

Mohammad Salman AlKhaza'leh, Bilal Fayiz Obeidat. (2021). Students' Preferred Professors: The Human and Educational Aspects. *International Journal of Early Childhood Special Education (INT-JECSE)*, 13(1): 28-34. DOI: 10.9756/INT-JECSE/V13I1.211004

Received: 09.10.2020 Accepted: 08.12.2020

Mohammad Salman AlKhaza'leh¹
Bilal Fayiz Obeidat²

Students' Preferred Professors: The Human and Educational Aspects

Abstract

This purpose of this study is to identify students' attitudes at Al Ain University towards their preferred professors when registering their courses based on the educational or human aspects. The researchers used the descriptive survey method, whereby the two researchers developed a questionnaire consisting of (27) items. The study sample consisted of 750 male and female participants. Findings of the study showed that participants had positive attitudes toward their professors in the educational aspect. This study also showed that the relationship between the educational aspect and the human aspect in students' attitudes was statistically significant and positive. In addition to having educational competencies and the ability to manage these competencies efficiently, students stressed the importance of adhering to the human aspect that provides knowledge in a human and professional manner at the same time. This indicates that students prefer to choose professors who possess effective competence, human education and the moral aspect that determines their attitudes and preferences when they register courses in each academic semester.

Keywords: Attitudes, Human Aspect, Education, Professors, Al Ain University.

Introduction

The educational aspect is an important part faculty members must possess. It is one of the competencies effective faculty member manipulate to transfer knowledge and necessary skills to their students. Besides the educational aspect, faculty members have to take the human part into consideration, which allows professors to build good links with their students and thus makes communication easy and flexible. In addition, it would encourage students to be more spontaneous in class and accepting to their instructors. University Professors are hired to perform academic duties such as teaching, evaluating students (Brint, 2011), their work requires interacting and engagement with their students (Rhoades, 2012). They receive extensive training on research work, but not on building social relationships with their students. The large numbers of students in classes might represent another challenge for professors to

know their students on the personal level. As a result, faculty staff are not prepared to establish social connections with their students due to lack of training (Chory & Offstein, 2017).

The study of student's attitudes and tendencies is one of the main subjects connected to the internal efficiency, quality, and academic adoption to the university. The annual report of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), this survey asks students questions about their university experience such as: How they choose their academic courses of study, how they spend their time, benefits and progress they make during their study, evaluating the quality of interactive relationship that brought them together with their professors (Mahmoud, 2006). On the other hand, some families raised their children have the culture of trophy or receiving praise when they are doing well at school, but feel anxiety when receiving criticism either at school or colleges, which invites parents to contact administrators and

Mohammad Salman AlKhaza'leh¹, Associate Professor, College of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences, Al Ain University - Abu Dhabi, UAE.

Bilal Fayiz Obeidat², Assistant Professor, College of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences, Al Ain University - Abu Dhabi, UAE.

sometimes professors complaining about their behaviour. As a result, administrative staff urges professor to modify their familiar procedure of teaching to fit students in order to sustain their students (Vinson, 2013). On the other hand, Faculty staff feel concerned about close relationships with students which might lead to lawsuits and penalties when they get too personal (Kipnis, 2015).

University student's preferences and attitudes is one of the issues addressed in the literature in the field of humanities and social sciences. These tendencies and attitudes are multiple and varied forms, some of which are related to the student's preferences, some are related to their family influence, and some are associated with the character of their faculty professors.

Mahmoud (2002), stated that individuals acquire most of their tendencies, attitudes, values, and ideas from their surrounding community. Ali (2001), defines the attitude as it is a group of individual responses of acceptance or rejection related to certain issues or controversial topics, that means any attitude is an expression of situation or belief.

According to Egaly (2006), there are several benefits to identify students' attitudes toward their programs and courses of study. Recognizing students' attitudes may develop evaluation ability and equip them with some teaching and learning skills. In addition, this would develop their research skills and to think critically.

Students' attitudes toward instructors are determined by the instructors' efficiency, teaching skills, the abundance knowledge, information to the faculty member, his enthusiasm, the possession of communication skills, effective communication, acceptance of others, and instructors ability to interact with students flexibly (Coats, 2000).

Bshay (2003), pointed out that the students' attitudes is a good indicator, which helps educators to consider all aspects of the educational process. Students could identify the strength and weakness of their academic program and courses. They also can assess instructors' role and their effectiveness in achieving course goals.

Faculty members play an important and effective role to achieve the goals of the university programs. In addition to employ it in a way that helps students to identify their peculiarities related to schedule study. Therefore, faculty members and the university should exert efforts to refine their educational efficiencies (Habaeb & Alkhalili, 2010).

Positive attitudes and the degree of acceptance students develop toward their professors creates an interactive atmosphere in

the classrooms where all students feel their attendance is important and anticipate the appreciation they receive regardless their participation (Taha, 2000).

Students' attitudes toward their professors reflect their instructors' commitment to the prevailing standards, values, and beliefs in a certain community. Student positive attitudes toward faculty members encourage them to register courses and make them open to different opinions, ideas, and knowledge (Salem, 2000).

Faculty member is considered one as an influential person, especially for their students. They represent an academic and social commitment and play a major role in shaping the psychological and cognitive attitudes of their students (Nafie, 1996). On the educational level, university professors represent the essence of university experience for their students.

Several studies have identified the characteristics of a university professor as a successful teacher (Boukhars, 2017). Some of these characteristics are listed below:

- Professional characteristics: represented by scientific mastery, teaching skill, fairness of assessment, accurate punctuality, classroom interaction with students, discussion of students mistakes without embarrassing them.

Emotional features: These are emotional equilibrium, good behavior in decisive situations, self-confidence, self-sufficiency, objectivity, motivation for action and achievement, and automatic flexibility.

- Personal characteristics: The nature of faculty members' work requires, in addition to their knowledge competencies, skills and other capabilities that help them to communicate and simplify content for students, which are personal competencies.

On the human side, some studies have focused on a set of features that a university professor should have (Al-Jadri, 2019). These features include:

- They are characterized by good scientific honesty in dealings with students and workers, sincerity at work, and honesty with words and deeds.

To instill solid university morals in their behavior and relationships with their students and colleagues, and to show sufficient respect for all those who work with them.

- To represent a good example through their behaviors, be it for his students and those working with him.
- They do not place themselves above their students, but rather to build good links and encourage them to be close and

open when discussing their different perspectives.

A faculty member plays a key role in the class environment and could leave a positive impression when interacting with their students smoothly. Because of the virtues associated with the professor position and value, the community and the educational system grant them the guidance and counseling authority. Besides their commonly spread status as a source of knowledge and experience, instructor plays a significant role in psychological and cognitive impact on his students. Instructors' relationship with their students determines the quality of attitudes formed by students toward them. Consequently, these attitudes influence instructors' performance and interaction with students (Nafi, 2007).

Based on the above, it proved to researchers that any person cannot be born equipped with any tendency with respect to any external subject. But, these attitudes composed as a result of the individual interaction with external varying situations affect him in some way. So that, it ends up to the formation of some attitudes. That any human acquires attitudes of the environment in which they live, work, and learn, as well as groups and cultures which a person belongs are playing a key role in determining attitudes.

Literature Review

Habeb and Khalili (2018), conducted a study to explore the Attitudes of University Students towards faculty members. The study also tried to predict their educational achievement taking into consideration different factors including gender, cumulative average, and faculty. The instrument of the study composed by (457) male and female students. It contained (30) items. Overall, students' attitudes of Al Najah University were positive. Moreover, the students hold less positive attitudes toward human and professional features of faculty members compared to their attitudes toward teaching methodologies and roles. The variable of gender and the faculty have influenced toward faculty members. Whereas, the rest of variables have not influenced the attitudes.

May (2008), conducted another study to reveal the student's attitudes toward faculty members. This study was conducted at New York USA. The population of the study was (776) male and female students. The results had a statistical significance for female science faculty students towards their male instructors.

Bird (2006), Conducts a study entitled "Indian Students' Attitudes toward Research Assistant and Instructors at Indian Universities". The population of the study composed by (180)

male and female students. One of the study results showed that the students had positive attitudes toward their instructors. There were statistical denotations associated with the student's attitudes.

To measure the Attitudes of the Elementary Students at Arish Faculty, Suez, Toward Teaching Profession, Salem (2000) conducted a study to explore the relationship between the students' attitudes toward the teaching profession and their performance in the applied education. The researcher identifies the correlation between the attitudes toward teaching profession and performance in practical education for students. The results showed that the attitudes in primary education students at the Arish Faculty of Education towards teaching profession is not as it should be, which is neutral rather than positive. This is probably due to the lack of the students' conviction of their future profession as teachers. Bedouin student's attitudes were better than urban students' attitudes towards teaching profession based on statistically significant differences. This is probably due to the desert environment of the Bedouins life.

The previous literature concentrates on studying the attitudes of students towards faculty members, however, these studies varied in the independent variables and the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable. This study tried to identify the students' preferences at Al-Ain University toward their instructors when registering their courses based on the human and/or educational side. It also tried to identify the relationship between the human side and the educational side in the attitudes of students towards their professors.

It is noticed through previous studies that studies focused on studying the attitudes of students towards faculty members, however, these studies varied in the independent variables and the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable, while this study differs from other previous studies in that it tried to identify the trends of university students Al-Ain is towards the teachers who prefer them to register their curricula, be it on the humanitarian or educational side. It also tried to identify the relationship between the human side and the educational side in the attitudes of students towards their professors.

Problem of the Study

The educational process in all its axes is based on bringing about a desirable change in the behavior of the learners. To achieve this goal, university professors are expected to show mastery in the cognitive competencies without neglecting the human side, so that the students

are properly enabled from the knowledge and its details to them properly. However, the researchers, as faculty members in the college, noticed the reluctance of some students from some professors and their turnout for others, and to find out this, this study came to identify the professors that students prefer in the educational process (the educational aspect, the human side), through answering the following questions:

1. What are the students' attitudes toward their preferred professors in the educational process (the educational aspect)?
2. What are the students' attitudes toward their preferred professors in the educational process (the human aspect).
3. What is the relationship between the human and the educational aspect of students' attitudes towards their professors?

Significance of The Study

This study is important due to the importance of selecting and registering academic courses process by students which is the base of universal education in a certain specialization in any field. In addition to the ongoing interaction between the students who are the core part of the educational process, and the faculty members. This is one of a few studies which tried to explore students' preferences toward their professors based on the human and educational part.

The researchers hope that the results of the study contribute to enrich the Arab intellectual production in the field of scientific studies for students. They also hope that this study avails the current executives at Al Ain University to improve and develop the educational services for the students and equip the faculty members with teaching methodologies to support, help, and enhance students while there are selecting and registering their academic courses.

Procedural Definitions

The educational aspect: It is the professor's ability and possession of educational competencies which enables them to learn educational material in an effective manner.

The human aspect: It is the human part of in the educational process in which the professors deals with their students with love, affection, and tolerance, and enables them to reach responsible freedom.

Attitudes: Students desire and affection for a flexible, tolerant, faculty member who are confident and able to deliver the scientific subject efficiently and competently.

Methodology

The researchers followed the scientific method in the procedures to achieve the purpose of the study as follows:

The two researchers used the descriptive approach in a survey form, as it suits the nature and objectives of the study. The population of this study is made up of all B.A. students at Al Ain University, who are enrolled in the first semester of the academic year 2019-2020. The study sample consisted of (750) male and female students who were randomly selected.

Instruments of the Study

In order to achieve the goals of this study, the researchers developed a questionnaire to collect the necessary data related to Al Ain University students' preferences and attitudes toward their professors when registering their courses based on the educational aspect which included 10 items and 17 for human aspect.

The Validity and Reliability of the Study

The researchers proved the validity of the study by examining the items of the study by specialized reviewers to determine the validity of the survey items and to measure the degree of the appropriateness for the study items in terms of structure, language drafting, and suitability for measuring the preferences and attitudes of Al Ain University students toward faculty members and their relationship in selecting their academic courses, and the extent of affiliation to the title of the study, and its relevance to the field. Items of the study have been settled on the final form (27) items.

Statistical Processing

To answer the study questions, the raw information was entered into the computer, and the mean, standard deviations, and the percentage ratio were extracted, and Pearson correlation coefficient was used.

Results and Discussion

The First Question

What are the students' attitudes toward their preferred professors in the educational process (The educational aspect)?

To answer this question, the mean, standard deviations, and the percentages have been extracted for the instrument items. 60% has been considered at the point between the positive and negative attitudes, because the study followed the gradient quintet. Whereas, the critical point for these attitudes is three. If the

mean is more than three, this will denote for positivity and vice versa as showed in table (1) below.

Table 1.

Means, Standard Deviations, Percentages, and Assessments

The educational aspect of the faculty member					
Number	Items	Mean	Standard Deviation	Percentage	Assessment
3	Uses appropriate learning activities to achieve lesson objectives.	3.89	1.13	77.8	positive
2	It takes into account the individual differences of students.	3.87	0.90	77.4	positive
4	It takes into account the individual differences of students.	3.86	0.89	77.2	positive
1	It takes into account the individual differences of students.	3.84	0.90	76.8	positive
9	Prepare students before starting the lesson with a question to stimulate brainstorming.	3.66	0.99	73.2	positive
6	It uses various types of reinforcement for students.	3.63	0.91	72.6	positive
7	The ability to manage discussion and dialogue in the lecture in a manner that provides an effective educational climate.	3.61	0.90	72.2	positive
8	The ability to attract student attention to the subject and improve the teaching process.	3.58	0.91	71.6	positive
5	The ability to link the scientific subject within the course	3.57	0.97	71.4	positive
10	Ability to include thought-provoking and researching questions	3.56	1.03	71.2	positive
14	Ability to include excitement and suspense in the presentation of the article	3.53	1.00	70.6	positive
12	The ability to provide illustrations to explain the subject within the book	3.48	0.82	69.6	positive
13	The ability to provide interesting examples in the course	3.47	0.92	69.4	positive
11	Focus on the novelty of the information in the course	3.47	0.98	69.4	positive
17	The ability to provide a special space of activities to stimulate student creativity.	3.46	0.78	69.2	positive
16	Focus on showing the course comfortably and softly	3.44	0.87	68.8	positive
15	Fairness and objectivity in the test results.	3.44	0.82	68.8	positive
Total		3.27	0.98	65.4	positive

Table (1) shows that all items of the educational aspect that measure students' attitudes toward their professors were positive and ranged between (3.89) for item (3) "Using appropriate educational activities to achieve the objectives of the lesson" and between (3.37) of item (15), "Justice and objectivity in test results".

The total score for the field reached (3.27) and its percentage (65.4) reflected positive attitudes. This indicates that students value the active faculty member who deliver the course clearly and deals with them objectively, flexibly and is characterized by the qualities and competencies of the successful instructor. The results of this study are consistent with the study of Habayeb and Al-Khalili (2010), which showed that the attitudes of An-Najah National University students towards faculty members were positive.

The total degree for the whole study was (3.27) i.e. (65.4%), which reflects positive attitudes. This indicates that the students appreciate the instructor who is flexible, active, and successful. The results of this study agree with the results of Habayeb and Al-Khalili (2018), which says that the attitudes of Al-Najah University students were positive.

The Second Question

What are the students' attitudes toward their preferred professors in the educational process (The human aspect)?

To answer this question, the mean, standard deviations, and the percentages have been extracted for the instrument items. 60% has been considered at the point between the

positive and negative attitudes, because the study followed the gradient quintet. Whereas, the critical point for these attitudes is three. If the mean is more than three, this will denote for

positivity and vice versa as showed in table (2) below.

Table 2.

Mean, Standard Deviations, Percentages, and Assessments

Scope: The human side of a faculty member					
Number	Items	Mean	Standard Deviation	Percentage	Assessment
22	Emotional poise and maturity in dealing with students.	3.63	0.92	72.6	positive
19	Commitment to good behavior in word and deed (good example).	3.56	0.78	71.2	positive
21	Flexibility in dealing with students	3.41	0.81	68.2	positive
20	High self-esteem and lack of hypocrisy.	3.39	0.89	67.8	positive
18	Maintain the overall appearance and indecision.	3.37	0.82	67.4	positive
27	A sense of humor in his dealings with students.	3.37	0.92	67.4	positive
25	Choose the faculty member who accepts any excuse	3.34	0.93	66.6	positive
24	A faculty member who is not obligated to do homework and activities chooses not to be systematic	2.56	0.74	51.2	negative
26	The absentee chose the faculty member.	2.51	0.80	50.2	negative
23	Choose a faculty member who forgives everything	2.48	0.88	49.6	negative
Total		3.16	0.98	63.2	positive

Table (2) shows that the items that measure students' attitudes toward their professors on the human side were in positive for most of them except items. Those items were (23,24,26) where their mean reached (2.56 - 2.48)

As for the total degree of the field, it reached (3.16) and its percentage (63.2) reflects positive attitudes. The researchers attribute this to the fact that students value professors who possesses human education, conscious education, who deals with them easily while achieving the principle of justice. They also show everyone in a purposeful, clear, educational vision and milestones.

The Third Question

What is the relationship between the human and the educational aspect of students' attitudes towards their professors?

To answer this question, the Pearson correlation coefficient was used to study the relationship between the human side and the educational aspect in students' attitudes toward their preferred professors, and the results of Table (3) show that.

Table 3.

Pearson correlation coefficient to measure the relationship between the human side and the educational aspect in the students' attitudes toward their preferred their professors

Number	Item number	Coefficient correlation
750	27	0.73*

The previous results from Table (3) show that there is a statistically significant relationship between the educational aspect and the human aspect in students' attitudes towards their professors.

This indicates that there is a friendly relationship between students and their professors based on the educational side, which points out to the professor's ability and academic personality. In addition to having educational competencies and the ability to manage these competencies efficiently, students stressed the importance of adhering to the human aspect that provides knowledge in a human and professional way at the same time. This indicates that students prefer to choose professors who possess effective competence, human education

and the moral aspect that determines their attitudes and preferences when they register courses in each academic semester.

Recommendations

The researchers recommend the following:

- Professors who possess cognitive competencies must be appointed to a high degree and effectiveness.
- Concentrating on frequent training courses to emphasize the importance of the human side in the educational process and how to use it effectively with students.
- Directing faculty members make good balance between their human and professional features, and the necessity of activating contact with their students at the university on regular bases.
- Carrying out more studies in this field and other variables.

References

- Ali, M.A. (2001). *Terminology of Curricula and Teaching Methodologies*. Mansoura: Amer press.
- Al-Jadri, A. (2019). The ethical frameworks and controls that govern the professional performance of a faculty member. *Jerash University Journal*, M(5) 11, 132-165.
- Bashaya, S.H. (2003). The Psychological Attitudes for Elementary Education Class Towards Teaching Profession and Its Relation With The Psychological Harmony. *Faculty of Education Journal, Asute University*.
- Bird, R. (2006). Attitudes toward Instructors. Social Desirability and Behavioral Intentions. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 405-408.
- Boukhars, K. (2017). *Higher Education Institutions in Algeria: Between the efficiency of the teaching staff and the quality of the educational service*, Arab Democratic Center for Strategic and Economic Studies, Algeria.
- Brint, S. (2011). *Focus on the classroom: Movements to reform college teaching, 1980-2008*. In J.C. Hermanowicz (Ed.), *The American academic profession: Transformation in contemporary higher education*, Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 44-91.
- Coats, D. (2000). Students Perceptions of teachers. *American Educational Research Association*. Washington: Western Michigan University.
- Chory, R.M., & Offstein, E.H. (2017). Your professor will know you as a person evaluating and rethinking the relational boundaries between faculty and students. *Journal of Management Education*, 41(1), 9-38.
- Eagly, R. (2006). *Competency Based Teacher Education*. Chicago: Crowell.
- George, Q., Kanzi, J., Totash, J.T., Wet, E., Emam, M., & Others. (2006). *Translation: Student Successful at University and Create necessary conditions*. Al Riyadh: Obekan Education.
- Habayeb, A., & Khlili, F. (2018). The Attitudes of Al Najah National University towards faculty members and Its Relation With The Students Academic Achievements. *Al Najah National University Journal for researches*, 2560-2588.
- Kipnis, L. (2015). *Sexual paranoia strikes academe*. The Chronicle of Higher Education.
- Mahmoud, I. (2006). *Readings at Psychology and Education*. Tripoli: International Scientific Press.
- May, K. (2008). *A Survey of Undergraduate Attitudes towards Associate Instructors*. Bloomington: Indian University.
- Nafe', S.A. (2007). The Students and Alumni of Education Faculty Attitudes towards Teaching Profession. *Educational Studies Journal*.
- Rhoades, G. (2012). The incomplete completion agenda: Implications for academe and the academy. *Liberal Education*, 98, 18-25.
- Salim, M.R. (2000). *The Attitudes of The Elementary Education Students at Al-Oraish faculty, Al Sowais, Toward Teaching Profession*. egypt: Studies in Teaching Methodologies and Curricula. Egypt Association for Curricula and Teaching Methodologies.
- Taha, F.A. (2000) *Principles of Modern Psychology*. cairo: Social and humanities studies and researches.
- Vinson, K.E. (2013). *Hovering too close: The ramifications of helicopter parenting in higher education*. Georgia State University Law Review, 29, 423-451.