

**IDENTIFYING TRAINING NEEDS AND CLIENT SATISFACTION OF  
VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH  
PHYSICAL, INTELLECTUAL, OR MULTIPLE DISABILITIES IN KUWAIT**

**by**

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**MENGENAL PASTI KEPERLUAN LATIHAN DAN KEPUASAN PELANGGAN  
PERKHIDMATAN PEMULIHAN VOKASIONAL MURID BERMASALAH  
FIZIKAL, INTELEK, ATAU BERMASALAH PELBAGAI DI KUWAIT**

**oleh**

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**Tesis yang diserahkan untuk  
memenuhi keperluan bagi  
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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	II
TABLE OF CONTENTS .....	IV
LIST OF TABLES .....	XVI
LIST OF FIGURES .....	XXIII
ABSTRAK .....	XXV
ABSTRACT .....	XXVII
<b>CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.0 Introduction .....	1
1.1 Background Knowledge.....	1
1.1.1 Vocational Rehabilitation.....	2
1.1.2 The Vocational Rehabilitation Programs in Kuwait.....	3
1.1.3 Training Needs in Vocational Rehabilitation .....	5
1.1.4 Client Satisfaction in Vocational Rehabilitation .....	6
1.2 Problem Statement .....	6
1.3 Purpose of Study .....	9
1.4 Objectives of Study .....	10
1.5 Research Questions .....	12
1.6 Conceptual Framework of Study .....	16

1.6.1 Training needs .....	17
1.6.2 Client satisfaction .....	18
1.7 The Importance of the Study .....	18
1.8 Limitation of the Study .....	20
1.9 Operational Definitions .....	21
1.10 Conclusion .....	28
<b>CHAPTER 2 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE .....</b>	<b>29</b>
2.0 Introduction .....	29
2.1 Introduction to Vocational Rehabilitation.....	30
2.2 Definition of Vocational Rehabilitation.....	33
2.3 Concepts of Vocational Rehabilitation .....	35
2.4 Theories Related to This Research.....	39
2.4.1 Theories on Vocational Rehabilitation .....	39
2.4.1.1 Psychological Theory .....	40
2.4.1.2 Cognitive-Behavioral Theory.....	40
2.4.1.3 Career Development Theory .....	40
2.4.1.4 Systems Theory .....	41
2.4.2 Theories on Training.....	43
2.4.2.1 Learning Theories .....	43

2.4.2.2 Career Development Theory in Relation to Training of Vocational Rehabilitation Service Providers .....	44
2.4.3 Theories on client satisfaction .....	44
2.4.3.1 Expectancy-Disconfirmation Paradigm .....	45
2.4.3.2 Multi-dimensional Client Satisfaction in Vocational Rehabilitation .....	46
2.5 Theoretical Framework of This Research .....	46
2.6 Vocational Rehabilitation Service Provisions .....	48
2.7 Vocational Rehabilitation Service Provisions in Kuwait .....	51
2.8 Knowledge Domains in Vocational Rehabilitation .....	55
2.8.1 Career Counseling, Assessment, and Consultation Services .....	57
2.8.2 Counseling Theories, Techniques, and Applications .....	57
2.8.3 Rehabilitation Services and Resources .....	57
2.8.4 Case and Caseload Management .....	58
2.8.5 Health Care and Disability Systems .....	58
2.8.6 Medical, Functional, and Environmental Implications of Disability .....	58
2.9 Training Needs in Vocational Rehabilitation .....	59
2.10 Previous Studies on Training Needs in Vocational Rehabilitation .....	62

2.11 Previous Studies on Training Needs of Special Education Teachers in Arab Countries.....	69
2.12 Dimensions of Client Satisfaction in Vocational rehabilitation.....	74
2.12.1 Counselor.....	74
2.12.2 Services.....	75
2.12.3 Agency.....	75
2.13 Dimensions of Client Satisfaction in Vocational Rehabilitation in Kuwait.....	75
2.13.1 Service Providers.....	75
2.13.2 Services.....	78
2.13.3 School.....	79
2.14 The Role of Parents in Vocational Rehabilitation.....	79
2.14.1 The Rights and Duties of Parents in Programs of Vocational Rehabilitation.....	81
2.14.2 Importance of Client Satisfaction.....	82
2.14.3 Client Satisfaction and Evaluation of Vocational Rehabilitation Services.....	84
2.15 Previous Studies on Development of Client Satisfaction Instruments.....	86
2.16 Previous Studies on Client Satisfaction in Vocational Rehabilitation.....	87
2.17 Previous Studies of Client Satisfaction on Special Needs Services in Arab Countries.....	93



2.18 Discussion of Previous Studies in Relation to Current Study.....	100
2.19 Conclusion .....	106
<b>CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN.....</b>	<b>108</b>
3.0 Introduction.....	108
3.1 Research Design.....	108
3.2 Independent Variables and Dependent Variables .....	113
3.3 Population of the Study.....	116
3.4 The Study Sample .....	118
3.5 Instruments of Study .....	122
3.5.1 Original Instrument to Identify Training Needs .....	123
3.5.1.1 Adaptation of Instrument to Identify Training Needs.....	126
3.5.2 Original Instrument to Identify Client Satisfaction .....	129
3.5.2.1 Development of Instrument to Identify Client Satisfaction .....	131
3.5.3 Preparation of Interview Questions .....	133
3.6 Translation Process .....	134
3.7 Content Validity of Instruments.....	137
3.8 Construct Validity of the Instruments .....	140
3.9 Predictive Validity of the Instruments .....	141
3.10 Internal Consistency Reliability .....	142

3.11 Pilot Study.....	142
3.11.1 Pilot Study Sample .....	143
3.11.2 Demographic Variables of Pilot Samples.....	143
3.11.3 Descriptive of Items in the Study Instrument of Pilot Sample .....	147
3.11.4 Internal Consistency Reliability for the Instruments .....	148
3.12 Data Collection Procedures.....	149
3.13 Data Analysis to Answer Research Questions .....	152
3.14 Summary .....	158
<b>CHAPTER 4 DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS .....</b>	<b>159</b>
4.0 Introduction.....	159
4.1 Response Rate .....	159
4.2 Demographic Variables.....	161
4.2.1 Demographic Variables of Service Providers.....	161
4.2.2 Demographic Variables for Student Satisfaction .....	165
4.2.3 Demographic Variables for Parent Satisfaction .....	169
4.3 Descriptive for Items in the Study Instruments .....	174
4.3.1 Descriptives for Items in the Training Needs Instrument.....	174
4.3.1.1 Descriptive for Items in Importance Scale.....	175
4.3.1.2 Descriptive for Items in Preparation Scale.....	176

4.3.1.3 Descriptives for Items in the Training Needs Scale.....	178
4.3.2 Descriptive for Items in Student Satisfaction Survey.....	181
4.3.3 Descriptive for Items in Parent Satisfaction Survey.....	183
4.4 Analysis of Research Questions.....	184
4.4.1 Analysis of Research Questions Related to Training Needs .....	184
4.4.1.1 Analysis of Research Question One.....	185
4.4.1.2 Analysis of Research Question Two .....	193
4.4.1.3 Analysis of Research Question Three .....	196
4.4.1.4 Analysis of Research Question Four.....	201
4.4.1.5 Analysis of Research Question Five .....	220
4.4.1.6 Analysis of Research Question Six .....	221
4.4.2 Analysis of Research Questions Related to Client Satisfaction .....	232
4.4.2.1 Analysis of Research Question Seven.....	232
4.4.2.2 Analysis of Research Question Eight.....	246
4.4.2.3 Analysis of Research Question Nine.....	249
4.4.2.4 Analysis of Research Question Ten .....	252
4.4.2.5 Analysis of Research Question Eleven .....	257
4.4.2.6 Analysis of Research Question Twelve .....	262
4.4.2.7 Analysis of Research Question Thirteen.....	276

4.4.2.8 Analysis of Research Question Fourteen .....	294
4.4.2.9 Analysis of Research Question Fifteen .....	298
4.4.2.10 Analysis of Research Question Sixteen .....	303
4.5 Demographic Variables of Focused Group Interviews .....	305
4.5.1 Demographic Variables of Service Providers in the Focused Group Interviews .....	305
4.5.2 Demographic Variables of Students in the Focused Group Interviews .....	307
4.5.3 Demographic Variables of Parent in Focused Group Interviews .....	309
4.6 Analysis of Interviews Questions .....	312
4.6.1 Analysis of Interview Questions Related to Training Needs.....	312
4.6.1.1 Analysis of First Interview Question .....	313
4.6.1.2 Analysis of Second Interview Question .....	314
4.6.1.3 Analysis of Third Interview Question.....	315
4.6.1.4 Analysis of Fourth Interview Question .....	317
4.6.1.5 Analysis of Fifth Interview Question .....	318
4.6.1.6 Analysis of Sixth Interview Question .....	319
4.6.2 Analysis of Interview Questions Related to Students' Satisfaction .....	320
4.6.2.1 Analysis of First Interview Question .....	320
4.6.2.2 Analysis of Second Interview Question .....	321

4.6.2.3 Analysis of Third Interview Question.....	323
4.6.2.4 Analysis of Fourth Interview Question .....	324
4.6.2.5 Analysis of Fifth Interview Question .....	326
4.6.2.6 Analysis of Sixth Interview Question .....	326
4.6.3 Analysis of Interview Questions Related to Parents’ Satisfaction .....	328
4.6.3.1 Analysis of First Interview Question .....	328
4.6.3.2 Analysis of Second Interview Question .....	329
4.6.3.3 Analysis of Third Interview Question.....	331
4.6.3.4 Analysis of Fourth Interview Question .....	333
4.6.3.5 Analysis of Fifth Interview Question .....	334
4.6.3.6 Analysis of Sixth Interview Question .....	335
4.6.3.7 Analysis of Seventh Interview Question.....	337
4.7 Conclusion .....	337
<b>CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION.....</b>	<b>339</b>
5.0 Introduction.....	339
5.1 Discussions.....	340
5.1.1 Discussion of Research Objective One.....	341
5.1.2 Discussion of Research Objective Two.....	344
5.1.3 Discussion of Research Objective Three .....	346

5.1.4 Discussion of Research Objective Four.....	348
5.1.5 Discussion of Research Objective Five .....	354
5.1.6 Discussion of Research Objective Six.....	355
5.1.7 Discussion of Research Objective Seven .....	358
5.1.8 Discussion of Research Objective Eight .....	361
5.1.9 Discussion of Research Objective Nine .....	362
5.1.10 Discussion of Research Objective Ten.....	365
5.1.11 Discussion of Research Objective Eleven .....	370
5.1.12 Discussion of Research Objective Twelve .....	372
5.2 Other Findings.....	373
5.4 Implication of the Study.....	374
5.5 Suggestions for Future Research.....	378
5.6 Conclusion .....	380
<b>REFERENCES .....</b>	<b>381</b>
<b>APPENDICES .....</b>	<b>394</b>
APPENDIX 1 Approval of the Use and Translation of Knowledge Validation Inventory-Revised .....	394
APPENDIX 2 Approval of the Use and Translation of VR Client Satisfaction Survey.....	397

APPENDIX 3	Knowledge Validation Inventory-Revised (Original Version).....	398
APPENDIX 4	VR Client Satisfaction Survey (Original Version).....	403
APPENDIX 5	Comparison of the Original and Translated English Versions of the Surveys.....	405
APPENDIX 6	Content Validation form Knowledge Validation Inventory (Arabic Version) .....	407
APPENDIX 7	Content Validation form Vocational Rehabilitation Parents Satisfaction Survey (Arabic Version).....	416
APPENDIX 8	Content Validation form Vocational Rehabilitation Students Satisfaction Survey (Arabic Version).....	428
APPENDIX 9	Knowledge Validation Inventory (Arabic Version).....	435
APPENDIX 10	Vocational Rehabilitation Parents Satisfaction Survey (Arabic Version).....	450
APPENDIX 11	Vocational Rehabilitation Students Satisfaction Survey (Arabic Version).....	466
APPENDIX 12	Interview Questions for Training Needs .....	476
APPENDIX 13	Interview Questions for Parents Satisfaction .....	478
APPENDIX 14	INTerview Questions for Students Satisfaction .....	480
APPENDIX 15	Means and Standard Deviations of Importance, Preparedness and Training Needs Items .....	482

APPENDIX 16	Means and Standard Deviations for Students Satisfaction Items .....	488
APPENDIX 17	Means and Standard Deviations for Parents Satisfaction Items .....	490
APPENDIX 18	Reliability Rating of Training Needs Scales .....	495
APPENDIX 19	Factor Loading Matrix for Six Factors Solution Based on a Principle Components Analysis with Varimax Rotation for 73 Items from Knowledge Validation Inventory .....	499
APPENDIX 20	Reliability Rating of Students Satisfaction Survey .....	503
APPENDIX 21	Reliability Rating of Parents Satisfaction Survey .....	506



## LIST OF TABLES

	<b>Page</b>
Table 2.1	Application of Theories to the Constructs of the Study .....47
Table 3.1	Dependent Variables and Independent Variables to Identify Training Need ..... 114
Table 3.2	Dependent Variables and Independent Variables to Identify Client Satisfaction..... 115
Table 3.3	The Number of the Service Providers and Students Distributed According to the Public and Private Schools ..... 116
Table 3.4	The Number of Service Providers Distributed According to the Variables of the Study..... 117
Table 3.5	The Number of the Students Distributed According to the Variables of the Study ..... 118
Table 3.6	Private and Public Schools and the Number of Service Providers and Students After Using Random Cluster Sampling ..... 120
Table 3.7	Final Sample of Service Providers, Students, and Parents ..... 121
Table 3.8	Original Instruments to Identify Training Needs and Client Satisfaction ..... 123
Table 3.9	Qualifications and Specifications of Members of Expert Committee..... 138
Table 3.10	Demographic Variables for Pilot Sample of Service Providers ..... 144

Table 3.11	Demographic Variables for Pilot Sample of Students with Physical, Intellectual, or Multiple Disabilities .....	145
Table 3.12	Demographic Variables for Pilot Sample of Parent of Students with Physical, Intellectual, or Multiple Disabilities .....	146
Table 3.13	Descriptive Statistics for the Knowledge Validation Inventory of Pilot Sample.....	147
Table 3.14	Descriptive Statistics for the Clients Satisfaction Survey of Pilot Sample.....	148
Table 3.15	Internal Consistency Reliability for the Knowledge Validation Inventory of Pilot Sample.....	148
Table 3.16	Internal Consistency Reliability for Client Satisfaction Instruments .....	149
Table 3.17	The Type of Analysis Used According to Research Questions on Training Needs.....	155
Table 3.18	The Type of Analysis Used According to Research Questions on Client Satisfaction.....	156
Table 4.1	Response Rate for All Study Samples .....	160
Table 4.2	Demographic Variables for Training Needs (Categorical Variables).....	162
Table 4.3	Demographic Variables for Training Needs (Continuous Variables).....	162
Table 4.4	Demographic Variables for Students' Satisfaction (Categorical Variables).....	166

Table 4.5	Demographic Variables for Students' Satisfaction (Continuous Variables).....	166
Table 4.6	Demographic Variables for Parent's Satisfaction (Categorical Variables).....	170
Table 4.7	Demographic Variables for Parent's Satisfaction (Continuous Variables).....	170
Table 4.8	Overall Descriptive Statistics for the Knowledge Validation Inventory (Importance Scale) .....	175
Table 4.9	Frequency of Item Means (Importance Scale).....	175
Table 4.10	Overall Descriptive Statistics for the Knowledge Validation Inventory (Preparation Scale) .....	177
Table 4.11	Frequency of Item Means (Preparation Scale) .....	177
Table 4.12	Overall Descriptive Statistics for the Knowledge Validation Inventory (Training Needs Scale).....	179
Table 4.13	Frequency of Item Means (Training Needs Scale).....	180
Table 4.14	Overall Descriptive Statistics for the Student Satisfaction Survey .....	181
Table 4.15	Frequency of Item Means (Student Satisfaction rating).....	182
Table 4.16	Overall Descriptive Statistics for the Parent Satisfaction Survey .....	183
Table 4.17	Frequency of Item Means (Parent Satisfaction rating).....	183

Table 4.18	Internal Consistency Reliability for the Knowledge Validation Inventory (Arabic Version).....	185
Table 4.19	Factor Loadings Based on a Principle Components Analysis for Training Needs Scales.....	188
Table 4.20	Factor Loadings Based on a Principle Components Analysis Depending on Six Components .....	190
Table 4.21	Descriptive Statistics and Coefficient Alpha Estimates for the Six Knowledge Validation Inventory Factors (N = 764).....	192
Table 4.22	Independent-Samples T- Test , Mean, and Std Deviation of Gender and School Type Variables .....	197
Table 4.23	ANOVA, Mean, and Std Deviation of Age, Qualification, Years of Experience, and Job Title Variables .....	198
Table 4.24	Descriptive Statistics for the Knowledge Validation Inventory (Training Needs Scale) According to Variables of Study.....	202
Table 4.25	Frequency of Item Means (Training Needs Scale) According to Variables of Study .....	203
Table 4.26	Highest Training Needs for Service Providers According to Males and Females .....	205
Table 4.27	Highest Training Needs for Service Providers with Different Age Categories .....	208
Table 4.28	Highest Training Needs for Service Providers with Different Years of Experience Categories .....	211

Table 4.29	Highest Training Needs for Service Providers with Different Qualification.....	214
Table 4.30	Highest Training Needs for Service Providers with Different Job Titles.....	217
Table 4.31	Highest Training Needs for Service Providers According to Type of School.....	219
Table 4.32	Mean Discrepancy Score and Standard Deviation by Six Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling Knowledge Domains .....	221
Table 4.33	Internal Consistency Reliability for the Clients Satisfaction Surveys (Arabic Version) .....	233
Table 4.34	Factor Loadings Based on A Principle Components Analysis for Students Satisfaction Survey.....	235
Table 4.35	Total Variance Explained for Three Factor Loadings Based on a Principle Components Analysis for Student Satisfaction Survey .....	237
Table 4.36	Factor Loadings and Communalities Based on a Principle Components Analysis with Oblimin Rotation For 38 Items from Students Satisfaction Survey (N = 484).....	238
Table 4.37	Descriptive Statistics and Coefficient Alpha Estimates for the Three Student Satisfaction Survey Factors (N = 484) .....	239
Table 4.38	Exploring Factor Loadings Based on a Principle Components Analysis for Parents Satisfaction Survey.....	241

Table 4.39	Total Variance Explained for Three Factor Loadings Based on a Principle Components Analysis for Parents Satisfaction Survey .....	243
Table 4.40	Factor Loading Matrix for Three Factors Solution Based on a Principle Components Analysis with Varimax Rotation for 69 Items from Parent Satisfaction Survey .....	244
Table 4.41	Descriptive Statistics for the Three Parent Satisfaction Survey Factors (N = 1170) .....	246
Table 4.42	Independent-Samples T- Test , Mean, ad Std Deviation of Gender and School Type Variables for Students' Satisfaction .....	253
Table 4.43	ANOVA, Mean, and Std Deviation of Age, Qualification, Experience, and Job Title Variables .....	254
Table 4.44	Independent-Samples T- Test , Mean, and Std Deviation of Gender and School Type Variables for Students' Satisfaction .....	258
Table 4.45	ANOVA, Mean, and Std Deviation of Age, Qualification, Experience, and Job title Variables .....	259
Table 4.46	Descriptive Statistics for the Students Satisfaction Survey According to Variables of Study .....	263
Table 4.47	Frequency of Item Means (Student Satisfaction Survey) According to Variables of Study .....	264
Table 4.48	Descriptive Statistics for the Parent Satisfaction Survey According to Variables of Study .....	277

Table 4.49	Frequency of Item Means (Parents Satisfaction Survey) According to Variables of Study .....	278
Table 4.50	Mean and Standard Deviation for Three Students Satisfaction Dimensions of Vocational Rehabilitation Services.....	294
Table 4.51	Mean and Standard Deviation for Three Parents Satisfaction Dimensions of Vocational Rehabilitation Services.....	298
Table 4.52	The Interaction Effect Between Client Variable and Category of Disability Variable by Using Two Way ANOVA.....	304
Table 4.53	Demographic Variables for Training Needs for Focused Group Interviews .....	306
Table 4.54	Demographic Variables for Students' Satisfaction for Focused Group Interviews.....	308
Table 4.55	Demographic Variables for Parents Satisfaction for Focused Group Interviews.....	310
Table 5.1	Knowledge Areas Required Based on Demographic Profiles of Service Providers .....	352

## LIST OF FIGURES

	<b>Page</b>
Figure 1.1. Conceptual framework of study.....	16
Figure 3.1. Steps of research design.....	112
Figure 3.2. Steps of the translation process.....	136
Figure 4.1. Distribution of age in years of all respondents (service providers).....	164
Figure 4.2. Distribution of years of experience of all respondents (service providers). ....	165
Figure 4.3. Distribution of age in years of all respondents (Students).....	168
Figure 4.4. Distribution of number of sibling for all respondents (Students).....	169
Figure 4.5. Distribution of age in years of all respondents (Parents).....	172
Figure 4.6. Distribution of age in years of all respondents' sons/daughters.....	173
Figure 4.7. Distribution of number of sibling for all respondents' sons/daughters.....	174
Figure 4.8. Scree plot of factor loading for training needs scales.....	189
Figure 4.9. Normal Q-Q plots of regression standardized residual for training needs.....	194
Figure 4.10. Scatterplot of regression standardized residual for training needs. ....	195



Figure 4.11.	Scree plot of factor loading for Students Satisfaction Survey. ....	236
Figure 4.12.	Scree plot of factor loading for Parents Satisfaction Survey. ....	241
Figure 4.13.	Normal Q-Q plots of regression standardized residual for students' satisfaction. ....	248
Figure 4.14.	Scatterplot of regression standardized residual for students' satisfaction. ....	248
Figure 4.15.	Normal Q-Q plots of regression standardized residual for parents' satisfaction. ....	251
Figure 4.16.	Scatterplot of regression standardized residual for parents' satisfaction. ....	251

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**ABSTRAK**

Keperluan latihan dan kepuasan pelanggan adalah dua kebimbangan utama dalam pemulihan vokasional tetapi belum ditangani di Kuwait. Objektif yang berkaitan dengan keperluan latihan adalah untuk menentukan ciri-ciri psikometrik inventori keperluan latihan untuk konteks Kuwait, membanding dan mengenal pasti keperluan latihan berdasarkan ciri-ciri demografi yang berbeza, dan mengenal pasti pengetahuan domain kaunseling dengan keperluan latihan tertinggi. Objektif yang berkaitan dengan kepuasan pelanggan adalah untuk menentukan ciri-ciri psikometrik soal selidik kepuasan pelanggan bagi konteks Kuwait, membanding dan mengenal pasti kepuasan pelanggan berdasarkan demografi ciri-ciri yang berbeza, mengenal pasti dimensi kepuasan pelanggan yang mempunyai kepuasan terendah, serta membandingkan kepuasan ibu bapa dengan kepuasan murid perkhidmatan pemulihan vokasional. Metodologi kajian tinjauan menggunakan reka bentuk penyelidikan berurutan QUAN-Qual. Sampel kajian ini terdiri daripada staf yang memberi perkhidmatan (764), murid (484), serta ibu bapa (1170) di sekolah-sekolah pemulihan vokasional di Kuwait. Hasil kajian yang berkaitan dengan keperluan latihan menunjukkan kebolehpercayaan ketekalan dalaman yang tinggi untuk inventori. Enam faktor yang berbeza telah diekstrak. Didapati tahun pengalaman, kategori pekerjaan, dan kelayakan meramalkan skor keperluan latihan. Perbezaan yang signifikan dalam keperluan latihan telah diperoleh berdasarkan umur, pengalaman, kelayakan, dan kategori pekerjaan. Kesemua domain pengetahuan didapati memerlukan latihan. Terdapat juga perbezaan yang signifikan dalam keperluan latihan

domain pengetahuan mengikut umur, pengalaman, kelayakan, jenis pekerjaan dan jenis sekolah. Instrumen kajian kepuasan klien menunjukkan kebolehpercayaan ketekalan dalaman yang tinggi bagi Soal Selidik Kepuasan Murid (Student Satisfaction Survey) dan Soal Selidik Kepuasan Ibu Bapa (Parent Satisfaction Survey). Tiga faktor utama bagi kepuasan pelajar dan ibu bapa telah diekstrak. Kategori jenis sekolah dapat meramal skor kepuasan pelajar, manakala jantina ibu bapa, jantina pelajar, jenis sekolah, dan kategori kurang upaya adalah peramal kepada skor kepuasan ibu bapa. Terdapat perbezaan yang signifikan bagi kepuasan pelajar berdasarkan jantina, umur, jenis sekolah, dan kategori kurang upaya. Manakala terdapat perbezaan yang signifikan bagi kepuasan ibu bapa dari segi jantina ibu bapa, jantina pelajar, kelayakan, jenis sekolah, dan kategori kurang upaya. Perbezaan yang signifikan bagi kepuasan pelajar yang terendah diperoleh untuk jenis sekolah. Terdapat juga perbezaan yang signifikan bagi kepuasan ibu bapa dari segi jantina pelajar dan jenis sekolah. Akhir sekali, didapati tiada perbezaan yang signifikan bagi tahap kepuasan antara klien (ibu bapa dan pelajar).

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**ABSTRACT**

Training needs and client satisfaction are two of the major concerns in vocational rehabilitation but has not yet been adequately addressed in Kuwait. The objectives related to training needs are to determine the psychometric characteristics of an adapted training needs inventory for the Kuwait context, explore demographic characteristics, compare and identify the training needs across different demographic characteristics, and identify the knowledge domains with the highest training need. The objectives related to client satisfaction are to determine the psychometric characteristics of a developed client satisfaction survey for the Kuwait context, explore demographic characteristics, compare client satisfaction and identify the client satisfaction across different demographic characteristics, identify the client satisfaction dimension that has the lowest satisfaction, and compare parent satisfaction and student satisfaction of vocational rehabilitation services. A survey methodology with sequential explanatory QUAN-qual research design was used. The samples of this study consisted of service providers (764), student (484), and parents (1170) in vocational rehabilitation schools in Kuwait. The results related to training needs revealed high internal consistency reliability for the inventory. Six distinct factors were extracted. Years of experience, job title category, and qualification predict training needs scores. Significant differences in training needs were obtained across age, experience, qualification, and job title. All knowledge domains require training, and significant differences in knowledge domains training needs were obtained across age, experience, qualification, job title and type of

school. The results related to client satisfaction revealed high internal consistency reliability for the Student Satisfaction Survey and Parent Satisfaction Survey. Three main factors for both student satisfaction and parent satisfaction were extracted. The type of school category predicts student satisfaction scores, whilst parent gender, student gender, type of school, and category of disability predict parent satisfaction scores. Significant differences in student satisfaction were obtained across gender, age, type of school, and category of disability. Significant differences in parent satisfaction were obtained across parent gender, student gender, qualification, type of school, and category of disability. Significant differences in the lowest student satisfaction were obtained across type of school and in the lowest parent satisfaction across student gender and type of school. Finally, the results indicated that the level of satisfaction for client (parents and students) was not significantly different; also the interaction effect between client variable and category of disability variable was not statistical significance.

# **CHAPTER 1**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.0 Introduction**

Kuwait has been making every possible effort to improve services for persons with special needs (Public Authority for Special Needs, 2011). In 2010, Kuwait issued the law of persons with disabilities care (Law No.8 for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities) which respect the rights of the special needs persons to live a good life in order to be an effective member of the society (Public Authority for Special Needs, 2011).

However, since special needs provision in Kuwait is still new, there are many areas that still need a lot of attention. One such area is vocational rehabilitation for individuals with disabilities. There is currently a dearth of research in vocational rehabilitation in Kuwait and also in the Middle East. This Chapter provides a background on the need for research into this area, and also the aims and objectives of the research.

### **1.1 Background Knowledge**

The modern concept of rehabilitation is not only to help the individuals with disabilities to understand and accept their disability, but is a more comprehensive concept that focuses on other aspects such as medical, psychological, social, academic and professional community to develop rehabilitation skills (Khatib, 2010). The World Health Organization [WHO] (2010) defines rehabilitation as a process aimed at enabling

persons with disabilities to reach and maintain their optimal physical, sensory, intellectual, psychological and social functional levels, and to provide them with the tools they need to attain independence and self-determination. The definition by the International Labour Organization [ILO] (2008) refers to rehabilitation as a process which enables persons with disabilities to secure, retain and advance in suitable employment and thereby to further the person's integration or reintegration into society. Although the definitions vary in its terms but it coincide in its goal, which is a specialists' team effort aimed towards helping individuals with disabilities to achieve their potential and increase their confidence in life through the assessment of their abilities and through helping them to develop and benefit from these abilities as much as is possible (Jakobsson, Bergroth, Schuldt, & Ekholm, 2005).

Rehabilitation services consist of several types which include: community-based rehabilitation; medical rehabilitation; psychological rehabilitation; social rehabilitation; educational rehabilitation; and vocational rehabilitation (Khatib, 2010). The primary concern of this research is on vocational rehabilitation.

### **1.1.1 Vocational Rehabilitation**

Vocational rehabilitation is identified by the ILO in 1983 as a major component of rehabilitation services (Obeid, 2009). Vocational rehabilitation is considered to be a continuous and coordinated process which includes offering of vocational services such as vocational guidance, vocational training through workshops, enhancement of professional work environment to elevate the abilities of the person with a disability, and

therefore enable persons with disabilities to find suitable and continuous work (Obeid, 2009).

Vocational rehabilitation is defined by Homa (2004) as helping individuals with disabilities to reach a crucial decision related to his affairs, and in helping him to maximise his abilities and personal traits, which can be used to educate and train him for a job or career which will benefit him and the society. The services under vocational rehabilitation can include training, education, and provision of psychological, social and medical services. A person who is vocationally rehabilitated therefore will be able to maximize their ability to obtain jobs, live an independent life, adapt to society, and therefore, are considered to be less of a burden to the society as is often perceived. They can now become more effective persons in society after rehabilitation and training as they are now a part of the productive force.

Some studies indicated that if persons with disabilities are trained and rehabilitated in component areas, they will compensate the cost spent on them forty times (Zarei, 2006). This is a motivation for the researcher to conduct research to improve vocational rehabilitation services for persons with special needs in Kuwait.

### **1.1.2 The Vocational Rehabilitation Programs in Kuwait**

Most of the Arabic countries offer vocational rehabilitation programs for students with special needs and this includes Kuwait. These programs offer individualised educational plans and rehabilitation strategies which are derived from theoretical frameworks in the field of rehabilitation of students with special needs. These services are implemented through teamwork.



Vocational rehabilitation services for persons with physical, intellectual or multiple disabilities are offered in two specialized centers, fifteen private special schools, and five public special schools. The specialized centers provide for persons aged 18 years and above, whereas the schools serve students aged between 13 till 25 years old. From aged 3 years till 13, students are provided with special education services. This study focused on students with physical, intellectual, or multiple disabilities in both private and public schools. Students with visual or hearing impairment are not included in this study as they are in different programs (integrated programs) with different sets of needs. Students with severe visual or hearing impairment are enrolled in vocational rehabilitation centers, and not in schools.

The students with physical, intellectual, or multiple disabilities in schools receive their vocational rehabilitation services in vocational workshops and rehabilitation programs that cover multiple disciplines like psychological, social, academics and job training. The type of services received is based on the type and degree of disability, age, ability, gender, and occupation that is suitable for training. In these workshops they are trained in simple jobs like binding, printing, sewing, carpentry, flower arranging, making of gifts and perfumes etc.

Even though there are different types of schools (private or public), but the vocational rehabilitation team that provide vocational rehabilitation services for persons with physical, intellectual, or multiple disabilities in these schools are largely similar in terms of disciplines. They offer these services through a multi-disciplinary team that include the following: rehabilitation trainer, assistant rehabilitation trainer, psychologist, a social worker, speech and language specialist, physical therapist, occupational

therapist, nurse, supervisor, and a manager. The members in this team are collectively called vocational rehabilitation service providers.

### **1.1.3 Training Needs in Vocational Rehabilitation**

The traditional model of vocational rehabilitation services involves many human specialists and a rehabilitation service coordinator called a rehabilitation counselor (Saravanabhavan, 1991). The job of the rehabilitation counselor is multi-faceted and different competencies are required of them to function at different phases in their work. Competencies required of certified vocational rehabilitation counselors are comprehensive and in-depth, and knowledge in vocational rehabilitation encompasses many and vastly different knowledge areas such as assessment, career counseling, caseload management, health and medical services, employment strategies and laws (Leahy, Muenzen, Saunders, & Strauser, 2009). Therefore, training need is an important aspect of vocational rehabilitation.

Clearly, training needs of vocational rehabilitation providers is a major concern in vocational rehabilitation and has been addressed in previous studies (e.g. Berven, 1979; Chan, Leahy, Saunders, Tarvydas, Ferrin & Lee, 2003; Emener & Rubin, 1980; Froehlich & Linkowski, 2002; Harrison & Lee, 1979; Leahy, Chan, & Saunders, 2003; Leahy et al., 2009; Leahy, Shapson, & Wright, 1987; Leahy, Szymanski, & Linkowski, 1993; Matthews, Buys, Randall, Biggs & Hazelwood, 2010; Rubin, Matkin, Ashley, Beardsly, May, & Onstott, 1984). A measure of the vocational rehabilitation service providers' knowledge on vocational rehabilitation was focused on in this research.

#### **1.1.4 Client Satisfaction in Vocational Rehabilitation**

Vocational rehabilitation programs have been evaluated previously through assessment of client satisfaction (Capella & Turner, 2004; Hein, Lustig & Uruk, 2005). In this research, the researcher looked at client satisfaction more as a process, and therefore, determined it from multiple dimensions of satisfaction such as satisfaction on service providers, satisfaction on services provided, satisfaction on school, and overall satisfaction (Capella & Turner, 2004).

#### **1.2 Problem Statement**

The latest statistics in 2011 issued by the Public Authority for Special Needs determined that the number of person with disabilities in Kuwait has reached 33, 000 persons and the proportion of persons with physical, intellectual, or multiple disabilities is more than 60% of the total. Due to the large number, there is an urgent need to conduct research on vocational rehabilitation services for persons with physical, intellectual or multiple disabilities. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, there has been no large-scaled empirically-based research so far in the field of vocational rehabilitation in Kuwait. The three studies conducted so far in Kuwait (Aldei, 2008; Kamal, 1993; Meshal, 2005) are small-scaled and sampled only the two vocational rehabilitation centers but not the schools. Vocational rehabilitation services in the schools have never been researched upon.

From the practical-based perspective, feedback from the Public Authority of Special Needs (2011) indicated that the number of persons with disabilities that has been vocationally rehabilitated is still very small. From 1960 till 1990, only 166 persons with

disabilities have been rehabilitated in the specialised centers (Kamal 1993). Currently, with the addition of vocational rehabilitation services in schools, the number receiving such services have increased, however according to the Kuwaiti authorities, those who have obtained jobs are still very few and far between. This feedback from the Public Authority for Special Needs (2011) is supported by field observations and informal interviews conducted with persons with disabilities and parents by the current researcher, who has been a technical supervisor of special education programs in Kuwait for four years, then as a manager of special education programs for three years. Therefore, there is a great need to improve on the vocational rehabilitation services in Kuwait in order to obtain better outcomes.

A major area that requires improvement is in the training of vocational rehabilitation service providers. This is because currently the multi-disciplinary team of service providers lack training in the field. Providers of allied health services such as psychologists, speech and language therapists would have received specialized training in their respective fields, however, currently, there are no data to show whether they possess the knowledge to take on the tasks traditionally performed by rehabilitative counselors. In addition, most of the other service providers such as managers, and social workers in the vocational rehabilitation team normally receive their training through in-service ad hoc programs rather than through a pre-service certified program (Kamal, 1993).

It is quite obvious that there is a lack of systematic training among the vocational service providers; however, no research has been conducted thus far to identify exactly which knowledge component they need training in (Meshal, 2005). Many knowledge

components have been identified to be required of rehabilitative counselors. For example, Leahy et al. (2003) identified six knowledge domains that are required of vocational rehabilitation counselors. They include (1) career counseling, assessment, and consultation; (2) counseling theories, techniques, and applications; (3) rehabilitation services and resources; (4) case and caseload management; (5) health care and disability systems; and (6) medical, functional, and environmental implications of disability. It is necessary to identify training needs as according to Rubin and Roesler (2001) vocational rehabilitation counselors are required to operate as very “sophisticated professionals” possessing multiple rehabilitation counselor knowledge and skills. Training needs of rehabilitation counselors has been the focus of many research studies on vocational rehabilitation as this is a relatively new discipline compared to other types of disciplines related to special needs (e.g. Froehlich & Linkowski, 2002; Chan et al., 2003), however this research area has not be addressed in Kuwait.

The lack of knowledge and training among vocational rehabilitation service providers have been shown to have impact on vocational outcomes of their clients. Previous researches have found that education and training have impact on service quality and vocational outcomes (e.g. Cook & Bolton, 1992; Wheaton & Berven, 1994), and this highlights another issue on vocational rehabilitation services in Kuwait, which is the issue of the lack of program evaluation especially in Kuwait schools.

Evaluation of vocational rehabilitation programs are important in order to improve on services, planning of programs and evaluating of rehabilitation counselors (Capella & Turner, 2004). In this regard, client satisfaction has been used as the focal point for assessing program effectiveness in vocational rehabilitation services (Hein,

Lustig & Uruk, 2005). Client satisfaction is able to identify the strengths and weaknesses of rehabilitation services (Koch & Merz, 1995). As this type of assessment has not yet been conducted before for vocational rehabilitation programs in Kuwait schools, it therefore necessitates that such evaluations be carried out.

In summary, training needs of service providers and client satisfaction of vocational rehabilitation services are two of the major concerns in vocational rehabilitation but has not yet been adequately addressed in Kuwait. It is therefore necessary to look at inadequacies that might exist from these two perspectives. In addition, as larger-scale vocational rehabilitation research is new in Kuwait, therefore it is necessary that this research is exploratory. This suggests that the association of demographic variables such as gender, age, qualification and types of experiences to both training needs and client satisfaction are necessary to provide a better baseline of the current situation. Moreover, research into how these demographic characteristics affects training needs and client satisfaction in vocational rehabilitation studies in developed countries has been divergent (e.g. Chan et al., 2003; Froehlich & Linkowski, 2002; Matthews et al., 2010; Szymanski, Linkowski, Leahy, Diamond, & Thoreson, 1993). Therefore, there is a need to study the association of demographic characteristics in relation to the dependent variables of this study.

### **1.3 Purpose of Study**

As vocational rehabilitation counseling services are still new in Kuwait, it was critical to identify the training needs of vocational rehabilitation service providers in order to inform education curricula. It was also as important to identify client

satisfaction in order to inform on improvement of services. Client satisfaction was measured where possible from the perspectives of the students themselves and also from the parents' perspectives. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to investigate and identify strengths and limitations of the vocational rehabilitation services in Kuwait from the perspectives of both the providers (training needs) and the clients (client satisfaction).

#### **1.4 Objectives of Study**

Based on the purpose above, the objectives of the research in relation to training needs are to:

1. Determine the psychometric characteristics of an adapted training needs inventory for the Kuwait context for service providers.
2. Explore demographic characteristics that are associated with training needs of the vocational rehabilitation service providers.
3. Identify whether there are any significant differences in training needs across demographic characteristics for service providers.
4. Identify the training needs of vocational rehabilitation service providers in Kuwaiti schools serving students with physical, intellectual, or multiple disabilities.
5. Identify the vocational rehabilitation counseling knowledge domains with the highest training need for service providers.

6. Identify the vocational rehabilitation counseling knowledge domains with the highest training need across different demographic characteristics for service providers.

Based on the purpose above, the objectives of the research in relation to client satisfaction are to:

7. Develop a client satisfaction survey and determine its psychometric characteristics for the Kuwait context.
8. Explore demographic characteristics that are associated with client satisfaction of vocational rehabilitation services in these Kuwaiti schools.
9. Identify whether there are any significant differences in client satisfaction across demographic characteristics.
10. Identify client satisfaction of vocational rehabilitation services in Kuwaiti schools serving students with physical, intellectual, or multiple disabilities.
11. Identify the client satisfaction dimension that has the lowest satisfaction.
12. Compare parent satisfaction and student satisfaction of vocational rehabilitation services.



## 1.5 Research Questions

In light of the research objectives on identifying training needs, the following research questions are determined:

For objective one, the research question is:

- (1) What are the psychometric characteristics of an adapted training needs inventory for the Kuwait context?

For objective two, the research question is:

- (2) Which demographic variables (gender, age, years of experience, qualification, job title, type of school) significantly predict the service providers' training needs?

For objective three, the research question is:

- (3) Are there any significant differences between the training needs of vocational rehabilitation service providers across: gender, age, years of experience, qualification, job title, type of school?

For objective four, the research question is:

- (4) What are the training needs of vocational rehabilitation service providers in Kuwaiti schools serving students with physical, intellectual, or multiple disabilities across: overall, gender, age, years of experience, qualification, job title, type of school?

For objective five, the research question is:

- (5) For which vocational rehabilitation counseling knowledge domains do the vocational rehabilitation service providers report the highest training needs?

For objective six, the research question is:

- (6) For which vocational rehabilitation counseling knowledge domains do the vocational rehabilitation service providers report the highest training needs across: gender, age, years of experience, qualification, job title, type of school?

In light of the research objectives identifying client satisfaction, the following research questions are determined:

For objective seven, the research question is:

- (7) What are the psychometric characteristics of the client satisfaction survey (Student Satisfaction Survey and Parent Satisfaction Survey) for the Kuwait context?

For objective eight, the research questions are:

- (8) Which demographic variables (gender, age, parent's qualification, parent's income per month, number of siblings, type of school, and category of disability) significantly predict students' satisfaction of vocational rehabilitation services?
- (9) Which demographic variables (parent's gender, student's gender, parent's age, student's age, parent's qualification, parent's income per month, number of student's siblings, type of school, and category of their son/daughter's disability) significantly predict parents' satisfaction of vocational rehabilitation services?

For objective nine, the research questions are:

- (10) Are there any significant differences between students' satisfaction of vocational rehabilitation services which are offered to them across: gender, age, parent's qualification, parent's income per month, number of siblings, type of school, and category of disability?
- (11) Are there any significant differences between parents' satisfaction of vocational rehabilitation services which are offered to their children across: parent's gender, student's gender, parent's age, student's age, parent's qualification, parent's income per month, number of student's siblings, type of school, and category of their son/daughter's disability?

For objective 10, the research questions are:

- (12) What is the students' satisfaction of vocational rehabilitation services overall, and across: gender, age, parent's qualification, parent's income per month, number of siblings, type of school, and category of disability?
- (13) What is the parents' satisfaction of vocational rehabilitation services which are offered to their children overall, and across: parent's gender, student's gender, parent's age, student's age, parent's qualification, parent's income per month, number of student's siblings, type of school, and category of their son/daughter's disability?

For objective 11, the research questions are:

(14) For which satisfaction dimensions do the students report the lowest satisfaction overall, and across: gender, age, parent's qualification, parent's income per month, number of siblings, type of school, and category of disability?

(15) For which satisfaction dimensions do the parents report the lowest satisfaction overall, and across: parent's gender, student's gender, parent's age, student's age, parent's qualification, parent's income per month, number of student's siblings, type of school, and category of their son/daughter's disability?

For objective 12, the research question is:

(16) Do students and parents of different category of disabilities share similar assessment of satisfaction about the vocational rehabilitation services which are offered to them?

## 1.6 Conceptual Framework of Study

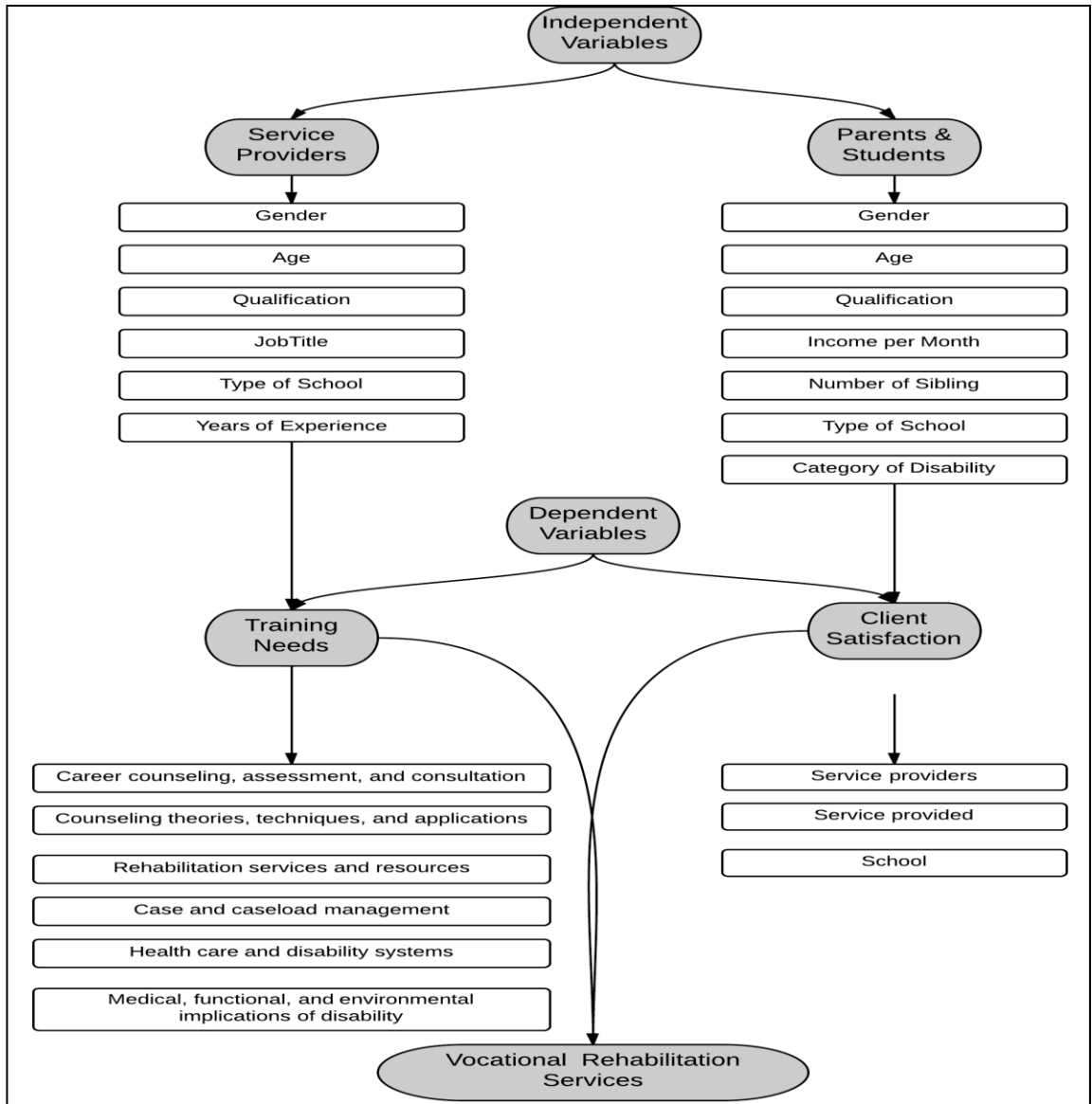


Figure 1.1. Conceptual framework of study.

There are two dependent variables in this research, which are training needs and client satisfaction (refer to Figure 1.1).

### **1.6.1 Training needs**

This study attempted to determine the training needs of vocational rehabilitation service providers in terms of knowledge domains on vocational rehabilitation as defined by Leahy et al. (2003). According to Leahy et al. (2003), there are six dimensions in vocational rehabilitation counseling knowledge, which are (1) career counseling, assessment, and consultation; (2) counseling theories, techniques, and applications; (3) rehabilitation services and resources; (4) case and caseload management; (5) health care and disability systems, and (6) medical, functional, and environmental implications of disability.

Training needs were calculated based on the discrepancy between perceived importance and perceived preparedness in the knowledge areas. In other words, if the service providers pointed to high importance of a particular area, but at the same time indicate little preparedness for it, therefore it means that there is a need for training in this area. However, if the participant pointed to high importance and also high preparedness in a particular knowledge area, this means that there is no need for training in that particular area.

In this study, the researcher identified several independent variables (gender, age, years of experience, qualification, job title, and type of school) to study their influence on the training needs of the providers of vocational rehabilitation services. The levels of the independent variables for training needs are: gender (male, female); age (22-32, 33-38, 39-54); qualification (bachelor [B.A], B.A and professional diploma, MA or PhD, others); job title (manager, supervisor, rehabilitation trainer, assistant rehabilitation

trainer, psychologist, social worker, occupational therapist, physical therapist, speech and language specialist, a nurse); type of school (private, public), and years of experience (4 or less, 5-6, 7 and above).

### **1.6.2 Client satisfaction**

This study attempted to determine client satisfaction of both parents and students with physical, intellectual, or multiple disabilities in schools. In this research, client satisfaction was determined by a multi-dimensional model. According to Capella and Turner (2004), client satisfaction should include three dimensions which are (1) counselor; (2) services; and (3) agency. As this research addressed vocational rehabilitation services in schools that provide services based on a multidisciplinary team, dimensions of satisfaction was developed as follows: (1) service providers; (2) services; (3) school. The researcher identified several independent variables that are believed to have an impact on the level of satisfaction with the clients which are as follows: gender, age, qualification, income per month, number of sibling, type of school, and category of disability. These variables have been addressed in previous studies in other countries and they are gender, qualifications, type of school and category of disability (e.g. Bashiti & Abdats, 2004; Capella & Turner, 2004; Iouye, 2000; Kosciulek, 2003; Mounzer, 2007; Tucker, Abrams, Chennault, Stanger, & Herman, 1997).

### **1.7 The Importance of the Study**

The importance of this study is that it focuses on vocational rehabilitation services provided in public and private schools, which to the researcher's knowledge has not been addressed before. There are no studies in the Arab countries in general or in

Kuwait in particular on this topic. The results therefore added to the body of knowledge on vocational rehabilitation by providing empirical evidence from the Kuwait perspective. This study also contributed to fulfill the shortage of literature in Arabic in the field of rehabilitation of persons with disabilities. Currently, there are a lack of studies and researches in this area.

The study was significant as it highlighted the training needs of vocational rehabilitation services providers for individuals with disabilities. The shortcomings of service providers in these programs are revealed in order to improve on education curricula, training and services. The study was also significant as it highlighted the client satisfaction of vocational rehabilitation services from the perspective of both parents and students. The weaknesses revealed by them will help to improve on provision of services.

This study also adapted an established instrument on knowledge of vocational rehabilitation into Arabic language and also Arabic culture and context, with permission obtained from the original author. Another instrument on client satisfaction was also developed. The psychometric characteristics of the instruments were investigated in this study and were reported. Even though validation is done only for Kuwait, however, the similarity of language and culture across the Arab region lends credence to the generalisability of the instruments across the Arab-speaking region. It is important to have validated instruments in vocational rehabilitation suitable for the Arabic language and culture as this will help to expand and encourage empirical research in this area from this particular part of the world. Currently, most research on vocational rehabilitation is predominantly only from the United States (U.S.).



The results will also be beneficial for those responsible for the planning and development of vocational rehabilitation programs for persons with disabilities. It will provide them with data to clarify the vulnerabilities in these programs in order to improve on them, so that eventually the desired goals of vocational rehabilitation are achieved. In addition, this study proposed ways to improve the rehabilitation services for persons with special based on a scientific basis.

In summary, the identified strengths and limitations of vocational rehabilitation services through analysis of training needs of service providers and through analysis on client satisfaction of current program, especially from the contributions of different demographic characteristics will have implications for vocational rehabilitation practice, pre-service preparation and professional development.

### **1.8 Limitation of the Study**

The primary research methodology in this study is survey. Even though the researcher endeavoured to obtain a high return of the survey questions distributed, the final returns were not 100%. This includes survey questions distributed to vocational rehabilitation providers, students, and parents. Also this study focused on only students with physical, intellectual, or multiple disabilities who received vocational rehabilitation services in Kuwaiti schools, because different programs are offered to students with hearing and visual impairment.

## **1.9 Operational Definitions**

### **Vocational rehabilitation**

International Labour Organization (ILO) definition: The term vocational rehabilitation of persons with special needs is defined as a phase in the coordinated and continuous process of social rehabilitation whose aim is to avoid or minimize the functional, psychological, physical, economic or socio-cultural effects of disabilities of different types and origins, and coordinated and combined use of social, educational, medical, and vocational measures for training or retraining the person to the highest possible level of functional ability to enable persons with disabilities to obtain and retain suitable employment. The promotion of integration of the person with disabilities into the community is emphasized (ILO, 2008). The ILO definition is the adopted vocational rehabilitation definition for Kuwait.

In this study vocational rehabilitation is operationalized as:

All rehabilitation services provided by an integrated work team in Kuwaiti schools for persons with physical, intellectual, or multiple disabilities. These include all the assistance, the arrangements and procedures provided by the schools in the educational aspects, counseling and health, diagnostic, training and transition, and various support services. It also includes services provided to the students or the parents.

### **Vocational rehabilitation counseling knowledge domains**

Six domains of knowledge have been determined by Leahy et al. (2003) to identify training needs, which are as follows: (1) career counseling, assessment, and

consultation; (2) counseling theories, techniques, and applications; (3) rehabilitation services and resources; (4) case and caseload management; (5) health care and disability systems; and (6) medical, functional, and environmental implications of disability.

In this study it is operationalized as:

The six domains of knowledge as defined by Leahy et al. (2003) that are supposed to be acquired by the rehabilitation services providers in Kuwait, whether acquired before (pre-service) or during the service. These knowledge domains are in the survey questionnaire used for the study (refer to Chapter Two page [55-58] for in-depth explanation of the six knowledge domains).

### **Training needs**

The knowledge areas that are reported to be important but are limited or insufficient in preparation would be the knowledge areas that require training needs (Leahy et al., 2009; Leahy et al., 2003). Training needs are identified through measuring the discrepancy between perceived importance and perceived preparedness of knowledge domains in vocational rehabilitation counseling (Chan et al., 2003; Leahy et al., 1993).

In this study it is operationalized as:

The discrepancy between a measure on perceived importance and perceived preparedness of knowledge domains in vocational rehabilitation counseling as identified in the survey questionnaire on knowledge domains. If the service providers pointed to high importance of item, and a little preparedness, that means there is a need for training

in this area. In other words, the theoretical body of knowledge on vocational rehabilitation domains which are estimated to be low on a scale of acquisition and estimated to be high on the scale of importance will constitute training needs.

### **Vocational rehabilitation counselors**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) defined vocational rehabilitation counselors as personnel that help persons with intellectual, physical, or emotional disabilities -as determined in the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and then the 1998 Amendments to the Rehabilitation Act- deals with the social, personal, and vocational effects of disabilities. The personnel is able to provide vocational and personal counseling, determine the strengths and limitations of persons with disabilities, and offer case management support by interviewing both persons with disabilities and their parents. Rehabilitation counselors also evaluate school and medical reports, arrange for medical care, vocational training, and job placement, and consult with psychologists, physicians, employers, and speech, physical, and occupational therapists to determine the skills and capabilities of the persons with disabilities. Rehabilitation counselors develop vocational rehabilitation programs of persons with disabilities by conferring with the client. These programs include training for persons with disabilities to develop their job skills to be employed, and to integrate them into society. Rehabilitation counselors are competent to recognize and to help lessen attitudinal and environmental barriers. Such help may include providing education, and advocacy services to persons with disabilities and their families, employers, and others in the community. Rehabilitation counselor facilitates and coordinates with other service providers to

increase the person's competence to live independently (United State Department of Labor, 2010).

### **Vocational rehabilitation service providers**

Providers in this study are:

Team members who provide vocational rehabilitation services for persons with physical, intellectual, or multiple disabilities within the schools in Kuwait, which includes public and private schools. These include manager, supervisor, rehabilitation trainer, assistant rehabilitation trainer, psychologist, social worker, occupational therapist, physical therapist, speech and language specialist, and a nurse, who answered the study instrument for the identification of training needs. These team members are supposed to have the skills of vocational rehabilitation counselors as described above.

### **Clients**

Clients in this study are:

Students with physical, intellectual, or multiple disabilities who are receiving the vocational rehabilitation services within the schools of Kuwait. These students are aged between 13 to 25 years old. Clients also include parents of students with physical, intellectual, or multiple disabilities who are receiving the vocational rehabilitation services within the schools of Kuwait.