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The Relationship Between Overprotection and Vocational Rehabilitation among Students with Intellectual Disabilities According to the Perspective of Their Parents

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Abstract

The current research aimed to discuss the relationship between parental overprotection of students with intellectual disabilities and vocational rehabilitation from the perspective of their parents. It has adopted the descriptive-correlational approach via a questionnaire with a sample of 188 parents of individuals with intellectual disabilities in Makkah. Findings indicated a negative relationship between parental overprotection and vocational rehabilitation. The results showed no statistically significant differences between males and females according to the gender variable. Differences were found in the relationship between overprotection and vocational training according to age, favoring those under 30 years old, followed by those aged 31 to 50 and finally those over 51. No differences were found based on educational qualifications, nor family economic status. The findings also indicated that there is a strong, statistically significant positive correlation ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between overprotection and vocational training and employment.

Keywords: career readiness, developmental disabilities, family support, self-determination, transitional services.

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1. Introduction

Parenting methods vary from one society to another, depending on their cultures. These methods play a prominent role in shaping a student's personality. They are classified into healthy methods, such as (Democratic, Independent, Participatory, Accepting, Encouraging, Equitable & Flexible/Firm) and unhealthy methods, such as (Rejection, Overprotection, Neglect, Harshness, Instilling Feelings of Inferiority, Authoritarianism & Inconsistency). These methods undoubtedly have diverse and multifaceted impacts on child development (Mansour 2021). Therefore, children, in general, need care and attention throughout their developmental stages. Children with disabilities, in particular, require specialized care and supportive environments and methods to foster their growth in all aspects. This helps prepare them for successful personal, social and economic lives, enabling each individual to contribute to society, regardless of the extent of their contribution. Neglecting this group, however, exacerbates their problems, thus compounding the impacts of their disabilities. They can be perceived as a burden on their communities (Mohammed 2016).

It should be noted that preparing individuals with intellectual disabilities to meet the requirements of life requires equipping them with as many experiences and skills as possible to enable them to be responsible members of their society and to move from complete dependency to partial or complete self-reliance (Sulaiman 2016). One of the most prominent elements of comprehensive rehabilitation is vocational rehabilitation, which aims to empower individuals with disabilities to achieve social and economic integration. Vocational rehabilitation facilitates the development of economic self-sufficiency for the individual, enabling them to contribute to the economic and social development of their community. This is accomplished by providing a qualified and trained workforce to address labor shortages. Vocational rehabilitation also helps channel the untapped potential of individuals with disabilities, including their income potential. Further, vocational rehabilitation positively impacts the psychological and social well-being of individuals with disabilities and their families. This can lead to increased self-esteem and greater appreciation from family and community members for them as productive members of society, capable of fulfilling important roles and providing services to others (Masoud 2011).

The transition from youth to adulthood is a challenging process for individuals with intellectual disabilities. To ensure the best possible success in this transition, organized support measures such as vocational rehabilitation

programs are essential (Alshuayl et al. 2024). The objective of vocational rehabilitation is clear: to hone the skills necessary for work, build independence, and enhance self-efficacy. However, despite the use of vocational rehabilitation programs in several countries, individuals with intellectual disabilities still face challenges in the workplace (Nevala et al. 2019).

According to Barbara and Callus (2025), overprotection is a restriction of independence and excessive control that focuses on protection rather than risk. Although the task of protecting individuals with intellectual disabilities has ended, overprotection can hinder personal development and limit opportunities to acquire life and work skills. It may also unintentionally prevent caregivers and families from benefiting from real-life experiences that support them in achieving functional objectives, such as navigating society or making decisions independently (Callus et al. 2019).

2. The Problem of the Research

The family plays a major role in a child's personality development. The family serves as the cornerstone of a child's understanding of their role in society, which then impacts their ability to eventually integrate into in a healthy way. Conversely, the family may cause them to be placed in a circle of isolation away from their peers and society without realizing the extent of the impact of this excessive protection on the individual and their personality, as the individual must be independent and effective in society (Barabra and Callus 2025; Mohammed 2016).

Career decision-making is a cornerstone of the future for individuals with intellectual disabilities. Choosing a profession is one of the most prominent decisions a person makes in their life, as a career is not solely based on hopes, aspirations, and desires, but must also align with an individual's abilities, potential, interests, and the opportunities available in society (Al-Muaiqil and Majrashi 2015). Furthermore, the labor market needs these workers, which can simultaneously help individuals with disabilities achieve independence and utilize their capabilities. Previous studies have indicated that inappropriate educational and parenting practices may contribute to undesirable outcomes among students with disabilities (Al-Sayah 2018; Bizoush et al. 2020). Additionally, studies by Al-Maghazi (2018), and Rashid (2021) suggest that vocational rehabilitation for people with disabilities is related to their integration into society and, consequently, their participation in the labor market, leading to independence. It is observed that individuals with intellectual disabilities who are overprotected will suffer from decreased self-confidence, motivation, and competence, and will be less likely to achieve positive outcomes in a professional environment without supportive conditions for independence (Martin et al. 2024).

2.1 Requirements of the Research

1. To what extent are parents of students with intellectual disabilities displaying overprotective responses toward their children regarding vocational rehabilitation?
2. Are there statistically significant differences at the significance level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) regarding the relationship between overprotection and vocational rehabilitation among individuals with intellectual disabilities, according to the perspective of their parents? Do these differ by gender, age, educational qualification, and family economic level?
3. Is there a correlation between overprotection and vocational rehabilitation among students with intellectual disabilities, according to the perspective of their parents?

2.2 Research Objectives

This research is needed to better understand the relationship between parental overprotection of students with intellectual disabilities and vocational rehabilitation from the perspective of their parents. It will be helpful to understand the relationship between overprotection and vocational training according to gender, age, and in response to educational qualifications, family economic status, and employment. Understanding these relationships can benefit parents by helping them understand the consequences of overprotecting their child, so they can help them reach their full potential. This can also help vocational rehabilitation professionals better understand how they can best equip and prepare individuals with intellectual disabilities to thrive in the workplace. Thus, the objectives of this research are to:

1. Develop a valid instrument to measure parent levels of overprotective responses regarding their children with disabilities, specifically relating to vocational rehabilitation.
2. Assess levels of parent overprotection regarding their children's vocational rehabilitation.
3. Determine if there are differences in overprotection based on demographic factors.
4. Assess the relationship between overprotection in the area of vocational training and overprotection in the area of vocational employment.

3. Methodology

3.1 Theoretical Framework

Overprotective parenting is a form of unhealthy parenting characterized by excessive and exaggerated fear on the part of parents for their children's safety. This fear is expressed in a way that delays the child's independence, leading the child to perceive their parents as preventing them from interacting with others. All their desires are met and fulfilled quickly, provided they remain close to their parents (Al-Ghamdi 2021). Youssef (2019) defines overprotective parenting as fulfilling all of the child's desires to an excessive degree, even if those desires conflict with social values and norms. It also includes performing all tasks for the child, even those they can perform themselves. The manifestations of overprotection are apparent, as the most prominent of which is the parent's keenness to protect the child and interfere in his affairs to the extent of performing duties and responsibilities that he can perform on his behalf. At that point, the child does not have the opportunity to make his own decision. Another manifestation of overprotection is the parent's concern about their child's safety from any danger or illness he faces. Therefore, this general concern is accompanied by monitoring the child's movements and general supervision of all his actions and monitoring his behavior towards any issue he faces (Al-Azmi 2021).

In the same vein, Zayed (2015) asserted manifestations of overprotective parenting include interfering in every aspect of a child's life, to the point of assigning duties and responsibilities. This includes inhibiting their opportunity to manage many things, such as their allowance, choosing their clothes, selecting their favorite foods, or defending themselves if a classmate attacks them. Parents often choose their child's friends, and if one of them attacks the child, the parents take it upon themselves to defend them. This is where the negative impact becomes apparent, as overprotective parenting fosters selfishness, excessive dependency, withdrawal, and an inability to persevere and struggle in the face of life's challenges, along with an inability to define objectives and needs (Youssef 2019).

One of the negative impacts of overprotection is hindering a child's attempts to test their strength in the face of environmental pressures, which leaves them unprepared to confront reality outside their home life. Children who have experienced overprotection for a long time tend to develop submissive or anxious personalities. Overprotection leads to patterns of emotional instability and delayed maturity. It also creates several difficulties for the child throughout their life, such as when selecting a field of study or type of work, and exposes them to psychological disorders like anxiety, lack of self-confidence, an inability to make decisions, and feelings of failure when faced with life's problems and demands (Ahmed 2016). A child raised in an overprotective manner develops a weak, dependent personality, reliant on others for guidance, characterized by instability, low ego strength, and a lack of emotional control. Over time, the child becomes a fearful individual who is unable to take responsibility (Ahmed 2018). As Sanders (2006) explained, overprotection of children with intellectual disabilities leads to low self-esteem and poor academic performance. It also makes them feel less capable than typically developing children, also one of the most significant drawbacks of overprotection for children with intellectual disabilities is their inability to develop their abilities, skills, and potential. They are unable to live their lives as they wish, but rather as others dictate. Overprotection also tends to result in children who are dependent and unable to rely on themselves. Venkatesh et al. (2023) found parents often underestimated the abilities of their children with intellectual disabilities. This perception may contribute to the pervasiveness of overprotection in this population.

Numerous studies have addressed the impact of overprotection. For example, Hayen and Bousri (2019) investigated the extent to which overprotection by parents impacts their children's self-concept from the perspective of special education professionals. In this study, they aimed to ascertain whether there were differences in the level of impact based on the types of self-concepts. The sample consisted of 56 professionals working in several specialized centers for people with special needs. The findings indicated overprotection by parents has a significant negative impact on self-concept. The study also showed significant differences in this

relationship based on experience and academic level. The researchers recommended organizing guidance courses and adopting guidance programs that contribute to improving the abilities of disabled students and directing them towards developing their peaks and knowledge, guiding parents and advising them on the importance of moving away from the overprotective style of parenting, and explaining its harms and serious dimensions in the present and future.

3.2 Vocational Rehabilitation

Hawsawi (2015) views vocational rehabilitation as part of a continuous and coordinated process that includes providing vocational services, such as career guidance and specialized employment, ensuring suitable employment for people with disabilities. From Suleiman's (2012) perspective, vocational rehabilitation involves several steps and procedures that a person with an intellectual disability undergoes, beginning with an assessment of their mental, psychological, and physical abilities and culminating in nomination for a specific job and follow-up in that employment to overcome obstacles that limit their success and adaptation to the work environment. Meanwhile, Hamadi (2016) believes that the philosophy of vocational rehabilitation for people with intellectual disabilities is based on ensuring that they enjoy all the basic rights enjoyed by citizens without disabilities, including respect for their dignity and the provision of educational and training opportunities. People with disabilities have their own needs, desires, and unique characteristics; therefore, effective rehabilitation includes individualizing services to meet specific needs and taking into account individual differences. The importance of the active participation of people with disabilities in service planning and implementation is paramount. Individuals who participate in setting objectives and determining their professional path are more likely to succeed in the rehabilitation process. Vocational rehabilitation helps people with intellectual disabilities reach acceptable levels of self-sufficiency and yields real benefits for both the individual and society.

Researchers have highlighted the importance of vocational rehabilitation for people with intellectual disabilities. Al-Dakhil and Mohammed (2019), for example, aimed to investigate the effectiveness of a training program for developing social skills among students with mild intellectual disabilities. Their sample consisted of 18 students with mild intellectual disabilities in the primary stage in Al Majma'ah Governorate, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, selected purposively. The study used a social skills scale and a training program, employing a quasi-experimental design. The findings demonstrated the effectiveness of the rehabilitation training program in developing the social skills of students with mild intellectual disabilities.

Based on the foundational work of previous studies, and expanding to explore new relationships, the current research has adopted the descriptive-correlational approach to investigate the relationship between overprotection experienced by students with intellectual disabilities and its impact on vocational rehabilitation. The descriptive-analytical approach is defined as the method that quantitatively describes the relationship between two variables, or the method that studies the relationship between variables, or predicts other variables using advanced statistical techniques such as discriminant analysis, factor analysis, and others (Abu Allam 2007).

3.3 Population & Sample of the Research

The research population consisted of parents of students with intellectual disabilities in Makkah region. The total number of parents in the Makkah region, according to the statics provided by the regional education administration, was 547. The research sample comprised 188 parents of students with intellectual disabilities in secondary school. Table 1 shows the distribution of the research sample according to demographic characteristics.

As can be seen in Table 1, the majority of the research sample was males (60.6%), and the highest representation of age is from the 31-50 age group (51.1%). Most participants had earned a Bachelor's degree or less, and the majority were in the middle economic level (77.7%).

3.3.1 Instrument

To achieve the research objectives, the tool used was a closed-ended questionnaire to investigate the relationship between overprotection and vocational rehabilitation among students with intellectual disabilities according to the perspective of their parents. The tool's development process was carried out in the following stages:

3.3.2 Procedures of the Research

To achieve the research objectives and answer its questions, the tool used was a closed-ended questionnaire to investigate the relationship between overprotection and vocational rehabilitation among students with intellectual disabilities according to the perspective of their parents. The tool's development process was carried out in the following stages:

The research was conducted in several stages, including:

1. Developing the survey instrument used to investigate the relationship between overprotection and vocational rehabilitation among students with intellectual disabilities according to the perspective of their parents and establishing appropriate validity and reliability indicators.
2. Sending a request for assistance to the entities where the tool would be implemented and obtaining their approval.
3. Administering the research tool (The Questionnaire) and distributing it to the research sample, which consisted of the parents of students with intellectual disabilities.
4. Collecting the data in preparation for entering it into the SPSS Program.
5. Entering the data into the SPSS Program and extracting the findings.
6. Analyzing the data using statistical methods.

3.3.3 Instrument Development

The survey instrument was developed based on the educational literature related to the relationship between overprotection and vocational rehabilitation among students with intellectual disabilities according to the perspective of their parents. To verify the relationship between overprotection and vocational rehabilitation among students with intellectual disabilities according to the perspective of their parents, the researcher prepared a questionnaire consisting of 20 items distributed across two main dimensions:

- Dimension One: Overprotection and Vocational Training (9 items).
- Dimension Two: Overprotection and Vocational Employment (11 items).

3.4 Validity & Reliability

3.4.1 First: The Survey Validity

Survey validity is not a characteristic held by the tool itself, but rather relates to the appropriate interpretation of its derived scores within a particular context. It refers to the extent to which decisions made based on the tool's findings are correct. Validity is considered the most prominent characteristic of measurement, referring to the soundness of the inferences we draw from scale scores, in terms of their usefulness and meaning (Abu Allam 2007). A scale is valid when it measures what it was designed to measure (Odeh 2010). The validity of a scale depends on its function and purpose. A test designed for prediction may not be as valid for diagnosis.

The researcher investigated the questionnaire's validity using several methods, including:

1. Face Validity: To confirm the tool's face validity, it was introduced to a panel of six expert reviewers from Saudi university faculty members specializing in Special Education. This panel assessed the tool's suitability and ability to answer the research questions. Based on their notes and modifications, the questionnaire was revised. Initially consisting of 45 items, it was reduced to 20 items after revisions and deletions, resulting in a more effective tool capable of representing the intended measurement.
2. Construct Validity (Internal Consistency Evidence): Construct validity refers to the extent to which the questionnaire measures the theoretical constructs it was designed to assess. To examine construct validity, the researcher calculated: 1) the correlation coefficients between each item and its total dimension score, and 2) the correlation coefficients between each dimension score and the total questionnaire score. Statistically significant correlations indicate that the dimensions are consistent with the overall construct measured by the questionnaire.

Table 3 above shows the correlation coefficient between each statement of the first dimension and the total dimension score.

3.4.2 Item to Dimension Correlations

For the first dimension, correlation coefficients between each statement and the total dimension score ranged from 0.459 to 0.867. Eight of the nine correlation coefficients were significant at the .01 level, and the last was significant at the .05 level. Therefore, there is evidence of construct validity within this dimension. For the second dimension, correlation coefficients between each statement and the total dimension score ranged from 0.479 to 0.804. Ten of the eleven items were significant at the .01 level, and the last item was significant at the .05 level. Therefore, there is evidence of construct validity within this dimension.

3.4.3 Dimension-Total Correlations

Table 4 above shows that all correlation coefficients for all dimensions of the questionnaire are statistically significant at the 0.01 significance level. Therefore, all dimensions of the tool are considered internally valid on a structural level.

3.5 Second: The Questionnaire Reliability

The reliability of a research tool refers to the stability, dependability, and predictive power of its findings. This means assessing the consistency of the tool's findings when it is administered multiple times under similar conditions. Cronbach's alpha was used for internal consistency testing. It measures the consistency of the research sample's responses to all questions on the scale. Alpha can be interpreted as the internal reliability coefficient among 20 responses. A higher value indicates a higher degree of reliability, ranging from 0 to 1. A value of 60% or higher is considered acceptable, while in other studies, it is considered acceptable at 70% or higher. To verify the tool's reliability, Cronbach's alpha and split-half reliability were calculated. The findings are as follows:

Table 5 above indicates that the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the first dimension is 0.890 and the split-half value is 0.791 - 0.884, while the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the second dimension is 0.907 and the split-half value is 0.759 - 0.863. These are statistically significant high coefficients.

4. Results

4.1 Findings of the Research

This chapter presents the findings of the current research, which aimed to reveal the relationship between overprotection and vocational rehabilitation among students with intellectual disabilities from the perspective of their parents. The findings were presented based on the study questions.

4.2. Question 1

To what extent are parents of students with intellectual disabilities displaying overprotective responses toward their children regarding vocational rehabilitation?

To answer this first question, the arithmetic means and standard deviations were calculated to measure the relationship between the excessive protection provided by parents of students with intellectual disabilities and vocational rehabilitation. These were then ranked in descending order according to their means, as shown in Table 7.

Table 6 shows the arithmetic means for the dimensions of the scale measuring the relationship between overprotection used by parents of students with intellectual disabilities and vocational rehabilitation, from the parents' perspective. The means ranged from 3.19 to 3.23. The highest mean was for the second dimension: Vocational Employment and Overprotection, with a mean of 3.23 and a neutral trend. This was followed by the first dimension: Vocational Training and Overprotection, with a mean of 3.19 and a neutral trend. The overall arithmetic mean for the tool was 3.026, and a neutral trend. While the means do not display strong trends toward or away from overprotection, there is some variation, as can be seen by the standard deviations. Further analyses for other research questions will determine if the variation is systematic based on demographic variables.

4.2.1 First: Overprotection and Vocational Training

To answer this question, the arithmetic means and standard deviations of the items in the Overprotection and Vocational Training subsection were calculated, ranking them in descending order according to their means. Table 8 illustrates this.

Table 7 shows that the arithmetic means for the items "Overprotection and Vocational Training" ranged between 2.21-3.63. The highest was item number 4 which states, "I fear that my son will face many risks in the vocational training environment," with a mean score of 3.63 The lowest was item 8, which states, "I believe that my son's enrollment in vocational training programs for people with disabilities exposes the family to a negative perception from those around them." It an average score of 2.21. The average score for the "Overprotection and Vocational Training" dimension as a whole was 3.19, indicating a neutral trend. The items with the higher means have the commonality that they focus on individual responsibility, while the items with the lower means focus on perceptions from external observers. This shows that stronger overprotective responses related to vocational training stem from parent concerns about the child's personal abilities and responsibilities, to a greater extent than from fear of others' perceptions.

4.2.2 Second: Overprotection and Vocational Employment

To answer this question, the averages and standard deviations of the items in the Overprotection and Vocational Employment dimension were calculated, ranking them in descending order according to their averages. Table 9 illustrates this.

Table (8) shows that the arithmetic means for the items in the Overprotection and Vocational Training dimension ranged between 2.43-3.89. The highest was item 4 which states, "I believe that the long distance between the workplace and home limits my son's employment," with an arithmetic mean of 3.89 and a high degree of agreement. The lowest mean was for item 6, which states, "I see that employing my son professionally is not economically worthwhile." It had an arithmetic mean of 2.43. The arithmetic mean for the dimension of "overprotection and professional employment" as a whole was 3.23, with a neutral direction. Similar to the first dimension, responses related to external observers and judgment were ranked lower in terms of means. In this case, there were some more logistical issues that presented with higher means, and the personal and individual limitations were in the middle of the ranked list.

4.3 Question 2

Are there statistically significant differences at the significance level (**α=0.05**) regarding the relationship between overprotection and vocational rehabilitation among individuals with intellectual disabilities, from the perspective of their parents, according to the following variables: gender, age, educational qualification, and family economic status?

4.3.1 Vocational training: Demographic comparisons

A Mann-Whitney U test was conducted to answer this question regarding gender differences and overprotection related to vocational training.

The Z-value is -1.297, which is not statistically significant. Therefore, it is evident that there are no statistically significant differences between males and females in their opinions regarding overprotection and vocational rehabilitation for their children with intellectual disabilities based on the gender variable (males and females). In other words, males and females are equally likely to respond in overprotective ways regarding their child's vocational training.

Next, three separate Kruskal-Wallis tests were conducted to explore relationships between demographic variables age, education level, and economic level and overprotection related to vocational training.

The Kruskal-Wallis Test for age (Table 10) shows statistical significance at the 0.01 level. This indicates differences among the sample in their reported levels of overprotection and vocational training, based on the age variable. Those under 30 years old showed the highest levels of overprotection related to vocational training, followed by those aged 31-50 years, and finally, those over 51 years old.

As shown in Table 11, there were no significant differences in overprotection and vocational training based on the educational qualification variable.

Table 12 shows that there were no significant differences in overprotection and vocational training based on family economic level.

4.3.2 Vocational employment: Demographic comparisons

A Mann-Whitney U test was conducted to explore gender differences and overprotection related to vocational employment.

The table above shows that there are statistically significant differences between males and females in their responses regarding overprotection and vocational employment for their children with intellectual disabilities, based on the gender variable (Males & Females). Females showed significantly stronger levels of overprotection related to vocational employment than males did.

Next, three separate Kruskal-Wallis tests were conducted to explore relationships between demographic variables age, education level, and economic level and overprotection related to vocational employment.

Table 14 shows that there are statistically significant ($p<.01$) differences in overprotection and occupational employment responses based on age. The responses of those under 30 years of age were least overprotective in vocational employment, followed by those aged 31-50 years, and finally, those over 51 years of age responded with the strongest levels of overprotection.

Table 15 shows that there are statistically significant ($p<.05$) differences in overprotection and vocational employment based on educational qualification. Those with postgraduate degrees showed the lowest levels of overprotection in vocational employment, followed by those with bachelor's degrees, and finally those with a high school diploma or lower. It is possible that those with higher levels of education are more likely to have learned about the value of self-determination and independence and have responded accordingly. It is also possible that those with higher levels of education have greater means to care for their children with intellectual disabilities, giving them the freedom to allow more autonomy.

there are no statistically significant differences in overprotection and vocational employment based on family economic level. Given that the result is approaching significance, and given the results of the educational qualification variable, it is possible that there is some amount of the economic variable that is being captured in educational attainment.

4.4 Question 3

Is there a correlation between overprotection and vocational training, and between overprotection and vocational employment among students with intellectual disabilities, from the perspective of their parents?

To answer the third question, Pearson's correlation coefficient was calculated between the responses of parents of students with intellectual disabilities on the dimension of overprotection and vocational training, and their responses on the dimension of overprotection and vocational employment. The correlation coefficient between the responses of parents of students with intellectual disabilities on the dimension of overprotection and vocational training, and their responses on the dimension of overprotection and vocational employment is 0.735. This is a significant value at the ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) level, confirming a strong, statistically significant positive correlation at the ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) level between overprotection and vocational training, and overprotection and vocational employment among students with intellectual disabilities, from the perspective of their parents. This shows that parents who respond in more overprotective ways regarding vocational training also tend to respond in more overprotective ways regarding vocational employment, when considering their children with intellectual disabilities

5. Discussion

The findings of the current research indicate a relationship between the overprotection practiced by parents towards their children with intellectual disabilities and vocational rehabilitation. The mean scores for the relationship between overprotection and vocational rehabilitation ranged from 3.19 to 3.23. Regarding the first point, namely overprotection and vocational training, a relationship was found between the two, as the arithmetic means ranged from 2.21 to 3.63. The researchers attribute this result to parents' fears for their children with intellectual disabilities regarding the dangers of the environment surrounding them during vocational training.

This is coupled with the parents' belief that their children are incapable of coping with problems in the vocational training environment, such as difficulty in being accepted by others in the workplace, negative perceptions of their children, and an inability to accept responsibility for their mistakes. Furthermore, the researchers believe that vocational training centers do not provide complete protection for their children. This result is attributed to the consequences of vocational training due to their children's lower IQ scores. Additionally, parents believe that families who allow their children with disabilities to participate in vocational training are viewed negatively.

The findings of the current research are consistent with those reported by Suleiman (2016), who discussed the importance of vocational rehabilitation for individuals with disabilities and its role in improving personal and social adjustment. Likewise, Al-Dakhil and Mohammed (2019) found that vocational rehabilitation programs contribute to the development of social skills among students with mild intellectual disabilities. The current findings also support those of Al Laqqani and Al-Dakhil (2019), who pointed to a number of family-related factors that may interfere with vocational rehabilitation for individuals with intellectual disabilities.

Li and Meng (2026) found that parental over-protection had a negative impact on the mental health of individuals with intellectual disabilities. Meral et al. (2025) found that overprotective parenting styles negatively impacted the self-determination of individuals with intellectual disabilities. Together, these studies explain how parent overprotection can impact their child's mental health, which can, in turn, impact the child's activity and self-determination. While the overprotective parent may feel they are keeping the child safe, they may be negatively impacting their child's mental health, self-concept, and self-determination.

Regarding overprotection and professional employment, a relationship was found between overprotection of children with intellectual disabilities by their parents and professional employment, as the arithmetic means of the questionnaire items ranged between 2.43-3.89. The researchers believe this result is due to several reasons, the most prominent of which are the distance of the workplace from the home, the difficulty of communication between people in the workplace, the inability to make work-related decisions, the inability of the person with a disability to adapt to the work environment, the lack of acceptance from others, and their negative perception of them, in addition to the work conditions that are often not applicable to individuals with intellectual disabilities, as they are required to spend long periods away from home, which is not commensurate with their abilities, in addition to the lack of work skills. Niedbalski (2025) found that most individuals with intellectual disabilities perceived that their families treated them in an overprotective way because they were not confident in their abilities. Perceived overprotective attitudes from family and lack of stimulation tended to result in apathy toward employment and other activities, general inactivity, and sometimes even trauma responses. On the flip side, employers have named overprotective families as one reason they may choose not to hire a person with intellectual disabilities (Alajlan, 2023). In this way, overprotective families may create a cycle where their levels of overprotection keep the child from seeking employment, and simultaneously make employers less inclined to hire their children due to the inconvenience of parental interference.

These findings are also consistent with those of Alyousef (2019), who concluded that several obstacles hinder the employment of individuals with disabilities, the most prominent of which are problems with the architectural design of the building, which may not be suitable for this category of people with disabilities. The study recommended increasing the percentage of employment for humanitarian cases and monitoring compliance with it and organizing meetings with employers. Providing job opportunities in the local market that people with disabilities can move into after training.

The findings of the current research showed no statistically significant differences between males and females in their opinions regarding overprotection and vocational rehabilitation for their children with intellectual disabilities. The researcher may attribute this result to the similarity in the opinions of the sample, whether fathers or mothers, regarding their degree of protection and concern for their children with disabilities. The findings of the current research are consistent with those of Al-Rajhi's (2021) study, which confirmed the absence of statistically significant differences between the reality of family participation in vocational rehabilitation programs for individuals with intellectual disabilities, from the perspective of parents and gender. While differences were found among the sample members in their opinions regarding the relationship between overprotection and vocational rehabilitation based on age, favoring those under 30 years old, followed by those aged 31 to 50, and finally those over 51. The researchers explain this result by suggesting that younger participants may be more aware of the development of rehabilitation centers for people with disabilities and their high level of advancement, while older participants believe that vocational rehabilitation centers have not developed and remain as they were previously. It is also possible that older adults are less aware of the importance and benefits of rehabilitation for individuals with intellectual disabilities. The findings of the current

research differ from those of Al-Rajhi's study (2021), which reported no statistically significant differences between the reality of family participation in vocational rehabilitation programs for people with intellectual disabilities from the parents' perspective and age. Because of this discrepancy, more research is needed to better understand the findings.

The findings of the current research showed that there were significant differences in participants' level of overprotection response related to vocational employment, but not vocational training, based on the educational qualification variable. Parents with higher levels of education responded in less overprotective ways than participants with lower levels of education, with regard to vocational employment. This was not true for vocational training, which is consistent with the findings of Al-Rajhi (2021), which indicated no statistically significant differences between the reality of family participation in vocational rehabilitation programs for individuals with intellectual disabilities, from the parents' perspective, and their educational qualifications. Regarding the differences based on educational qualification for vocational employment, prior research has shown that parent education level is highly related to their level of anxiety in parenting (Bujnowska et al. 2025). This also aligns with research from Rezka and Pratama (2025), who found that higher levels of parent education were associated with higher levels of parent advocacy for children's rights, as well as better access to healthcare. Health care and rights provide pathways to independence and self-determination, while poor health and limited knowledge of rights can lead to parent perceptions of the child as vulnerable, resulting in overprotective behaviors and attitudes (Avedissian et al. 2025).

Furthermore, findings of the research showed that there were no differences among the sample members in their responses regarding overprotection and vocational rehabilitation based on the family's economic level variable. The researchers attribute this result to the similarity of the sample members' opinions regarding the relationship between overprotection and vocational rehabilitation for individuals with disabilities, regardless of their economic level. Society's general perception of the abilities of individuals with intellectual disabilities and their perceived inability to undergo vocational rehabilitation is similar, with most of the sample members believing that their children are incapable of vocational rehabilitation or that vocational rehabilitation is pointless for this group due to the potential risks involved. The findings of the current research are consistent with those of Al-Rajhi's study (2021), which confirmed the absence of statistically significant differences between the reality of family participation in vocational rehabilitation programs for individuals with intellectual disabilities, from the parents' perspective, and their economic status. Rezka and Pratama (2025) found contrasting results – that economic conditions facilitated access to healthcare and specialized educational programs. This, in turn, tends to improve children's development and overall well-being, and decrease overprotective attitudes and behaviors. However, Rezka and Pratama's (2025) research incorporated the results of many studies over a wide range of cultures and countries. Thus, the medical systems and impact of economic conditions may differ depending on the location of the research.

The findings of the current research revealed a strong, statistically significant positive correlation ($\boldsymbol{\alpha \leq 0.05}$) between overprotection and vocational training, and between overprotection and vocational employment among students with intellectual disabilities, as perceived by their parents. The researchers attribute this finding to a strong relationship between vocational training and employment. The more experience a person with an intellectual disability gains during vocational training, the more likely they are to succeed in employment. Similarly, the more challenges and obstacles they encounter during vocational rehabilitation, the more difficulties they will face in employment. The findings of the current research, regarding this question, are consistent with the study by Alyousef (2019), which aimed to identify the problems facing vocational rehabilitation and employment programs for people with disabilities. That study recommended increasing the employment rate of people with disabilities and providing job opportunities that they can transition to after training, thus highlighting the strong relationship between vocational training and employment. Similarly, Venkatesh et al. (2023) assessed challenges associated with vocational training for individuals with intellectual disabilities and found family member's perceptions of their loved one's abilities can be a challenge associated with vocational training. The findings in this research also align with Suleiman's study (2016), which emphasized the importance of vocational rehabilitation for individuals with disabilities, due to its positive impacts on their personality, which naturally reflects on their professional employment. It also agrees with Al-Dakhil and Mohammed's study (2019), which concluded that vocational rehabilitation helps in developing some social skills for people with intellectual disabilities, which are among the most prominent skills required for professional employment. The findings are also consistent with research by Mudde et al. (2025), who asserted vocational training contributed to skill development, including soft skills such as time management and working well with others, as well as employment opportunities.

6. Conclusion

This research indicates there is a negative relationship between parental overprotection and vocational rehabilitation. Regarding the variables, there were not statistically significant differences between males and females, nor based on family economic status. There was a significant difference based on parent level of education for one dimension (employment) but not the other (training), where parents with lower levels of education had more overprotective responses to their children's vocational employment. The only statistically significant variable on both dimensions was age, favoring those under 30 years old, followed by those 31 to 50, then those over 51. There was a statistically significant correlation between overprotection and vocational training, which leads to the recommendations that transpired from this research.

7. Recommendations

Based on the findings in this research, vocational rehabilitation programs should be required to provide research-based instructions to caregivers, in addition to the students in their care to ensure they are aware of the ramifications of their attitudes and actions, and how these affect their child. Research-based guidelines should be generated to instruct caregivers how to serve as facilitators to help their children with intellectual disabilities reach their full potential. Further research should explore interactions between these variables and incorporate qualitative data to better understand parent responses.

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Table 1. Distribution of the Research Sample According to Demographic Characteristics.

Variable	**Classification**	**Frequency**	**Percentage %**
Gender	Male	114	60.6
	Female	74	39.4
	Total	188	100
Age	Under 30	50	26.6
	31 – 50	96	51.1
	Over 51	42	22.3
	Total	188	100
Educational Qualification	Secondary or Less	78	41.5
	Bachelor's	82	43.6
	Postgraduate	28	14.9
	Total	188	100
Economic Level	High	14	7.4
	Middle	146	77.7
	Low	28	14.9
	Total	188	100

Table 2. Questionnaire Review by Experts.

No.	Dimension	Number of Items Before Deletion	Number of Modified Items	Number of Deleted Items	Number of Items After Modification
1	Overprotection and Vocational Rehabilitation	12	8	3	9
2	Overprotection and Vocational Rehabilitation	11	11	0	11

Table 3. Correlation coefficients between each statement of the first dimension, Overprotection and Vocational Training, and the total score of the dimension.

No.	The Statement	Correction Coefficient	Significance Value
1	I fear the professional consequences of vocational training for my son with an intellectual disability.	0.800	0.000*
2	I feel my son is unable to solve the problems he faces during vocational training.	0.780	0.000*
3	I fear the negative perception of my son in vocational training programs.	0.819	0.000*
4	I fear my son will face many risks in the vocational training environment.	0.762	0.000*
5	I feel others do not accept the idea of training people with intellectual disabilities, which causes distress for my son.	0.867	0.000*
6	I believe that vocational training centers cannot provide sufficient protection within the training workshops.	0.705	0.000*
7	That My son's low IQ limits his vocational training opportunities.	0.558	0.004*
8	I believe that my son's enrollment in vocational training programs for people with disabilities exposes the family to negative perceptions from those around them.	0.459	0.021
9	My son's difficulty in taking responsibility for his mistakes causes him problems at work.	0.794	0.000*

*significant at the .01 level

Table 4. Shows the correlation coefficient between the score of each dimension of the questionnaire and the total questionnaire score.

Dimension	Correlation Coefficient	Significance Value	Significance Level
Dimension 1: Overprotection and Vocational Training	0.951	0.000	0.01
Dimension 2: Overprotection and Vocational Employment	0.963	0.000	0.01

Table 5. Cronbach's alpha and split-half reliability for the questionnaire.

Dimension	Number of Items	Cronbach's alpha Coefficient	Split-half
Dimension 1: Overprotection and Vocational Training	9	0.890	0.791 - 0.884
Dimension 2: Overprotection and Vocational Employment	11	0.907	0.759 - 0.863

Table 6. Arithmetic Means and Standard Deviations for the Dimensions of the "Relationship Scale Between Overprotection Used by Parents of Students with Intellectual Disabilities and Vocational Rehabilitation".

No.	Dimension	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	Rank	Sample Trend
1	Vocational Training and Overprotection	3.23	0.78	1	Neutral
2	Vocational Employment and Overprotection	3.19	0.81	2	Neutral
	Overall Performance	3.026	1.59	-	Neutral

Table 7. Arithmetic Means and Standard Deviations of the Items in the "Overprotection and Vocational Training" Subsection.

No.	Item	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	Rank	Sample Trend
1	I am afraid that my son will face many risks in the vocational training environment.	3.23	1.15	1	Agree
2	I feel that my son is unable to solve the problems he faces during vocational training.	3.19	1.14	2	Agree
3	I believe that vocational training centers cannot provide sufficient protection within the training workshops.	3.026	1.12	3	Neutral
4	My son's difficulty in taking responsibility for his mistakes causes him problems at work.	3.28	1.12	4	Neutral
5	I feel that others do not accept the idea of training people with intellectual disabilities, which causes distress for my son.	3.24	1.26	5	Neutral
6	I am afraid of the professional consequences of vocational training for my son with an intellectual disability.	3.20	1.21	6	Neutral
7	My son's low IQ limits his vocational training opportunities.	3.20	1.13	7	Neutral
8	I fear the negative perception my son will face in vocational training programs.	3.08	1.35	8	Neutral
9	I believe that my son's enrollment in vocational training programs for people with disabilities will expose the family to negative perceptions from those around them.	2.21	1.15	9	Disagree
	Overall	3.19	0.81	-	Neutral

Table 8. Means and Standard Deviations for Items in the "Overprotection of Professional Employment" Section.

No.	Dimension	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	Rank	Sample Trend
1	I believe that the distance between the workplace and home limits my son's employment.	3.89	1.11	1	Agree
2	I believe that applying general employment conditions to my son with an intellectual disability limits his chances of obtaining a job.	3.68	1.04	2	Agree
3	My son with an intellectual disability faces difficulty communicating with people in the workplace.	3.58	1.05	3	Agree
4	I believe that my son cannot make decisions in the workplace.	3.43	1.09	4	Agree
5	My son faces difficulty adapting to the work environment.	3.36	1.05	5	Neutral
6	I believe that the amount of time my son spends at work is not suitable for his health condition.	3.30	1.09	6	Neutral
7	I am afraid of my son taking the job because he lacks the basic skills.	3.26	1.11	7	Neutral
8	I am afraid my son will not be accepted by his colleagues at work.	3.05	1.24	8	Neutral
9	I think that employing my son professionally would be stressful for him.	2.79	1.13	9	Disagree
10	I am afraid of others' negative perceptions of my son in the workplace.	2.73	1.35	10	Neutral
11	I believe that employing my son professionally is not economically viable.	2.43	1.21	11	Disagree
	Overall Dimension	3.23	0.78	-	Neutral

Table 9. Findings of the Mann-Whitney U test to determine differences between males and females in the relationship between overprotection and vocational rehabilitation for individuals with intellectual disabilities.

Group	Sample Size	Mean Rank	Group Rank	U-value	W-value	Z-value	Significance
Males	114	98.64	11245.00	3746.00	6521.00	-1.297	0.194
Females	74	88.12	6521.00				

Table 10. The Kruskal-Wallis Test results for age and overprotection and vocational training.

Age	Under 30 years	31-50 years	Over 51 years
Mean Rank	116.14	90.56	77.74
Test Value	12.445		
Significance Level	0.002		
Penetrating Significance	0.01		

Table 11. Kruskal-Wallis Test findings for educational qualification and overprotection and vocational training.

Educational Level	**Secondary or lower**	**Bachelor's degree**	**Postgraduate studies**
Mean Rank	97.17	90.87	97.71
Test Value	0.653		
Significance Level	0.721		
Significance	Not significant		

Table 12. Kruskal-Wallis Test findings for family economic level and overprotection and vocational training.

Family Economic Level	**High**	**Medium**	**Low**
Mean Rank	96.79	93.50	100.36
Test Value	0.262		
Significance Level	0.855		
Significance	Not Significant		

Table 13. Mann-Whitney U test findings for gender and vocational employment.

Group	**Sample Size**	**Mean Rank**	**Group Rank**	**U-value**	**W-value**	**Z-value**	**Significance**
Males	114	102.92	11733.00	3258.00	6033.00	-2.636	0.008
Females	74	81.53	6033.00				

Table 14. Kruskal-Wallis Test results for age and overprotection - vocational employment.

Age	**Under 30 years**	**31-50 years**	**Over 51 years**
Mean Rank	109.10	98.75	67.40
Test Value	14.630		
Significance Level	0.001		
Penetrating Significance	0.01		

Table 15. Kruskal-Wallis Test results for educational qualification and overprotection – vocational employment.

Educational Level	**Secondary or lower**	**Bachelor's degree**	**Postgraduate studies**
Mean Rank	90.47	89.79	119.50
Test Value	6.965		
Significance Level	0.031		
Significance	0.05		

Table 16. Kruskal-Wallis test findings ofor family economic level and overprotection - vocational employment.

Family Economic Level	**High**	**Medium**	**Low**
Mean Rank	93.43	93.29	109.21
Test Value	1.109		
Significance Level	0.057		
Significance	Not Significant		