

Full Length Research Paper

Reasons for avoidance of vocational education in Jordan

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The study aimed to identify the factors that lead students to avoid joining Vocational Education (VE) in Jordan. A pilot study was conducted, then a 39-item questionnaire was developed, and its validity and reliability were ensured. The reasons included were divided into personal, social, economic, educational and vocational domains. The questionnaire was administered to 1050 students of the 10th basic grade. Results showed that the factors included in the questionnaire contribute at a medium level to students' avoidance of VE. The highest contributing factors were the vocational factors of which the most contributing factor was the nature of the jobs that they had to take up. The second was the domain of personal factors, the highest of which was the discrepancy between students' academic ambitions and the nature of vocational work. The third was the social factors, the highest of which was the effect of peers and their academic orientations. The fourth in level were the economic factors with the fluctuating nature of the income for the prospective careers of those who join VE being of the highest influence. The least contributing domain was the educational domain with the negative image of vocational schools being of the highest influence. The study produced some recommendations to mitigate avoidance of VE.

Key words: Avoidance of vocational education, vocational education, career choice.

INTRODUCTION

Thinking of selecting the educational stream is a vital issue for students especially at the end of the basic education stage that represents the medium that delivers the education inputs in its two academic and vocational branches representing its main outputs. Choosing the vocational stream is a very particular process for the individual since it contributes in his/her career success, which is in return reflected in his/her accommodation and stability. The student's choice of his/her study stream

leads to his/her choice of future's career, thus it is considered one of the most important decisions in one's life since it almost determines his life style, social status, and occupational ladder. It also has its own dimensions and effects on all of their life.

The world labour market is exposed to rapid changes as a result of the successive technical, economic, and political and developmental changes which influences the career choice because of the increase in the scientific,

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vocational and practical specializations. Careers have become multiple and wide in their fields, and each career began to have its own study specializations and characteristics. Our age is considered a changeable age where the world's lives up to renewed industrial and technological revolutions. Future also holds a lot in the world of career, which means that there would be several careers that are different from those available today with new requirements that force individuals to change their careers several times during their practical life (Jeynes, 2007; Al-Masri, 2003; MacAskill, 2014).

Because there is a close relationship between education programmes of all their branches and the kind of job, a student can be involved in the future. Therefore, education should provide them with a model of occupational choice, which requires that students and parents should be aware of the labour market and the available occupational opportunities, in addition to providing the right information that may help them in selecting the future educational stream correctly (Liu et al., 2014).

The relationship between the general education and transition to the workplace has been raising a big debate through the last decades. The 'Vocationalisation Debate' is a controversy that has developed internationally since the 1960s, mainly concerning the provision of vocational education at secondary school level. Different issues are related to this debate. These include cultural issues relating to the status of vocational education as seen by the students, the teachers and the wider community including the students' parents. Other issues are economic, regarding the cost of the programs in comparison with that of academic education; and some functional issues concerning purely vocational schooling versus purely academic schooling or the provision of diversified curriculum (Hayward, 2004).

Increasing evidence has come to the conclusion that vocationalising the school curriculum is not viable (Grubb, 2004). Since the mid-1970s, aid agencies such as the World Bank started showing significant shifts in their sponsorship from vocational to non-formal education and other programs (Hayward and James, 2004). Most of the evidence castigating the inclusion of vocational courses as part of school curriculum seems to be based on economic arguments. It was found that vocational courses are expensive. Significant contributions to the debate have concluded that policies emphasising the provision of vocational education in schools are doomed to failure. They contend that schools should concentrate on increasing access to and improving the quality of general education. However, the suggestion to delay providing vocational education until after secondary education implies denying the majority of pupils the opportunity to acquire even basic vocational skills (Hayward, 2004). Although the bulk of literature provides evidence counter to a policy of vocationalising the school

curriculum, protagonists have provided counter-evidence in support of its provision. Although acknowledging that vocational subjects were substantially more expensive than academic.

Thus, the duty of preparing the individual through providing an educational strategy that links between the school and the work lies on the educational system. This is called "Education for Career" which focuses on providing students with the necessary attitude and skills to accommodate with the various changes. This includes: Academic basic skills, the skills of decision-making and job-seeking, getting a job and keeping it, good work habits, and a system of positive personal values towards the job (Galliot et al., 2015; Twarawneh, 2000). There are various reasons which influence the individual's vocational choices such as:

The occupational ladder at the labour market

Individuals usually begin with an occupation from which he/she is promoted up an accelerated ladder most of the time where responsibility and salaries increase and the work conditions get better. This is called the occupational ladder. Promotion from one position or level to another within the occupational ladder requires a period of time that may be short or long according to the occupation, and according to the orientations, motivations and opportunities available to that individual. Sometimes, that individual may move one or more steps backwards because of the difficult requirements of the new job. That same individual may jump over trespassing some jobs speeding up his progress up that ladder because of his distinguished activity or any other circumstances (Liao and Ji, 2015). At the labour market, experience and seniority plays a conspicuous role in promotion, in addition to the job and production conditions at the factory. Whenever production increases, this leads to an increase in the demand for higher level occupations at the occupational ladder, especially from those who worked in the factory.

Therefore, the obviousness of the occupational ladder and the kinds of the available careers at each level, the requirements of entering such jobs and the reasons that help to be promoted in them are necessary to be aware of because they influence the individuals' occupational decisions (Amir and Gati, 2006; Atwan, 2001). If curricula worked all through the study years on making individuals' vocational decisions more positive and more compatible with their status quo and with their interests and abilities, they would have achieved one of the most important objectives of learning in life (Mahasneh, 2011).

Income and social class

Parents are keen to teach their children, but the social

classes under the poverty line mostly find it so difficult to pay for education costs. Therefore, they refuse to making their sons involve in the labour market at an early age. This deprives them from progressing in education. Thus, the poorest individuals and those with low level of education are at the lower levels of the vocational ladder where the work conditions are not attractive (Wilson, 2011; Rossetti, 1990). This leads to an increase in the percentage of those who quit the labour market to join the unemployed individuals. As a whole, the opposite may take place (even among the poor). Some poor people let their sons continue their education with the aim of moving them away from the unattractive work conditions which they themselves might have experienced, and so they try to help their children approach the university education (Watkins and Noble, 2008; Wilson, 2011). When they are graduated, they are surprised to discover that they can't find any job opportunity (Israel et al., 2001). Thus, such parents had unintentionally harmed their children and themselves, because of the lack of comprehensive awareness of the job conditions and their dynamic change.

Gender differences

Females are inclined to take up office jobs more than their inclination towards manual work (Walker, 2005). They accept less wages than males. There are some jobs which are excluded to females such as cosmetics careers, nursery, kindergarten and secretary careers. There are also some jobs which are excluded to males such as the industrial jobs of production, maintenance, transportation, storing and others. In the Islamic communities along with conservative communities in general, this custom is available reflecting commitment to the religion teachings, customs and habits, (Cheung and Dimple, 2012; Al-Saaideh and Al-Zyouud, 2009; Sikora and Saha, 2009). There is nothing to prevent its being available. The researcher doesn't see any use in seeking to answer the strangers calls to open up all work fields for both sexes since it contradicts with the social role practised by both males and females in the society. It also contradicts with our religion, habits and customs. In general, studies showed that students themselves, at the upper basic stage and at the secondary stage in Jordan, expressed their desire to get trained on jobs that are fit for their social roles (Al-Saaideh, 2011).

Influence of family and friends

Many believe that entering a chosen job depends mainly on family and peers' support. Since family and peers belong almost to the same social class, and since the social class is closely related to the vocational field, the

availability of information about these careers and job opportunities is limited to such careers. These job opportunities lie within the knowledge of the family and peers (Israel et al., 2001). Nevertheless, the more the curriculum works on providing information for all, and works on increasing awareness, the less influential this factor will be (Watkins and Noble, 2008).

Vocational counselling and occupational status careers

These are classified into high level if their educational requirements are high, and if the income is also high, and low level if they require manual work (Israel et al., 2001). Counsellors are inclined to encourage students to choose a career preferred by their parents (Tomlinson, 2012). If counsellors commended that some careers are better than others, they would reduce the chances of the students' choice. Therefore, adequate information must be provided about the various careers and work conditions in a neutral way. School advisors must foster work values (Liu et al., 2014). In general, the more vocational guidance and counselling work on making the individual join a career that fits his/her needs, interests and the labour market are provided to students, the more a student will be safe of committing a mistake in making his/her vocational decision (Sikora and Saha, 2011).

Abilities

Individual abilities vary greatly. To increase individuals' options of careers, such abilities should be developed as much as possible (Unterhalter, 2003). The problem lies in discovering such abilities. If such abilities remain potential, the students' options will be less than that even if there were vocational programs at the schools where they study (New South Wales Education and Communities, 2014; Walker, 2005).

Thus, the curriculum activities, whether in the Vocational Education (VE) course or others must help learners in discovering their mental and physical abilities to work on developing and directing them towards work and achievement, in addition to providing accumulative records to help them and the teachers in knowing such abilities to build on them so that they mature by the time the students had reached the end of the student's school age (Keating et al., 2012). Thus, they would be ready to choose the future specialization or to take up a career that is suitable for them. Individuals' joining the aptitudes they practised at school such as the players, artists, computer specialists and others is a living evidence of that. Any way, we rarely see that the educational establishments respond to such interest to open up wider horizons of various vocational options for individuals. No

matter how wide the vocational options and opportunities opened in front of individuals who don't realize their interests, they would be very narrow (Lent et al., 2000; Tarawneh, 2000; Atwan, 2001).

VE has not greatly developed in the Arab World. On the contrary, it improved slowly because of the educational policy connected with general political trends, as a result of transferring the educational policy at the developed countries without taking into consideration the conditions of such countries (aAbdel- Raheem et al., 2010). Separation between the general academic education and VE, in addition to looking down on manual work, and the extreme weakness of the job establishments constitute the main reasons for the weakness of the VE in the Arab World (Al-Adwan, 2009). With the increase of the development movement, it became vital to care for human cadres to qualify them to administer the establishments and projects of the vocational work. Thus, reconsideration of the educational policies is a must to find a new vision to promote this purpose (Mahasneh, 2011; Tweissi, 2013).

Countries issued legislations related to VE in order to include it in the curriculum from a very young age to draw students' attention, and to help them know their interests and abilities. In this way, VE became a part of the General Education after its low status in the educational process (Galliot et al., 2015).

In spite of the official care of VE, the Jordanian society still looks down on it when compared with the academic education which is highly valued and respected. Mrayyan (2010) points out that "despite the comprehensive scientific change witnessed by our society, the look towards the VE is still negative. Since the general opinion of VE is still unattractive to students and parents, there is an urgent need to implement solutions that may contribute in improving this opinion. This was asserted in the seventh priority of the "Sector of Employment, Training, and VE in Jordan"; which states that:

"It is necessary to enhance the image of careers of VE and Training programs through enhancing awareness of the importance of these sectors" (NET, 2011; Ministry of Labor, 2011).

With the emergence of the economic development plans in Jordan during the 1990s, the programs and streams of Secondary General educational and technical education became plentiful with the inclusion of new specializations that fit with the technological advances and labour market requirements. The most important update in the school curricula is adopting the approach of having one curriculum with complementary teaching and training units or qualifying modules based on competency. Such modules are adopted in the applied secondary education. They include theoretical and technical information in addition to practical training to achieve a group of training

competencies that fit for the vocational level required at the labour market (ALECSO, 1998; Alsaydeh, 2002). The Ministry of Education worked on the extension of the VE through two main programs for vocational secondary education:

1. Comprehensive Secondary VE which is a two-year program after passing the 10th basic grade. At the end of it, students sit for the exam of the General Certificate of Secondary Examination (GCSE). This certificate allows students to work or to join higher education at universities and technical colleges in their specializations.
2. Secondary Applied VE which is also a two-year program after passing the 10th basic grade, but this program does not qualify students for the exam of the GCSE. Instead, they obtain a school certificate from where they were trained. Nevertheless, they can sit for the GCSE Examination one year after completion of the training program (Al-Adwan, 2009; Yusuf, 2012).

There are various bodies that care about VE in Jordan such as:

1. Schools from the 1st basic grade up to the 10th basic grade (the basic stage) who teach the Pre-VE subject (PVE). It consists of different domains; (health and general safety, general life and domestics, Engineering industries and light maintenance, agriculture and environment, economy and technology, tourism and hospitality) (Al-saaideh, 2013).
2. Vocational schools for the 1st and 2nd secondary vocational grades. This is called VE (Secondary stage). The program is provided in four domains (industrial, agricultural, hospitality, and home economics). Students are graduated as skilled workers according to the occupational ladder in Jordan (Yusuf, 2012).
3. The Vocational Training Centers that turn out skilled, workers with limited skills, and technicians according to courses with various durations (Al-Mahasneh and Al-Saaideh, 2015).
4. Community colleges (Technical Education) that graduate technicians of diploma degree in various vocational specializations (Al-Mahasneh and Al-Saaideh, 2015).
5. Other parties in the Private Sector such as the Electricity Company, the Communication Companies and the Royal Forces turn out technicians for their employment to satisfy their needs of vocational specializations (Al-Mahasneh and Al-Saaideh, 2015). Figure 1 shows the relationship between the educational levels and the occupational levels in the Jordanian VE provision.

According to UNESCO- UNEVOC (2012), al-Raggad (2005) and the European Training Foundation (2006) there are different aspect to the VE promotion in Jordan

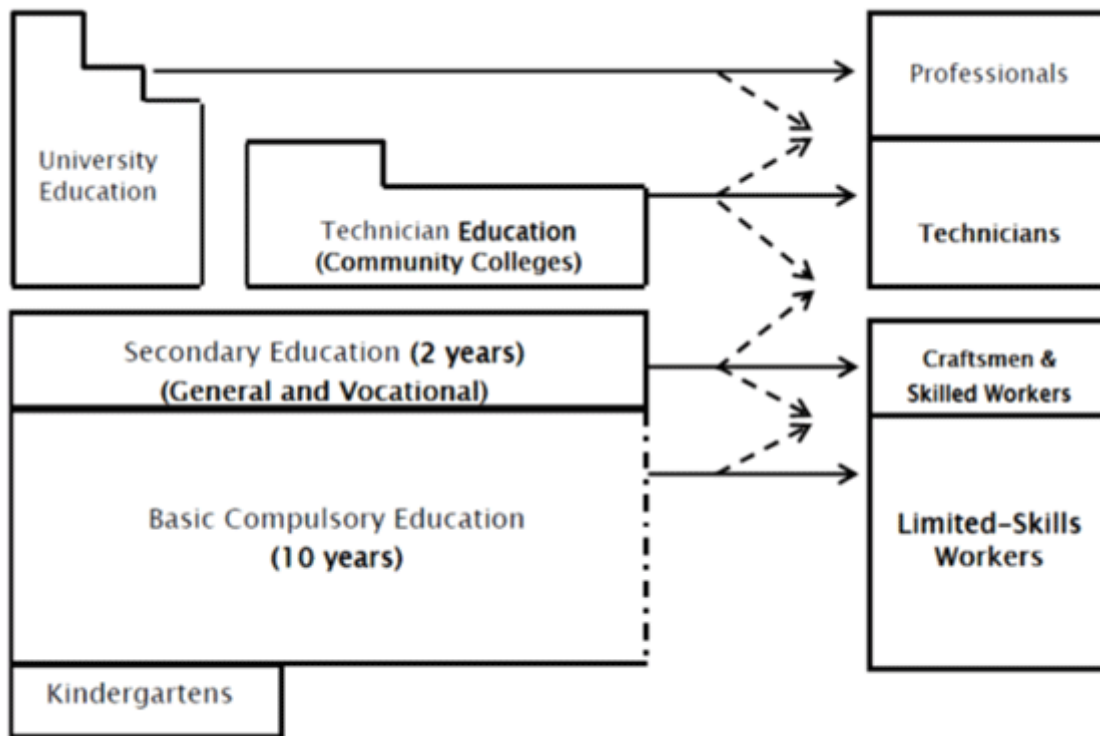


Figure 1. Relationship between the educational levels and occupational levels (Source: World TVET Database - Country Profiles- Jordan).

which are:

1. To have a related course in school education starting from early grades called Vocational education. However, this course has many problems in its curriculum design and implementation.
2. To have a vocational guidance committee in the school that plays a role in guiding students towards appropriate educational and career choices in their future. It was ascertained that this committee is not adequately activated.
3. Launch initiatives from time to time so as to provide job opportunities for people including upskilling and qualification initiatives that are usually implemented cooperatively by the governmental bodies, the formal and private training providers, and the private sector. These initiatives are slow in achieving the targets since Jordanian VE graduates do not have the appropriate aptitude to work in vocational sites.
4. To reform legislations concerning acceptance of vocational education and training graduates in the tertiary education. Although this increased the numbers of students who enroll in VE programmes, minority of them achieve enough GPA to join the university education, and they do not wish to join the vocational work.
5. To try to disseminate awareness of the importance of manual and vocational work through the public media,

but the current programmes are not strong enough to achieve the target.

Despite all these aspects of promotion of VE, learners still avoid to enroll in its programmes. Also, majority of those who enroll in VE programmes take them as a bridge to join university education- not to join the vocational work sector (Al-Tweissi, 2013). The employment and TVET (E-TVET) Strategy (2005) sets the following targets in TVET for the period of 2006 to 2015 (UNESCO- UNEVOC, 2012):

1. Adopt a two-pillar approach in planning for employment and TVET considering:
2. The characteristics and needs of the labour market, and (2) the abilities and needs of the trainees;
3. Develop the capacity of TVET agencies in line with their roles in planning, policy design, and resource development, as well as activities related to follow-up, monitoring, evaluation and networking;
4. Diversify the number and type of TVET providers and ensure their coordination and cooperation;
5. Promote women's participation in TVET and encourage their involvement at the planning and executive level;
6. Encourage media's promotion of TVET as a way of enhancing positive attitudes towards vocational and

technical professions, and towards women's participation in TVET training and employment;

7. Initiate, institutionalise and upgrade channels between the demand and supply side of TVET - including legislation, information and resource development systems, occupational classification and standards, career counselling and employment services, etc.

8. Promote TVET research by cooperating with universities and other TVET stakeholders.

9. Consider and apply international best practices in TVET with the objective of developing national planning capabilities.

10. Develop legislative tools and create an adequate legal framework for TVET.

11. Develop organisational structures that link general education and TVET allowing for greater flexibility of the TVET system.

12. Highlight and promote women's role in TVET.

13. Establish the Higher Council for Human Resources Development to undertake responsibilities related to planning, policy-making, and coordination of human resource development (HRD) at the national level; and establish the E-TVET council to undertake activities related to planning, policy-making and coordination for employment and TVET at the national level

In a response to the national needs, His Majesty King Abdullah launched the National Strategy for Employment and its executive program for 2011 to 2020 in 2012, which focuses on helping youth find suitable jobs. The strategy aims to support programmes designed to provide graduates with funding to carry out pilot projects across the Kingdom as well as establishing start-ups. Moreover, the National Strategy for Employment has developed solutions and practical mechanisms to address unemployment by providing and expanding vocational training programmes that allow paid training in collaboration with the private sector (UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2012).

The issue of students' avoidance of joining VE in Jordan has attracted the interest of researchers since the last two decades of the last century. Mdanat and Naser (1982) aimed to explore the effect of the socioeconomic reasons, father educational level and students' achievement on the attitudes of the 3rd preparatory male students towards VE. Results indicated that students' attitudes towards VE are not significantly influenced by the difference in the family income levels, the levels of parents' education and students' achievements.

Al-Shawaqfah (1991) conducted a study aiming at exploring the Jordanian Community attitudes toward crafts education, and their relation with the variables of (individual's educational level, gender, and the different careers they had taken up). The results indicated that there was significant difference among the people of the Jordanian community regarding craftsman education

which can be attributed to the various careers they had taken up and for the benefit of the two reasons related to manufacturing industries. There were also significant differences of attitudes among Jordanians towards craftsman education which can be attributed to the difference in individuals' university education with no significant difference due to the gender differences. A study by Al-Ja'nini (1992) explored the 10th basic grade students' attitudes, and concluded that there was a positive influence towards VE with no effect of the variables of gender, place of residence, and of parents' level of education and the nature of their work on the children's attitudes towards such kind of education.

During the past decades, a number of Jordanian scholars addressed students' attitudes towards VE in general. Al-Sabaibah (1998) studied revealed that students' attitudes towards VE were positive with no difference due to gender or level of achievement, but with difference due to the level of parents' education. Al-Banawi and Al-Ghazwi (1999) also conducted a study to explore students' attitudes towards VE regarding social status, economical aspect of education and the possibility of providing job opportunities for its graduates. The study results revealed that VE had a negative social status among the study sample with insignificant differences between males and females towards the social status of the VE. Students' attitudes towards the VE ability to provide financial returns were positive with a significant difference of students' attitudes towards the financial returns of VE in the light of gender and the level of the family income variables. Most of the study sample stated that the family conditions influence students' attitudes towards VE, and that such attitudes differ according to the level of the family income. Al-Alwan (2001) also conducted a study to explore the status quo of the 1st Secondary Vocational students' attitudes towards VE in rural and urban areas. Attitudes were found to be positive, and students' attitudes in urban areas were more positive. There were no significant differences in students' attitudes that can be attributed to the career type of parents, their educational level, and the family monthly income. There were also significant differences in the students' attitudes towards VE that are attributed to students' way of joining VE mostly for the optional.

In Palestine, Abu-Asbah (2005) studied the main problems of VE at the vocational secondary schools from the point of view of teachers. The results showed no significant differences regarding the VE problems that can be attributed to gender or class variables. Migdadi (2007) conducted a study to explore the VE reality in Jordan, its most important problems and ways of improving it. Despite the medium positive attitude disclosed by the study, it showed that there are positive attitudes towards the development of VE in Jordan in the future. Al-Farah and Abu-Samaha (2010) conducted a study which aimed to identify the attitudes of secondary

school students towards VE. The title was derived from the results of the GCSE exams for the year 2010 since they showed a decrease in the success percentage of 2010 in comparison to previous years. Results revealed that the educational levels of students' parents who enrolled in academic education were higher than those of VE students. This means that parents of students in the academic education guide them towards university education, and that the ninth grade student achievement was better than the achievement of those at the vocational training centers and secondary VE.

The study also showed that most of the study sample subjects expressed their desire to pursue their academic study. This means that VE which aims to supply the labour market with appropriately skilled people missed its target to convince students to transfer to this field. The motives behind students' joining VE were various, among them were the personal preference, the achievement average, the desire to get a job opportunity, the desire to get good income, parents' preference, and teachers' advice. Students of VE also showed more inclination to work after graduation, with a limited effect on the side of academic education students who studied the course of PVE to show a limited inclination to work after graduation. Secondary school vocational students showed more belief of the community's respect of vocational work. The image of the vocational education was not so clear through this study among all the study subjects since 50% of them only were aware of the kinds of vocational work.

In a closely related issue, Al-Tweissi (2013) carried out a study of the proposed solutions to improve community negative image towards vocational and technical education making use of experts' opinions. The nature of the solutions was classified into six domains: curricula and methods of instruction and training, infrastructure and the learning environment, policies and legislations, media and communication, programs for education and vocational guidance, participatory relation among bodies relevant to VE. Solutions related to curriculum included proposals that educational materials should keep up with modernity; allowing students to actively share in the implementation of the VE lessons in a way that fosters their attitudes and vocational tendencies; variation of the teaching methods of VE; in addition to enriching its curriculum by enhancing respect to manual work and to people doing such work; in addition to activating the promotion of the vocational work as an occupational choice for income; activating the role of parents and field visits to real workplaces particularly for students in higher grades, making use of the participatory relations with the private sector and the international bodies to implement initiatives that serve vocational awareness; conduct continuous campaigns for vocational awareness, through Radio and TV. Finally, it was suggested to reduce the fees of study, and to award special allowances to

graduates of VE.

As for the Eastern Arab Countries, Chammas (2007) conducted a study where she summarized the events and results of the conference of enhancing the social image of VE in the Eastern Arab Countries. It ascertained the importance of initiatives that could contribute to enhancing the social image of vocational and technical education through introducing real modifications to the relevant policies, legislations, curricula of teaching and training, in addition to systems of vocational guidance and counselling. It also stated that the private sector can participate in meeting some of the needs of VE and training sector, in addition to participating in curriculum development to enhance work and training environment, in addition to the importance of the role of the media in guidance and vocational counselling.

Schools have a vital role in vocationally guiding students and helping them in taking the future vocational decision. It was since the beginning of the 20th century when talks began about children vocational development in the USA when Pearson introduced a program for vocational counselling for children in 1909 when they leave elementary school on to work (Porfeli et al., 2008). Liu et al. (2007) consider that the childhood stage which extends up to the age of 14 is considered a vital stage in the vocational development of children. They also see that the VE of work provided by the school curriculum to students is considered by many as the basic foundation for VE all through their life. Watson and McMahon (2007) state that vocational development during childhood didn't receive the sufficient attention compared with VE of students. The kind of the educational and cultural context the child receives determines the kind of vocational interests a child forms all through their going to school (Watson et al., 2011). Creed et al. (2005) state that the societal influence that begins from the family greatly contributes to the kind of vocational interests formed by the children. Therefore, schools have to play a critical role in positively supporting students' interests formed through the social context they live in. This can be done through making such interests more realistic by being compatible with the child's physical and mental abilities and to the community needs.

Thus, Yawkey and Arnion (2001) consider that activities related to the world of work which children receive through the school curriculum contribute in formulating the vocational interests, and that it would be the same in its importance whether for the small children or for those who approached completing their basic education. The most important thing from the emotional point of vocational choice lies in the early experience of children. The various vocational components such as decision making, self-awareness, awareness of human dimensions of the work are considered critical factors in formulating the personality of students. Its effect stays far long in the vocational behavior, choice, attitude, and in

the way people invest their time. In addition, the kind of the tasks which may contribute in making vocational development among children can be summarized by: acquiring human work habits, learning how to organize time and energy in a way that helps in achieving work and learning that work is prior to play.

In addition, Watson and McMahon (2008) demonstrate that the most important components are: to develop certain kinds of motional skills, interpersonal and basic learning skills in addition to attitudes towards work in general and working in certain careers, and information about work and who works there and that the valuable development should be the basis of both the general education and VE.

Porfeli and Lee (2012) consider that building a vocational personality consists of tasks that should be included in the school curriculum such as career exploration, career commitment and career reconsideration. Career exploration includes wide and deep learning about a certain domain of life and exploring the world of work to ensure making a better understanding about the self and the future vocational choices appropriate for the self. Career commitment takes place through making decisions about the future career and considering the personal identity of the individual. This requires a long-term process of shaping knowledge and developing the self-concept in order to approach the right vocational choice and commitment of this choice. As for the career reconsideration, it is concerned with the comparison of available opportunities and selecting one of them after the individual had formed a commitment towards a certain career, and formed flexible attitudes towards his future career. This requires learning reflection to be able to consider his commitment.

The process of vocational choice becomes complicated when the factors affecting it become multiple and continuous. As for the formal approach, specialists determine 4 stages to obtain the right VE which leads to taking the right vocational decision. In the first four grades, the world of work and its relation to life is introduced, in addition to introducing the children to the careers through their main groups, their names, and some of the tools commonly used in them. This is known as career awareness. In the 5 to 7th grades, students are introduced to more detailed information about careers, their names, and tools in addition to enabling them to implement some works that may benefit them and their families domestically. The higher basic grades (8 to 10th basic grades) introduce students of careers in a more detailed way. Students carry out vocational tasks similar to those carried out by specialists at the labour market in a way that is compatible with the student's desire and capabilities, and the nature of actions practices in their environment with the aim of the students' discovering their abilities and vocational interests. When the stage of the basic education is over, students must have chosen

their future orientation in their life (Academic or vocational, and the vocational specialization in case of choosing the VE domain). Students study specialized knowledge and skills that foster their ability to achieve works as they are in the developed and changeable labour market. This stage is called career preparation (Al-Sayyed, 2009).

Vocational choice is influenced by the invisible approach resulting from parents' expectations and experience, and effect of peers, media of its various kinds and from simple preconceptions formed by students as a result of the interaction of all these factors. The ways to deal with the various effects on the career choice are under theoretical approach without considering how to address them in practice (Porfeli and Lee, 2012). Hence came the idea of this study.

The study problem and questions

Despite the concern of the Ministry of Education and all the establishments which provide VE of education, statistics show a great decrease in the number of students joining the VE. The distribution plan of the 10th students for the year 2011 to 2012 on the educational streams show that 70.3% of males joined the academic education compared with 16.5% who joined VE, and 9.8% were distributed on the centers of the vocational training corporations for their low achievements. As for females, 85.45% joined the Academic education, while 9.4% joined VE, and 8.1% were distributed on the vocational training centers. The clear variance between the academic and VE requires investigating the reason's which influence students' choice of the secondary education whether it be social, educational, personal, vocational or economic. This study addresses the reasons behind students' avoidance of joining the VE through answering the following questions:

1. What are the personal reasons which lead to students' avoidance of joining the VE?
2. What are the social reasons which lead to students' avoidance of joining the VE?
3. What are the educational reasons which lead to students' avoidance of joining the VE?
4. What are the economic reasons which lead to students' avoidance of joining the VE?
5. What are the vocational reasons which lead to students' avoidance of joining the VE?

Aims of the study

This study aims to identify the reasons affecting students' decision of not choosing the VE, and which lead to their avoidance of joining it. This could serve the ultimate goal of analysing such reasons and to propose some

suggestions to mitigate their influence.

Importance of the study

The importance of the study stems from the importance of enrollment in VET, since it positively affects providing the labour market with various workforce. This contributes in achieving balance between offered and sought jobs, and fills a gap in reducing un-employability, since most of the offered jobs are in vocational areas, and very minor jobs are offered in the office jobs. This is a corner stone of the social and economic development. In addition, it could reduce the burden on universities when students join the labour market after graduation without seeking university. Care about guiding students and encouraging them to join VE through addressing the reasons for the low level of joining it leads to them acquiring the skills necessary for labour market which in turn activates their role in the society. Therefore, schools' curricula should work on building the ability to make the appropriate vocational decision.

The results of this study are useful to all educational institutions, such as the Ministry of Education in improving students' educational opportunities that may guide them to join VE, in addition to the Vocational Training Corporation (VTC), social institutions and media to activate their roles in contributing in guiding students towards joining VE. In addition, curriculum developers for all stages of education will benefit from these results by stating what can be done (regarding curriculum) to improve numbers of students' joining VE. Parents also benefit from the results of the study by becoming more aware of the reasons that may influence their children's choices of future careers. And so work on providing the best guidance for them to make more realistic decisions regarding their vocational future.

Terms of the study and their procedural definitions

The study includes a group of terms that should be identified. These terms are:

Vocational education

This is the kind of systematic education which includes educational preparation, skills, attitudes acquisition and vocational knowledge. This is carried out by the systematic educational establishments at the level of the secondary education for a period of two years preparation after the 10th basic grade, for the purpose of preparing skilled workers in the various industrial, agricultural, house holding and hospitality streams in a way that provides them with the ability for productivity. VE usually includes various programs and specialization that are

compatible with the work field requirements to prepare the qualified workforce which includes: industrial, agricultural, commercial, hospitality, nursing, child care, cosmetics careers, dress-making and others (Mahasneh, 2010).

Reasons of students' avoidance of joining VE

These are reasons which influence 10th grades students' decisions to choose the vocational stream which will join at the end of the basic educational stage. These reasons were specified in the questionnaire, and the degree of their influence on students' decision was measured through estimating it on a questionnaire that was built for this purpose. These reasons were divided into: economic, social, personal, educational and vocational reasons.

Personal reasons

These are reasons stemming from the individual characteristics of the learner such as their abilities, ambitions, interests and perceptions which learners hold about life, work and learning, which force them not to join the VE.

Social reasons: These are reasons related to the various social chains (parents, family, peers and society) which force students not to join the VE.

Educational reasons: These are reasons related to the school reality (general and vocational) regarding their capabilities, curricula, reputation and the image hold of the VE which force students not to join the VE.

Economic reasons: These are reasons related to the financial income, unemployment and job opportunities in the various vocational sectors which force students not to join the VE.

Vocational reasons: These are reasons related to the nature of the vocational work, working hours, promotion opportunities, security and safety reality of workers.

METHODOLOGY

The descriptive analytical approach was used because it is appropriate for the study; the reasons for students' avoidance of joining the VE were identified through a closed end questionnaire administered to students themselves. Items of the questionnaire were initiated from qualitative results of a pilot study.

Study sample

Students' sample was selected from five Education Directorates of

the central district of Jordan, with 6 teaching classes for each directorate (3 male, and 3 female).

The directorates were randomly selected out of the 22 education directorates. Schools were also selected randomly from within the directorate schools. Classes were also randomly selected from the 10th grade classes at the schools when they had more than two sections. The total number of students was 1050 including 502 male and 548 female students.

Study instrument

Pilot study

A pilot study was conducted to identify students of the 10th grade avoidance of joining the VE and the reasons for this. Students were asked two open questions: Question 1 Do you intend to join VE? and Question 2 was If your answer to the first question was "no", why didn't you join the VE?. The pilot study was conducted on 243 (male and female students: 126 male and 117 female) in six classes: 3 classes for males and 3 classes for females, from schools that didn't receive the main questionnaire. The pilot study showed that 94% of students didn't intend to join VE, they showed many reasons which were useful in building up the questionnaire which aimed to identify the reasons and their degree of contributing to students' avoidance of joining VE. In the questionnaire, the researcher tried to use the vocabulary that is close to that used by students to ensure the highest degree of students' understanding of its items.

The questionnaire

The questionnaire aimed to identify the reasons that affect the decisions of 10th grade students which contribute to their avoidance of joining the VE. The questionnaire consisted of 39 items distributed into five domains: personal reasons (8 items), social reasons (9 items), educational reasons (11 items), economic reasons (5 items) and vocational reasons (6 items). The response was a five-point Likert scale to estimate the degree of each reason's contribution in students' avoidance of joining the VE (very high, high, medium, low, very low). To confirm the validity and reliability of the questionnaire regarding content and formulation, the questionnaire was shown in its preliminary form to a panel of experts including five faculty members from Jordanian universities who were asked to judge each of the five domains of the instrument items and their ability to measure what they were intended to measure. Some items were modified upon the experts' suggestions. As for reliability, it was calculated by test-retest on a pilot sample of 200 students from the study population and from outside the study sample twice with an interval of two weeks between them. The value of the stability co-efficient was found to be 0.88.

Statistical analysis

Students' responses were coded and entered into statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) (very high degree=5, high=4, medium=3, low=2, very low=1). The means and standard deviations were used. To facilitate judging the values of the means, the grading was redistributed into three categories (high, medium and low) instead of five. This was carried out by dividing the range of 1-5=4 on the new number of categories (3). The result was 1.33 which is the range that each category falls within. The level of the reason's contribution to students' avoidance was low if the means

Table 1. Means and standard deviations for the domains of reasons for students' avoidance to VE.

Domain	Mean	S.D	Level
Vocational reasons	3.13	1.49	Medium
Personal reasons	2.80	1.47	Medium
Social reasons	2.78	1.57	Medium
Economic reasons	2.77	1.44	Medium
Educational reasons	2.62	1.42	Medium
All domains	2.82	0.60	Medium

value ranged between 1 to 2.33, and medium if the means was between 2.34 to 3.67, and high if the mean was higher than 3.68.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The domains were: Personal reasons, social reasons, economic reasons educational reasons and vocational reasons. The means and the general means of reasons were recorded. Table 1 shows the means and standard deviation for the reasons which lead students to avoid joining the VE.

Table 1 shows that all the domains of the reasons of students' avoidance of joining the VE had a medium effect. The vocational reasons were the highest influential reasons with a means of 3.13, the educational reasons were the lowest influential reasons with a 2.62. To illustrate the details of the results in each domain, results of the study will be displayed and discussed according to its questions. Discussion will focus on the factors of the emergence of the reasons for avoidance, with only pointing out the main aspects of solutions, since the researcher will study solutions in details in another stage of the project.

Results of question 1: The personal reasons

Table 2 shows the means, standard deviations and grades of the personal reasons which lead students to avoid joining VE. Table 2 shows that the general level of the effect of this domain on students' avoidance of joining VE was medium. The item 'VE contradicts with my academic ambitions which discourages me from joining VE' was the highest with 3.39. The item 'My personal desire doesn't motivate me to join VE' was the lowest with 1.94 which is the only reason that was estimated of low contribution to avoidance of VE.

Contradicts with academic ambitions

The item 'VE contradicts with my academic ambitions which discourages me from joining VE' showed the most

Table 2. Means, standard deviations and levels of the personal reasons for students' avoidance of VE.

Rank	Personal reasons	Mean	S.D	Level
1	VE contradicts with my academic ambitions and doesn't encourage me to join it	3.39	1.49	Medium
1.	VE doesn't offer me a high social status which alienates me from joining it	3.07	1.41	Medium
2.	My physical ability doesn't enable me to join the vocational stream that I like	2.99	1.45	Medium
4.	VE doesn't allow me to join the university with less effort than academic education	2.94	1.47	Medium
5.	VE doesn't allow me to develop my abilities, skills and practical abilities. This doesn't encourage me to join VE	2.93	1.47	Medium
6.	VE doesn't allow me to compete on university seats which made me refrain from VE	2.68	1.49	Medium
7.	The condition of working at the labour market makes me unwilling to join VE	2.45	1.26	Medium
8.	My personal desire doesn't motivate me to join VE	1.94	1.29	Low
Total mean of personal reasons		2.80	1.470	Medium

Table 3. Means, standard deviations and levels of the social reasons for students' avoidance of VE.

Rank	Social reasons	Mean	S.D	Level
1.	My colleagues' attitudes discourage from joining VE	3.31	1.73	Medium
2.	My family's academic attitudes don't foster my attitudes towards VE	3.14	1.59	Medium
3.	My family members' unwillingness to join VE alienates me from it	2.93	1.61	Medium
4.	Society negative attitudes towards VE alienates me from joining it	2.73	1.42	Medium
5.	My father's academic achievement discourages me from joining VE	2.69	1.59	Medium
6.	Services provided by vocational corporations for VE students don't contribute in my orientation towards VE	2.66	1.36	Medium
7.	My feeling that I am lower than my colleagues who joined the academic education limits my orientation towards VE	2.66	1.62	Medium
8.	My colleagues' lack of mastering vocational skills discourages me from joining VE	2.52	1.74	Medium
9.	My family considers VE a waste of time at school which negatively influences my decision to join it	2.50	1.50	Medium
Total mean of social reasons		2.77	1.45	Medium

influential of students' decision to join VE. This requires that students should understand that life is not all about academic studies in addition to the necessity of understanding the relationship between their life ability and the vocational attitudes they follow. Hence appears the necessity of the curriculum working on getting the students to be aware of their abilities and interests so as to be realistically guided (Helwig, 2008; Freihart, 2000).

VE and the high social status

The second item of this domain was VE doesn't provide a high social status which makes me refrain from joining it. This reminds us that people look down on VE unintentionally fostered by some official parties, which influenced the VE reputation in Jordan and the Quality of its outcomes. The Ministry of Education distributes the 10th grade students on the various educational streams based on their academic achievements and average.

This is a fatal mistake. There is a weakness in the feeling of the VE graduates of feeling proud and belonging to their vocational community because of this opinion. This requires working on changing this image which underestimates the value of manual careers, and creates a personality that is proud of its career. It also requires reconsideration of the school curricula to pay more attention to respecting careers and whoever works in them. Minhua (2015) mentioned that the social reproduction of the bad image of vocational education is dominant, and the school efforts fail to improve its image among students.

Physical abilities of students

The third item of this domain which influenced students' decisions was connecting the physical ability with joining the VE which means the necessity of educating students of their physical abilities and the kind of careers that are

fit for them. Each vocational stream has its own special skills that should be possessed by the students. This also requires giving students the chance to strengthen their physical abilities by fostering and caring about the physical training classes. In addition, the right vocational decision requires that the student should be aware of the requirements needed to achieve the various kinds of work whether it be vocational or others. This requires that school curricula should address through their various topics related to careers, their mental, physical, and specialization requirements. This would render the school teaching a kind of guidance to join VE, and thus joining vocational jobs in the future (Okorosaye-Orubite, 2008).

Social status and higher education

The item related to the high social status comes fourth. This indicates that students think that VE doesn't provide it. This belief stems from the society heritage which the Jordanian school didn't succeed in changing it, although status quo indicates something different (Yusuf, 2012). Many people who worked at the various vocational sectors earn incomes more than their peers who joined careers that required academic education. To solve this problem, the education should provide realistic information and success story about the financial income received from certain jobs, and about the social status occupied by some of those who enrolled in traditional careers (Porfeli et al., 2008). Minhua (2015) mentioned this as one of the factors that could help "better" students enroll in vocational education in China, mainly for migrant societies, since such societies usually suffer from bad economic situations.

VE and development of individual's potentials

The item 'VE doesn't empower me to develop my potentials, skills and practical abilities which discourages from joining it' was fifth. This indicates that some students believe that those who join the VE can't develop their potentials, abilities and level at the occupational ladder. This is not right. Through the system of vocational classification and characterization- developed and managed by the VTC, anyone who joins VE, whether during his study or after completing it (when joining the work) can sit for the tests of job practice on its various levels. In case of his success in a level that is higher than the level he is currently in, he gets official certificates that enable him to be promoted at the work place or to submit for higher level jobs. This is considered one of the aspects that the school curricula must educate students about; the various Government systems in all kinds of life should be addressed by school curricula to qualify individuals to deal with future life (Al-Tweissi, 2013),

included in Jordan, the knowledge of an important corporation VTC that cares about training individuals and qualifying them to join labour market, and organizes the labour market including all tasks affiliate to such task. McMillan and Marks (2003) emphasised the importance of such organisations and systems that took place early particularly for school leavers.

No way to go to university

The sixth rank was to the item 'Not allowing students of the VE to compete for the university "seats" made me refrain from VE'. The students' previous perception of not being able to be promoted at work is connected with the idea that VE doesn't lead to students' joining the university. Two things are connected with ideas which the curricula should inform students of, which are: VE is one of the educational tracks according to the educational policy in Jordan, and that there are no barriers to prevent those who pass the required additional theoretical courses from joining the university education. The second issue which the researcher considers as the most important is related to the mistaken societal belief that every student should join the university which should be discussed at all the societal levels because some of the simple vocational tracks have a promising future far better than the future of some students who join university specializations that don't provide job opportunities. Moreover, such issue should not be discussed until students are about to complete the basic education stage for fear that students take it as a pretext so as not to care about their education. If reliable statistics and studies were available about the income rates and internal and external job opportunities in addition to promotion chances and could be used in teaching, this may make teaching more convincing and useful (Al-Tweissi, 2013). This was emphasised by Sikora and Saha (2011) for building the students' career plans for the high school and the higher education stage.

Work conditions at the labour market

The influence of the item 'The condition of working at the labour market makes me unwilling to join it' was medium. This may be referred to the stereotyped image in students' mind of the labour market produced by media or social heritage which is connected with the nature of the work with dirty clothes and very long working hours. This emphasizes the fact that students don't realize the various levels and kinds of work. Working on selling goods at a market or at the street is different from working at an organized store or workshop or factory, or a craftsman service work at a private establishment or governmental department. Students may not realize that

some careers bring in profitable income through working at home without the need for an official employment (or regular work at an establishment). There are numerous careers such as house electrician, plumbers, tailors, and health related jobs or barbers that provide a proof of that. Therefore, school curricula are required to educate students of the fact of the variance of work conditions, work requirements and available opportunities at present and in the future. Wilson (2011) pointed out that having a clear image of the working conditions is crucial to the career choice of students. Along with the previous interpretations, student's estimation of the fact that their refusal of vocational work was personal (Item 8) was low. This may indicate that their response was defensive resulting from their weak perception of the facts provided at the discussion of the previous items.

Results related to question 2: The social reasons

Table 3 shows the means and standard deviations of the social reasons that lead to students' avoidance of joining the VE. Table 3 shows that all the social reasons were at the medium level regarding their contribution to students' avoidance of joining VE.

Colleagues' attitudes and mastery

The most influential item in the social reasons was 'My colleagues' attitudes discourage from joining VE'. This shows the great deal of students being influenced by their peers' attitudes which are originally influenced by the society and family attitudes to which these peers belong. A student may feel inferior if s/he saw his colleagues' orientation towards academic education while s/he joins the VE. Marks (2010) pointed out this issue and urges about its role in misleading of the career choice. In addition, the negative image that comes with colleagues who already joined VE through their lack of mastery of the skills also contributed to the students' avoidance of having VE as their pathway for future careers (item 8). This is also linked to the poor services that are provided to the students and graduates of VE (item 6). Students and graduates need to be followed up in order to find good opportunities for practical training that could lead to employment in the same place of training; they also need to be followed up after graduation to find job opportunities that allow them to continue their career life. Luke et al. (2006) in their study emphasised this need through their study of literature for various VE and training programs.

Low achievers join vocational schools

This is a scholastic issue concerned with the regulations

distributed on students to select their specializations at the secondary stage based on their academic achievement rates. This led to the fact that most students who joined the VE don't master the skills they study because of their low achievement level and other factors related to school and education. Therefore, those who have not chosen the stream that they would join would be negatively influenced. The school curricula should work on changing this image among students, so that future generations (their children) would come to school with positive attitudes about VE. The relationship between students and the teaching staff should be promoted to be able to advice and guide students instead of receiving guidance from their peers.

Family attitudes

As far as the family is concerned, the family members' attitudes don't foster students' orientation towards VE. This is a general attitude of the whole society that considers academic education as the way to secure a better future, and a higher social status than working at the vocational labour market. This is a social "heritage" that may contradict with reality- as mentioned earlier. Things were aggravated when the parents' academic level is high (as an indicator of social status) leading to hindering sons' joining the vocational domains. Taking the economic status quo into consideration and the reality of the vocational labour market, - existence of unemployment- it is supposed that individuals should be more aware (scientifically) through guiding their children to more realistic orientation so that they would not become unemployed.

Minhua (2015) mentioned that the social negative image of VE in the rural areas of migrants in China prohibited students from enrollment in VE except for those bad ones who continued on the same behavioral style in vocational schools; a factor that reflected a negative image of the schools themselves and the careers that are taught in these schools. Thus, the process became a kind of continuous reproduction of the same kind of students studying in these schools and working in these careers.

In general, the item 'My family members' unwillingness to join VE alienates me from ' shows that the family instead of leaving it for their sons to freely choose what they desire, they push them towards not joining the VE. This is considered as a kind of hidden curriculum that breaches what the school calls for. If the school works on making students to be aware of VE, and make them make decisions based on their abilities and the labour market potentialities it will go a long way in helping them, but the family plays an adverse role to the extent that some families consider joining VE a waste of time. This may be caused by the status quo of the vocational

schools- and the unemployment of their graduates- in addition to the society's traditional image which was previously mentioned (Marks, 2010).

Societies' like office jobs

Societies' desire to work at office jobs or jobs with high social level negatively affects students' vocational decisions. Students estimated that the negative social image towards VE alienates them from joining it. They believed in that because of the inefficiency of the vocational corporations including educational establishments, unions and Societies in providing the appropriate guidance for the society individuals to join such careers (Yusuf, 2012). This lead to the implantation of the traditional image among people- including students- that VE is inferior and so such careers became excluded to expatriate workers, supported by the relatively low wages paid to these workers without employers making any adequate effort to make Jordanians join such careers- may be, they are reluctant to do so. This made the government stop hiring foreign workers in some of the careers seeking to employee Jordanians in them. But things are aggravated. The VE graduates are not reasonably qualified, wages are low, in addition to the negative attitudes of the society towards joining VE and careers. Lamb and McKenzie (2001) mentioned that educational systems might fail to make a successful transition from school to work if the work conditions are negative. Therefore, work conditions in general should be enhanced in order to have a long term effect on employment of graduates in order to enhance attitudes towards the vocational work sector and vocational education.

Results related to question 3: Educational reasons

This is related to the curriculum in general, and to the VE subject in particular and to the status of the vocational schools in Jordan. Table 4 presents the results of its items. Educational reasons obtained a medium grade too with a means of 2.62. The highest mean was for 'Vocational schools' reputation makes refrain from studying there' with a mean of 3.03. The lowest means which was 2.34 was for the item 'Lack of seminars and meetings held by vocational professionals at my area for students makes me ignorant of VE'.

Vocational schools' reputation

The most influential items on students' vocational decisions was 'Vocational schools' reputation makes refrain from studying there'. This may be referred to students' tampering inside workshops and their deliberately stirring up problems. In addition, students are

not regular in coming to schools because of lack of adjustment with the educational stream they had joined, lack of motivation and academic abilities among students who are enrolled in the Academic streams which leads to low achievement (Al-Adwan, 2009). Considering the fact that these students didn't join the vocational schools and hadn't seen them from the inside, the negative reputation formed in the society and among the students of the Academic schools, stemmed from the kind of students who originally joined such schools because they were forced to do so because of their low achievement level. Students' behaviours, lack of interest, rise in the percentage of absence and drop out, the daily early school leaving came as a result of lacking motivation among these students who were forced to join specializations that they don't desire or at least don't have enough information about them. Minhua (2015) emphasised the effect of the vocational school image on the reproduction of 'bad' students, a factor that continuously affect the quality of VE graduates. This raises the need to enhance the vocational schools through a multi-dimensional plan that address the physical and human resources in addition to students who enrol in these schools.

VE is perceived unimportant

The second statement which states:

My feeling that the VE subject is not important discourages me of joining VE.

Refers to students' feeling that the VE subject is not a basic course. The introduced curricula may not be interesting. The teacher has a vital role in forming this opinion towards the VE subject. Some teachers don't carry out the activities available at the subject (Al-Saaideh, 2011; Daghlas, 2004). Instead, teachers teach the material theoretically without giving students the chance to use the workshops. This helps in forming a negative opinion that degrades it, in addition to linking the subject with the inferior social image of VE which calls for activation of the PVE subject through making various vocational activities, reconsideration of curricula introduced to students to create a kind of balance between what the students should be taught concerning information and of experience and skills to achieve the curriculum objectives. Herault and Zakirova (2015) emphasized that delivering knowledge about the world of work and information about careers is fundamentally the role of the school.

No idea about field experience

The third item states:

Table 4. Means and standard deviations and levels of the educational reasons for students' avoidance of VE.

Rank	Educational reasons	Mean	S.D	Level
1	Vocational schools' reputation makes me refrain from studying there.	3.03	1.44	Medium
2	My feeling that the VE subject is not important discourages me of joining VE	2.94	1.51	Medium
3	The field visits we made to vocational schools discouraged me from joining VE.	2.7	1.32	Medium
4	The lack of lessons related to careers in the curriculum discourages me from joining VE.	2.64	1.54	Medium
5	Depending on the low achievement level when assigning students to VE discourages me from joining it.	2.62	1.35	Medium
6	The practical vocational activities don't encourage me to a sufficient level to join VE.	2.56	1.46	Medium
7	The VE topic which I previously studied are not so interesting that they foster my orientation towards VE.	2.55	1.49	Medium
8	The number of the PVE lessons compared with other lessons is few and doesn't excite me to join VE	2.53	1.46	Medium
9	Different media doesn't encourage me to approach VE	2.48	1.31	Medium
10	Buildings, facilities and equipment are old and don't motivate me to join VE	2.41	1.37	Medium
11	Lack of seminars and meetings held by vocational professionals at my area for students makes me unaware of VE	2.34	1.26	Medium
	Total mean of educational reasons	2.62	1.42	Medium

The field visits we made to vocational schools discouraged me from joining VE

Reasons are attributed to students' dissatisfaction of the location of workshops and the way they are built. They may be old and lacking the facilities and services students might need. These visits are few and only take place in one class (10th grade) and most frequently just for once (Yusuf, 2012; Al-Saaideh, 2011). Field visits would render PVE teaching a kind of guidance to join VE, and in turn joining vocational jobs in the future (Okorosaye-Orubite, 2008).

Lack of content related to careers

Students showed that the scarcity of the vocational content in general whether it was related to technical skills or guidance or counselling or statistics, about the reality of the labour market made students less aware of the VE. One's ignorance of anything makes one move away from it. Most of the time, it is pointed to the academic inclination in curricula in the 3rd world countries despite the need for the vocational inclination because of the abundant job opportunities that are more than those available for office jobs related to academic studies (Psacharopoulos, 1997). In Jordan, this raises the need to review the whole educational provision in

relation to vocationalism and career education.

Achievement as a criteria (no choice)

Educational policies play a role in dedicating the negative attitude through adopting the educational level as a basis to categorize students, forcing those with low achievement to join VE. Taking into consideration the weak motivation and negative attitudes and the general awareness of this group of people, all of them contribute in moving things backwards regarding joining the VE. Thus, conditions that move students towards optionality in joining the kind of education should be improved in addition to providing opportunities to join university education along with wage improvements. Moodie and Wheelahan (2009) also recommended this for the vocational educational system in Australia.

Status quo of PVE

It becomes clear from the means of the items (6, 7 and 8) that the PVE curriculum, which is part of the curriculum that was prepared to work on improving the vocational awareness of students, is inefficient, which reduced its efficiency in achieving its aims. The activities carried out through the vocational curricula didn't adequately

encourage students to join the VE. This may be attributed to the fact the curriculum focuses in many units on personal life skills without concentrating on practicing real vocational activities in the real labour market. The status quo of teaching in these schools makes teachers sometimes teach the material theoretically without conducting the practical training skills, this was indicated by various studies (Ahmed and Saaideh, 2012, 2007; Tweisat, 1998; Daghlas, 2004) in addition to the unattractive topics included in the PVE curriculum. Results state that the few number of the PVE lessons compared with academic topics doesn't achieve the purpose of encouraging students to join VE. It is known that when student receives deeper content of certain topics they acquire useful and more serious experiences, which makes their attitudes towards that subject more positive and constant (Watson et al., 2011; Liu et al., 2014). Therefore, a holistic review of the PVE delivery is needed in terms of the curriculum objectives, content, activities and assessment in addition to the facilities provided to its delivery.

Lack of seminars and meetings

By looking at the real curriculum, considering media being a part of it, media don't encourage students to approach VE. This may be attributed to the fact that, although there are television educational programs which guide towards VE and joining work, the negative image communicated by drama about VE and careers dominate with this negative influence- as result of their abundance and continuity, over the positive influence of the educational programs. In general, the lack of concentration on the necessity of seeking VE and warning of unemployment in academic specializations makes it worse as time passes by (Al-Tweissi, 2013; Al-Tarawneh, 2000). This is concluded from the results that lack of seminars and meetings held by vocational professionals at various areas for students makes them unaware of the vocational sector and VE in general. Herault and Zakirova (2015) also emphasized that delivering knowledge about the world of work and information about careers is fundamentally the role of the school. Therefore, school relationships with the vocational bodies and the community should be improved, and appropriately utilized to achieve students' awareness about VE.

Students need to meet professionals

If we consider what schools are doing regarding that, the PVE teachers may invite professionals in some occasions to talk to students, or the vocational awareness committees at schools may host a professional to

meet students. This is not enough considering the adverse effect in reality (McMahon and Watson, 2008; Porfeli et al., 2008). Students also stated that the visits they made to vocational school and noting that the buildings and facilities were old reduced their motivation to join VE. This resulted from the indifference of the Ministry of Education to facilities and services at the vocational schools. There was clear contradiction in the previous years between the Ministry's tendencies towards knowledge based economy and what was accompanied by negligence of VE through the lack of opening new specializations, modernizing the contents of the programs and improving the facilities (Mrayyan, 2010). This clarifies the need for new strategy to deliver the PVE curriculum, and the need to enhance and utilize the school relationships with the vocational bodies and the community

Results related to Question 4: The economic reasons

Table 5 presents the means and standard deviation of the economic reasons that lead students to avoid joining VE. Table 5 shows that the economical reasons' contribution in students' avoidance of joining VE was medium. All reasons were estimated at a medium level. The highest means of 3.04 was for the item 'VE doesn't provide me with a good and stable income'. The lowest means of 2.56 was for the item 'Unemployment among the VE graduates fosters my orientation towards academic education'.

Income from vocational careers

Results also revealed that the economic status has negatively influenced students' orientations related to their vocational decisions. Students' feeling that VE doesn't provide a good and stable income discouraged them from joining it. This is attributed to the fact that vocational sectors in general are occupied by expatriate workers who accept to work with less wages than natives do. Students expressed this in item 2, that the presence of expatriate workers forced them to join academic education. It is noticed that students consider VE provide job opportunities that Jordanians don't agree to take up. The reason behind that is that Jordanians in general look for office careers with high social level (according to their own beliefs). This led to having unemployment among the VE graduates, or it led them to join jobs that are not related to what they had specialized in (Al-Tweissi, 2013). Israel et al. (2001) emphasized the importance of the acceptance of the education that leads to vocational careers as a prerequisite to enhance the acceptance of these careers. This again reminds the need to enhance the work conditions and income of the vocational jobs, in

Table 5. Means, standard deviation and levels of the economic reasons for students' avoidance of VE.

Rank	Economic reasons	Mean	S.D	Level
1	VE doesn't provide me with a good and stable income	3.04	1.54	Medium
2	Limited work domains provided by VE doesn't encourage me to join VE	2.78	1.44	Medium
3	The presence of expatriate workers made me avoid VE	2.76	1.45	Medium
4	The presence of sufficient number of workers for the labour market motivates me not to join VE	2.69	1.47	Medium
5	Unemployment among the VE graduates fosters my orientation towards academic education)	2.56	1.3	Medium
	Total mean of economic reasons	2.77	1.443	Medium

Table 6. Means, standard deviation and levels of the vocational reasons for students' avoidance of VE.

Rank	Vocational reasons	Means	S.D	Level
1	The nature of the career which I would like to take up in the future doesn't encourage me to join VE	3.50	1.63	Medium
2	Lack of job security in the fields of VE doesn't motivate me to join VE	3.27	1.5	Medium
3	Danger related to health and safety at VE doesn't encourage me to join VE	3.17	1.41	Medium
4	Opportunities of Job promotion are very limited for vocational schools and centres' graduates. This doesn't motivate me to join VE	3.09	1.43	Medium
5	The low estimation of manual work doesn't encourage them to join VE	3.03	1.47	Medium
6	The lack of new specializations at vocational schools motivates me not to join VE	2.73	1.44	Medium
	Total mean of vocational reasons	3.13	1.49	Medium

addition to enhance the media through which students can be informed about the status of the future careers they intend to take up.

Lack of job opportunities and expatriate workers

It is noticed that such economic factors are interactive since they began with the social belief that VE leads to low levels which made students acquire regretful beliefs; They seemed convinced that the country doesn't provide job opportunities although the expatriate labour occupies a large percentage of the vocational labour market with an timely increasing number. The students object to low wages and full labour market, and that the VE doesn't provide good income. If we look at the interactive structure of pretexts, we find out that the future education of Jordan requires the rebuilding of analytical and critical abilities of students' personality in addition to the development of critical thinking and decision-making, so that they could investigate the reality and analyse it to know the opportunities and challenges to follow the steps of problem solving in order to deal with various contexts. This was emphasized by scholars of the vocational awareness requirements (Watson and McMahon, 2008; Porfeli and Lee, 2012).

Thus the focus of the curriculum on the earlier mentioned skills, which are called the 21st century skills, is considered a vital necessity. During the last century, curricula in Jordan began to change into education based on knowledge economy; nevertheless, a comprehensive evaluation based on the retroactive effect of the curriculum on the society has not been conducted yet. This is a necessity in order to adopt course of corrective actions. This has been emphasized by modern literature when dealing with the vocational development issues for children and the educational systems orientations towards our age challenges (Porfeli and Lee, 2012; Yawkey and Arnion, 2001). Explicitly, the changes that take place in the life of the local, the regional, and the international community, and their implications to the educational systems (at all educational stages) should be studied and continuously reflected on these systems.

Results related to question 5: The vocational reasons

Table 6 presents the means and standard deviation of the vocational reasons that lead students to students' avoidance of joining VE. Table 6 shows that the factors related to the nature of the vocational work were the most influential factors although they gained medium

estimation in making students avoid joining VE.

Students' dreams of the future

The item 'The nature of the career which I would like to take up in the future doesn't encourage me to join VE'. Dreams built by students for their future can't be fulfilled through VE. Each student has the right to draw up a future that he dreams of, and to select the career s/he likes to take up. The most important of that is to build this decision and to draw up that dream to accommodate with students' physical and mental abilities. The dream must be attainable within the economic and educational circumstances. Therefore, education should play (in the whole school age) a role in guiding students' interests and in improving their capabilities and acquaint them of the careers appropriate for such capabilities. This has been emphasized by Yawkey and Arnion (2001) and Porfeli and Lee (2012) as a basic requirement for a sound vocational decision.

The nature of the vocational work (danger and job security)

The perceived reality of the vocational work is reflected on students' beliefs and their vocational decisions. Results revealed that the risks of the vocational work and the issues of health and safety at the vocational workplaces don't encourage them to join VE. Job security which is influenced by the reality of the implementation of the Labour Law and labourers' rights adds to their negative perceptions. Therefore, the reality of the job security at the vocational labour market and the factors affecting it, and the provisions of the Labour Law and its executive regulations are critical issues that students should be aware of. Students should learn to respect them as future workers, or may be as future employers (Al-Tarawneh, 2002).

Limitation of promotion

As for the item 'the opportunities of job promotion for vocational schools and centres are so limited which doesn't motivate them to join VE'. This issue has been discussed in the social factors explaining that it is a perceptual unrealistic issue; promotion opportunities in the VE and the labour market are possible with the presence of the classification and characterization system, and the execution of the various levels of the career practice tests in most of the career groups in Jordan. Society, in general and students in particular, need to be aware of this, through the school curriculum addressing the role of the Vocational Training

Corporation in a more detailed way (Al-Tweissi, 2013; Al-Mahasneh and Al-Saaideh, 2015).

Results emphasize the necessity of respecting the manual work in general. The society doesn't highly appreciate such kind of jobs. Students showed that the low estimation of manual work doesn't encourage them to join VE. The curricula don't play its role through a constant process (Al-Saaideh and Al-Zyouf, 2009). Bearing in mind that respecting manual work is an emotional issue, it requires a long time and continuous follow up to build this respect. Therefore, school curricula should be integrative and not contradictory in focusing on this issue, since curricula in general show that they highly appreciate the office jobs and doesn't concentrate on it being equal with the vocational work. Scholars from various countries mentioned this issue (Porfeli, 2012; Yawkey and Arnion, 2001; Porfeli et al., 2008).

Lack of new specializations

The factor of the lack of new specializations at vocational schools made students refrain from joining the VE. The fact that the specializations offered by the vocational schools are stable without being modernized led to students' avoidance of VE. It is known that mechanisms of conducting work, and the appearance of new kinds of jobs every period of time requires updating new specializations or to update the present specialization to accommodate with the requirements of the labour market. The relation of the VE in Jordan with the requirements of the labour market is one of the issues that has to be addressed. Therefore, it receives a large share of officials' talks and recommendations without proposing mechanisms to achieve them (Mahasneh and Al-Saaideh, 2015; Tweissi, 2013; Al-Syouf, 2007; Nasrallah, 1998).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Through the study results about the reasons that lead to students' avoidance of joining VE, and through analysing the factors inherent in such reasons, the following can be recommended:

1. Conduct research about how avoidance of VE could be reduced.
2. Conduct research to analyse roots of each type of reasons for avoidance of VE (personal, social, economic, educational, and vocational) in order to set plans to treat these reasons at the long term scale.
3. Improve specialties and contents of VE to keep up with the requirements of the labour work.
4. Discuss that the social belief that every student should join the university is a mistaken belief at all the societal levels.

5. The school curricula should educate students about the various country systems.
6. Activate the role of the different media in the educating the society about the role of the VE in supplying the labour market its needs, while paying attention to the image reflected by the media about VE.
7. Students should learn the Labour Law and its executive mechanisms. They should learn to respect them.
8. Take care of the PVE subject and its content in a way that contributes in the vocational awareness of the available job opportunities.
9. Education has to explain careers and their requirements of mental, professional and physical abilities. Students should become aware of their interests and abilities to guide them in a realistic way
10. Reconsideration of the school curricula to create a kind of balance between what should be learnt of information and what is learnt of experience and skills
11. Schools should work on building the decision-making, analytical and critical abilities of students'.
12. Educate students about the variety of jobs' conditions, work requirements and available opportunities at present and in the future.

Conflict of Interests

The author have not declared any conflict of interests.

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