

# Career Guidance in Lebanon: The Role of Counselors between Family Expectations, Youth Aspirations, and Institutional Gaps

Maguy Salameh

PhD Researcher, School of Social Work, Saint Joseph University of Beirut, Beirut, Lebanon  
Email: maguysalameh@hotmail.com

**How to cite this paper:** Salameh, M. (2025). Career Guidance in Lebanon: The Role of Counselors between Family Expectations, Youth Aspirations, and Institutional Gaps. *Advances in Applied Sociology*, 15, 944-958.  
<https://doi.org/10.4236/aasoci.2025.1510055>

**Received:** September 18, 2025

**Accepted:** October 26, 2025

**Published:** October 29, 2025

Copyright © 2025 by author(s) and Scientific Research Publishing Inc.  
This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY 4.0).  
<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>



Open Access

## Abstract

This article examines the role of school guidance counselors in Lebanon through doctoral research conducted in two private Catholic schools in the Metn region. Using a mixed-methods design that combined a survey of 197 parents with separate focus groups for parents and students, the study highlights the gap between the strong demand for personalized guidance and the weak institutional provisions in place. Parents emphasize motivation, confidence-building, and informed decision-making, while young people stress autonomy, exploration, and being listened to without judgment. Still, the counselor's role remains fragmented, poorly defined, and often invisible. Drawing on Social Cognitive Career Theory, Bronfenbrenner's ecosystemic model, and Savickas' career construction theory, the article argues that counselors can serve as mediators between families, students, and schools, and as bridges to the labor market. It concludes with a call for national education policies that formally recognize and professionalize guidance services to better equip Lebanese youth for uncertain futures. This study contributes to filling the gap in research on school guidance in Lebanon and offers policy recommendations for integrating counselors into the national education system. It is also one of the first studies to explore the role of counselors in Lebanon using both quantitative and qualitative evidence, providing an original contribution to international debates on career guidance in fragile contexts.

## Keywords

Career Guidance, School Counselors, Parental Involvement, Guided Autonomy, Youth Aspirations

## 1. Introduction

Educational and career guidance is increasingly recognized as a central dimension in shaping students' life projects, identities, and integration into unstable labor markets (Guichard, 2016; Cohen-Scali, Guichard, & Pouyaud, 2018). It goes beyond the transmission of information: it requires structured accompaniment, active listening, and sustained mediation between young people's aspirations, family expectations, and socio-economic realities (Savickas, 2013; Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994).

In Lebanon, however, guidance provision remains fragmented and inconsistent. Public schools largely lack specialized services, while in private institutions the counselor's role is often underestimated or limited to sporadic activities (Shuayb, 2016; CRDP, 2020). These gaps are particularly concerning given the country's current crisis, where families face mounting uncertainty, and young people must make decisions in an environment marked by economic collapse, emigration pressures, and shifting labor-market needs (Dibeh, Fakh, & Marrouh, 2019).

Against this backdrop, parents often seek stability and reassurance for their children's futures, while youth express a desire for autonomy, exploration, and meaningful life choices (To et al., 2021). International studies confirm that parents can act both as facilitators and as obstacles in career decision-making, depending on their knowledge and perceptions (Grolnick & Pomerantz, 2022). The lack of institutional structuring in Lebanon exacerbates these tensions and leaves the role of the guidance counselor poorly defined and undervalued.

This article examines the role of school counselors in Lebanon by analyzing the convergences and tensions between parents' expectations, students' aspirations, and institutional provisions. Drawing on a mixed-methods study, combining a survey of 197 parents with focus groups involving parents and students, the article situates these findings within international theoretical frameworks (Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT); Career Construction Theory; and the ecosystemic model) and proposes avenues for repositioning the counselor as a central educational actor. Recent MENA evidence also shows that structured school–university guidance strengthens students' planning and work-readiness (Alnajjar & Abou Hashish, 2024) and that career self-efficacy is tightly linked to STEM aspirations among young women (Yamani & Almazroa, 2024), reinforcing the relevance of SCCT for this context.

## 2. Theoretical Framework: Guidance as Accompaniment— Foundations and Contributions of Social Cognitive Career Theory

The role of the school guidance counselor cannot be understood outside of a solid theoretical foundation. International research has progressively moved away from a purely informational conception of guidance toward models emphasizing accompaniment, self-construction, and empowerment. Theories of career develop-

ment provide tools for analyzing how individuals build their life projects within specific socio-economic and cultural contexts. Among these, Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT), Career Construction Theory, and the ecosystemic model offer particularly relevant insights for understanding the tensions that shape guidance in Lebanon, where family expectations, youth aspirations, and institutional weaknesses intersect.

### **2.1. Guidance as an Accompaniment Process in an Unstable World**

Today, educational and career guidance is increasingly conceived as an accompaniment process that supports young people in building coherent, realistic, and meaningful life projects (Guichard, 2016; Savickas, 2013). Beyond helping students choose tracks, it contributes to identity development and agency, especially in unstable socio-economic contexts (Arulmani & Nag-Arulmani, 2014). This is particularly relevant in Lebanon, where traditional occupational reference points are collapsing and pathways are increasingly uncertain. In many schools, particularly in the public sector, the absence of internal structures forces reliance on one-off external interventions (Shuayb, 2016), which prevents the establishment of sustained, personalized accompaniment.

### **2.2. Social Cognitive Career Theory: Self-Efficacy and Contextual Barriers**

Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (1986, 1997) emphasizes the interaction between the individual, behavior, and environment, introducing self-efficacy as central to human agency. Lent, Brown, and Hackett (1994) extended this into Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT), which explains how career interests, choices, and persistence are shaped by the interplay of:

- self-efficacy beliefs (confidence in one's abilities),
- outcome expectations (beliefs about the consequences of actions), and
- personal goals, influenced by environmental supports and barriers such as family expectations or cultural norms.

Applied to Lebanon, SCCT sheds light on the tensions revealed in this research: students doubting their chances in creative fields tend to fall back on "safe" options, while parents reinforce traditional careers in the name of stability. In this framework, the counselor becomes a key actor in strengthening students' self-efficacy, reframing barriers, and mobilizing supports.

### **2.3. Career Construction Theory: Adaptability and Life Design**

Savickas' Career Construction Theory (Savickas, 2005, 2013) complements SCCT by shifting the focus to adaptability and the active construction of meaning. Guidance is not limited to matching individuals with existing opportunities but to developing capacities for resilience, exploration, and life design. This is particularly pertinent to Lebanese youth who, as shown in the focus groups, seek autonomy and creative exploration yet face strong parental and economic pressures. The

counselor's role here is to nurture adaptability and empower students to see themselves as authors of their trajectories, capable of designing futures that balance aspiration and context.

#### **2.4. The Ecosystemic Model: Situating Guidance in Context**

Bronfenbrenne's ecosystemic model (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) provides a broader lens for situating guidance within interrelated systems: the microsystem of family and school, the mesosystem of their interactions, and the macrosystem of socio-economic and cultural forces. In Lebanon, this framework helps explain how parental concerns about emigration, schools' fragmented guidance provision, and the pressures of an unstable labor market jointly shape decision-making. It also highlights the need to embed counselors not only within schools but within networks linking education, families, and the labor market.

Taken together, these frameworks offer complementary insights for analyzing the empirical findings of this study. SCCT explains the role of self-efficacy and contextual barriers in shaping choices; Career Construction Theory highlights the demand for adaptability and identity construction; and the ecosystemic model situates these dynamics within Lebanon's fragile institutional and socio-economic environment. Together, they provide a multi-level analytical lens, psychological, relational, and structural, through which the empirical findings of this study will be analyzed in the following section.

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1. Design and Setting**

This study used a mixed-methods design in two private Catholic schools in the Metn region, combining a parent survey with separate focus groups for parents and secondary-level students to triangulate perspectives on the counselor's role (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Ethics approval was granted by the USJ Ethics Committee; participation was voluntary, anonymous, and confidential, with informed consent collected online from parents and parental consent plus student assent obtained for minors.

#### **3.2. Sampling and Participants**

Survey (parents). A total of 197 parents completed the online questionnaire: 82.2% mothers ( $n = 162$ ) and 17.8% fathers ( $n = 35$ ). Education levels were Licence 46.5%, Master 20.1%, Doctorate 4.1%, and Other 28.4%. Employment status was 69.5% employed and 28.4% not employed. To characterize the sample, we recorded age, sex, education level, and employment status (descriptive statistics reported in Results).

Focus groups (parents). Twelve parents of secondary students participated (10 mothers; 2 fathers), all university-educated, with varied occupations (social work, teaching, engineering, marketing, entrepreneurship, medical; three not currently employed).

Focus groups (students). Three groups were conducted: 8 students in Secondary 2; 12 in Secondary 3 (Life Sciences and General Sciences); and 6 in Secondary 3 (Sciences Économiques et Sociales), for a total of  $n = 26$ . Stratification maximized variety in year and academic track.

### **3.3. Instruments and Measures**

The parent survey covered: 1) expectations of the counselor's role (informational vs. psychosocial), 2) stressors/concerns around career choice, and 3) views on parental involvement. Construct quality was examined via exploratory factor analysis (EFA) with  $KMO = .870$  and Bartlett's test  $p < .001$  across dimensions; retained components explained up to 75.93% of variance, and Cronbach's  $\alpha = .563 - .920$  indicated acceptable–excellent internal consistency (Field, 2018; Kline, 2016). The focus-group guides mirrored the survey domains (parental role, decision conflicts, expectations of counselors) and were piloted for clarity.

### **3.4. Procedures**

Parents were recruited through school channels and completed the online consent and questionnaire. Focus groups (parents and students) followed a semi-structured guide, were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and anonymized.

### **3.5. Qualitative Analysis**

Focus-group transcripts were analyzed thematically using a combined inductive–deductive strategy aligned with the theoretical framework. To enhance trustworthiness, two researchers double-coded a subset with ~85% intercoder agreement (percent agreement), resolving discrepancies by discussion. Coding followed a documented codebook and was conducted manually using a matrix spreadsheet to organize excerpts, codes, and memo notes (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2021).

### **3.6. Ethical Safeguards**

All procedures followed institutional standards: ethics approval, informed consent, anonymity/confidentiality, and secure data storage.

### **3.7. Methodological Limitations**

Given the single-region focus on two private schools and voluntary participation, findings may be affected by self-selection and limited generalizability; quantitative results are interpreted as exploratory.

## **4. School Guidance in Lebanon: Cross-Perceptions and Accompaniment Issues**

The empirical results of this doctoral research shed light on how school guidance is understood and experienced in the Lebanese context. By combining a quantitative survey of parents with focus groups involving both parents and students, the study highlights converging expectations as well as persistent gaps between needs

and institutional provisions. The analysis is organized around three main dimensions: the institutional positioning of the counselor, parents' expectations and perceptions, and young people's voices. Together, these findings underscore both the demand for structured, personalized guidance and the difficulties of providing it within a fragmented system.

#### 4.1. Institutional Weakness and Marginalization of the Guidance Function

Here, "institutional weakness" denotes the lack of national policies, fragmented counselor roles, and insufficient systemic support within schools (e.g., limited time, unclear mandates, sporadic activities).

Career guidance in Lebanon operates within a fragile institutional framework. In most public schools, the counselor position is absent or limited to sporadic information-sharing activities (Shuayb, 2016). This situation is compounded by the absence of a national policy on guidance and the lack of specialized training pathways for professionals (CRDP, 2020). In the private sector, some schools have developed internal mechanisms to support students, as observed in the two institutions studied, but these remain isolated initiatives rather than elements of a coherent national strategy.

The findings of this doctoral research confirm these institutional gaps. Parents in focus groups repeatedly reported feeling "*disoriented*" when trying to advise their children, pointing to the lack of institutional support and the absence of reliable labor market information. One parent explained: "*At school, I don't even know what the counselor does.*" (Parent, focus group).

Students also voiced dissatisfaction, particularly with external counselors. As one recalled: "*She was using her computer without even looking at me.*" (Student 2). Another added: "*I felt she was helping my mother during the interview rather than supporting me directly.*" (Student 3). These accounts point to the limited visibility of counselors and the perception that students' needs are not always prioritized.

Without a structured and recognized counseling role, parents' and students' perspectives rarely meet in a constructive dialogue. As a result, guidance remains fragmented, uneven, and highly dependent on family resources, echoing international findings that weak institutionalization undermines both equity and effectiveness (Goyer et al., 2021).

#### 4.2. Parents' Expectations and Perceptions: Between Support and Ambiguity

The quantitative survey highlights parents' explicit recognition of the counselor's importance in supporting their children (Figure 1). More than 66% "strongly agree" and 27.6% "somewhat agree" on the value of structured dialogue and active support. Expectations focus above all on psychosocial functions: 71% of parents want counselors to foster motivation, self-confidence, and personal development,

while 66.7% emphasize support for informed decision-making. By contrast, the strictly informational role is less central, with only 49.2% considering the transmission of data on academic tracks and professions essential. Even fewer parents (35.2%) attach importance to being personally supported or trained by counselors.

### The Guidance Counselor’s Role with Parents

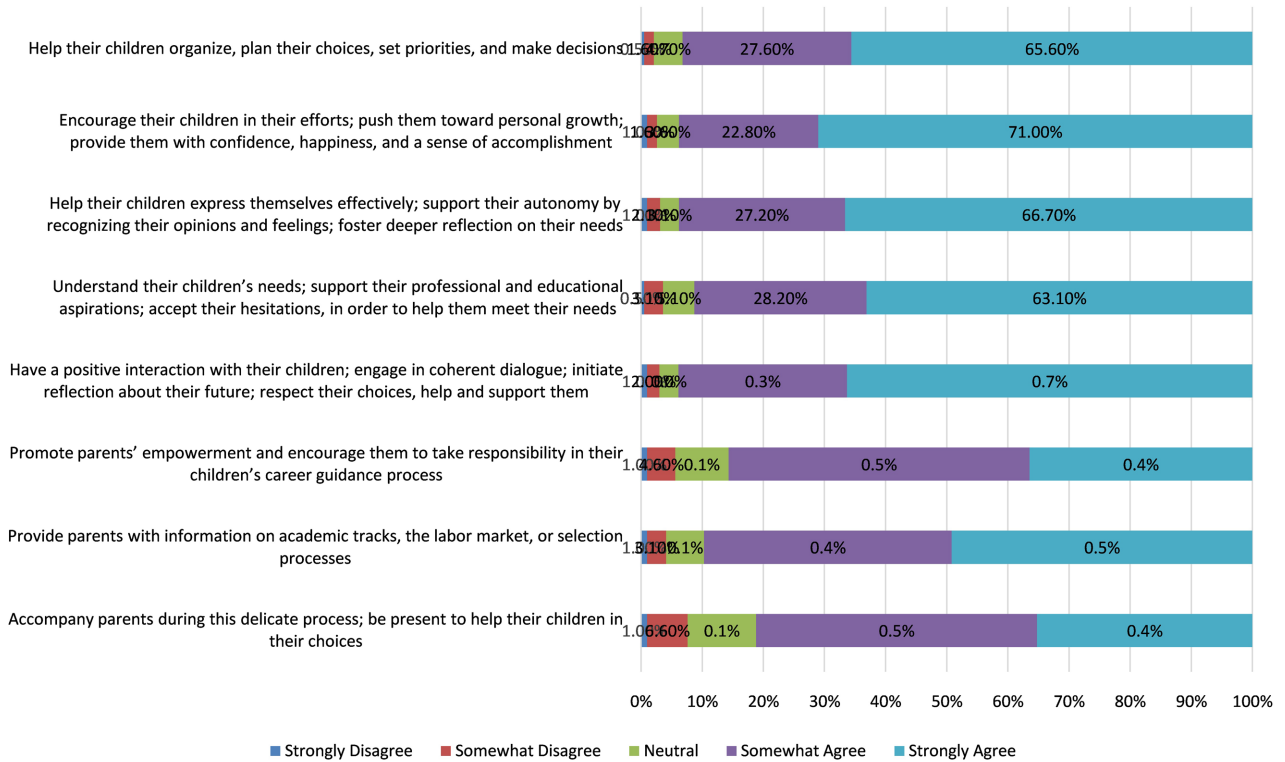


Figure 1. The guidance counselor’s role with parents.

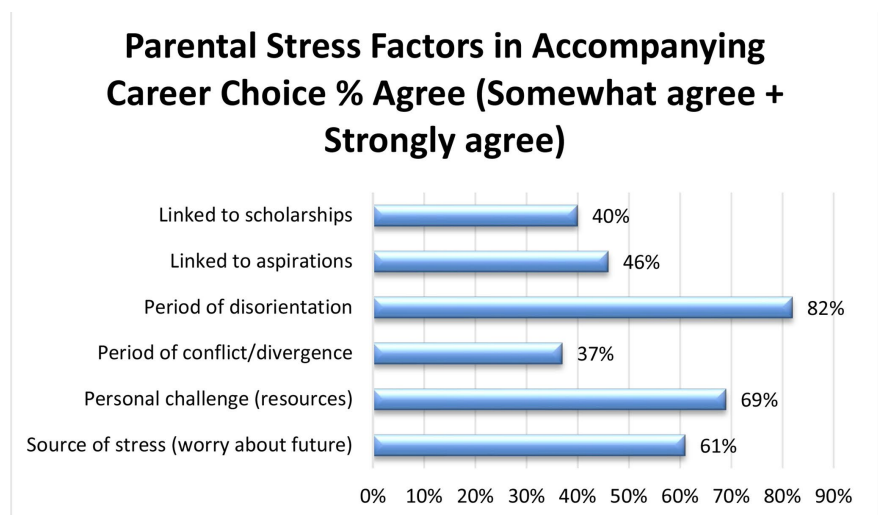


Figure 2. Parental stress factors in accompanying career choice (% somewhat agree + strongly agree).

Survey results also reveal the emotional burden parents associate with career choice: 61% describe it as a source of anxiety, 69% as a personal challenge to mobilize resources, 37% as a period of conflict, and over 80% as a time of disorientation. Only a minority frame it positively, linking it to aspirations (46%) or scholarship opportunities (40%). These findings confirm that career choice is not merely an informational process, but one laden with strong emotional and psychosocial weight (Figure 2).

This gap between high expectations for children and limited engagement for themselves reflects a broader ambivalence. International research shows that parents often adopt a “delegator” stance, entrusting professionals with motivational and developmental tasks while remaining hesitant to assume an active role (Grolnick & Pomerantz, 2022).

Focus group discussions help illuminate this ambivalence. For some parents, the counselor is perceived as a mediator capable of bridging generational gaps: “*I would like someone to explain the new tracks and the jobs of the future. We don’t always understand what our children want.*” (Parent, focus group 1). Others, however, emphasize the lack of visibility or clarity surrounding the function: “*I don’t even know whether my child has met the school counselor. They never mentioned it.*” (Parent, focus group 2).

Taken together, these results underline a paradox. Parents clearly recognize the counselor’s role in motivating and guiding their children, yet often encounter this role as peripheral, inaccessible, or undefined. This reinforces the need for a more structured, transparent, and collaborative framework that clarifies responsibilities and makes the counselor’s presence both visible and meaningful.

Statistical anchors. On the parent survey ( $N = 197$ ), parental stress correlated positively with expectations for counselor involvement ( $r(195) = .41, p < .001$ ). Parents’ education level was associated with expectations for personalized counselor support,  $\chi^2(1, N = 197) = 5.87, p = .015, V = .17$ .

### 4.3. Youth Aspirations and the Demand for Guided Autonomy

“Guided autonomy” refers to structured accompaniment that preserves students’ ownership of choices while scaffolding exploration, planning, and decision-making.

Students’ accounts reveal strong and consistent expectations of the counselor. Above all, they look for an adult who listens attentively, is available, and remains neutral. Several emphasize the importance of being taken seriously in their aspirations: “*I would need someone at school who listens without judging*” (Student 12).

Others underline the gap between their own projects and parental ambitions: “*My parents want me to study law, but I want to pursue media studies (radio/TV). I wanted her to help me convince my parents*” (Student 7). In such cases, the counselor is imagined as a guarantor who can both validate young people’s projects and reassure families.

This mediating role is particularly valued as some students express feelings of isolation when confronted with complex choices. What they seek is neither direction nor control, but a form of *guided autonomy*: progressive accompaniment that helps them clarify and structure their trajectories while respecting their individuality. Focus-group accounts consistently emphasized a desire for personalized support to explore careers and plan futures, while 65% of parents considered the counselor's mediation essential to harmonize aspirations with family expectations.

Framed within SCCT, this demand highlights the need to reinforce students' self-efficacy and reduce perceived barriers. From the perspective of Career Construction Theory, it reflects a search for adaptability and identity construction in contexts of uncertainty. In the Lebanese setting, "guided autonomy" thus emerges as a key dimension of the counselor's role as an intergenerational mediator.

#### **4.4. Strengthening the Counselor's Role for Concerted Guidance**

"Mediator" designates the counselor's bridging function between parents' expectations, students' aspirations, and school-labor market interfaces (dialogue, negotiation, referral).

The convergence between parents' expectations and students' needs highlights a pressing need to reinforce the counselor's role within the Lebanese education system. As the survey data confirm, 71% of parents expect counselors to foster motivation and self-confidence, while the majority of the student participants call for personalized support to explore careers and plan their futures: "*Tests are not enough, personal exploration and discussion helps more...*" (student 6) Both groups thus anticipate much more than the simple transmission of information: they look to the counselor as a trusted mediator and an ally in navigating complex choices.

Positioning the counselor as an integrated member of the educational team would make it possible to establish structured dialogue between generations, support the co-construction of meaningful life projects, and reduce tensions that often arise when decisions are made in isolation. International research underscores that when counselors are institutionally embedded and professionally recognized, they contribute not only to smoother educational transitions but also to the prevention of disengagement and dropout (Whiston et al., 2017; Goyer et al., 2021).

In the Lebanese context, the challenge of school guidance is therefore not limited to aligning education with labor market demands. More fundamentally, it involves creating human, contextualized, and sustainable mediation at the heart of students' trajectories. Recognizing and professionalizing the counselor's role emerges as a precondition for equitable access to opportunities and for preparing youth to face uncertain futures. The following section develops this perspective by examining how the counselor's role is currently defined and the obstacles that prevent its effective implementation.

## 5. The Guidance Counselor's Role: Discussion and Perspectives

The findings presented above highlight both the convergence of parents' and students' expectations and the persistent gaps in institutional support. While families and youth articulate a clear need for structured, personalized guidance, the counselor's role remains fragile and inconsistently recognized. To move beyond descriptive accounts of expectations, it is necessary to examine how the counselor's role is positioned within the Lebanese school system and shaped by broader institutional and socio-economic conditions. This sets the stage for the following discussion.

### 5.1. A Blurred Function Relegated to the Background

The data confirm that the counselor's role in Lebanese schools remains peripheral and poorly institutionalized. Rather than being integrated into a coherent pedagogical framework, their work is often confined to sporadic initiatives such as forums, brochures, or end-of-cycle interviews. This marginalization reflects both the absence of a national policy and the lack of specialized training for professionals (Shuayb, 2016; CRDP, 2020). Symbolically and physically sidelined within school structures, counselors are frequently isolated from collaboration with teachers, administrators, and families, which limits their impact on students' educational trajectories.

### 5.2. Strong Expectations, But Little Structural Support

Parents seek reassurance and informed advice, while youth call for attentive listening, neutrality, and validation. These expectations are undermined by structural weaknesses. Counselors often lack continuous training on labor market changes or psychosocial accompaniment, and their effectiveness depends more on individual initiative than on systemic support. This mismatch between expectations and available resources underscores a structural gap: the counselor is viewed as essential but remains insufficiently professionalized to fulfill the role effectively.

### 5.3. From Information to Mediation: Redefining Professional Stance

This research shows a shift from viewing counselors as information providers to recognizing them as mediators and partners. Parents and students implicitly define guidance as accompaniment: dialogue, recognition of aspirations, and intergenerational mediation. International research confirms this evolution: Whiston et al. (2017) demonstrate the positive impact of structured career counseling on persistence and motivation, while Goyer et al. (2021) highlight the benefits of professional recognition in reducing dropout. Repositioning the counselor as a mediator aligns with these findings and situates the Lebanese case within broader debates on the professionalization of guidance.

#### 5.4. Structural and Contextual Determinants of Guidance in Lebanon

Beyond individual expectations, the Lebanese socio-economic context weighs heavily on guidance processes. Families under financial pressure tend to prioritize “safe” professions that ensure stability or facilitate emigration, while households with more cultural and economic capital encourage exploration of new fields. As one parent explained: “*We prefer our children to follow safe professions that guarantee a future abroad. It is not the time to experiment.*” (Parent, focus group). The economic collapse has eroded traditional occupational reference points and intensified fears about stability. In contrast, students often aspire to creative, digital, or alternative pathways, diverging from parental logics.

Students, on the other hand, articulate aspirations that often diverge from these parental logics, expressing interest in creative, digital, or alternative pathways. This divergence highlights the structural weaknesses of a system that leaves the mediation of such tensions largely unaddressed. Moreover, the reliance on external or non-specialized staff further fragments provision, limiting equitable access to sustained support. In this fragile context, the counselor’s role becomes not only desirable but essential: a recognized professional embedded in school structures could help transform these tensions into constructive dialogue and empower young people to pursue meaningful life projects.

Taken together, these findings show that the guidance counselor in Lebanon occupies a paradoxical position: perceived as essential by parents and students, yet structurally marginalized and poorly supported by the education system. The role, when recognized, is often reduced to fragmented tasks and deprived of the professional and institutional conditions necessary to ensure equity and sustainability. Repositioning the counselor as a mediator and educational partner requires not only a change in practices but also a coherent national framework that integrates guidance into the core of the school project. Such recognition would align Lebanon with international trends while responding to the urgent needs expressed by families and youth in a context of profound social and economic uncertainty.

Our results align with recent regional studies reporting enhanced readiness and self-efficacy when guidance is formalized within schools (Alnajjar & Abou Hashish, 2024; Yamani & Almazroa, 2024). Methodologically, emerging school-based models (e.g., teacher-facing training frameworks) further illustrate feasible implementation pathways (Parola et al., 2024), while synthesis work confirms consistent effects of secondary-level career interventions on motivation and decision outcomes (Wang et al., 2024).

#### 6. Toward a Strategic Repositioning of the Guidance Counselor

The findings of this research reveal a clear paradox: parents and students consider the counselor essential, yet the role remains structurally marginalized. Addressing this paradox requires moving beyond fragmented practices toward a coherent

strategy that redefines and strengthens the counselor's place in the education system.

First, counselors should be positioned as mediators capable of fostering dialogue between parents and students. Families request support, while youth seek recognition of their aspirations. Structured initiatives, workshops, three-way meetings, and project discussions, could turn misunderstandings into constructive dialogue and support guided autonomy.

Second, counselors must serve as bridges between schools and the world of work. In a context marked by economic collapse and emigration pressures, access to reliable career information and opportunities is uneven. By facilitating internships, connecting with alumni, and tracking emerging professions, counselors can democratize access and reduce inequalities between privileged and less privileged families.

Third, guidance should be anchored in adaptability. Drawing on frameworks like Career Construction Theory and SCCT, counselors can help students develop resilience, decision-making skills, and self-efficacy, competencies that are essential for navigating volatile labor markets. This reframes guidance as preparation not just for a first choice but for lifelong career adaptability.

Finally, national policy must formally recognize the counselor's role through training pathways, statutory frameworks, and advocacy mechanisms that ensure professional legitimacy. By voicing field realities and contributing to policy debates, counselors can play an active role in reforming education and promoting equity.

In sum, repositioning the counselor as mediator, bridge, promoter of adaptability, and policy advocate would move Lebanon closer to international best practices while responding to urgent local needs. Such a shift would not only support individual trajectories but also strengthen the capacity of the education system to respond to ongoing social and economic challenges.

## 7. Conclusion

This research brings to light a central paradox: while the tensions surrounding school and career guidance in Lebanon are growing sharper, the guidance counselor's function remains marginal, ill-defined, and undervalued. At the same time, parents and students converge on the same demand: the need for structured, human, and reliable accompaniment to help them navigate complex decisions in an unstable socio-economic environment.

The findings demonstrate that the counselor cannot be reduced to the role of a mere information provider. Instead, they embody a unique potential: to mediate between generations, to open schools to the socio-economic world, to foster adaptability in uncertain futures, and to advocate for more coherent educational policies. In this sense, the guidance counselor emerges as a strategic actor, not only in supporting individual trajectories, but also in contributing to the collective capacity of the education system to respond to contemporary challenges.

Investing in training, professional recognition, and institutional integration is essential to promote equity, reduce the gap between family expectations and youth aspirations, and anchor schools in today's realities. Above all, it would reaffirm that guidance is not a secondary service but a fundamental educational right: the right for every young person to be listened to, accompanied, and empowered to construct a meaningful life project. The originality of this study lies in documenting, for the first time in Lebanon, how parents' and students' voices converge in shaping expectations of counselors, offering empirical evidence that has been largely absent from the literature. Findings derive from two private schools in a single region, which limits generalizability, especially to public schools. Voluntary participation may have introduced self-selection bias, and quantitative analyses should be interpreted as exploratory. Future work should extend to public schools, use larger national samples, and adopt longitudinal designs to track how guidance affects educational transitions and early labor-market outcomes.

## 8. Implications for Policy, Practice, and Research

The results of this study carry important implications at multiple levels. For policymakers, they underscore the urgent need to institutionalize guidance through a national framework, dedicated training programs, and statutory recognition of counselors within schools. For schools and practitioners, they call for integrating the counselor as a full member of the educational team, allocating time and resources for sustained accompaniment, and cultivating partnerships with universities, training institutions, and the labor market. For research, this study opens new avenues: examining public-school contexts, conducting longitudinal analyses of how guidance shapes youth transitions, and carrying out comparative studies with other countries facing similar crises. By linking local realities to global debates, such work could further inform strategies to ensure that all Lebanese students, regardless of social background, benefit from equitable, meaningful, and future-oriented guidance.

## Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

## References

- Alnajjar, H. A., & Abou Hashish, E. A. (2024). Exploring the Effectiveness of the Career Guidance and Counseling Program on the Perceived Readiness for the Job Market: A Lived Experience among Nursing Students. *Frontiers in Public Health*, 12, Article ID: 1403730. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2024.1403730>
- Arulmani, G., & Nag-Arulmani, S. (2014). *Career Counselling: A Handbook*. Tata McGraw-Hill Education.
- Bandura, A. (1986). *Social Foundations of Thought and Action: A Social Cognitive Theory*. Prentice-Hall.

- Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-Efficacy: The Exercise of Control*. W.H. Freeman.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3*, 77-101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp0630a>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2021). *Thematic Analysis: A Practical Guide*. Sage. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-69909-7\\_3470-2](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-69909-7_3470-2)
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The Ecology of Human Development: Experiments by Nature and Design*. Harvard University Press.
- Centre de Recherche et de Développement Pédagogiques (CRDP) (2020). *National Education and Guidance Report in Lebanon*. CRDP.
- Cohen-Scali, V., Guichard, J., & Pouyaud, J. (2018). *Psychologie de l'orientation*. Dunod.
- Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2018). *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research* (3rd ed.). SAGE.
- Dibeh, G., Fakih, A., & Marrouch, W. (2019). Labor Market and Institutional Reforms in Lebanon: Policy Challenges. *Middle East Development Journal, 11*, 169-195.
- Field, A. (2018). *Discovering Statistics Using IBM SPSS Statistics*. 5th ed. Sage Publications.
- Goyer, L., Gagnon, S., Drolet, J., & Lapostolle, L. (2021). Professionalization of Career Guidance: Challenges and Perspectives. *Canadian Journal of Career Development, 20*, 32-45.
- Grolnick, W. S., & Pomerantz, E. M. (2022). Parental Involvement in Children's Schooling: Its Nature and Impact. *Educational Psychologist, 57*, 1-17.
- Guichard, J. (2016). Career Guidance, Education, and Dialogues for a Fair and Sustainable Human Development. *International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance, 16*, 147-160.
- Kline, P. (2016). *A Handbook of Test Construction: Introduction to Psychometric Design*. 2nd ed. Routledge.
- Lent, R. W., Brown, S. D., & Hackett, G. (1994). Toward a Unifying Social Cognitive Theory of Career and Academic Interest, Choice, and Performance. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 45*, 79-122. <https://doi.org/10.1006/jvbe.1994.1027>
- Parola, A., Diano, F., Ponticorvo, M., & Sica, L. S. (2024). Exploring the Adolescents' Career Development and Career-Related Teacher Support: The NEFELE Career Guidance Model. *Frontiers in Psychology, 15*, Article ID: 1437472. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2024.1437472>
- Savickas, M. L. (2005). The Theory and Practice of Career Construction. In S. D. Brown, & R. W. Lent (Eds.), *Career Development and Counseling: Putting Theory and Research to Work* (pp. 42-70). John Wiley & Sons.
- Savickas, M. L. (2013). Career Construction Theory and Practice. In S. D. Brown, & R. W. Lent (Eds.), *Career Development and Counseling: Putting Theory and Research to Work* (2nd ed., pp. 147-183). Wiley.
- Shuayb, M. (2016). *Education for Social Cohesion in Lebanon: The Politics of Policymaking*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- To, S. M., Ngai, S. S., & Lin, C. Y. (2021). Parenting, Youth Aspirations, and Career Choices: A Cross-Cultural Perspective. *Children and Youth Services Review, 121*, Article 105870.
- Wang, D., Li, Y., & Wang, G. (2024). A Systematic Review on Career Interventions for High School Students. *Frontiers in Psychology, 15*, Article ID: 1461503. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2024.1461503>
- Whiston, S. C., Li, Y., Goodrich Mitts, N., & Wright, L. (2017). Effectiveness of Career

Choice Interventions: A Meta-Analytic Replication and Extension. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *100*, 175-184. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2017.03.010>

Yamani, N., & Almazroa, H. (2024). Exploring Career Interest and STEM Self-Efficacy: Implications for Promoting Gender Equity. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *15*, Article ID: 1402933. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2024.1402933>