

العوامل المؤثرة على اختيار الطلبة لمهنة الخدمة الاجتماعية

أنوار الخرينج
هند المعصب

ملخص: إن قرار اختيار المهنة من أصعب القرارات التي قد يتخذها الفرد في حياته. تعتبر مهنة الخدمة الاجتماعية مهنة إنسانية قائمة على هدف تحسين حياة الإنسان ومساندة الضعيف ونشر العدالة الاجتماعية. شارك ما مجموعه 172 طالباً من طلبة الخدمة الاجتماعية من جامعة الكويت طوعاً في هذه الدراسة. أظهرت نتائج هذه الدراسة أن هناك علاقة ذات دلالة إحصائية بين توجهات الطلبة نحو اختيار المهنة والمتغيرات التالية: وجود صديق أو قريب يعمل كأخصائي اجتماعي والتفكير في دراسة تخصصات أخرى. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، فإن العامل الإيثاري هو العامل الأكثر تحفيزاً لطلبة الخدمة الاجتماعية لاختيار الخدمة الاجتماعية كمهنة. ستساعد نتائج الدراسة الحالية مهنة الخدمة الاجتماعية على فهم الدوافع التي تساعد طلبة الخدمة الاجتماعية في الكويت على اختيار مهنة الخدمة الاجتماعية.

المصطلحات الأساسية: اختيار المهنة، الدوافع، الخدمة الاجتماعية، الأخصائي الاجتماعي.

Factors Affecting Students' Choice of Becoming Social Workers^{*}

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Abstract: Choosing a career is usually a complex decision for individuals to make. Social work is a humanitarian profession known for its mission of enhancing human well-being, empowering the disadvantaged population, and improve social conditions through promoting social justice and social change. A total of 172 undergraduate social work students from Kuwait University participated voluntarily in the study. The findings of this study showed that there was a significant relationship between attitudes toward career choice and variables such as having a friend or relative who works as a social worker and considering studying other majors. In addition, altruistic factor was found to be the most factor the motivated social work students to choose social work as a career. The findings of the current study will help the social work profession understand the motivations that inspired social work students in Kuwait to choose social work to be their profession.

Key words: Career Choice, Motivation, Social Work, Social workers.

Introduction

Choosing a career is usually a complex decision for individuals to make. The Psychology Dictionary defines the term career choice as "the selection of a particular path or vocation in terms of career. This is usually influenced by parental guidance, vocational counseling, and training opportunities. It is also affected by personal preference and identification with figures and role models". This choice maybe starts to

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evolve during high school years. Students begin to think of what major to study or which college to attend if they want to have a certain career. For some people personal traits affect their choice of major/career while for other people life experiences direct them to join a particular profession. In general, the context in which we live in is a main factor for making this choice. As research shows below, the political and social environment plays a major role in shaping people's beliefs and values, which in return affects their career choice.

Social work is a humanitarian profession known for its mission of enhancing human well-being, empowering the disadvantaged population, and improving social conditions through promoting social justice and social change (National Association of Social Workers [NASW], 2017). It is a profession for people with strong passion towards enforcing social justice and meeting the needs of those who are suffering. It is a well-known fact, internationally, that social workers are among the least paid professionals. For example, the average salary of a school teacher in Kuwait is about 1200 K.D per month (\$ 4000) while a school social worker's average salary is 800 K.D. (\$2600). However, this fact did not discourage individuals from joining the profession.

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In Kuwait, social work as a profession started in the 1960's. Kuwait University established the program of Social Work in 1974 as part of a larger department of Sociology, Social Work, and Anthropology. Regardless of the limited financial profit this career would bring, a decent number of Kuwaiti students are choosing to apply every year to the only Social Work program at Kuwait University to become social workers. In fact, some of them pursue graduate degrees in social work in Kuwait and abroad. However, authors of this study; being graduates of

and educators at the Department of Social Work for long years; noticed that the number of applicants to the BSW program fluctuates periodically, especially for male students. For example, the admission office at Kuwait University reported that in 2010 there was 137 accepted students in the social work major, while in 2015 there was only 83 in total, only 4 students were males. This unpredictability of numbers of graduates of the program certainly affects the field of practice negatively, especially that there is a need for more Kuwaiti social workers in different agencies and sectors.

Study Problem

The fact that the number of students attending social work major is decreasing is very concerning. As of this academic year, the total number of students majoring in Social Work is 405 (Deanship of Admission & Registration, 2018). The fewer students graduating from this major, the fewer practitioners we will have in Kuwait to deal with the increasing social problems. It is undeniable how social workers can positively affect people's lives and improve their well-being, therefore it was very distressing to the authors to see how this field is becoming less appealing to students in Kuwait.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study emerges from the fact that literature on this subject is very limited in Kuwait particularly, and in the Middle East generally. It is important to understand what influences the choice of a career in social work whether it is personal traits, beliefs and values, demographic variables, or personal life experience. Such understanding is crucial if we want to create strategies to recruit more students to join the profession. It is also important to understand these motives for academics and social work professors in order for them to facilitate the course of study and the transition to the practice for the current students.

Purpose of the Study

The current study aimed to investigate the relationship between attitudes toward career choice and its four dimensions (personal and family experiences, desire to be a therapist, prestige of the profession, and social change mission of the profession) and variables such as having a friend or relative who works as a social worker and considering studying other majors before choosing to study social work as a major. In addition, this study evaluated the attitudes of social work students at

Kuwait University toward career choice. Furthermore, the current study explored what motivates social work students at Kuwait University to be social workers. For the purpose of this research paper, the term "motivation" refers to the drive or incentive that stimulates people to act in a certain way (Merriam Webster dictionary, 2019).

Research Questions:

1 - What are the attitudes toward career choice among a sample of social work students at Kuwait University?

2 - Is there a significant relationship between attitudes toward career choice and its four dimensions (personal and family experiences, desire to be a therapist, prestige of the profession, and social change mission of the profession) and having a friend or relative who works as a social worker among a sample of social work students at Kuwait University?

3 - Is there a significant relationship between attitudes toward career choice and its four dimensions (personal and family experiences, desire to be a therapist, prestige of the profession, and social change mission of the profession) and considering studying other majors before choosing to study social work as a major among a sample of social work students at Kuwait University?

4 - What motivates social work students at Kuwait University to be social workers?

Literature Review

The topic of reasons why people choose social work as a career has been discussed in many studies. Studies revealed two major factors affecting people's choice become social workers: (a) personal traits and characteristics, (b) past experiences and events in their lives. For example, a qualitative study by Mensinga (2009) explored the interplay between individual, community and professional agendas as well as participants' past and present experiences and how it affected their choice of a career in social work. It was found that "meanings we attached to particular events and people in our experiences were as significant to our choice of career as identifying essential character traits. (Mensinga, 2009, p. 203).

In terms of personal traits and values, altruism was a prevalent character among social work students. Stevens et al. (2010) conducted a study on social work students from six different undergraduate and graduate programs in England in which subjects were asked to identify all their motivations for choosing to become a social worker from a pre-selected list

of 13 options and then to indicate their most important motivation. They found that "Helping individuals to improve the quality of their own lives" was the most common option. It was also found that altruistic motivations were very frequent and career and personal fulfillment motivations were common. Personal experience was a prevalent reason among subjects for wanting to help others in general, but personal experience that involved contact with social workers as a service user was found to be one of the motives to either "be a better social worker or because of positive experiences with a social worker they had encountered" (Stevens et al, 2010, p. 29). These findings about altruistic motivations were in line with what Limb & Organista (2003) found in their secondary data analysis of a California statewide sample of around 7000 MSW students between 1991 and 1999. They found that out of six statements the strongest motive for joining a Master's degree of social work was "through social work I will be able to make an important contribution to individuals and society".

The findings from Campanini & Facchini's study (2013) were parallel to the above studies. When Italian social work students were asked to rate their motivations to study social work there was a strong trend towards values of freedom, social equality, solidarity and social commitment. Findings showed that students indicated less importance for reasons such as money and comfortable life while factors such as easier studies or the role played by friends and family were hardly mentioned.

A study on Ugandan social work students revealed that the most common motives to study social work was "working with people" and "helping people" (Bukulukia, H?jerb, & Janssonb, 2017). Interestingly, they found that religious motives and political motives have the lowest ranks, while motives such as fighting poverty and injustice had much higher ranking. The study indicated that for some of those students, personal experiences from their childhood often affected their choice to join social work program.

Negative early childhood experience was investigated in previous literature. For example, Nikcevic et al. (2010) mentioned that psychology students who wanted to work in the clinical domain experienced childhood sexual abuse and neglect. Results from a study by DiCaccavo (2002) indicated that counselling psychology trainees had significantly low levels of care from their mothers and lack of care from fathers. Likewise, Rompf and Royse's (1994) study showed that life events influenced individuals to choose social work as a career. Their study revealed that MSW students, when compared with other graduate students, came from families who experienced problems with alcohol or drug abuse.

Bradley, Maschi, O'Brien, Morgen, & Ward (2012) conducted a study on clinical social workers to see what motivated them to have a career in social work. The study revealed that their choice was influenced by "factors such as a desire to be of service to others; a dedication to social justice through a commitment to working for the liberty, equality, and dignity of all people; and an interest in problem solving with people on an individual basis" (p. 470). Majority of respondents stated that they chose social work as a service profession because they enjoy helping people as well as solving problems, which is similar to findings of other previous studies mentioned here done on students.

Unfortunately, there is a dearth of literature in Kuwait and Middle East regarding this subject. El-Adayleh and Al-hadedy (2013) investigated the attitudes of social work students in Jordan towards their academic study and the profession of social work. They found that students had positive attitudes towards their academic studies in general and their future profession. It was found out that students understood the importance of social workers' role helping others in the society, which was a main factor for choosing social work as a career.

Another study in Jordan by Alkhtabya and Abu Melhem (2018) aimed at investigating the attitudes of undergraduate social work female students towards the major of social work. The study found out that there was a positive attitude towards the profession but no significant differences related to demographic variables. The participants of the study mentioned that social work as a major was lacking good marketing.

Alyafei (2018) conducted a study examining the factors that influenced the social work students' career choices in Qatar. He found out that their job choices were affected by profession social change, family and personal experiences, being a therapist and profession social respect. Students indicated that practicing in private sectors was more appealing to them. It was also found that socio-economic status, marital status, and the educational levels of the parents were influential on the students' choice of this career.

Methodology

For the purpose of the current study, a quantitative cross-section survey method was selected to address the research questions. The duration of collecting the data was one month; started on November 2018 and ended in December 2018.

Instrument of the Study

The current study used a questionnaire as a tool to collect the data. The questionnaire was divided into three sections. The first section included the demographic questions such as gender, age, marital status, and college year.

The second section included the Arabic version of the Social Work Career Influence Questionnaire (SWCIQ-Ar), which was adapted by Alyafei (2018). The Social Work Career Influence Questionnaire (SWCIQ) was first developed by Biggerstaff (2000) and consisted of 32 items that evaluated students' attitudes toward career choice. The SWCIQ included four dimensions-personal and family experiences, desire to be a therapist, prestige of the profession, and social change mission of the profession. The personal and family experiences dimension included individuals' childhood experiences, their experiences with social problems, the provision of services to families that have social problems, and the helping of others who are similar to oneself (Biggerstaff, 2000). The desire to be a therapist dimension is related to the desire for private practice, which includes the ability to practice independently as a social worker, suitability of the salary, and accessibility of licensing for social workers (Biggerstaff, 2000). Furthermore, the prestige of the profession dimension related to the Master of Social Work (MSW) program degree, which included items about salary and the duration of, requirements of, and the accessibility to the program (Biggerstaff, 2000). Moreover, the social change mission of the profession dimension related to individuals' commitments to social justice, positive social change, values, and helping individuals with their social problems (Biggerstaff, 2000). Responses for the SWCIQ-Ar were made on a 5-point scale, ranging from 1 = strongly agree to 5 = strongly disagree. The internal consistency (coefficient alpha) for SWCIQ-Ar ($\alpha = 0.97$) and for the subscales are as follows: personal and family experiences ($\alpha = 0.96$), desire to be a therapist ($\alpha = 0.97$), prestige of the profession ($\alpha = 0.98$), and social change mission of the profession ($\alpha = 0.95$) (Alyafei, 2018). These results showed an excellent reliability for the SWCIQ-Ar. The validity of the SWCIQ-Ar was assessed by a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), and results showed that data fit the four-factor model (Alyafei, 2018). The SWCIQ-Ar is valid and showed excellent reliability.

The Third section of the questionnaire included 13 items, developed by Stevens et al. (2010), that measured students' motivations for choosing social work as a career. The participants of the study were given the option to rank the 13 items based on their motivational priorities. "Motivation" is a

broad term that represents three factors-career factors, altruistic or personal qualities, and the day-to-day nature of social work-that could influence a person's decision to become a social worker (Stevens et al., 2010).

Sample and Data Collection

A total of 172 social work undergraduate students were recruited from the College of Social Science at Kuwait University. This study used a convenience sampling method to recruit the study participants, and students volunteered to participate in this study. The study sample was restricted to individuals who were enrolled in social work classes, whose major was social work, and who were undergraduate students enrolled in the College of Social Science at Kuwait University. The participants' mean age was 22.25 years ($SD = 5.04$, range = 18-52).

In terms of gender, 3.5% were males and 96.5% were females. Of the sample, 4.7% were married, 79.7% were single, and 5.8% were divorced. Of the students participating, 4.7% of the sample were in the first year, 41.3% were in the second year, 35.5% were in the third year, and 18% were in the fourth year. Science majors in high school comprised 24.4% of the sample, and art majors in high school were 75.6% of the sample. While 59.3% of the participants considered studying other majors, 40.7% of them never considered studying another major other than social work. Of the participants reporting, 59.9% disclosed that they have a relative or a friend who is working as a social worker, and 40.1% reported that they do not have a relative or a friend who is working as a social worker. Of that population, 72.1% of the participants reported that they chose to study social work based on their own desire, 2.9% reported that they chose to study this major because a relative or friend recommended it, 1.9% reported that they chose to study this major based on their parents' desire, 14% reported that they chose to study this major because they were unable to study other majors, and 9.3% reported that they chose to study this major for different reasons than the above.

Internal Consistency

Internal consistency was calculated using Cronbach's alpha (α). The reliability of the alpha scores of the SWCIQ-Ar was $\alpha = 0.88$. The reliability of the alpha scores of the four subscales was found to be as follows: personal and family experiences, $\alpha = 0.82$; desire to be a therapist, $\alpha = 0.76$; prestige of the profession, $\alpha = 0.84$; and social change mission of the profession, $\alpha = 0.88$. All measurements were satisfactory.

Data Analysis

The current study used the IBM SPSS statistics package v.25. In order to answer the research questions, descriptive analyses that included means, standard deviation, and percentages were used. A t-test was conducted to illustrate the differences between variables.

Results

The mean of the total scores of the SWCIQ-Ar was 95.8 (3.09 per item mean), and the midpoint of the scale was 3 on the 1 to 5 range. The personal and family experiences subscale had the lowest per-item mean of 2.8, the desire to be a therapist and the prestige of the profession subscales had a middle per-item mean of 3.1 and 3.0, respectively, and the social change mission of the profession had the highest per-item mean of 3.4 (See Table 1).

Table (1)
Mean Score, and Standard Deviation for the Entire Scale and Subscales
(N = 172)

Scale (Number of Items)	Mean Score	SD	Per-Item Mean
Total scores (SWCIQ-Ar)	95.8	11.28	3.09
Personal & Family Experiences	22.4	4.41	2.8
Desire to be a Therapist	24.8	3.93	3.1
Prestige of the Profession	21.1	4.14	3.0
Social Change Mission of the Profession	27.4	3.66	3.4

Considering Other Majors

A t-test was conducted to find the differences between participants considering studying other majors than social work and the SWCIQ-Ar and its four subscales scores (personal and family experiences, desire to be a therapist, prestige of the profession, and social change mission of the profession). The results showed that there were significant differences between considering other majors and the personal and family experiences subscale ($t = -2.04$, $p = 0.05$), with a mean of 21.8 for participants who considered studying other majors and 23.2 for participants who did not consider studying other majors. In addition, there were significant differences between considering other majors and prestige of the profession subscale ($t = -3.03$, $p = 0.01$), with a mean of 20.33 for participants who considered studying other majors and a mean

of 22.4 for participants who did not consider studying other majors. Furthermore, there were significant differences between considering other majors and SWCIQ-Ar ($t = -3.00$, $p = 0.01$), with a mean of 93.3 for participants who considered studying other majors and a mean of 99.4 for participants who did not consider studying other majors. However, the analysis indicated the mean of the desire to be a therapist and the social change mission of the profession subscales did not differ significantly at $p < 0.05$ (see Table 2).

Table (2)
T-test between considering other majors & SWCIQ-Ar and its four subscales

Considering other Majors	Yes		No			
	M	SD	M	SD	df*	T
Personal & Family Experiences	21.8	4.35	23.2	4.39	154	-2.04*
Desire to be a Therapist	24.3	3.79	25.5	4.04	159	-1.95
Prestige of the Profession	20.3	4.32	22.4	3.53	141	-3.03**
Social Change Mission of the Profession	27.3	3.70	27.6	3.63	168	-0.54
Total scores (SWCIQ-Ar)	93.3	10.8	99.2	11.0	125	-3.00**

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$, (2-tailed).

Having a social worker who is a friend or a relative

A t-test was conducted to find the differences between participants who had a friend or a relative who is a social worker and the SWCIQ-Ar and its four subscales scores (personal and family experiences, desire to be a therapist, prestige of the profession, and social change mission of the profession). The results showed that there were significant differences between having a friend or relative who is a social worker and personal and family experiences subscale ($t = 2.57$, $p = 0.01$), with a mean of 23.1 for participants who had a friend or relative who is a social worker and 21.3 for participants who did not have a friend or relative who is a social worker.

In addition, there were significant differences between having a friend or relative who is a social worker and prestige of the profession subscale ($t = 2.33$, $p = 0.05$), with a mean of 21.77 for participants who had a friend or relative who is a social worker and a mean of 20.12 for participants who did

not have a friend or relative who is a social worker. Furthermore, there were significant differences between having a friend or relative who is a social worker and SWCIQ-Ar ($t = 2.42$, $p = 0.01$), with a mean of 97.6 for participants who had a friend or relative who is a social worker and a mean of 92.7 for participants who did not have a friend or relative who is a social worker. However, the analysis indicated the mean of the desire to be a therapist and the social change mission of the profession subscales did not differ significantly at $p < 0.05$ (see Table 3).

Table (3)
T-test between Having a Social Worker Who was a Friend or a Relative & SWCIQ-Ar and its Four Subscales.

Having a social worker who is a friend or a relative						
	Yes		No			
	M	SD	M	SD	df*	T
Personal & Family Experiences	23.1	3.70	21.3	5.09	154	2.57**
Desire to be a Therapist	24.8	4.05	24.8	3.77	159	-0.01
Prestige of the Profession	21.7	4.16	20.1	3.95	141	2.33*
Social Change Mission of the Profession	27.4	3.73	27.4	3.59	168	-0.01
Total scores (SWCIQ-Ar)	97.6	11.2	92.7	10.6	125	2.42**

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$, (2-tailed).

Motivations for choosing social work as a career

The most popular item for the participants of the current study that motivated them to choose social work as a career was "helping individuals to improve the quality of their own lives," with a mean of 3.16 and an SD equal to 2.86. The next popular item was "wish to tackle injustice and inequalities in society," with a mean of 4.80 and an SD equal to 3.38. Participants were less likely to be motivated by the choice of "well-paid jobs," with a mean of 11.24 and an SD equal to 3.10. The top motivational choices for choosing social work as a career were related to altruistic or personal qualities of the students. Choices such as "good career prospects", "well-paid jobs", and "opportunities for flexible working" were items that were less likely to be chosen by participants as motivation to pursue a career in social work.

Table (4)
Motivations for Choosing Social Work as a Career, Mean Score, and Standard Deviation ($N = 172$)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	M	SD	R	N
Helping individuals to improve the quality of their own lives	5.2% (9)	8.7% (15)	14% (24)	13.4% (23)	8.1% (14)	2.9% (5)	4.7% (8)	2.3% (4)	2.3% (4)	2.9% (5)	0.6% (1)	1.7% (3)	0%	3.16	2.86	1	162
Interesting, stimulating work	5.8% (10)	9.9% (17)	12.8% (22)	7.0% (12)	13.4% (23)	7.0% (12)	4.1% (7)	8.1% (14)	5.8% (10)	4.7% (8)	4.7% (8)	4.1% (7)	3.5% (6)	5.94	3.42	4	156
Personal ability to get on with people	5.2% (9)	8.7% (15)	14% (24)	13.4% (23)	8.1% (14)	8.7% (15)	7% (12)	8.7% (15)	7% (12)	4.1% (7)	3.5% (6)	3.5% (6)	1.2% (2)	5.68	3.09	3	160
Wish to tackle injustice and inequalities in society	11.6% (20)	20.3% (35)	11.6% (20)	10.5% (18)	5.2% (9)	5.2% (9)	7% (12)	5.2% (9)	4.1% (7)	2.9% (5)	2.9% (5)	2.3% (4)	2.9% (5)	4.80	3.38	2	158
Variety of work day to day	2.3% (4)	3.5% (6)	8.7% (15)	8.1% (14)	11% (19)	8.7% (15)	9.9% (17)	9.3% (16)	9.3% (16)	6.4% (11)	4.7% (8)	7% (12)	2.3% (4)	6.92	3.10	7	157
Good career prospects	3.5% (6)	2.9% (5)	7.6% (13)	6.4% (11)	6.4% (11)	8.7% (15)	6.4% (11)	11.6% (20)	6.4% (11)	9.3% (16)	9.9% (17)	9.3% (16)	2.3% (4)	7.51	3.30	10	156
Working in a team	3.5% (6)	3.5% (6)	1.7% (3)	9.3% (16)	11.6% (20)	9.9% (17)	11.6% (20)	8.1% (14)	9.9% (17)	6.4% (11)	9.9% (17)	2.3% (4)	2.3% (4)	7.06	2.96	8	155
High job satisfaction	8.7% (15)	4.1% (7)	7% (12)	7.6% (13)	8.7% (15)	9.9% (17)	8.1% (14)	7.6% (13)	11.6% (20)	7.6% (13)	4.1% (7)	4.7% (8)	1.2% (2)	6.44	3.25	5	156

Cont/ Table (4)
Motivations for Choosing Social Work as a Career, Mean Score, and Standard Deviation ($N = 172$)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	M	SD	R	N
Especially suitable career for someone with life experiences like mine	4.7% (8)	4.7% (8)	4.7% (8)	4.1% (7)	3.5% (6)	9.9% (17)	12.8% (22)	11% (19)	10.5% (18)	9.3% (16)	9.3% (16)	4.7% (8)	2.3% (4)	7.39	3.13	9	167
Being able to exercise individual responsibility for making my own decisions	4.7% (8)	6.4% (11)	12.8% (22)	4.1% (7)	9.9% (17)	4.7% (8)	9.9% (17)	4.1% (7)	8.7% (15)	12.8% (22)	5.8% (10)	7% (12)	2.3% (4)	6.83	3.47	6	160
Encouragement from family or friends	1.7% (3)	5.2% (9)	5.2% (9)	5.8% (10)	2.9% (5)	5.8% (10)	7.6% (13)	8.7% (15)	3.5% (6)	7% (12)	16.9% (29)	17.4% (30)	5.2% (9)	8.46	3.49	11	160
Opportunities for flexible working patterns	1.7% (3)	4.1% (7)	1.7% (3)	7.6% (13)	4.1% (7)	8.1% (14)	5.2% (9)	5.2% (9)	9.3% (16)	13.4% (23)	12.2% (21)	14.5 (25)	4.1% (7)	8.46	3.25	11	157
Well paid jobs	1.7% (3)	1.2% (2)	1.2% (2)	2.3% (4)	1.7% (3)	3.5% (6)	0.6% (1)	1.7% (3)	2.3% (4)	4.1% (7)	5.2% (9)	11% (19)	54.1% (93)	11.24	3.10	13	156

Discussion

Social work is a profession that effectively promotes social change and development and helps individuals to adjust to their situations. Furthermore, social work as a profession enhances individuals' well-being and involves the helping process, social justice, human rights, and ethics and values that could help to improve peoples' lives. Social work requires very skillful social workers that can apply social work principles and values when working with individual clients and/or societies. Therefore, it is important to study the attitudes toward career choice among social work students and their motivation for choosing social work as a career.

The current study evaluated the social worker undergraduate students' attitudes toward career choice. The results showed that their attitudes for their career were neither positive nor negative, which means they were in the middle for the following variables: social work career influence, the desire to be a therapist, and the prestige of the profession. In addition, they had positive attitudes toward the social change mission of the profession. The social change mission dimension related to their commitment to social justice, positive social change, values, and helping individuals with their social problems (Biggerstaff, 2000). This means that social change mission motivated them to choose social work as a career. However, their negative attitudes were related to their personal and family experiences. This dimension related to individuals' childhood experiences, their experience with social problems, and helping others similar to them (Biggerstaff, 2000). This means that students' personal and family experiences did not encourage them to choose social work as a career.

The findings of the current study revealed that the participants' attitudes toward career choice were associated with considering other majors, where social work students who considered studying other majors had more positive attitudes toward career choice in general than social work students who did not consider studying other majors. In addition, there is an association between personal and family experiences and considering other majors, where social work students who considered studying other majors had higher scores on personal and family experiences than social work students who did not consider studying other majors. This means that participants who were considering studying other majors were motivated more by their childhood experiences, their social problems, and helping others similar to themselves to choose social work as a career than participants who did not consider studying other majors.

Furthermore, there is an association between prestige of the profession and considering other majors, where social work students who considered studying other majors had higher scores on prestige of the profession than the social work students who did not consider studying other majors. This means that participants who were considering studying other majors were motivated more by salary and the duration of, the requirements of, and the accessibility to the MSW program to choose social work as a career than participants who did not consider studying other majors.

Another finding of the study is the association between participants' attitudes toward career choice and having a friend or a relative who is a social worker, where social work students who had a friend or a relative who works as a social worker had more positive attitudes than social work students who did not have a friend or a relative who works as a social worker. This could be related to the influence of a friend or a relative who is a social worker on the social work students' attitudes toward career choice, where these participants who have a friend and a relative are more familiar with social work values, principles, and work than the other students. In addition, there is an association between personal and family experiences and having a friend or a relative who is a social worker. This means that participants who had a friend or a relative who works as a social worker had higher scores on personal and family experiences than others. Furthermore, there is an association between prestige of the profession and having a friend or a relative who is a social worker. This means that participants who had a friend or a relative who works as a social worker had higher scores on prestige of the profession than others. This could be related to their relationships with social workers who provided the individuals with more information that helped them or motivated them to choose social work as a career.

The current study evaluated the motivation for choosing social work as a career among social work students. The findings showed that the most motivating factor for social work students at Kuwait University was the altruistic factor. This factor is related to personal and social qualities of students who are motivated by helping others, justice, and encouragement from family. These results are similar to Stevens et al. (2010) results, where they found that the most favorable item among social work students that motivated them to choose social work as a career was "helping individuals to improve the quality of their own lives," which is related to the altruistic factor. The day-to-day nature of social work was considered as the second motivational factor for students. This included items such as job

satisfaction, variety of day-to-day work, and interesting, stimulating work. The least motivational factor for the participants of the study was the career factor, which included items such as good career prospects, well-paid jobs, and opportunities for flexible working. Furthermore, as in the current study results, Stevens et al. (2010) found that items like well-paid jobs and opportunities for flexible working were the least common motivations for social work students to choose social work as a career. It was not surprising that items like well-paid jobs and opportunities for flexible working were at the bottom of the motivational list for social work students because in Kuwait social work jobs are one of the lowest paid jobs in comparison to other jobs such as teaching, engineering, and nursing. In the past years, the Kuwaiti government raised the salaries of many jobs in Kuwait; however, the social work jobs were not included. Because of this decision, the number of the students enrolled in the social work major was drastically reduced. Therefore, social work students in Kuwait were motivated more by the altruistic factor than the career factor.

Implications For Social Work

The findings of the study revealed new information about variables that are associated with attitudes toward career choice. These variables were considering studying other majors and having a relative or a friend who works as a social worker. In addition, the findings of this study explored the motivation for social work students to choose social work as a future career. These findings help the social work profession and educators understand the motivations that inspire social work students in Kuwait to choose social work as a profession.

In terms of academia, social work educators should consider the altruistic factor, which includes helping others, justice, and encouragement from family to inspire individuals to choose social work as a future career for themselves. Social work professors teaching general education courses, such as introduction to social work and social work ethics, should illustrate the richness of the profession and how it touches individuals' personal and social life. Studying social work is an advantage because it helps people improve their lives and cope with life stressor.

From an administrative viewpoint, social workers who work at the administration level should help improve the career factor. Social work administrators are ought to advocate for a better job conditions, including salary and work flexibility. It is logical to expect more students choosing social work as a profession if career factors were improved.

Recommendations for future research and for the field

Future research could be conducted on the motivational factors among graduate social work students at Kuwait University. In addition, research could be carried out to compare attitudes toward career choice among psychology and social work students. Another area of research could be studying cultural differences between the East and West, for example, as factors that may have possible impacts on the attitudes and motivations of social work students that belong to these different cultures.

Some recommendations can benefit the social work field based on the findings of the current study. First, there is a need to improve conditions of the social work profession in Kuwait, including increasing social workers' salaries and making the salaries equal to those in other professions such as teaching and nursing. Furthermore, since social workers manage many different cases in a variety of different settings, it is important to improve the flexibility of their work. It is hoped that the Kuwaiti Association of Social Workers assumes responsibility to improve the work conditions of the practitioners and encourage individuals to join this profession.

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