficult than others' (Arthur, 2014). This might guard practitioners against being used as social control agents, where their sole purpose would be to serve market needs whilst overlooking meaningful career development (Irving, 2011).

Thus it is important to consider the structures in which career guidance practitioners operate as they face structural barriers (Arthur et al., 2009). According to Arthur (2014, p. 51), “A just society would be one in which the constraints of oppression and domination are eliminated, allowing people from all groups to develop and reach their full human potential. This would include lifting restrictions on participation in social institutions such as education and employment. Beyond acknowledging inequities, guidance practitioners need to define active interventions that challenge systems, institutions, and cultural norms that result in the oppression and marginalization of certain groups in society. It is not enough to identify barriers, the work of social justice in career guidance is to remove those barriers, offer people hope, and services that are relevant to their situation”. This means that practitioners should be equipped with the attitudes, knowledge, and skills to offer a wide range of interventions while also helping clients in terms of addressing social and structural issues (Arthur et al., 2009).

## **2.6. Barriers Affecting Career Guidance Practice**

Policy barriers are not the only set of factors that may interfere with achieving career guidance desired outcomes. Family structures for example have the potential to obstruct career guidance interventions. According to Sultana and Watts (2008), the Western notion of individual career guidance might be seen as inappropriate or irrelevant by some groups, since traditional notions of respect toward elders often induce young people to follow pathways determined by their parents, older siblings, close relatives and others. This situation may be especially relevant to tribal communities in South East and East Anatolia regions and families living in rural areas. In connection to this, a study on national and regional cultural groups carried out by Hofstede and Hofstede (2001) revealed that there is a considerable resistance affecting both the behaviours of individuals and those of institutions. Collectivistic cultures are different to

individually oriented culture; individuals living in Mediterranean and Arab communities usually tend to be collectivist and rarely act independently (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2001).

Another challenge is the negative perception of career guidance and counselling. Borders and Drury (2008) found that most students had negative perceptions about counsellors. Similarly, Gysbers (2008) found that most students did not believe in counsellors' advice and recommended that students should be aware of the importance of career guidance before they experience it. Schools may also constitute an indirect barrier when they do not promote awareness around the importance of career skills to students. Lapan and Gyber (2001), in a study measuring the impact of comprehensive guidance and counselling programs on seventh graders in Missouri (U.S.) concluded that when schools were fully engaged in implementing career guidance, students were likely to be aware of educational and career information, and skills. The changing nature of the job market could also be challenging and require practitioners to have reliable information about the job market (Zelloth, 2014). According to this view, the lack of reliable job market information could be an obstacle as it may lead career guidance practitioners to be inadequately prepared and confused about how to cater for clients' needs.

## **2.7. Career Guidance Skills and Training Needs**

Despite the fact that some individuals are capable of managing their careers effectively, it is probably not the case for many others who may be in need of guidance to varying degrees and in different ways. In order for that assistance to be meaningful and instrumental, practitioners need to update their skills and knowledge so as to meet the dynamic needs of clients. In the previous chapter, it was stated that the profession of career guidance is subject to a wide range of changes and is influenced by complex variables; it is heavily influenced by changes in the workplace, politics, social conditions, globalisation as well as fluctuating economies and other variables. Contexts are now much more complex than before and require practitioners to keep up with such forces and see and deal with career guidance in more systematic ways. This is



because such changes inform and influence not only the individual needs of clients, but also the way in which guidance services should be provided.

This raises questions around what competencies and skills career guidance practitioners need to have in order to deliver the service in effective ways, whilst taking into account the universal dimensions but also the local level. Repetto (2008) noted that there are various roles carried out by guidance practitioners, and there are differences in the type of training received cross-culturally. A universal framework of competencies may be useful to assist practitioners in expanding the scope of practice and training where career guidance is concerned. This could help develop qualifications and training programmes to deliver competencies that could address a wide range of needs on multiple levels (Repetto, 2008).

Hiebert et al. (2011) identified several competency areas that are considered relatively new developments in the career guidance field. The competencies identified are as follows:

1. Assessment: “evidence-based practice and outcome-focused service delivery” as well as “determining client needs and service expectations” (p. 178).
2. Information Management: managing a “variety of information sources and the amount of information available” (p. 178).
3. Consultation and Coordination: “pertaining especially to the wide array of stakeholders, such as policy makers, administrators, parents, teachers, etc.)” (p. 178).
4. Community Capacity Building : “dealing with analysing resources and addressing community economic, social, education, and employment goals” (p. 166).
5. Program and Service Management: “connected especially to the design, implementation, supervision, and evaluation of interventions” (p. 179).

6. Client advocacy: “client cultural differences; designing, implementing, and evaluating guidance and counselling programs” (p. 179).

Hiebert et al. (2011), regarding training needs pertaining to career guidance practitioners, found that in general there is also a need for further training in the following core competencies: education, training and employment trends; job market and social issues; program design, implementation, and evaluation; and dealing with client intercultural issues.

This section of the chapter so far dealt with international competencies for the most part. On a more local level, Savicaks (1993) observed a number of trends in career guidance. Of these trends is the recognition of the importance of context and culture when dealing with career guidance. Perhaps the argument made by Niles, Engels and Lenz (2009) may constitute a balanced view in terms of how career guidance should be approached. They argue that one of the many challenges regarding competency identification across national contexts relates to clarifying which competencies should be part of all career practitioner training and which competencies are more unique to specific contexts. According to them, while the national context is important there is still the possibility of identifying core competencies across all national contexts. Identifying both national and international competencies may open the door for competency models for career guidance that could allow practitioners to better understand the local context; meet client’s needs but also keeping up to date with the practice of career guidance universally.

## **2.8. Theoretical Framework for Career Guidance**

Without theoretical frameworks to guide career practice, there is fear that career practitioners might become too reliant on common sense (Bimrose, 2013). Career guidance practices usually



make use of assessment in order to better understand the individual. The Holland theory lays the foundation for career interest assessment and is widely used by practitioners.

Nauta (2010) concludes that Holland's theory is empirically grounded and widely applicable, and maintains that it is simple and practical, and its success can be attributed to achievement, its user-friendliness and its testability (Nauta, 2010).

Many assessment instruments, which have been derived from the Holland's theory such as the Vocational Preference Inventory (hereafter referred to as Holland), have been designed to assist career practitioners to better explore and guide clients. In essence, the Holland's theory provides a framework that is based on describing people and environments by classifying them into six types (Gottfredson & Richards, 1999). Looking at interrelationships between the six types enables career practitioners to predict career choices and interests of individuals, how easy it will be for them to choose, their satisfaction with their career, and how well they may perform (Nauta, 2013).

Leung (2008) argues that it is of importance for practitioners to broaden their understating of the universals of career guidance internationally, yet he urges practitioners "to critically evaluate the cross-cultural limitations of such theories and to identify points of divergence, including the cultural relevance of theoretical constructs, assessment methods, and the content and design of career interventions based on the big-five theories" (Leung, 2008, p. 128). However, research conducted by Mobley and Slaney (1996), aimed at evaluating Holland's theory, revealed weaknesses in the theory. They suggest that despite investigations of the use and relevance of Holland's theory, little attention has been given to the implications of the theory across different cultures. Leong, Austin, Sekaran and Komarraju (1998) studied the cross-cultural validity of Holland's theory in India and concluded that while internal validity was high, external validity was lower. Accordingly, they recommended that there is a need to

study cultural factors related to occupational choice as alternatives to the Western position which considers vocational interests as the primary factors.

The development of career guidance across different settings has affected the way in which career guidance is seen and understood. According to Savickas (1993), career counselling or guidance has gone through a number of developments:

- 1) “A rejection of the notion that careers practitioners are experts: ‘instead of portraying themselves as masters of truth, counsellors are creating a space where those involved can speak and act for themselves” (p.211).
- 2) The replacement of the concept of ‘fit’ with ‘enablement’, and affirmation of diversity.
- 3) “Recognition of the importance of context and culture, together with the broadening of focus beyond pre-occupation with work-role. Together, these indicate a move toward life-design counselling and grand narratives” (p.212).
- 4) “A questioning of the legitimacy of separating career from the personal, with a move toward the greater integration of these two domains” (p. 212).
- 5) “The realisation that career theory has provided objective guidance techniques which practitioners have increasingly had to combine with subjective techniques derived from counselling theory for their practice. Embryonic career theories are thus being developed which focus more on meaning, invention and construction, and move towards ‘co-construction or social construction of meaning” (p.213).
- 6) “A shift away from objectifying clients by measurement to a preference for autobiography and meaning-making” (p. 213).

Psychological models determine the type of career which best suits the individual based on aptitudes and personality, while sociological theories place more emphasis on environment as

the central factor (Savickas, 1993). Savickas (1993, p.213) argues that changes in career guidance “redefine the practitioner as co-authors and editors of career narratives. Instead of diagnosing, assessing and matching, they authorise careers by narrating coherent stories; invest career with meaning by identifying themes and tensions in the story line; and help clients learn the skills necessary for the next episode in the story”.

Perhaps the view which suggests that career development theory follow a western approach is one that is worthy the attention of career guidance practitioners operating within their contexts. According to Flores (2009) models of career development are biased in that emphasis is placed on individual factors. Subsequently, this may leave out important factors that may impact the access to education and employment (Arthur & McMahon, 2005), as well as ignore the perspective of people from collectivistic cultures (Bimrose & McNair, 2011). In the same breath, a study, focusing on the personal and collective dimensions of career guidance, conducted by Bello and Chacón (2015), concluded that educational and vocational guidance should go beyond focusing solely on the individual and take into account the broader social justice issues. Similarly, Vera (2014) illustrated that counselling and guidance are connected to the personal, socioeconomic, cultural and collective development of people and of their countries.

Criticism has been raised against some of the individualistic assumptions in theories of career choice (Bimrose & McNair, 2011; Flores, 2009). Contextual factors such as oppression that influence people’s lives are now receiving more attention (Arthur & Collins, 2011; Pope, 2011). Accordingly, shift in the orientation of guidance practitioners is required to work with clients in terms of both understanding and addressing the conditions that may limit career options, while also addressing human capital and talent potential (Shaffer & Zalewski, 2011).

## **2.9. Who Should Provide Career Guidance?**

According to the OECD (2004), international evidence shows that when career guidance is provided by schools it may not correspond to the labour market demands. It also shows that when it is provided by those who are not career guidance specialists it will render career guidance too subordinate, and too linked to the self-interest of particular institutions (OECD, 2004). At the same time, the OECD (2004) recommends that efforts should be complementary to programmes inside the school and therefore, a partnership model is required between specialist agencies and the schools. Partnerships should also be established between schools and employers in order to expose young people to the world of work (OECD, 2010). An important observation, made by Hiebert et al. (2011), pertaining to career guidance practitioners' target audience; they suggest that while the practice of career guidance is readily available across many countries, guidance services tend to often exclude those outside the schooling system. They further suggest that practitioners should be brought together from different areas of speciality so as to accomplish various professional development and practitioner training goals. Finally, they argue that services are best provided by a variety of professionals with different types of training, working together in a non-hierarchical way to ultimately meet the needs of clients.

## **2.10. Conclusion**

The chapter covered issues pertaining to the local and international context of career guidance, drawing from various sources to construct a definition for career guidance and the activities and processes that fall under it but also drawing on challenges that may affect career guidance. Understanding international contexts and the development of career guidance is no less important than understanding the local dimensions. In this global context there is a constant need to look at universal dimensions to exchange knowledge and expertise but also to consider

the local context to better address the needs of local communities. The next chapter deals with the methodology employed to gather the data necessary for completing this study.



## CHAPTER THREE METHODOLOGY

### 3.1. Introduction

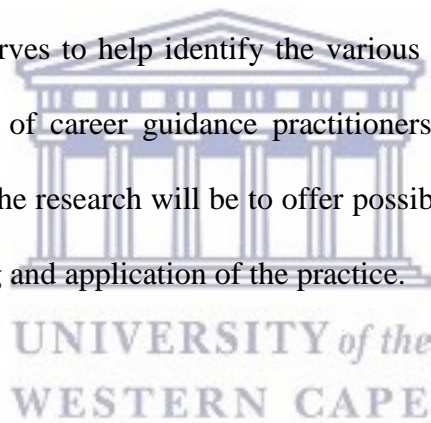
The previous chapter dealt with literature pertaining the various aspects surrounding career guidance. This chapter provides an explanation of the research design and methodology used to conduct the research which is based on a qualitative design. It covers research design, sampling and data collection and analysis methods.

### 3.2. Research Design

A qualitative method was employed to obtain data on the career practitioners' views of the concept, application and implication of career guidance. According to Sekaran and Bougie, (2010) the qualitative approach produces descriptive data. Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005) added that this approach is essentially descriptive in nature and typically takes the form of in-depth interviews or group discussions. Fundamentally, the qualitative research approach is used to study formerly unexplored areas (Welman et al., 2005). The practice of career guidance in the Arab community inside Israel is still unexplored; it seems that there has been no, or little, research on career guidance in the respective community especially from the perspective of the service provider.

The decision to employ a qualitative research approach in this study is based on the very nature of qualitative research; its interpretive and holistic approach. The main aim of qualitative research is to understand the social reality of the participants and the meaning that people attach to it (Babbie, 1992). Put differently, in qualitative research, the main objective is to describe events or experiences of individuals in their own natural setting such as a home, school or an organisation. The participants' and the researcher's interpretation is of critical importance to the research process and the prediction of outcomes is not a meaningful, nor is it applicable, goal of this study. Atieno (2009) notes that the limitation of qualitative designs is that findings

cannot be generalised to wider contexts and populations with the same degree of certainty that quantitative research can. This is due to the fact that findings are not tested to establish whether they are statistically significant or due to chance (Atieno, 2009). The reason for choosing a qualitative paradigm as opposed to a quantitative paradigm is that this approach is best suited to understand the phenomenon in this field of the study and context. In a qualitative study the variables are not usually controlled and it is not intended to apply generalisability of the findings to other populations. Qualitative studies require sufficient freedom and scope to unlock the natural development of action and representation that the researcher wishes to capture (Henning, Rensburg & Smith, 2010). This is certainly the case when conducting this work on career guidance practitioner's views and experiences in their work context as well as the wider context. This methodology serves to help identify the various themes across the practice of career guidance and the role of career guidance practitioners in their working and social settings. The ultimate aim of the research will be to offer possible recommendations that may add value to the understanding and application of the practice.



### **3.3. Population**

Sekaran (2001) describes a population as a whole group of events or people of interest from whom the researcher chooses a sample in order to investigate for the purpose of research. The population for the current research, estimated at 200 to 300, are all Palestinian career guidance practitioners from various centres, including independent practitioners, located within the Palestinian community inside Israel.

### **3.4. Sample**

According to O'leary (2014) a sample is a subset of the population. What makes up a sample is members that are selected from the population as it is not easy or feasible to involve all population in a study. A sample size of  $n=8$  career guidance practitioners was used. The career



guidance practitioners who constitute the composition of the sample fulfilled the inclusion criteria, that is to say that they are Palestinian and are practising the profession in the Palestinian community in centres and/or independently. The participants were mostly men 63%, with women comprising 37% of the participants. The participants fell in the age category of 26–51 years. Participants were all Arab Palestinians with Arabic being their first language and Hebrew as their second. With regards to qualifications, participants held different qualifications and diplomas deemed to be relevant to career guidance. Some had HR degrees others had social work, psychology business management. Half the participants resided in Northern Israel, whilst the other half of the participants were from the Triangle area, where most Palestinians reside.

### **3.5. Sampling Method**

The sampling techniques employed is a nonprobability sampling. Sekaran (2001) defines it as a set of techniques where units or elements in the population have no probabilities attached to them being chosen as sample subjects for a given study. The type of nonprobability sampling which was used for the purpose of this research was convenience sampling and snowballing. Sekaran (2001) explains that a convenience sample involves collecting data from elements or units of the population who are readily available or easily accessible. Practising career guidance practitioners from different cities and towns across the Palestinian community inside Israel were included in the study due to their accessibility. This type of method enabled the researcher to gather data more quickly and easily (Sekaran, 2001). This is due to the fact that population from which the sample was drawn was not large and operated in the Palestinian community within which it was easy to travel and reach. A second upside for using this method was that the sample size could be achieved more quickly. However, employing convenience sampling may have underrepresented or overrepresented a particular group. While this may affect generalisability, due to the nature of the study, generalisability is not a prime concern.



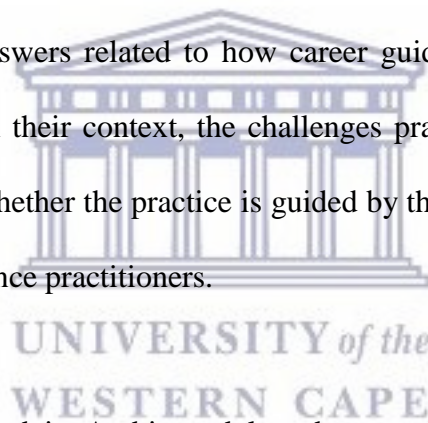
Snowball sampling resulted when the researcher was referred to other willing participants who could be contacted to take part in the study. Snowballing is usually used to obtain research and knowledge from extended associations through previous acquaintances (Leedy & Omrod, 2005). "Snowball sampling uses recommendations to find people with the specific range of skills that has been determined as being useful" (Leedy & Omrod, 2005, p. 206). An individual or a group receives information about a potential subject from different places through a mutual intermediary (Patton & Appelbaum, 2011).

### **3.6. The Research Instruments**

A cover letter was given to participants in order to determine age, gender, and educational qualifications. The letter had been written in English and Arabic for the convenience of the participants and to make sure the content of the letter is well understood. The translation of the letter was conducted by the researcher who is a professional Arabic-to-English-and-English-to-Arabic translator. In terms of the research instrument, an interview guide was developed based on the literature consulted, to explore the career guidance practitioners' views of the concept, application and implications of career guidance. In other words, the view of the practitioners regarding the challenges practitioners are faced with; the types of interventions used, if the practice is guided by theoretical frameworks, and recommendations for the future training of career guidance practitioners. The basic questions were spread across the interview guide in conjunction with the objectives aforementioned. The interview questions were translated into Arabic by the researcher and were later validated by two other translators to ensure maximal proximity. The guide was based on the following research questions: How career guidance practitioners define career guidance in their context? What are the challenges that practitioners face? What types of interventions are used? Is the practice is guided by theoretical frameworks? What are the future training needs of career guidance practitioners?

Thus, the instrument used for this research was interviews. An interview is a method of data collection which involves direct personal contact with the participant (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). For the purpose of this study semi-structured interviews were used. In semi-structured interviews the interviewer does have a sequence of questions to be asked during the interview but has more freedom to change the sequence, wordings and time allocated to each question based on the needs of each separate interview (Robson, 2002). In fact, the semi-structured interview is usually a combination of both structured and unstructured formats in one interview. The reason for using semi-structured interview is because it allows both the interviewer and the interviewee the flexibility to probe for details or discuss issues.

The interviews were used to ask questions related to the objectives of this study. The questions helped the researcher find answers related to how career guidance practitioners define the concept of career guidance in their context, the challenges practitioners are faced with; the types of interventions used; whether the practice is guided by theoretical frameworks; and the future training of career guidance practitioners.



The interviews were conducted in Arabic and lasted on average for 55 minutes and the interviews were audio-recorded with informed consent (Schilling, 2006). The researcher had to be familiar with the questions asked in the interview before the research took place (Babbie & Mouton, 2008). The researcher used open-ended questions which were used to obtain the data. The questions were as follows: In your own words how do you define career guidance? How important do you think it is for the Palestinian community inside Israel?

What are some of most serious challenges facing career guidance as a practice? What recommendations can be made for the future training of career guidance in terms of the development of their career guidance skills? How could the practice be improved? How do you make sure the job fits the client? On what theoretical models do you base your career guidance

assessment? What follow-up steps do you take after you have introduced the intervention? In your own words, what are the three most important goals which you think career guidance can achieve? In what way does career guidance fight unemployment? To what extent has career guidance been instrumental? What type of services do you provide? Can you briefly outline how you go about each one? What do you do to make sure the outcome is met? In what way does the state's policy affect career guidance profession?

Where participants gave incomplete answers or provided an answer which they did not elaborate on, the researcher probed further. Probes helped to elicit more responses to open-ended questions. The researcher applied a creative approach in probing further through use of elaborating on what the respondent had just said. Sometimes the researcher repeated the same question or allowed for a time of silence (Henning et al., 2010). At the end of the question the researcher used an appropriate verbal probe such as "Anything else?" The researcher tried to remain objective and truthful to the research process at all times and stayed close to the meaning of the respondent. Essentially, the researcher needs to ensure that the data collection process follows a pattern that feeds into analytical and scientific purposes (Babbie & Mouton, 2008). Even though there is no one standardised way of interviewing, it is still the responsibility of the researcher to show transparency and discuss each step with the participant upfront (Schilling, 2006).

### **3.7. Procedure**

The interview guide had been pilot-tested on an initial sample of  $n = 2$  to avoid ambiguities or misunderstandings and ensure clarity and coherence. The interview guide needed no alterations as it proved to be void of any deficiencies. After the instrument was proved to be intact, relevant and clear, the researcher then proceeded with the data collection.

Recruitment of participants was conducted by means of networking with individuals and personal contacts with experience of career guidance. Such contacts and links helped the

researcher identify and eased access to the participants. After the participants were identified and informed about the context of the research, and appointments were confirmed via telephone or email, the participants were approached by conducting visits to their offices. Upon meeting with the participants, after they read the consent form as well as the cover letter and signed the consent form, the process of the interview was explained to them and their rights were reiterated. Thereafter, they were asked if they had any questions before we proceeded with the interview.

For some of the interviews, centres or service providers were asked to allow the researcher permission to conduct the data collection on their premises. The respective centres were asked for permission and indicated that the researcher has been granted access to practitioners. The rest of the interviews did not require the permission of centres because while the participants conducted career guidance service for centres, they enjoyed a level of independence in their practise.



### **3.8. Content Analysis**

Babbie and Mouton (2008, p. 490) argue that “there is no one neat and tidy approach to qualitative data analysis, nor even one approach to specific type of qualitative data analysis”.

In the study, the interview data was transcribed by the researcher from Arabic to English and analysed through coding and constant comparison process which required a lot of time. This research defined a compelling question that the researcher was seeking to learn more about. This made it easier to decide on a paradigm for career guidance from which to progress, and led to a theoretical framework within which to apply suitable techniques for the study.

When analysing the data, the researcher sought to find a pattern and a reason for the way in which things happened. The researcher investigated the nature of the practice, rather than quantities. The qualitative research approach seeks to find out not only *what* happens in career

guidance, but also *how* it happens and *why* it happens. This data may be used in the future to bring about practical steps of relevant change through application of the insights. The researcher typically uses evidence from the data and from the literature to compare, contrast and build arguments (Henning et al., 2010). An appropriate technique which may assist in making sense of the data is based on the method of content analysis.

Content analysis was used in order to try and categorise the data to make it understandable and organised. Babbie and Mouton (2008, p. 491) define content analysis as “words or phrases within a wide range of texts, including books chapters, essays, interviews and speeches as well as informal conversations and headlines”. Green (2004, p. 82) on the other hand defines content analysis as “a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts to the contexts of their use”. The researcher would examine artefacts such as written documents or transcripts of recorded verbal communications. Researchers should determine at what level they intend to sample, as sampling can occur at different levels: words, phrases, sentences paragraphs or elements relevant to the context (Henning et al, 2010, p. 107).

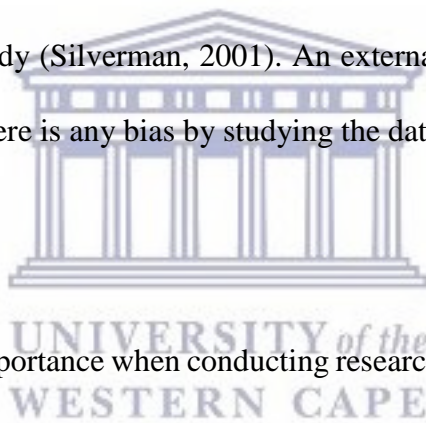
While it might be hard to ensure that qualitative research is accurate or correct, it is important to ensure that it as credible as possible. The following aspects need to be taken into consideration when conducting the study. Firstly, the credibility is concerned with ensuring that the results of the study are believable (Lincoln, 1995). In qualitative methods, it depends more on the richness of the data gathered, rather than how much information is collected (Lincoln, 1995). In essence, the participants or readers would be the only one able to judge the credibility of the results (Silverman, 2001).

Secondly, transferability, which refers to the degree in which the research can be transferred to other contexts, is defined by the readers (Silverman, 2001). The reader considers elements such as the research context and methodology, and compares them to a similar context that he or she

is more familiar with. If the specifics are comparable, the research would then be considered to have credibility. Therefore, it is of importance for the researcher to give a detailed descriptive account on the situation and the methods used (Silverman, 2001).

Thirdly, dependability ensures that the research results are consistent and could be repeated (Silverman, 2001). Process and procedures of the research should be laid out in detail to allow for other researchers to repeat the inquiry and achieve similar results. This should also allow researchers to understand the methods and their effectiveness (Silverman, 2001).

Usually there is a room for bias in qualitative studies as the research brings a unique perspective to the study. Therefore, confirmability questions how the research results are in line with the data collected (Lincoln, 1995). It involves ensuring whether or not the researcher acted in a biased way throughout the study (Silverman, 2001). An external researcher would be able to judge and examine whether there is any bias by studying the data collected (Lincoln, 1995).



### **3.9. Ethical Issues**

Ethical issues are of critical importance when conducting research. The following ethical issues were considered:

#### **3.9.1. Anonymity and confidentiality**

Participants were reassured that any information given towards the research will be confidential and will only be used for the purpose of this research. The Interview data is kept safe and is only accessible to the researcher. While the cover letter required identification information, participants were assured that no names or revealing information will be shared.

#### **3.9.2. Informed consent**

Centres and participants were approached and asked permission to conduct the study. In addition to this, participants were presented with a cover letter to the main topics to be discussed, which clearly explained the purpose of this research (career guidance) and what the



findings would be used for. In addition, the cover letter contained a consent sheet which they were required to sign.

### **3.9.3. Voluntary Participation**

Participation in the study was entirely voluntary. Participants were informed that they reserve the right to refuse participation and may withdraw from the interview at any time.

### **3.9.4. Objectivity**

The researcher ensured objectivity to the highest degree at all times. The researcher attempted to minimise any factors, whether it be personal opinions or beliefs, which could have influenced the way in which participants answered the questions. For example, no leading or close-ended questions were used except in the form of probing. Findings and conclusions drawn were factual; only data gathered from this research was used.

Also, important to mention are the principles of non-maleficence and beneficence. The former requires an intention to avoid harm (Denzin & Giardina, 2007). It would be considered “negligence” if a researcher imposed a careless or unreasonable risk of harm upon participants (Denzin & Giardina, 2007). Beneficence, on the other hand, refers to actions that promote the well-being of participants (Denzin & Giardina, 2007). The researchers made sure that the safety and well-being of participants were protected at all times during the interviews.

### **3.10. Conclusion**

This chapter discussed technicalities related to the methodology of this research which is based on qualitative design, employing semi-structured interviews to ask Palestinian practitioners in Israel questions about issues and concepts which pertain to career guidance in their context. The next chapter presents the main findings collected from the participants.



## CHAPTER FOUR PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

### 4.1. Introduction

This chapter will outline the results of interviews conducted with Arab career guidance practitioners in the Arab Palestinian community inside Israel. Demographic information will firstly be provided then the results are depicted in relation to their understanding of career guidance, the career guidance interventions used; the career guidance challenges they perceived and recommendations related to the future training of career guidance (the objective related to ‘theoretical framework’ is included under ‘assessment’). New themes have emerged such as career guidance orientations will also be presented. The findings are explored through a range of themes, each with sub themes and substantiated by quotations from the participants. It should be noted that the quotations were translated from Arabic to English for the purpose of this research. The interviewees are referred to as participant 1, participant 2 and so on.

### 4.2. Participant’s qualifications

Participants came from different academic backgrounds and completed non-degree courses and diplomas related to career guidance. Table 1 shows the type of qualifications obtained by the participants. All participants have asserted that there is not a specific university curriculum that leads to career guidance degree as the field is multi-disciplinary.

Participant 2 emphasized that the nature of career guidance is such that it requires team efforts. She said: “we come from different fields such as social work, HR, psychology and education but we all contribute to the same goal. This is because there is no such a subject at university that gives you all the tools and skills to practice career guidance effectively. Coming together and complementing each other enabled us to meet an important need in our society which we

had identified”. Participant 1 said: “It is still a new profession, so we try to build this role by bringing in skills from areas that may require similar skills and abilities”.

Participant 3 shared a similar opinion arguing that the field should be flexible, he noted: “Our team comes from different areas such as psychology, diploma or certificate in career guidance and so forth. I don’t think that it is a must for career guidance practitioners to be psychologists”.

Participant 8 also said: “This no such degree as career guidance, it is more of a broad field that requires different expertise”.

Figure 1.

	<b>Degree</b>	<b>Courses/ diplomas</b>
<b>Participant 1</b>	Social work & Business management	√
<b>Participant 2</b>	Human Resources	√
<b>Participant 3</b>	Behavioural sciences	√
<b>Participant 4</b>	Psychology	√
<b>Participant 5</b>	Public health	√
<b>Participant 6</b>	Psychotherapy	√
<b>Participant 7</b>	Human Resources	√
<b>Participant 8</b>	Accounting and psychometrics	√

#### 4.3. Meaning of career guidance

The interviews collected information on the understanding and perceptions of Palestinian career guidance practitioners about career guidance. All of the practitioners had similar views in terms of what career guidance meant for them. The participants’ views extracted from the data analysis shows that the meaning of career guidance can be clustered into the following

themes: providing assistance; self-exploration; environment exploration; client preparation; showing the way; types of clients.

#### **4.3.1. Providing Assistance**

All participants described career guidance as a form of help or *assistance* aimed at career or study outcomes such as finding the right subject of study; finding the right the job; changing one's career and progressing in one's career. Participant 3 said: "a form of help which a student or any person of any age may receive over a period of time to plan for his or her career whether it be by choosing the right subject to study; finding the right career and and/or even changing one's career... It can be seen as an ongoing and lifelong process aimed at career outcomes". Similarly, Participant 1 also said: "to help clients make better decisions that will lead them to successfully choose their career or field of study. Career guidance can assist various groups whether it be students or unemployed or anyone seeking the service, irrespective of age". Participant 8 said: "it helps students make careful plans and make the right decisions in terms of studies and careers. The previous views could be capsulated in the statement of participant 7 who described career guidance as: "helping students to get to know the different work fields after graduation and to expose them to the job market to identify work opportunities. It is providing assistance across different stages; pre-university, during university and post-university".

#### **4.3.2. Self-exploration**

Participants viewed career guidance as a tool for *self-exploration* by which clients may explore and understand themselves better in terms of their abilities; interests, strengths goals and/or values to make better decisions. Participant 4 summed this view saying: "career guidance comes as a way to help the students discover their abilities, values and interests and then choose a subject or a career that is most compatible with the kind of person he/she is. The role of a practitioner is to focus on and reveal the strengths of the clients and how one can build from

such strengths practical experience and goals... Once I show person the full picture in terms of abilities, strengths, interests and goals, the person should then be ready to make a decision that serves him or her best”. Similarly participant 1 said that career guidance serves to “help clients understand and match their interests and abilities to fields of study and careers to be successful in life”. Participant 6 said: “It is to guide students to explore what they want and choose what suits their abilities and interests, whether it be degree careers or non-degree careers”. Participant 5 also said: “In our approach we assess abilities and interests, the two factors have to be there in order for choosing a career”. Participant 8 helped clients identify strengths and goals: “The essence of career guidance is that the client needs to explore themselves and understand themselves, what I’d call self-exploration, so it could be things like abilities and interests. ...we help clients identify strengths within themselves and potential goals”.

#### **4.3.3. Environment-exploration**

Participants helped the clients understand and explore environmental factors such as the job market, barriers, university admission requirements, the different universities and colleges.

Information and tools were provided to make students aware of such aspects: “We direct them to links and websites that are important” (participant 4); “I’d give them university websites and important links to carefully consider options” (participant 2). Similarly, participant 7 said: “we look at things like barriers facing students aiming to find, build and develop careers and then develop plans to address them”. Participant 1 also said: it is “to make available necessary job market information, in terms of what careers are available in the market to help clients make better decisions that will lead them to successfully choose their career or field of study”.

#### **4.3.4. Preparing Clients**

Participants considered career guidance as *preparing clients* and reported various elements aimed at preparing the clients for the market and the world of work. Participant 1 said: “we make sure that they are ready for the market”. They prepared individuals in terms of self-

marketing, soft skills development; job interviews; assessment centres; CV writing; the Hebrew language; volunteering; experience: “we help students write CVs and how to market themselves, and be able to express oneself in a job interview. It is also important to help in terms of job market awareness as well as the Hebrew language, and vocational training to help them integrate in the job market” (participant 4). Participant 8 said: “soft skills is something that is not dealt with in high school. We make sure students acquire such soft skills as they are important for university, work and life in general”. Similarly Participant 7 identified “things that have to do with CV writing, how and where to find a job and how to handle and approach a job interview, self-marketing, also filling in the language gap”.

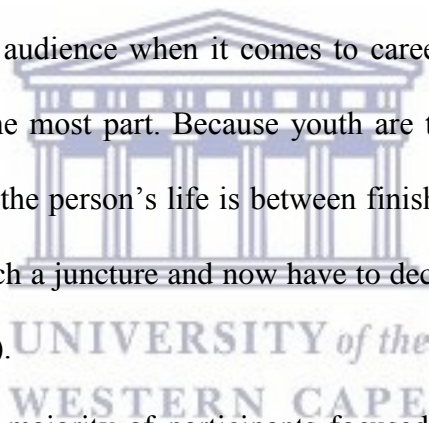
#### **4.3.5. Showing the Way**

Participants considered career guidance to be person centred and placed clients at the centre of decision making and saw guidance as showing the path rather than providing direct solutions: “We use a person centred approach where the first responsibility lies with the client, they make the final decision we only show them the way” (Participant 1). Similarly participant 5 emphasized that career guidance is about giving the tools so that the client may decide: “Guidance is not deciding for the client but rather to clarify and show the way and the various options, and giving the tools that would help in deciding; how to make a decision; how to weigh alternatives to help them make a more informed decision”. Participant 4 considered this person centred approach to be important as it holds the client responsible for the decisions reached: “Our job is to guide and not make decisions for the clients, the final decision is made by the client. It is important to get the person to reach a conscious decisions for which he or she can be responsible”.

#### **4.3.6. Types of Clients**

Overall, participants dealt with various client categories namely: university students, high school, middle school, unemployed, and clients seeking career change or promotion and anyone

seeking the service. Participant 3 touched on some of these categories: “I came to discover that career guidance can be provided to various categories of people rather than just students, such as people with no academic background or people who found themselves in the wrong job and are exploring various possibilities. It is also aimed at people who are not satisfied with their careers but they would like to change their career or be promoted”. Two of the participants offered service to anyone over 18 years old as demanded by the government: “Our services are for free and are aimed at those above 18” (Participant 1). The rest of the participants were open for all kinds of clients but chose to prioritise their audience. For example, participant 3 chose to approach university students actively: “we serve everyone but we mainly target students as they are the most important segment in society”. Similarly, participant 4 mentioned that youth are the most important target audience when it comes to career guidance: “it is a group of services aimed at youth for the most part. Because youth are the main victims... The most difficult and decisive point in the person’s life is between finishing high school and going to university, where students reach a juncture and now have to decide what they are going to do with their lives” (participant 4).



Thus the data shows that the majority of participants focused on high-school-to-university transition stage, this means that career guidance is targeted at those in high schools and those that finish high school for the most part. Participant 2 summarized this point: “most of our assistance is focused on those seeking to study at university”. Participant 8 confirmed this point but stressed the importance of targeting younger ages as well: “Most career guidance focus on high schoolers and post high school clients. We target these categories but we also work with younger ages... students in grade 7, 8, 9 and 10. It is very important to build a long-term strategy for the students from an early stage” (participant 8).

#### **4.4. Career Guidance Interventions**

The data showed that the set of interventions used by the participants can be clustered into six themes. Counselling, workshops and presentations, assessment and follow-ups and internet and technology were the most predominant interventions used by all the practitioners.

##### **4.4.1. Individual Counselling**

All participants reported that they used face to face interaction as a way of providing guidance for clients considering that to be an important function for career guidance.

Participant 1 said: “counselling is the most important function in this centre and it involves consecutive face to face interactions”. Similarly, Participant 7 reported: “We have individual counselling sessions that are run by Industrial Psychologists who do counselling to help the students understand themselves better and know what they want, what they are interested in, what they can do and what they can’t, and explore the various opportunities”.

Participant 2, 3, 4 and 6 also confirmed the use of counselling sessions but they went on to talk about what happens during counselling and the kind of steps they take, participant 2 said:

“In the counselling session we get to know the client and expectations so as to understand their background, parents, economic conditions, as well as education and other variables ...and establishing trust...our counselling approach is individually based... when counselling it’s important to establish that I don't make decisions for them. I facilitate options and opportunities and bring the clients attention to what is available and what could be best and her or his interests based on the assessments conducted and the abilities identified... We might give them tasks to do or homework to explore the options discussed”. Participant 3 who talked about the theoretical framework used for counselling said: “in my counselling I use a theory called Work Orientation developed by the University of Yale which are divided into 3 orientations: job orientation, career orientation, call orientation. In terms of the flow of the session it is very flexible and it depends on the issue at hand”. Participant 6 said: “In the individual counselling



sessions we first get to know the student better, and give them homework, we also use the family tree... I use techniques to effectively engage with students and urge them to open up even if they are being difficult. I use a person centred approach, I also use games, cards and pictures”.

#### **4.4.2. Assessment**

The data showed that all participants used assessment instruments to assess interests. All participants used Holland’s Vocational Personality Inventory (hereafter referred to as Holland) for the most part. Other locally developed instruments such as Ramak and Carb, were also reported to have been used by 3 of the participants. Less than half of them assessed abilities through different methods. One participant assessed values alongside assessing abilities and interests. Other assessments were developed by participants were based on Super and the Family Tree. Three participants assessed Hebrew and English language level.

Participant 4 said: “We do Holland assessment the short version in schools, but we do the complete one in-house. We also do value and ability assessments; such as Ramak which is local. We also use assessments based on Weschler. We check Hebrew and English. We designed a game based on Holland to make it more interesting for the students... We also use Super to deal with the different needs of each age category, we especially focus on adolescence as most of our clients are youth. We use the occupational family tree to understand the career dynamics in the family”. Participant 3 said: “I do diagnosis and assessment to check career interests and clarify for the client the potential paths and opportunities that are linked to their personality and interests”. Participant 2 said: “there is a process of diagnosis followed using Holland’s instrument. The instrument is validated to suit the Arab community. We deal with Industrial Psychologists and centres that specialise in assessment and validation of

psychological tests... We have two versions, one is comprehensive and one is very basic. Accordingly we check the client's interests".

Most of the participants thought that Holland was not adequate to explore the interests of their clients and asserted that they supplemented Holland with additional tools to allow for a richer picture, while half of them said it was easy and convenient to use. Their critiques or disapproval were centred around issues such as lack of cultural validation, linguistic validation, and lack of evidence to prove the applicability of Holland to third world countries, inapplicable theoretical assumptions and generational compatibility/suitability (or/and age relevance). Some participants recommended that reliance on Holland should be minimised.

The Participants shared similar opinions around their experience with assessment:

Participant 2: "To be frank I don't think it is sufficient. I'd have preferred following an approach that gives me more in-depth information. Holland can give you generic themes but it doesn't give you a detailed account. I don't think that the 6 categories developed by Holland are that applicable to our society. I think it needs to be more detailed and broader. When we assess I get the feeling sometimes that some clients don't fully comprehend what is meant. I think 3 or 4 lines can't explain the depth of a field. It is especially difficult to apply to those who have never been exposed to the job market before, they won't necessarily know what is meant by socially oriented jobs. They have little knowledge about that. What they know is constructed by people in their surroundings; those who hold certain jobs such as lawyers or doctors etc. also they wouldn't necessarily know what a doctor or a lawyer exactly does. Here it becomes very risky in terms of the students deciding on what to choose".

Participant 5: "There is a need to test Holland against cultural characteristics in the Arab community and also see for example if the language is appropriate".

Participant 6: "I use Ramak, Carb and Holland. I think however as a psychologist and career guidance practitioner, we shouldn't solely base our analysis on these assessments. They should

be used in conjunction with other tools such as counselling and so on, as the validity of such instruments is questionable when it comes to the Arab community. So our role is to fill in that gap by adapting the questions to our environment. Adapting the questions requires experience”.

Participant 3: “I use Holland but it is outdated. As an Arab community we have a specific culture which makes difficult to apply Holland to the community... it gives a general idea of what the person is interested in but I abstain from telling the person what he or she needs to do by solely using Holland. This is because subjects and jobs are always changing. As a practitioner you have to do some work yourself in terms of keeping up to date with new jobs and subjects and see under which category they best fit”.

Participant 4: “Holland isn’t enough to determine interests which is why we use another assessment called Ramak. These combined with the interview or the individual session give a clearer picture of interests”.

Participant 5 noted that validation is absent across some of the instruments: “Some of the assessments used are not validated... there is a need to incorporate cultural and religious sensitivities when doing assessments and implementing career guidance. For example women in our society are conservative, this might be misinterpreted as introversion by somebody who doesn’t understand the society or the culture.”

Participant 8: “Personally I think that Holland in its current form is not suitable for the Arab community. For example in terms of age, it is hard for a student to answer questions along the lines of “what did you do in your life or what experience do have... The Holland version in its current form may suit Israelis Jews in the sense that they serve in the army for 3 years after high school, where they would have acquired some experience. While Arabs don’t serve in the army due to their Palestinian national identity. Also Holland assumes that interests are not influenced by societal or socio-economic factors. Also Holland’s classification is limited. Handcraft and some technological careers can barely be predicted by Holland. I do use

Holland as a framework but I adapt it to better suit culture, age and language”.

#### **4.4.3. Career Fairs**

The minority of the participants reported the use of career expos: Participant 6 said: “We also have career expos where we invite experts and students to share their experiences and talk about what they do and also it is an opportunity for networking”. Participant 4 also said: “We have career expos. We are the first ones in the Arab community to organise career expos”.

#### **4.4.4. Visits**

The minority of the participants reported that they take students on company and university tours: Participant 8 said: “We also arrange client tours to various companies and universities to familiarise clients with university life across different fields where they get to interact with students. They get to visit a wide range of companies to give them work-like simulations and to better see how career looks like in real life... We also do camps for students”. Similarly, participant 3 said: “We also take the students to various companies to familiarise themselves with the different work environments, especially jobs that approximate their field of studies”.

#### **4.4.5. Workshops and Presentations**

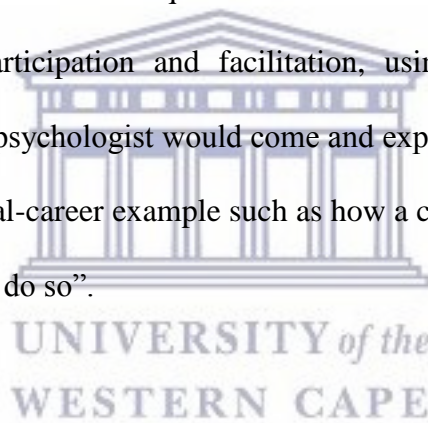
All participants reported the use of workshops and presentation in their practice as a way of giving group interventions. The presentations and workshops focused on skills building and promoting awareness on elements such as careers, studies, and potential barriers. They also included practical elements such as work simulation exercises.

Participant 5:” Through presentations we promote awareness about education, the different careers in the market, potential challenges which the students might face, especially challenges that are specific to the Arab community such as living conditions, the importance of increasing knowledge, fears and concerns which the students may have as well as university application

process. We also do workshops that are more practical, and are specifically career related. We teach the students through such workshops how to improve their decision making ability and skills, and time management. Although this comes at high costs, I think investing in this area is very critical, so that when students finish high schools they at least would have the basic knowledge and tools that can help them to make better decisions and chose what they really want. We give them a chance to experiment with different ideas, and we also introduce simulation exercises”.

Participant 6: “We do presentations that deal with soft skills such as time management”.

Participant 8: “We do presentations and workshops in a modernised fashion as well...we talk about the different fields and admission requirements and decision making. The presentation takes the form of active participation and facilitation, using multi-media, colours and illustrations... For example a psychologist would come and explain to them what it is to work as a psychologist and show real-career example such as how a counselling session takes place and what skills are required to do so”.



#### **4.4.6. Internships**

The minority of participants actively helped link up students with companies to secure internships. Participant 7 said: “we guide students where to do internships and we link them up with a wide range of organisations... we make sure that there are mentors in these organisation to guide the student throughout the internship”.

#### **4.4.7. Internet and Technology**

The data showed extensive use of technology and internet. Participants indicated that they use social media. The majority of them use websites with useful databases aimed at assisting the client. The minority of the participants used apps and software. Participant 5 said “We have a website with detailed explanations for each study subject. In the website there is software that directs students through the steps involved. It includes career information, career location and

what subjects lead to what careers... We need to be up-to-date with technology and use contemporary tools such as developing apps”. Participant 6 also said: “We also use computerised assessment like Holland and Ramak and Carb which is developed by Adam Mellow”.

#### **4.4.8. Follow-ups**

All participants considered checking up on clients important and reported that they carried out follow up activities. Participants used different ways to keep in touch and liaise with their clients. More than half of the participants followed a proactive systematic approach to following up while the rest were engaged in follow up activities in a less systematic or haphazard manner. The following phrases were extracted from the interviews:

Participant 1: “We check up on all clients every 3 months to ask them how things are going.... We direct our clients how to develop the skills and use tools and opportunities and what steps to follow to be promoted while they are at work”.

Participant 6: “I regularly check up on student throughout their studies. I also communicate to student bursary opportunities. I keep in touch via website by answering to emails and questions. i call every student to see how far they are in terms of their decision making and planning”.

Participant 7: “We keep in touch with both the mentor and the student to receive constant feedback... We keep in touch regularly with the students and our doors are always open... We also have a database to keep record of students. We also conduct surveys to better understand the students and to have general overview in the Arab society and identify areas that we need to work on”.

Participant 8: “We use email and phone clients to see how things are going with them. We use surveys to check students’ feedback by asking them to rate the different interventions. We also use a long term evaluation strategy where we ask the students 5 years after the interventions



have been completed. Other ways are spontaneous where we accidentally meet participants and then you find out that they are well off in terms of their studies or careers”.

Participant 2: “We keep in touch with those assisted such as telephonically to see how things are going on their side; whether it be at university or job... most of the time they tell us how happy they are after being assisted. Other students come back to us saying that they chose the wrong subject simply because they didn’t take our guidance into consideration”. Participant 4: “I also do follow up to make sure that clients do their homework”.

Participant 3: “I provide my contact details and urge them to keep in touch with me and ask questions and for advice when the need arises. Whether it be telephonically or via email. It is difficult to keep up with taking the initiative to get in touch with all those who have been assisted, it requires a lot of admin work”.

#### **4.5. Challenges Facing Career Guidance Practitioners**

##### **4.5.1. State Policy and Discrimination Factors Affecting Career Guidance**

Participants considered that the main challenge to career guidance is found in how the government deals with career guidance as well as the Arab community in general. They seemed to agree that the government is responsible for making sure that there is effective career guidance in place as well as dealing with many other issues that are linked to the general attitude of the state towards the Arab community. The participants acknowledged that there are macro factors, which are related to the state, that are beyond their control.

Participant 4 said: “career guidance is basically damage control and it won’t be enough. The policy of the state blocks possibilities and work opportunities when it comes to careers...such discrimination may affect the sense of self-confidence of individuals in that it may discourage individuals from attaining their dream careers and goals, due to Arabs fearing ending up



unemployed due to discrimination”. Similarly Participant 7 said: “it is important to recognise that while career guidance can contribute to reducing unemployment, it won’t solve it or alleviate it as there are other factors besides career guidance that affect the level of employment which only the state can solve”. Participant 1 said: “the main reason behind Arabs being unemployed is as a result of the state’s policy... our contributions as practitioners are limited when it comes to employment”.

When asked about state policy towards career guidance there was some hesitation to answering the question by some participants. In other cases, participants would change the topic when probed about structural conditions related to state policy. The data triggered a number of subthemes that are related to the role of the state. The themes were organised as follows:

#### **4.5.1.1. Government control and agenda**

All three participants who worked for government funded centres voiced the opinion that constant monitoring by the government interferes with their scope of practice. This means that the government dictated and interfered with the process of career guidance where centres are government-funded. This has affected their sense of autonomy and freedom. Participant 1 indicated that: “the government gives us the funding and regularly monitors our work. The Economic Ministry sends their staff regularly to keep an eye on everything we do; across all interventions basically... there is a strict protocol stipulated by the government which we have to adhere to... it is not a nice thing but we are obliged to submit reports about everything”.

The government was also found to be actively involved in defining which route career guidance must take. According to participant 2: “we can’t continue with the client if he or she insists on studying in the West Bank...because the budget provided by the Economic Ministry of economy doesn’t allow us to do so. The government regularly keeps track whether we have assisted student X and how much money was spend on that individual and the resources and time spent... if we don’t manage to discourage students from staying away from the West Bank

or other places, then we would not be meeting the government's criteria for guidance... our project is a pilot one and there is a lot of government check-ups and careful monitoring by the different ministries and we have a limited budget. At the end, all the government wants to see is numbers and figures. Personally I don't like that, because I prefer to focus on the student needs and help rather than being monitored... this is a serious barrier... this defeats the purpose of career guidance”.

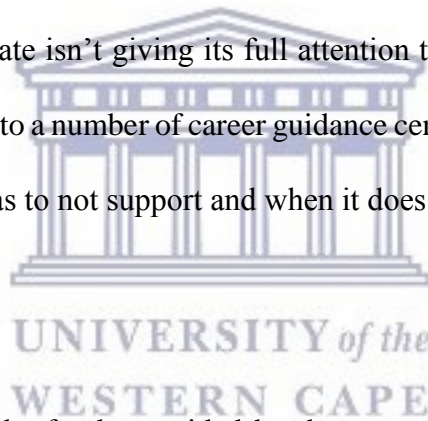
Participants were also sceptical about the government intentions behind the career guidance initiatives across the Arab community. Participant 3 said that one should be wary of agendas:

“Government funded initiatives may not be really concerned with what is best for the community, but rather they tend to be driven by goals that are pre-determined by the government with specific agendas. As Arab practitioners we always have to ask ourselves: whose agenda are we serving? What is best for our community? How can we improve? The state's sole concern is to get as many Arabs as possible from high school to higher education without taking into consideration the core development areas or needs in the Arab community... The state specified certain study subjects that if they are studied then the state can cover or contribute to the tuition fees depending on the level of importance. Teaching was one of the subjects ranked as important. This created repercussions in that many Arabs turned to that and the government funded them partially but this led to a big number of teachers many of whom found themselves jobless”.

Participant 1 questioned the government's intentions and raised his concerns over the incomprehensiveness and indifference of the government's programme: “The government passed official decree to implement a 5 year pilot plan to establish career guidance and employment centres as an attempt to integrate more Arabs into the job market. These centres however, only serve 40% of Arabs and the results are still minor... I don't think that they are concerned about Arabs per se, they are just interested in showing the world that they are nice

towards Palestinians”. Participant 3 thought that the government does it for OECD scores as well as economic returns: “The state isn’t necessarily doing that for us because they care about us... they just want to boost the Gross Domestic Product. Secondly, by doing so Israel is trying to meet the criteria of the OECD countries to score higher points, so that it can get subsidies and budgets from the OECD. .. So yes the state contributes to career guidance in the community but we can’t really say it is an efficient or comprehensive career guidance... They don’t really care what kind of jobs or whether they match community needs or whether it has any benefit for the community. So yes there is career guidance aimed at increasing the number of employees in the Arabs community so that the OECD is happy with Israel and see Israel in a positive light”.

Participant 7 also said: “the state isn’t giving its full attention to career guidance in the Arab community despite its funding to a number of career guidance centres in the Arab community... the state looks for excuses so as to not support and when it does I raise a question mark”.



#### **4.5.1.2. Limited funds**

All participants stressed that the funds provided by the government were insufficient when compared to funds provided for the Jewish community. Participant 7:” The budget allocated for career guidance in the Arab community is not enough”. Participant 2 also argued: “The ministry of economy allocates budgets for career guidance but it is still not enough to meet all the needs”. Participant 5 argued: “what the government spends on a Jewish student is five times more than what it spends on an Arab student. So budget discrimination is a big obstacle to career guidance. This allows the Jewish student to be more exposed to the world of work than an Arab student. As a Jewish school will have more budget from the government, they can afford to bring in specialists form all different fields including career guidance”.

Participant 8 said: “Recently the government allocated funds for career guidance which is positive, but at the same time it isn’t enough and you still find preferential treatment”.

Participant 6 argued that the behaviour of the state is confusing where funding is concerned:

“Successive ministers respond differently to career guidance in the Arab community, sometimes they reduce the budget and other times they make changes. There is no fixed policy”. In addition, aside from governmental centres, where the budget is limited, the data also showed that NGOs are mainly dependent on donations and the contribution of those in society who believe in their mission, the amounts wanted is way more than the amounts available.

#### **4.5.1.3. Political bans**

Political bans were found to be an issue by two of the participants. They were concerned about the effect created by the political ban of Palestinian political movements. Participant 5: “The ban of one of the biggest organisations (Eqraa) that is concerned with education and career development for Arabs due its affiliation to the Islamic movement. The ban was due to political activism. The ban paralysed this organisation and it left a void in society in terms of career guidance. Eqraa was attending to thousands of students across the country. This has made it difficult for other organisations to deal with the big number which Eqraa was attending to and providing service for”. Participant 4 echoed similar concerns: “I was doing career guidance for Eqraa, a Palestinian NGO, since 2009 until it was banned last year due to political reasons. A policy by the Israeli state to suppress Palestinian activism but also one which targets education and development in the Arab community given the contributions Eqraa has been doing nationwide”.

#### **4.5.1.4. Army service**

The data showed that access to jobs as well as budget allocation for career guidance in many cases is linked to serving in the Israeli army. Most of the participants believed that the army

service was a barrier to Arabs and career guidance practitioners as it is used as a job requirement in many cases; it also gave those who serve (such as Israeli Jews and Druze) special privileges.

The following quotes were extracted to illustrate this barrier:

Participant 3: “The amount of money given has to do whether the community serves in the army or not. So for example the Druze community gets more funding than Arabs due army service”.

Participant 6: “Both communities are in need of career guidance but I think we need it more as they are more privileged given the experience and privileges they gain out of the military”.

#### **4.5.1.5. Job discrimination**

Most participants asserted that there is job discrimination against Arabs. They were systematically excluded from particular jobs; they were demotivated to study certain subjects due to lack of access; thus narrowing down work opportunities for the Arab community. The participants triggered strong views about this barrier:

Participant 4 said: “Arabs are systematically marginalised and excluded when it comes to job opportunities and job market in general. There is blatant and clear discrimination in the job market. There is also discrimination inside the workplace as well”.

Participant 2: “the government and Israeli employers are responsible for Arabs being excluded when it comes to HR jobs. There is an explicit job discrimination in that field, which makes Arabs stay away from studying such careers, so yes it is hard but sometimes it is possible. Jewish society is more developed which may explain why there is low level of interest in such careers”.

Participant 3: “Arabs and Jews finish university but Jews are quickly integrated into the job market, unlike Arab students. It’s not just about the experience it’s about the opportunities available in each society”.

Participant 5: “The state doesn’t allow Arabs into certain careers such as pilots. Only Jews can be pilots. So there is discrimination and the state is biased in terms of its treatment”.

Participant 6: “Jews have more opportunities than Arabs. In certain cases Arabs aren’t allowed to do certain careers such as being a pilot”.

Participant 8: “the state is responsible for not creating equal employment opportunities for Arabs”.

Participant 1: “there is blatant discrimination against Arab citizens in terms of work opportunities and integrating into the job market. Many obstacles are placed in front of Arabs, across employment and many other aspects. The successive Israeli government deliberately neglected, and still do, Arabs in terms of living conditions, budget allocation, distribution of resources, housing and property, education, infrastructure, job opportunities, development, not allowing Arabs to have industrial zones, the concentration of capital and jobs in Jewish cities... prejudice and the bigotry perceptions against Arabs by Israeli Jews who are not willing to employ Arabs. Most Jewish managers in the Hi-tech industry are reluctant to employ Arabs in their companies...the government turns a blind eye to such issues”.

#### **4.5.1.6. Living conditions**

Most of the participants considered living conditions as an issue which affects career choice, study choice and whether students can afford university. The participants said:

Participant 6: “Arabs either go to university immediately not knowing what to study or work for a year due to difficult living conditions... often clients come to me from difficult socio-economic status and a lot of them can’t afford to go university”.

Participant 4: “The trend now, due to the hard conditions of Arabs, is such that students are assessing only the job market to see what is on high demand rather than looking at what is important for themselves in terms of their abilities and interests and community development”.



Participant 1: “A Jew can study anything they wish such as philosophy and they will find a job next morning. It’s not the same case for Arabs. Arabs will struggle to find jobs. Jewish students will the privilege of deciding on any study field they like because they will be secured, Arab students have to think ahead as to whether or not what they study will get them a job. So choosing the wrong subject can be devastating for Arabs due to the lack of opportunities. As much as we try to focus on interest and matching with abilities and jobs, the core consideration for any Arab is whether job x will afford them employment. We try to advocate the importance of interests but we don’t always succeed in that”.

Participant 7: “there is this social pressure on students to finish studies quickly to start working, build a house and get married in the light of hard conditions”.

#### **4.5.1.7. Geographical concentration of jobs**

Half of the participants considered the geographical distribution of jobs as an obstacle to Arabs finding jobs and working. Most jobs are geographically far from most Arab residences and Arabs are still denied industrial zones where they live. Some of the evidence extracted from the interviews is shown below:

Participant 4: “Geographically speaking Arabs are far from the cities where most jobs and universities are centred; so transports are a problem. There isn’t a single Arab university. So the Arab community is faced with many challenges. Most of these challenges are the responsibility of the state. These challenges can affect individual dreams and goals and it may stop from excelling”.

Participant 1: “Yes they support career guidance here and there but it requires efforts beyond attending to career guidance as there are structural problems that career guidance can’t solve, never mind the fact that even career guidance requires more serious efforts by the government... The high levels of unemployment and the exclusion from the job market is the



responsibility of the government and the Jewish majority in this country... Most workplaces are geographically far from Arab residences”.

Participant 2: “the Jewish society is much more developed in terms of infrastructure and companies. It has a lot of more developed and bigger companies than in the Arab society, so I can understand why people might overlook many careers”.

## **4.5.2. Other Factors Affecting Career Guidance Practitioners**

### **4.5.2.1. Public Schools**

Public schools were considered as a challenge by most participants. They argued that schools don't prepare students in terms of character, skills, university, and work readiness:

Participant 4: “the schools don't prepare students to be ready for university and that is a real problem. They fall behind in terms of developing the character of students. This makes me start from square one”.

Participant 8: “schools don't put the effort in preparing you for university and the world of work. Students finish high school feeling lost....Often I end up upskilling instead of just guiding...soft skills is something that is not dealt with in high school. We make sure students acquire such soft skills as they are important for university, work and life in general”. Most of the participants blamed the problem of public schools on the state arguing that more efforts should be exerted when it comes to Arab education:

Participant 8: “education in the Arab community needs attention right from its roots, it has to do with the level of education in Arab schools which the government isn't investing in adequately... it is important for the state to realise that they have to attend more to the education of Arabs at earlier stages, otherwise giving career guidance after high school is more like damage control”.

Participant 7:” I think they are not investing enough into the education of Arabs students”.

Participant 2:”they need to have accumulated 4 units of English in high school, this is because most universities see that as a critical requirement... Arab schools need to invest more in English. At the same time the ministry of education is not doing enough as they are not investing sufficiently in Arab schools”.

#### **4.5.2.2. Changing job market**

More than half of the participants thought that the changing nature of the market is challenging for the client and the practitioner. Changes included the emergence of new jobs, and thus new study subjects, and disappearing jobs. The quotes below illustrate this challenge:

Participant 4: “the job market is always changing and expanding which then affects what the university offers, it also shapes the entrance requirements and so on. Such factors make it difficult for students to make an informed decision; students face big dilemmas, it is also a challenge for practitioners”.

Participant 8: “the market is always changing which leads to new careers. On the contrary, other jobs lose centrality and value and start to fade away. For example, pharmacy was one of the most demanded subjects and nowadays most pharmacists are jobless due the high number of pharmacists in the country”.

According to participant 6 and 1, the changing market is linked to the high influx of teachers and small colleges contributing to delivering redundant and unemployable subjects. The following inputs illustrate this point:

Participant 6: “thousands of teachers are jobless because they chose to major in Arabic, Islamic studies rather than English or Maths. On Maths and English there is high demand, while Arabic teachers are many. Many small colleges are contributing to that due to their easy admission requirements”.

Participant 1: “the increased number of small education colleges which are pouring teachers and adding redundant subjects to the market like Arabic and Islamic studies, and they have easy admission requirements”.

Participant 2: “those who opt a teaching career go for traditional subjects such as history and Arabic because it is easier and all they want is just to get access into education. They could rather go for subjects such as Maths, English, physics, Chemistry because there is shortage of teachers in these areas”.

#### **4.5.2.3. Negative perception of counselling and guidance**

Most participants considered the negative perception of counselling and guidance in society to be linked to having difficulty promoting the importance of career guidance:

Participant 6: “In the Jewish community they have no problem going to a psychologist every couple of months to seek guidance, in the Arab community they see it as a problem... it is hard to excel in your guidance profession when there are a lot of negative stereotypes”.

Participant 3: “because the field is psychology driven for the most part, people would rather avoid it due to perceived negative attributions attached to psychology. When people hear of psychology they get a bit sceptical as it sometimes perceived as involving psychological diagnosis and what I’d call the traditional way of looking at psychology that the ‘person is in need of psychological assistance’. I think that this affects the success and the failure of career guidance services wherever diagnosis and assistance are brought up”.

#### **4.5.2.4. Herding and Family Influence**

Participants reported that interference, and influence of others such as parents, family and friends, in the decision making of individuals is not healthy. Participant 2 said: “society can be an obstacle sometimes, the pressure exercised by parents...even if parents are educated, it doesn’t mean that they are equipped to do career guidance for their children. I might guide

students to ways whereby they may speak to their parents to convince them and work on consolidating their self-confidence that is how far my role can go”. Participants 3, 7, 4 shared similar views:

Participant 3: “Unfortunately, when a student finishes high schools, parents push them to start their studies immediately which makes them rush into making a decision”.

Participant 7: “oftentimes students want to meet the expectations of their parents by studying subject x or working in field x”.

Participant 4 thought that parents and families have a role to play in terms of providing support rather than deciding for their children: “the role of family is also important in that families could be more supportive to create conducive conditions to make the person autonomous and self-reliant... Parents interfere with the career and study decisions of their children. They would give their children options to choose from or specify a list of dos and don’ts”.

On a more macro level, participants also said:

Participant 5: “One of the problems we have is conformity and imitation, students study subjects because of their friends or neighbours. Students are going for nursing just because it is becoming trendy instead of being creative and looking for new things. There is big big big problem in the way individuals make decisions in our society, not just when it comes to studies and careers, but also to a lot other things”.

Participant 6: “another problem I struggle with lies in people not making autonomous decisions where others and society get to decide for the person.”

Participant 4: “career guidance tries to fight conformity and herd behaviour which is predominant in society. When a subject becomes trendy many others will follow. Meanwhile, we have many subjects that we need in our community which are not attended to by our students just because it is not trendy such as industrial psychology”.

Participant 3: “others find themselves at university simply because it’s cool to be at university, or because a friend, neighbour or a relative chose subject X, I hear a lot of stories about that ... This phenomenon is widely spread unfortunately. It is not easy to break this mind set...some people end up dropping out of university and their start a small business”.

Participant 8: “When deciding on a field of study, they look at their friends or their neighbours”.

#### **4.6. Future Training and Skills**

The question on skills and future training triggered a number of training needs that career guidance practitioners should focus on in the future. The data showed that skills can be clustered into the five following themes:

##### **4.6.1. Job Market Understanding**

Participants thought that job market understanding is an area that needs to be developed for the future as the market is a changing variable. Participant 1 said: “Knowledge of the job market is always required as there are always new jobs and disappearing jobs”.

Participants also reported:

Participant 2: “we need to focus on Knowledge and awareness of the context and the job market as it is always changing”.

Participant 8: “it is important to keep up to date with what is happening in the market as things are always changing”.

Participant 7: “Training has to be continuous to increase knowledge of the job market”.

##### **4.6.2. Counselling Skills**

Less than half of the participants thought that more focus should be placed on counselling skills and the art of interviewing. Participant 8 said: “person-centred counselling skills as well as interviewing skills are very important for career guidance”.

### **4.6.3. Understanding of the socio-political context**

The majority of participants stressed the importance of having training on the socio-political barriers that affect students and clients. Some of the phrases are shown below:

Participant 4: “the practitioners should mentally prepare the client for challenges, while trying to boost their self-confidence by affirming the fact that there are controlled barriers and structural challenges, to be aware of what is possible and what is not... training is required for all practitioners to make clients aware of what is and what is not possible”.

Participant 7: “It is the duty of career guidance practitioners to make the students aware of the challenges that are beyond control such as the political climate and the treatment of the state... This will help the students on a psychological level”.

Participant 1: “to understand the contextual challenges facing our society”.

### **4.6.4. Research skills**

Less than half of the participants argued for the need to develop research skills. Participant 1 said: “we are in need of research skills... We have no research department but we are in touch with research centres who provide us with data continuously. Also the government helps with researching through monitoring our activities”. Participant 5 said: “I think we still need more data about our population, how else to build strategies if we don’t have enough information about our population and the challenges they face?”.

### **4.7. Conclusion**

This chapter summarized the main findings of the study and provided an outline of the themes which the researcher considered to be important. In the next chapter, the main findings are discussed and compared in relation to previous literature, followed by limitations, implications and recommendations for future practice and research.

## CHAPTER FIVE DISCUSSION

### 5.1 Introduction

This endeavour of work was launched to establish the state of career guidance within the special circumstances of the Palestinian Arab community in Israel. The researcher aimed to explore the meaning and practice of career guidance as well as the dynamics and challenges surrounding it based on the perspectives of the practitioners. The research triggered important findings on what constitutes career guidance as well as the contextual or local issues surrounding career guidance that are important to career guidance as a practice as well as a function.

### 5.2. Discussion of results

This study managed to interview eight career guidance practitioners. The participants had interesting and insightful perspectives about career guidance in a context of a disadvantaged community. It was clear that the participants were aware of the process of career guidance. Participants were also found to use a wide range of interventions under the umbrella of career guidance. Participants mostly used Holland as an assessment tool to assess interests. However, they reported that they are in fact faced with a spectrum of challenges that are multi-faceted in nature. The challenges ranged from state policy related factors to other challenges that pertain to the Arab society. Participants also made recommendations for the future training of career guidance practitioners around job market knowledge, counselling skills, understanding the socio-political context, and research skills, . Furthermore, participants also felt that career guidance should be dealt with on a policy level.

This section attempts to make sense of and put into context the findings of the study by discussing a wide range of themes. The discussion is formatted in relation to the objectives of



the study set earlier (note that the objective regarding the theoretical framework for career guidance is included in “assessment” under the “career guidance interventions” heading).

### 5.2.1. Definition of Career Guidance

The first objective of the study was related to how career guidance practitioners defined the concept of career guidance. Participants viewed career guidance as a form of *assistance* during which an individual is being guided to reach study and career outcomes. A similar definition is stated by the OECD (2004) who viewed career guidance as services aimed to assist people, of any age and at any point throughout their lives to make educational, training and occupational choices and to manage their careers. This also corresponds with Holman (2014) who wrote that the goals associated with career guidance relate to helping clients towards studying and enabling them to make informed decisions.

Participants also reported that when career guidance is defined, *preparing the clients* comes to mind. Participants viewed preparing clients as a form of career guidance that aims to assist individuals to make decisions, develop their skills and prepare them for work and studies. A study conducted by OECD (2004, p.19) supports this view of preparing clients, stating that “Comprehensive career guidance tries to teach people to plan and make decisions about work and learning”. In the same way, Cheng (2015) concluded that “skills development bridges the learning and economic gain of a young person and makes him or her immediately employable”. Liu et al. (2014) support this view suggesting that the most effective career guidance activities are those that deal with practical transition skills including teaching job search skills, self-presentation and career image.

A third theme that was found in the results related to *self-exploration* as a function of career guidance. Participants indicated that self-exploration is seen as a means by which individuals come to understand themselves better. This is in accordance with Savickas (2005) who stated

that career interventions should enable clients to better understand their own life themes and vocational personality. Similarly, the OECD (2004, p.19) considered guidance as a means to helping “people to reflect on their ambitions, interests, qualifications and abilities”. This is also consistent with the findings of a study targeting Korean international undergraduate students enrolled in U.S. universities which suggested that students with greater self-confidence in making career-related decisions were likely to have a better defined sense of their interests, abilities, and goals as well as to actively engage in activities related to career exploration (Gushue et al., 2006).

Participants also reported that career guidance also deals with *environment exploration*. They viewed environment exploration as a form of career guidance that aims to help individuals and give them tools to understand and examine the job market, universities and barriers. This result is in line with Holman’s view which suggests that career guidance helps individuals to understand enough about the world of work and to know what they need to succeed (2014).

In agreement, the OECD (2004, p.19) suggested that career guidance “helps individuals to understand the labour market and education systems, and to relate this to what they know about themselves, stressing that guidance makes information about the labour market and about educational opportunities more accessible by organising it, systematising it, and making it available when and where people need it”.

*Showing the way* was also considered an important feature of career guidance. According to participants, career guidance is facilitative rather than directive. This finding is consistent with the constructivist approach discussed by McMahon and Patton (2000) who argue that career guidance practitioners need to adopt a more facilitative role rather than an expert role, which goes beyond just solving problems at hand, so as to enable clients to manage their own career development in a constantly changing environment. Similarly, Krumboltz (1998) suggests that

practitioners should be facilitators of continuous learning and advocate for open-mindedness rather than decisiveness, in order to create satisfying lives for clients. This also corresponds with the view of the OECD (2004) which suggest that career guidance in many countries is moving away from an emphasis on the practitioner as an expert to seeing practitioners as facilitators of individuals choice and development as new developments take place within counselling theories.

*Types of clients*, which is the final theme under this category, refers to the different client categories served by career guidance services in the Arab community. Participants reported that they dealt with various client audiences in the Arab community by dealing with people from different ages and with different goals. This is consistent with the definition of the OECD (2004) which suggests that career guidance could be given at any age and it could serve different purposes such as educational and vocational. This is also similar to the findings of Whiston, Sexton and Lasoff (1998) who, in their review of 46 studies, reported that career guidance interventions are effective across most age groups.

From the results of the first objective of the study it seems clear that participants show a comprehensive understating of career guidance and view their role as that of assistants, facilitators, skills developers and knowledge and tool providers. Thus, guidance in this context can be seen as a process of paving the way for individuals to make the right decisions and achieve their educational and career goals. Overall, the literature seems to support the findings that career guidance in the Arab community is similar to other contexts and is understood in relation to other career guidance practices globally. The role of the practitioner should be to help clients to make them aware of themselves and the environment and prepare them for the job market so that they may autonomously make the right decisions to reach the desired educational and career goals.

### 5.2.2. Career Guidance Interventions

The second objective of the study was related to the type of interventions career guidance practitioners use in their practice. The study shows that participants use a wide range of interventions under the umbrella of career guidance. Participants reported the utilisation of individual counselling and considered it to be one of the most important interventions of career guidance. Furthermore, they indicated that the counselling session included elements such as: getting to know the client, dealing with client expectations, background exploration, homework, motivation and goal clarification. Using counselling as part of career guidance, along with emphasis on its effectiveness, has been illustrated extensively in the literature. This is supported by Smith et al. (2005) who pointed that counselling and individual interviewing had a positive impact on the development of student's career related skills. In support of this finding, Whiston et al. (1998) also provided evidence for the effectiveness of individual guidance. Similarly, Bimrose et al. (2005) found that career guidance was useful when clients were given an opportunity to reflect and engage in in-depth discussions as well as when it involved goal clarification and progress. Bimrose et al (2008) further found that one-to-one interventions were effective when it involved elements such as motivating; increasing self-awareness and self-confidence; structuring opportunities for reflection and discussion; and constructive change.

A second theme which was identified is that of workshops and presentations. Participants reported a wide use of this group intervention and thought it was useful for skills building, promoting awareness on elements such as careers, studies, and potential barriers. The intervention further included practical elements such as work simulation exercises and group activities. This is consistent with a similar finding by Whiston et al. (1998) who found group counselling and classroom interventions to be the second most effective. Similarly, Smith et al. (2005) found group-work sessions to have a positive impact in terms of career related skills.

A third intervention which was used by participants is that of assessment (also covers the objective related to theoretical framework). Participants viewed tests as a central component of career guidance when assessing interests, abilities and values and language level. The participants mostly relied on Holland's Vocational Preference Inventory (hereafter referred to as Holland) as an assessment tool to assess interests and considered it to be convenient and user friendly in terms of administration and interpretation. In conjunction with this finding, a study conducted by Nauta (2010) concluded that Holland is simple, practical and user friendly.

Despite its user-friendliness and convenience, participants felt that Holland was not sufficient to compile a comprehensive picture of the client's needs and interests. They supplemented it with other methods such as counselling and interviews. This is due to lack of cultural and linguistic validation, lack of evidence to prove the applicability of Holland to disadvantaged contexts and lack of generational compatibility. This contradicts with the results of Nauta (2010) which suggest that Holland is widely applicable and empirically grounded.

Furthermore, the concerns of participants over Holland could be motivated by the findings of Mobley and Salney (1996) who revealed weakness in Holland and suggested that little attention has been given to implications of Holland across different cultures. Similarly, Leong et al. (1998) noted that weakness in Holland theory could be related to the western position which overemphasizes vocational interests whilst paying little attention to cultural and contextual factors. This raises questions about the theoretical tenets of Holland when applied in Non-western contexts such as the Arab community inside Israel. Such concerns are similar to those of Leung (2008) who urged practitioners to critically evaluate the cross-cultural limitations and the cultural relevance of career development theories.

Other tests such as Meta'am and Carb were build using Holland as a framework, while Ramak was locally developed. No literature has been found to support locally developed tests. This could be due to lack of research on career guidance assessment in the context of the Arab

community. When probed, the participants didn't know much about the properties of these tests except how to administer them and interpret the results. Participants further reported that the tests are usually developed by centres that are based in the Jewish community such as Adam Milow, where the tests are developed in Hebrew and then are translated into Arabic.

Participants were also reported to carry out follow up activities with clients emphasizing the positive aspects of checking up on them regularly, some however went about it systematically while others were less systematic in doing so. The utility and usefulness of follow-ups in career guidance was motivated by Graverson and Van Ours (2008) who found ongoing monitoring to have a positive impact on job outcomes. This is also in correspondence with the findings of Walton et al. (2003) which suggest that regular check-ups help ensure the sustainability of the client's progression.

Utilising the internet and technology were coined under the theme: Internet and technology. The findings reveal that participants were heavily reliant on internet and technology resources to aid their work and considered them to be necessary in the light of a fast growing environment. Resources included social media, websites and databases. This is consistent with the study of the OECD (2004) which indicated that career practitioners need to be able to use a wide range of web-based resources. This also goes in line with Howieson and Semple (2013) who concluded that technology makes careers information and guidance more accessible.

From the results of the second objective of the study it seems clear that participants use a wide range of different interventions which deal with different aspects of the clients' needs. Based on the literature, the career guidance interventions reported by the clients were found to be useful. Thus, guidance in this context can be seen in line with previous literature. With regards to assessment, it is clear that Holland may have practical and theoretical implications for career guidance in the Arab community. Overall, the literature seems to support the findings that career guidance practitioners in the Arab community use techniques that are useful. The extent



of usefulness still lies in how they are implemented and the kind of challenges that may interfere with career guidance and its deliverables.

### **5.2.3. Challenges Affecting Career Guidance**

The third objective of the study related to determining the challenges Arab career guidance practitioners are faced with. Two categories of themes emerged, one is related to state policy and discrimination and the other was referred to as other challenges.

#### **5.2.3.1. Category 1: State Policy and Discrimination**

The first theme that was reported by participants working for government funded centres related to government control and agenda where constant monitoring of the government was reported to interfere with their practice and determined the course of career guidance, causing discomfort to the practitioners. For example, sending staff regularly to check up on practitioners; adherence to strict protocols and discouraging students from studying abroad. This is consistent with Borg (2003) who stated that when the state takes initiatives to demonstrate its responsibility towards its citizens follows the risk of guardianship and paternalism. Thomsen (2013) similarly argued that when governments target certain groups in society, they tend to make assumptions about the group's general needs rather than addressing needs from the client's point of view. In agreement, Irving (2011) argued that career education may become sites of oppression fuelled by political and employment agendas rather than focusing on the development of the people. This behaviour of the state may have implications on professional, socio-development and individual levels especially in a context where Arabs are discriminated against, in that the actual needs of Arab clients may go unmet.

Based on this analysis, with the government determining the course of career guidance in the Arab community and decentralising the authority of Arab practitioners, it may be reasonable



to argue that the government may only be concerned about serving its own agendas rather than seriously addressing the needs of a disadvantaged community, which may explain the extent of the tight control imposed on practitioners. Interestingly, on a more macro level, participants questioned the government's general agenda in that they identified issues such as government indifference and inconsistency in developing the Arab community. This result corresponds with findings from Adalah (2011) who reported that whenever the state has initiated development programmes targeting the Arab minority, it tended to implement them partially, gradually or not at all.

Participants also reported that funding is an essential backbone for career guidance to be effective. This is consistent with Bimrose et al (2005) who argue that the availability of resources is important when assessing career guidance. The participants further considered limited funds and the lack of funding as being a challenge that they are faced with, and thought that it was prevalent across career guidance centres and other services. This is consistent with the report produced by the OECD (2016) which urged the Israeli government to increase education and vocational education funds for disadvantaged groups including Arabs. The fact that the state is short-funding career guidance and other services may be an indication that the state tends to implement initiatives partially (Adalah, 2011).

Another factor which was found to impede the outcomes of interventions and the work of practitioners is that of Army Service. According to participants, serving in the Israeli army in many cases determined access to jobs and budget allocations, and afforded those who serve certain privileges that made it easier for ex-soldiers to earn jobs. This finding corresponds with Adalah (2011) which states that army service is one way in which Arab are discriminated against and excluded from the labour force, where serving in the army is included in job specifications as one of the conditions and is used as a criterion for employment often when

there is no connection between the nature of work and military experience. According to Adalah (2011), this has discriminatory effect on Arabs as they are exempted from serving in the army on the basis of their Palestinian national belonging. Such results present serious implications for the Arab practitioners and clients alike in that it interferes with career guidance deliverables of which the practitioners are in pursuit and thus reduces the potential of employment for Arabs. Looking at such macro factors it seems reasonable to suggest that career guidance services in the Arab community has a long road to go.

Another challenge is that of Job discrimination. Participants perceived systematic job discrimination as a real obstacle which discourages Arab students from studying particular subjects due to lack of work opportunities and access. This is consistent with the findings reported by IDIR (2013) which indicated that the state precludes the integration of Arabs across a wide range of jobs while there is no justification for doing so. This was also motivated by Flug and Keisar (2001) who found that limited supply of jobs is related to disparities between Arabs and Jews. Pappé (2011) also illustrated this point stating that Arabs are still faced with subtle forms of discrimination in various ways that can be found across a number of fields including education and employment. This may suggest that career guidance deliverables are at risk of not being attained, as this form of discrimination affects an entire ethnic group whom the practitioners are trying to help.

Participants felt that the living conditions in the Arab society is a factor that interferes with career choice, study choice and whether students can afford university fees. This is consistent with the finding that suggests that contextual influences on people's lives as well as oppressive living conditions may limit the client's career options (Arthur & Collins, 2011; pope, 2011). Such a barrier may make the role of the practitioner more complex in dealing with clients who come from poor households. Shaffer and Zalewski (2011) recommended that practitioners

should work with clients in terms of understanding and trying to change the conditions that limit career options while also supporting clients to develop their human capital and talent potential. This finding also confirms the phenomenon of guidance practices generally being more focused on the notion of preferred lifestyles, while not paying much attention to the realities of people who consider work as a basic means of survival (Blustein, 2006; Richardson, 2000).

Participants who spoke about geographical concentration of jobs in Jewish areas reported that such concentration stands in the way of attaining career guidance deliverables. This is consistent with the finding that suggests that the state is failing to locate employment-generating industrial zones in the Arab community while concentrating them in Jewish areas. This clearly affects the mobility of clients who reside in Arab areas and may play a role in reducing the likelihood of finding jobs. In this regard, Bimrose (2005) argued that geographical location is an important factor that needs to be considered when assessing the effectiveness of career guidance.

Another factor which the participants working in NGOs raised was that of political ban. The ban of the Islamic Movement which was offering career guidance in schools and across the entire Arab community, held career guidance back. This was reported to have increased the workload on other practitioners. No evidence from the literature was found to show how political bans of political movements and NGOs could impact employment and career guidance.

#### **5.2.3.2. Category 2: Other Factors Affecting Career Guidance**

Four factors posed a challenge to career guidance practitioners. Participants considered family influence and herding to be a challenge in that clients' career decisions were influenced by those around them. This is consistent with the findings of Sultana and Watts (2008) who found that young people in collectivistic contexts tend to follow pathways determined by their

parents, older siblings, close relatives and others. Family expectations may interfere with giving professional guidance and advice to the client, thereby interfering with the professional responsibilities of the practitioners as well as the interests and goals of the client.

This is also consistent with Hofstede and Hofstede (2001) who concluded that individuals living in Mediterranean and Arab communities usually tend to be collectivist and rarely act independently.

Negative perception of career guidance and counselling was found to be a concern by most of the participants which made it difficult for practitioners to convey the importance of career guidance and counselling. This finding is consistent with results from other contexts such as Borders and Drury (2008) who found that most students had negative perceptions about counsellors. In agreement, Gysbers (2008), who assessed career counselling perceptions of students from the Netherlands, found that most students did not believe in counsellors' advice and recommended that students should be aware of importance of career counselling before they experience it.

The changing nature of the job market was also reported by participants to be a variable which is challenging. This is supported by Zelloth (2014) who argued that the lack of reliable job market information is a significant obstacle and it leaves career guidance practitioners inadequately prepared and confused about how to cater for clients' needs.

Public schools were found to not make the effort in terms career skills and information. In agreement, a state-wide study measuring the impact of comprehensive guidance and counselling programs on seventh graders in Missouri (U.S.) reported that when schools were fully engaged in implementing career guidance, students were likely to know educational and career information, and skills (Lapan & Gyber, 2001).

#### **5.2.4. The Future Training of Practitioners**

The final objective of the study was to explore any suggestions regarding the future training of practitioners. The participants reported that it is important for practitioners to further broaden their knowledge of the job market and socio-political context to better serve their clients. In conjunction with that, Hiebert et al. (2011) state that career guidance practitioners need to be updated in terms social issues, job market and employment trends. The finding pertaining to understanding the socio-political context is also consistent with Arthur (2014) who states that career guidance practitioners should be to examine the systems and structures that affect their lives and those of the clients. Bello and Chacon (2015) also confirm the need for dealing with contextual issues by arguing that the role of practitioners should not be confined to focusing solely on the individual, but also they should take into account the broader social justice issues. Similarly, Vera (2014) argues that counselling and guidance are connected to the personal, socioeconomic, cultural and collective development of people and of their countries. This analysis confirms the need for identifying not only universal competencies but also ones that are specific to local contexts (Savicaks, 1993). Training with regards to research skills and counselling skills was reported by the minority of the participants.

#### **5.3. Limitations**

No research is without limitations. Possible limitations that arose include: first, the study was conducted in a relatively short amount of time, less than a year, and involved a time-consuming process of translating transcripts. This may have caused the researcher to overlook potential themes or trends due to time constraints. Second, although all interviewees came from career guidance background, differences in terms of experience levels were clear, which could have impacted the richness of the data. In addition, the sample of the study consisted of eight participants. Due to the use of snowballing and convenience sampling, all participants came from the North and the Tringle areas. The inclusion of participants from the South and Centre

of the country would have drawn a more comprehensive picture of career guidance and challenges. Another limitation is that although participants provided a lot of important data, some of them tended to be initially hesitant to answer questions related to the policy of the state possibly due to political sensitivities. Perhaps they would have given richer information had they felt more comfortable talking about state related issues. Other limitations are typically linked to employing qualitative research methods: with the study being qualitative, it might be hard to generalise the findings of this research to wider contexts and populations. While this may be considered a limitation, generalisability is hardly a concern in qualitative enquiry.

#### **5.4. Implications and Recommendations**

The findings show that in order for career guidance to contribute meaningfully to the Arab community, serious efforts must be made on a community, school, and professional level but mainly on a policy level. Policy challenges and structural conditions require serious efforts aimed at the revisiting of career guidance in the Arab community and the extent to which it can deliver effectively. Such challenges constitute important variables which ought not to be ignored as far as attaining career guidance deliverables is concerned. Addressing challenges affecting career guidance will help practitioners build more effective strategies and deal more effectively with clients. It will also be useful for career guidance practitioners to systematically assess the situation in the Arab community to see what careers are most critical to developing the Arab society; this certainly requires a carefully designed strategy, while at the same time keeping an eye on interests and abilities of clients.

The Israeli society is individualistic in nature but the Arab minority tend to be collectivistic. When doing career guidance, there is a need to consider the population characteristics in a way that would resonate with collectivistic societies. Factors such as negative perceptions, family



influence and herding may not be easy to tackle and require serious efforts, and such efforts may well take some time to change. However, if awareness is promoted around such issues this may aid the practitioners to serve clients more effectively on the one hand but at the same time it will be in the benefit of the client and the community. Reducing the external factors that may interfere with the decision of the client will ensure that clients are autonomous decision makers.

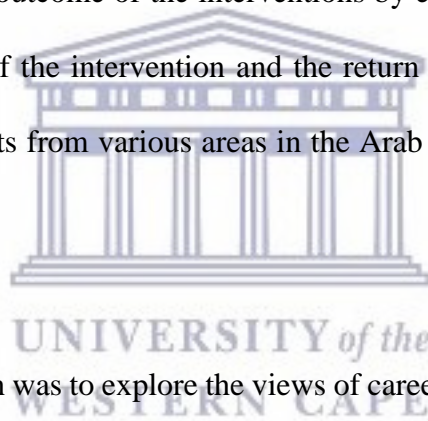
Redundant and outdated academic subjects are widespread which increases the risk of unemployment which career guidance tries to fight. So there is a need to discourage against such subjects. Practitioners further need to cooperate more often with public schools to promote awareness on the importance of skills and identify the skills necessary for job market readiness and urge schools to conduct workshops outside of the curriculum.

Also, training programmes are required for practitioners to update their skills and knowledge so as to meet the dynamic needs of clients. Their needs are heavily influenced by changes in the workplace, politics, social conditions, globalisation and fluctuating economies and other variables. Such changes inform and influence not only the individual needs of clients, but also the way in which guidance services should be provided. Practitioners and educators in the Arab community should engage in discussions to explore the possibility of developing career guidance competencies that would be relevant to the community. Identifying both national and universal competencies may open the door for competency models for career guidance that may lead practitioners to better deal with the local context while also keeping up to date with the practice of career guidance universally, to ultimately address and meet client's needs more effectively. Thus, such discussions should revolve around developing a framework of competencies to identify universal and locally-oriented competencies.



The value of career guidance has been established in literature and there is accumulative evidence to show the return of career guidance on individuals and communities across the globe. This research was not conducted to establish the importance of career guidance but rather it was set out to establish the state of career guidance in the Palestinian Arab community inside Israel. This research may not be the first to address career guidance in the Arab community but it is the first one to consider career guidance from a professional practice viewpoint and put it under scrutiny in the light of various variables that are, in my view, inspirable from well-functioning career guidance services.

While this research identified the interventions used across the community, further research should go into measuring the outcome of the interventions by employing longitudinal studies to observe the effectiveness of the intervention and the return on the client. Future research should also include participants from various areas in the Arab community to allow for more comprehensive results.

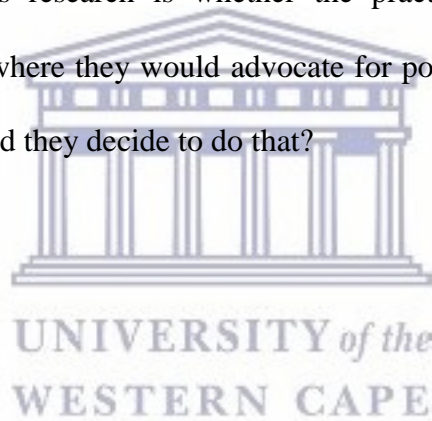


## **5.5. Conclusion**

The aim of the current research was to explore the views of career guidance practitioners in the Arab community inside Israel. Emphasis was placed on gaining insight into this phenomenon from the individual's personal beliefs and views over what constitutes and shapes career guidance in the Arab community. From the findings, one may infer that while professional aspects are important for career guidance where practitioners need to be up to date with career guidance interventions and use suitable application of theory, policy issues remain a paramount issue. According to this research, the challenges facing career guidance appear to be a symptom of a deeper problem as many of the challenges appeared to be state policy related. This means that the nature of the problem is one that is structural and needs official decisions to be made to change that. Indeed, policy challenges point to the essential need for viewing career guidance

through not only the professional lens but also in the light of social justice, if the aim is to reach concrete career guidance deliverables such as reduction of unemployment in the Arab society. After all, having the most professional skills and the best career guidance practice will not solve the problem as the state holds the primary responsibility.

The absence of serious intentions and attempts by the government to deal with career guidance and other structural factors such as policy challenges is alarming for the effectiveness of career guidance and its capacity to deliver results on the ground in the Palestinian community inside Israel. While the roles and responsibilities of career guidance practitioners lie in the professional spectrum, policy issues and structural factors remain beyond their control. The dilemma that rises from this research is whether the practitioners should extend their responsibilities to the extent where they would advocate for policy changes or is it that they will have to pay the cost should they decide to do that?



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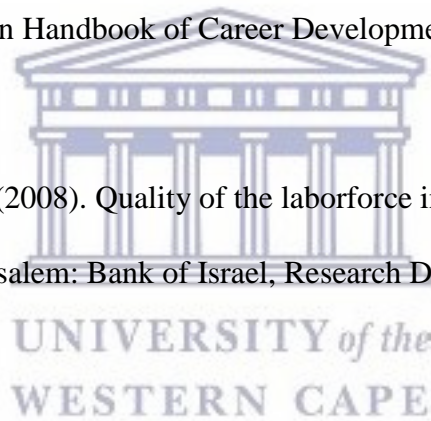
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## APPENDIX A

### Interview guide

- 1) In your own words how do you define career guidance?
- 2) How important do you think it is for the Palestinian community inside Israel?
- 3) What are some of most serious challenges facing career guidance as a practice?
- 4) What recommendations can be made for the future training of career guidance in terms of the development of their career guidance skills? How could the practice be improved?
- 5) How do you make sure the job fits the client?
- 6) On what theoretical models do you base your career guidance assessment?
- 7) What follow-up steps do you take after you have introduced the intervention?
- 8) In your own words, what are the three most important goals which you think career guidance can achieve?
- 9) In what way does career guidance fight unemployment? To what extent has career guidance been instrumental?
- 10) What type of services do you provide? Can you briefly outline how you go about each one?
- 11) What do you do to make sure the outcome is met?
- 12) In what way does the state's policy affect career guidance profession?

