

Vocational-Education Students' Attitudes towards Their Academic Specialization in Jordan

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Abstract

The aim of the study was to identify the attitudes of vocational education students at Al-Balqa Applied University towards enrollment in their academic specialization from their perception, relating them to variables such as gender, the student's academic year, and academic rating. A descriptive approach was used with a questionnaire which comprised 33 items that measured the students' attitudes towards the vocational education specialization. The study comprised 221 male and female students to whom the questionnaire was distributed in the first semester of the academic year 2019-2020. The study found that the students' attitudes towards the vocational education specialization for the instrument as a whole were positive: 24 items obtained positive attitude scores and 9 items showed an average attitude. It was found that there were no statistically significant differences among vocational-education students' attitudes towards their enrollment in their academic specialization in terms of the study variables: gender; the student's academic year (first and second year, third and fourth year); or academic rating (acceptable, good, very good, and excellent). It was also found that there were no statistically significant differences among the vocational education students' attitudes towards their enrollment in their academic specialization. These differences are attributed to the study variables: gender, academic year, and academic rating. It is recommended that: the study plan should be developed to be more comprehensive, and incorporates a diversity of experiences, knowledge, and activities to achieve differentiation of the student's personality. This requires the university and the college to provide diverse and flexible activities to suit the characteristics of students in light of the principles of respecting, meeting and satisfying their inclinations and desires.

Keywords: attitudes, academic specialty, higher education institutions, university education, vocational education specialty.

Отношение студентов профессионально-технического образования к академической специализации в Иордании

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Аннотация

Цель настоящего исследования – выявить отношение студентов профессионально-технического образования, обучающихся в университете прикладных наук Аль-Балка, к своей академической специализации, с учетом переменных, таких как пол, год обучения и акаде-

мический рейтинг. В качестве исследовательского инструмента была использована анкета, состоящая из 33 пунктов, которая измеряла отношение студентов к специализации профессионального образования. В исследовании принял участие 221 студент. Участники заполняли анкету в первом семестре 2019-2020 учебного года. Результаты показали, что в целом студенты положительно относятся к своей специализации профессионального образования: 24 пункта анкеты продемонстрировали положительное отношение, в 9 пунктах отношение было оценено как среднее. В ходе анализа не было установлено статистически значимых различий между отношением студентов к академической специализации с точки зрения исследуемых переменных: пол, год обучения (первый и второй курсы, третий и четвертый курсы) или академический рейтинг (удовлетворительно, хорошо, очень хорошо, отлично). Согласно рекомендациям автора, учебные планы должны быть комплексными. Разнообразие опыта, знаний и деятельности способствует дифференциации личности студента. В этой связи университеты и колледжи должны проводить различные мероприятия, отвечающие особенностям студентов, сохраняя принципы уважения и учитывая их склонности и желания.

Ключевые слова: отношение к специальности, академическая специализация, высшее учебное заведение, образование в университете, специализация профессионально-технического образования.

Introduction

Education plays a key role in society. A nation's progress and development depend on the efficiency and effectiveness of its educational system, and the success of institutions preparing and training depends on their ability to plan educational curricula through which students can be guided to the right educational and vocational tracks (Al-Shehri & Dhafer, 2000; Al-Abdallah, 2018; Hynes, 2019; Al-O'mairi & Al-Kubaisi, 2021).

There is no doubt that the institutions of higher education in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan attach great importance to educational specialties. This is especially the case for those that are characterized by their eagerness to build socially and psychologically integrated youth in addition to cognitive and vocational construction to serve their country in light of Islamic principles and sound doctrine. Al-Balqa Applied University Legislation is responsible for the policy of vocational and technical education in Jordan.

The challenges encountered in the modern era call for the advancement of the educational process to meet the transformations and developments produced by the technological revolution. This technology has become an instrument for comprehensive development in every educational system in the world, so programs must accommodate this revolution to become an effective instrument in an individual's development, meeting his or her needs and attitudes and enabling them to keep pace with these developments, and so contribute to the desired change (Al-Saud, 2010; Song and Jennifer, 2015; Zhang, 2017; Ghoul, 2020; Al-Zboun et al., 2020).

Vocational education plays an essential and undisputed role in the development of the educational learning process, adopted by many countries of the world. The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is an example of a developing country that cares about the improvement of the learner as an individual and a positive member of society. This study aimed to discover the real attitudes and motivations behind students' enrollment in this specialization.

Bani-Jaber (2004) and Mehrotra et al. (2009) confirm that since the students' attitudes towards the educational process, specialization or a field of study, greatly affect the success of this process or its failure, positive attitudes will provide the vocational-education students with the opportunity to acquire the skills, driving them to reflect, excel and be creative (Bou O'moud, 2016; Talafha, 2018).

Within the integrated system of vocational education one of the most important attributes of a vocational education teacher (besides, their specialization) is their ability to develop capabilities, knowledge and positive attitudes among students. This forces our

teacher training institutions to work to provide the greatest possible freedom for students to choose the majors and academic programs that they want to study, meeting their intellectual, social, and emotional needs and attitudes. It also requires that researchers study and measure students' attitudes towards their academic specializations, identifying those that contribute positively and effectively and so predict positive or negative prospects towards academic specialization. This helps the learner acquire the necessary skills for the learning process.

The aim of the study was to identify the trends of the vocational-education specialization students at Al-Balqa Applied University and examine their enrollment in their academic specialization from their point of view. A second aim was to identify the degree of different attitudes of students of the vocational education specialization towards joining their academic specialization. The study variables were: gender, the student's academic year (first and second years, third and fourth years), and the student's academic rating (acceptable and good, very good, and excellent).

It seems self-evident that identifying students' attitudes helps in identifying the degree of harmony and compatibility between the goals of the vocational education program and the aspirations of students. Furthermore, it demonstrates their willingness to grow and learn. Thus, obtaining adequate information on the nature of the attitudes of students of vocational education, can benefit decision-makers at the university, helping them take appropriate decisions to reorganize the specialization in a manner consistent with the students' aspirations and the job market. The significance of this study is in revealing students' attitudes toward enrolling in the specialization of vocational education, together with the relationship between attitudes and other variables such as gender, the student's academic year and the student's academic appreciation. This will provide information that can be used with confidence when planning university enrollment to match the attitudes, interests, and interests of students. Understanding these attitudes makes it possible to take measures to develop positive attitudes, deal with negative attitudes and modify or change them. The significance is greater because no study dealing with this category, investigating gender, the student's academic year, and the student's academic rating variables was found in the literature.

Previous Literature

Many studies attach great importance to attitudes in education in general, but few could be found in the field of vocational education concerning the current study variables. Ghoul (2020) conducted a study to identify the trends of university students towards their orientation to vocational education programs and its relationship to some variables including gender, age and university level at the National Institute for Professional Training in Algeria. The researcher used a descriptive method and questionnaire as the study instruments. The questionnaire comprised 19 items divided into three groups, distributed to 30 male and female students. The study found differences attributed to gender (favoring males), but no statistically significant differences attributed to the variables of age and university level.

Jones & Larke (2019) conducted a study to identify the factors that made Americans of African or Spanish origin choose agriculture as their university specialization. The study sample included 155 students. They found that some students did not choose the agricultural specialty because job opportunities in the agriculture and related specializations were few.

Wildman & Torres (2019) addressed the factors affecting the University of New Mexico male and female students (n=115), in the US, to choose the agricultural specialty.

The results showed that the students' previous experiences in the specialization and their willingness to work away from the office system were the highest influencing factors.

Al-Sayed's (2018) study aimed to reveal the relationship between the attitudes towards academic specialization and the anxiety of the vocational future for students of the Department of Special Education at King Faisal University in Saudi Arabia. This study included 250 male and female students who completed a questionnaire measuring their attitudes towards specialization and the scale of vocational future anxiety. It found a negative relationship between these variables and statistically significant differences between male and female students in their attitude towards specialization and anxiety about their vocational future. There was no significant difference among students of academic-year levels towards their attitude towards specialization and the anxiety about vocational future.

Another study conducted by Al-Sa'eedi and Mohsen (2017) identified the students' motives in joining the Department of Special Education at the College of Basic Education. A questionnaire was completed by 165 male and female students and the results showed that the students' motives towards their enrollment in their specialization were very high, in addition to having statistically significant differences in favor of the third and fourth academic years.

Williams (2017) conducted a study to identify the factors affecting university students to choose a social work major. The study sample comprised 50 students from California State University, USA. An open questionnaire was used and the results of the study indicated that one of the most important reasons for the specialization enrollment was living with individuals who practice this profession. Also, they wanted to practice social work and help others. The relevance of this specialization to their tendencies and attitudes helped them create new methods of social work in schools.

Further, a study conducted by Boglut, Rizeanua & Burtaverd (2015) aimed to verify the psychometric properties of the vocational orientation questionnaire for students of psychology at the university level. The study sample comprised 109 (32 male and 77 female) students from the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences at the University of Mayors in Romania. The results indicated that there is good internal consistency for the nine dimensions of the questionnaire. It demonstrated that the questionnaire is valid and useful in vocational guidance for psychology students. On the other hand, the results of the study indicated the importance of vocational guidance for university students in choosing a specialty that suits their capabilities, inclinations, and their attitudes.

Song & Jennifer (2015) conducted a study to deal with the influence of some of the factors that affect Asian and white American students to choose their university majors. They used a descriptive approach collecting data from 214 students. The results showed that the more highly economic majors or profitable jobs are chosen. The choice is influenced by the family. There were no differences between males and females in the factors affecting their choice of specialization.

Douglass and Duffy's (2015) study also aimed at identifying the relationship between the university students' attitude towards specialization and vocational adaptation. The study sample comprised 330 students from the University of Florida determining their vocational adaptation and attitude to academic specialization. It found that students who have a low attitude towards specialization showed a weak level of vocational adaptation in the future, emerging from the future anxiety, low confidence, and curiosity regarding their future profession.

Taber's and Blankemeyer's (2015) study aimed at identifying the degree of the contribution of both the vocational future and the functional adaptation to predicting vocational behavior among a sample of university students. The study sample comprised

113 students from Auckland University and the results indicated that their career behavior could be predicted by both the motivation towards work and academic adjustment and that when the student feels an adaptation in university study, his or her motivation is increased towards work in that field of specialization in the future.

Al-Saud's (2013) study investigated the attitudes of art education students in King Faisal University towards their enrollment in their academic specialization, and whether these attitudes differ following the academic level, branch and average in secondary school. The sample comprised 90 students. The methods were descriptive and also used a questionnaire. The results indicated that those students' attitudes towards the technical education specialization in the fields as a whole were positive, except for the vocational field. The results also showed statistically significant differences, attributed to the students' academic branch (scientific, literary), on each of the life attitude, social and vocational variables. They also showed apparent differences between the of students' grade averages on the instrument as a whole and between each field following the variable of the student's high school diploma.

Al-Khaza'li, Al-Momani and Al-Latif's (2010) study also revealed the attitudes of female students of Child Education at Al-Balqa Applied University to their academic specialization, and to reveal whether these attitudes differ according the college in which the student is taught and whether they differ according to level. The study used an instrument to measure the attitudes of 370 female students specialized in raising children in Irbid University Colleges and Ajloun University in Jordan to their specialization, and included five types of attitudes. The results showed that neutral attitudes among students towards their academic specialization on the attitudes as a whole and on each field of sub-attitudes. They also indicated that there were no differences in the attitudes of female students due to academic level, on the attitudes as a whole and all fields of sub-attitudes except for the attitudes towards the specialization of child education as science among other sciences. There were statistically significant differences ($\alpha = 0.05$) between the grades of students in the first year and the grades of students in the third and fourth years, and for students in the third and fourth years. The results of the study also indicated that there are no statistically significant differences in the attitudes of female students towards their specialization due to the college in which the female student was taught.

Finally, a study by Al-Awadi & Mohammad (2008) aimed at identifying the attitudes of students of the Department of Art Education towards their specialization at Sultan Qaboos University uncovered statistically significant differences between their responses attributable to gender and academic year variables, and the degree of participation in various technical activities. A scale was designed to include 40 items distributed equally in four areas. The sample included all 139 students of the Department of Art Education, and found that students' attitudes towards specialization are generally positive and strong. There were no statistically significant differences between the attitudes of male and female students towards specialization. But there was a positive increase in the attitudes of students in the first three years of study towards specialization in direct proportion to the level of study. The results also showed statistically significant differences in attitudes between students of the third and fourth academic levels in favor of the third academic level.

The current study has benefited from these previous studies in identifying the broad theoretical background, the scientific methodology, and the statistical instruments used. They helped to choose the appropriate method. Besides, it identified the general nature of the subjects to be university students. The current study was distinguished from these studies in being the first of its kind in Jordan to deal with an important category, namely students specializing in vocational education. No study dealing with this category,

investigating gender, the student's academic year, and the student's academic rating variables was found in the literature.

The research question

The vocational education specialization is considered one of the important aspects in the development of students' attitudes towards different aspects of their lives. It also contributes to preparing and raising well-educated children, provided that the student possesses the necessary skills and is convinced that he or she chooses to specialize because their affinity to the field. Their commitment to the field depends on the degree of their affiliation and their affection, inclination, and attitudes. The more positive the student's attitudes towards specialization, the greater his or her motivation to learn knowledge, and the easier the acquisition of skills and experiences. Hence, the attitudes of students who specialize in vocational education have an impact on their independent practice. The study addressed the following questions:

Q1: What are the attitudes of students of vocational education at Al-Balqa Applied University towards their enrollment in their academic specialization?

Q2: Do attitudes of students of vocational education at Al-Balqa Applied differ in their enrollment in their academic specialization due to their gender?

Q3: Do attitudes of students of vocational education at Al-Balqa Applied University differ in their enrollment in their academic specialization due to the questions student's school year (first and second year, third and fourth year)?

Q4: Do attitudes of students of vocational education at Al-Balqa Applied University differ in their enrollment in their academic specialization as a result of the academic evaluation of the student (acceptable, good, very good and excellent)?

To answer these study questions, three null hypotheses about the attitudes of the students of the vocational education specialization at the Al-Balqa Applied University towards their enrollment in their academic specialization were developed:

1. There are no statistically significant differences at the level of significance ($\alpha = 0.05$) among the averages of the study sample responses attributed to gender (males, females).

2. There are no statistically significant differences at the level of significance ($\alpha = 0.05$) among the averages of the study sample responses attributable to the student's academic year (first and second year, third and fourth year).

3. There are no statistically significant differences at the level of significance ($\alpha = 0.05$) among the averages of the study sample responses attributable to the student's academic evaluation variable (acceptable and good, very good and excellent)

Conventional and Procedural Definitions:

The study included some terms that should be defined:

1. Attitude: is the result of student's feelings towards joining vocational education specialization that makes him or her reach a decision (or lack of it) to join this specialization, as a result of direct experience of it.

2. Vocational Education specialization: This is one of the academic specializations offered by Al-Balqa Applied University within Irbid University Colleges and Al-Shoubak University. The duration of the study is eight semesters, where the last is field training. The department offers a variety of courses that combine theoretical knowledge and applied skill, in addition to some courses that are delivered from outside the department. The specialization grants a bachelor's degree in the specialization of vocational education to teach at the basic education stage.

3. Attitudes towards academic specialization: These are the thoughts, perceptions, and feelings held by the student as measured on the scale of attitudes used for this study.

Scope of the Study

1. The objective limit: to identify the attitudes of students of vocational education at Al-Balqa Applied University towards their perception of enrollment in their academic specialization.

2. Spatial limit: The study was applied at Irbid University College, which is one of the colleges of Al-Balqa Applied University in which the specialty of vocational education is located.

3. Time limit: The study was applied in the first semester of the academic year (2019-2020).

4. Human limit: The study was applied to students who specialize in vocational education who are physically present for the study.

Method and field procedures

A descriptive survey was employed. This section includes a description of the subjects and their method of selection, as well as a description of the study's application, procedures, design and statistical treatments used to extract the results.

Study Community:

The population comprised all students enrolled in the specialty of vocational education at Al-Balqa Applied University. They were 387 male and female students at all different levels of study (data from Department of Admissions and Registration, AL-Balqa Applied University 2019-20).

The Study Sample:

The study sample comprised all the 221 students enrolled in the professional education department at Irbid University, the University of AL-Balqa Applied University. Table 1 shows the numbers in each category.

Table 1. Distribution of the study sample by variables

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Categories</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Gender	Male	103	46.6
	Female	118	53.4
Academic Year	First and Second	98	44.4
	Third and Fourth	123	55.6
Academic Rating	Acceptable and Good	136	61.5
	Very Good and Excellent	85	38.5
Total		221	100

Study variables

Independent Variables:

* Gender has two categories: male and female.

* The student's academic year has three levels: (first and second year), (third and fourth year).

* University appreciation has two levels: (acceptable and good), (very good and excellent).

Dependent Variables

Attitudes of students of vocational education in Al-Balqa Applied University towards their academic specialization, measured by the students' responses to the study instrument.

Study instrument

Based on previous studies and theoretical literature in this field (Al-Sayed, 2018; Al-Saeedi & Mohsen, 2017; Al-Saud, 2013), an instrument was developed to measure the attitudes of students of vocational education towards their academic specialization. This initially comprised 37 items to measure the perceived attitudes of students of vocational education at Al-Balqa Applied University towards their enrollment in their academic specialization.

Instrument Validity

The validity of the study instrument was verified through the following steps:

Referees' validity: After preparing the study instrument in its initial form, it was presented to 10 arbitrators, members of the teaching staff, who are specialized in vocational education curricula, teaching methods, curricula, general teaching methods, and educational psychology, to express their views on how the items relate to the study instrument, and the extent of clarity of the wording of the item, or adding any necessary item, and deleting any unnecessary item. A consensus was adopted requiring 85% of the referees to accept any item, thereby removing, adding, modifying and merging some items. In its final form the instrument comprises 33 items that measure the perceived attitudes of students of vocational education specialization towards their academic specialization.

Internal Consistency: The study instrument was distributed to a survey sample (n=30) of male and female students from the same study community but from outside the original sample to verify the validity of the internal consistency of the questionnaire. The Pearson correlation coefficients between each of the instrument's items using the statistical program (SPSS) are shown in table 2.

Table 2. The correlation coefficient for each item of the study instrument with the overall degree of the instrument

<i>Item</i>	<i>Coefficient Correlation</i>	<i>Significance Level</i>
1-	0.556	0.01
2-	0.537	0.01
3-	0.651	0.01
4-	0.591	0.01
5-	0.582	0.01
6-	0.668	0.01
7-	0.561	0.01
8-	0.501	0.01
9-	0.523	0.01
10-	0.547	0.01
11-	0.529	0.01
12-	0.668	0.01
13-	0.610	0.01
14-	0.502	0.01

15-	0.654	0.01
16-	0.520	0.01
17-	0.611	0.01
18-	0.682	0.01
19-	0.512	0.01
20-	0.599	0.01
21-	0.503	0.01
22-	0.588	0.01
23-	0.540	0.01
24-	0.519	0.01
25-	0.594	0.01
26-	0.566	0.01
27-	0.555	0.01
28-	0.598	0.01
29-	0.500	0.01
30-	0.542	0.01
31-	0.467	0.01
32-	0.642	0.01
33-	0.533	0.01

This confirmed that all items are statistically significant at the level (0.01), and that the study instrument has a high degree of internal consistency.

The instrument reliability was verified in two ways:

The internal consistency coefficient was calculated using the Cronbach Alpha Coefficient for the instrument levels as a whole. The indications of the reliability of the instrument were calculated by applying the instrument to 30 students from the same study community but from outside the original sample, and the instrument was re-applied with a two-week time interval. For the instrument scores as a whole (0.89) and all of the values, were statistically significant, as shown in table 3.

Table 3. The Pearson correlation coefficient values, calculated by repetition, and the Cronbach Alpha Coefficient for the scale of attitudes towards the specialty of vocational education as a whole

<i>Pearson correlation coefficient by repetition</i>	<i>Cronbach Alpha Coefficient</i>	<i>Items Numbers</i>	<i>The Domain</i>
0.89	0.87	33	Attitudes as a whole

Significance level ($\alpha = 0.01$).

Instrument Correction

The students answered on a five-point Likert scale: strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree. Scores (1, 2, 3, 4, 5) were given, respectively, for the negative items, while scores (5, 4, 3, 2, 1) respectively were given for the positive ones. Using this method, the lowest score obtained by the respondent on the instrument was 33 and the highest score obtained was 165. The scores were divided into three bands (negative, average and positive attitudes) with negative attitudes are from 1-2.33, average attitudes from 2.34-3.67, and positive attitudes from 3.68-5.

Study Procedures

The study followed the following steps and procedures:

- The study sample was determined to include all students of vocational education currently at Irbid University College affiliated to Al-Balqa Applied University.
- The study instrument, a questionnaire of 33 items, in its final form, was prepared to measure the students' attitudes to their academic specialization.
- After obtaining approval from the Deanship of Irbid University College, the study instrument was applied to the subjects.
- After retrieving the questionnaires, the data and students' responses were analyzed and processed using SPSS.

Analysis

The following statistics were used: Arithmetical means and standard deviations, (T) Test for differences between two independent groups, ANOVA Test, and Tukey Test to make dimensional comparisons.

Q1: What are the vocational- education students' attitudes towards their academic specialization, at Al-Balqa Applied University, from their points of view?

To answer this question, arithmetic means and standard deviations for students' grades were calculated on the study instrument as a whole, and for each of its items as shown in table 4.

Table 4. Arithmetic means and standard deviations for each instrument items and the field as a whole in descending order of arithmetic mean

<i>Rank</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Arithmetic means</i>	<i>Standard Deviations</i>	<i>Attitude</i>
1	Studying a vocational education specialization provides me with a suitable income after graduation	4.87	0.58	Positive
2	I enrolled in a vocational education major to secure a job after graduation	4.81	0.68	Positive
3	I would like to deepen my relationships with experts in the field of vocational education and its diverse sub-fields	4.72	0.66	Positive
4	I advise my colleagues to join the vocational education major	4.66	0.58	Positive
5	I joined the vocational education major because the field of work suits me	4.60	0.48	Positive
6	I think that the specialization of vocational education has to do with the individual's daily behavior	4.59	0.69	Positive
7	I do not want to change the specialty of vocational education	4.47	0.63	Positive
8	I do not think that my conviction will decrease after, actually, engaging in the vocational education specialty	4.42	0.61	Positive
9	I feel that joining a vocational education degree will improve my financial income	4.30	0.55	Positive
10	I believe that no person who is not specialized in vocational education can study courses of the same field	4.25	0.58	Positive

11	The specialization of vocational education reflects a good social appearance in society	4.17	0.59	Positive
12	Vocational education is a high source of income	4.10	0.57	Positive
13	Society needs to specialize in vocational education	4.03	0.52	Positive
14	I would like to complete my higher education in the major of vocational education	3.91	0.55	Positive
15	I like vocational education specialty before I start studying it	3.88	0.50	Positive
16	I feel that a vocational teacher is a leading figure in school and society	3.85	0.51	Positive
17	Studying the vocational education specialization matches my desire	3.82	0.59	Positive
18	I would like to know what is new in the field of vocational education	3.79	0.58	Positive
19	Attending the specialization lectures is often voluntary	3.78	0.66	Positive
20	I know the specialty of vocational education well before I join it	3.76	0.56	Positive
21	I was instructed to enroll in a vocational education major depending on my average in high secondary school	3.74	0.69	Positive
22	I would like to watch TV when it shows programs related to vocational education and its disciplines	3.72	0.61	Positive
23	I feel happy when I hear about scientific success in the field of vocational education	3.71	0.56	Positive
24	I feel that my enrollment in a vocational education degree will be self-fulfilling	3.68	0.63	Positive
25	The specialization of vocational education increases the individual's self-confidence	3.67	0.60	Average
26	I enrolled in vocational education at the university with a wish for learning	3.65	0.58	Average
27	I would love to listen to an expert in the field of vocational education through various media	3.63	0.54	Average
28	I enrolled in a vocational education major to be with my colleagues	3.57	0.67	Average
29	The negative image of the vocational education specialty is justified in society	3.47	0.61	Average
30	I joined the vocational education major to fulfill my family's desire	3.41	0.58	Average
31	I think my contributions will be limited to the specialty of vocational education after graduation	3.36	0.56	Average
32	My colleagues appreciate me when they know that I joined the vocational education major	3.25	0.50	Average
33	The future of vocational education is mysterious and unknown	3.18	0.61	Average
Overall score		3.96	0.68	Positive

The results shown in table 4 indicate that students' attitudes towards vocational education of their specialization for the instrument as a whole were positive. The means of the study sample scores for the instrument as a whole were 3.9) with a standard deviation 0.68.

The students' perceptions were of a positive attitude on 24 items (arithmetic means ranging from 3.68 to 4.87. However, the scores for 9 items indicated an average attitude (arithmetic means from 3.18 to 3.67).

A possible explanation is that students elected to study this specialization because they had beliefs in this specialization and its role in public life. This is probably due to the data in the study plan which indicates the importance of the specialization of vocational education and its role in life via meeting the aspirations of students in the personal, scientific and life aspects. A further consideration is that the student, at the beginning of their enrollment in the university, is trying to show their personality and achievements. Some students try to join any academic discipline that achieves these goals before looking for another specialty. Students see this specialization that provide greater work opportunities than other disciplines. Given that there are large needs for this specialization, especially in the field of general education, it means that students have a positive view towards this specialization because of the job opportunities compared to those for other graduates specializing in other disciplines.

Q2: Do the vocational- education students' attitudes towards their academic specialization, at Al-Balqa Applied University, differ according to gender?

To answer this question, arithmetic means and standard deviations of students' attitudes towards their academic specialization by gender were calculated in terms of the instrument items as a whole.

Table 5. Arithmetic means and standard deviations of students' scores of the study instrument as a whole following gender (male and female) variable

Domain	Male				T	Freedom Scores	Sig Level
	Arithmetic Means	Standard Dev.	Arithmetic Means	Standard Dev			
Attitudes as a whole	4.02	0.37	3.93	0.30	-1.084	76	0.342

Table 5 shows that there are no statistically significant differences among the vocational-education students' attitudes towards their academic specialization, attributable to gender regarding the items of the instrument as a whole. This result can be explained by the fact that both males and females, hold positive ideas and outlook towards their academic specialization. This result may arise from their realization of the importance of this specialization and its practicality. Based on this result, we accept the first null hypothesis of the study.

Q3: Do the vocational-education students' perceived attitudes towards their academic specialization, at Al-Balqa Applied University, differ according to their academic year (first,

To answer this question, the arithmetic means and standard deviations of students' attitudes towards their academic specialization by academic year variable (first, second, third and fourth) were calculated.

Table 6. Arithmetic means and standard deviations of students' scores of the study instrument as a whole following the student's academic year (first, second, third and fourth) variable

Domain	First and Second Years		Third and Fourth Years		T	Freedom Scores	Significance Level
	Arithmetic Means	Standard Dev.	Arithmetic Means	Standard Dev.			
Attitudes as a whole	3.94	0.47	3.91	0.41	-1.031	79	0.458

Table 6 shows that there are no statistically significant differences among the vocational- education students' attitudes towards their academic specialization, attributable to the student's academic year (first, second, third and fourth).

The likely explanation is that students of the vocational education specialization, regardless of their academic level, are positive about their academic specialization because of an optimistic view of future labor opportunities, compared to other majors that are considered stagnant and have no room for employment. In particular, the vocational education specialization is one of the required specializations in the field of basic education in different schools. Al-Balqa Applied University's track is moving towards vocational and technical specializations of which the vocational education specialization is an example. Based on this result, we accept the second null hypothesis of the study.

Q4: Do the vocational- education students' attitudes towards their academic specialization, at Al-Balqa Applied University, differ in perception according to the student's academic rating (acceptable, good, very good and excellent)?

To answer this question, arithmetic means and standard deviations of students' attitudes towards their academic specialization attributable to the student's academic rating (acceptable, good, very good and excellent) were calculated.

Table 7. Arithmetic averages and standard deviations of student scores on the study instrument as a whole by academic rating (acceptable, good, very good and excellent)

Domain	Acceptable and good		Very good and excellent		T	Freedom Scores	Significance Level
	Arithmetic Means	Standard Dev.	Arithmetic Means	Standard Dev.			
Attitudes as a whole	3.86	0.67	3.94	0.59	-1.021	89	0.529

Table 7 shows that there are no statistically significant differences among the vocational- education students' attitudes attributable to their academic rating (acceptable, good, very good and excellent).

This result can be explained by the rapprochement of the students' rates and achievement in secondary school, giving a convergence of students' views towards the vocational education specialty. The result may also show a convergence of the environment, culture, customs and traditions that often affects an individual's attitudes. The university environment and the study of general courses, along with some specialization courses, helps student to be integrated and willing participants in the learning process, regardless of their academic level. This is especially in the specialty of vocational education which is more practical than based on theory and class teaching. Based on this result, we accept the third null hypothesis of the study.

Conclusion

Attitudes towards academic specialization are a reality that affect the various fields of academic study. The disparity in the sources and levels of these attitudes particularly affects the educational humanitarian field. This is demonstrated by many studies comparing attitudes towards academic specialization which consider several tasks, responsibilities, and relationships. The results of the current study demonstrated that the students' attitudes the specialization of vocational education were generally positive. It also found that there were no statistically significant differences among the students' attitudes towards their enrollment in their academic specialization in relation to the study variables of gender, the student's academic year, and academic prowess.

Recommendations

- The university academic program should include non-curricular activities aiming at developing students' knowledge, experiences, inclinations, and interests towards vocational education.
- Developing the study plan to be more comprehensive, because the diversity of experiences, knowledge, and activities increase differentiation of the student's personality. This requires the university and the college provision of activities that are diverse and flexible to suit the characteristics of students, respecting their inclinations and desires, meeting and satisfying them.
- Encouraging the faculty members of vocational education specialty to create and support positive attitudes among students towards their academic specialization.
- Inviting researchers to conduct other studies that reveal students' attitudes toward their different academic specializations in other colleges and universities to compare these attitudes with those within Al-Balqa Applied University students'.

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