

# Special Education Teachers in Jordan: Trends and Issues

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## Abstract

Although special education profession is not new in Jordan, the current research do not reveal many important demographic information about professionals working in the field, which is the goal of this study. 119 worked in the special education field were surveyed from all over Jordan. Results present many important demographic information. Moreover, results indicated high and relatively high levels of satisfaction with services provided for children with disabilities and job conditions. Additionally, professionals indicated source of support and frustration in their practice, which might affect retention and attrition rates in the field. Participants provided their future vision on career. Results were discussed and recommendations were made for educational authorities and professionals.

**Keywords:** special education career, recruitment, retention, attrition, Jordan.

## 1. Introduction

Jordan started the initial services for individuals with disabilities in the 1960s. However, it was not until 1980s when several two-year community colleges started an official special education preparation programs. In addition, the Jordan University started its first Masters program of special education. In 1993, the first law regulating services provided to children and individuals with disabilities was approved; a new law was introduced and approved in 2007. Yet, the current law is far behind to be considered satisfying law, according to many authorities. Additionally, many issues are being reintroduced and other emerging. One of the new-old hot issues is preparing and qualifying special education teachers (Al-hiary & Kinnison, 2008; Al Khatib & Al Khatib, 2008; Al Khatib & Hadidi, 2009; Bataineh, 2009). The issues of qualified teacher recruitment and retention are surfacing now heavily to be one of the top issues concerning stakeholders. According to The Center on Personnel Studies in Special Education (COPSSE, 2008), about 22,000 (13.5%) special education teachers are leaving the field in the United States.

The Ministry of Education (MOE, 2006; 2012) indicates that a dramatic increase of special education services provided for children with special needs in public schools is being delivered in Jordanian public schools. The MOE is spreading inclusion model in the form of resource room. Further, increased numbers of special education teachers are being hired; teachers from other disciplines are being assigned to these rooms (Al-Hiary & Kinnison, 2008). However, the numbers of newly hired special education teacher are not clearly provided. Additionally, numbers of those who are being assigned to special education classes from other disciplines are not clear either.

Although of the ambitious expansion plans of the MOE and other governmental authorities, such as the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) and the Ministry of Health (MOH); organizations, advocates, families, and individuals of special needs are indicating the need for more services, and complaining that current services suffer from severe shortage of properly qualified personnel, including special education teachers. In addition, the global and national economic crises started in 2008 lead the government to cut-off expansion plans in many

fields that include the field of special education. It is no secret that children of special needs are underserved and short of personnel providing them.

The current situation lead to a general sense of dissatisfaction in the field. This dissatisfaction can be seen in special education (Sp.Ed.) teachers' desire in leaving the field or –at least—their pronounced general dissatisfaction with several issues that can be observed in the field.

## 2. Literature Review

Al Khateeb and Hadidi (2009) investigated a sample of 135 resource room teachers' levels of satisfaction with resource room programs and working conditions. They found that teachers reported a moderate level of satisfaction with their job conditions and were most satisfied with their jobs as resource room teachers and relationships with colleagues. Teachers' were most dissatisfaction from the poor salaries, unreal benefits, and family's unrealistic involvement with educational programs. They also found that duties of those teachers were unclear and with no specific job description; teachers' have to make all kind of decisions regarding placement, instruction, and duration of child's stay in the resource room; teachers' practices are poor in regards to curriculum and evaluation adaptation; inservice training is conducted seasonal and have very little implication in teachers' practices; and resource rooms are poorly equipped with education resources and have little connection with students with special needs. Further, teaches have very little opportunities to interact with their colleagues. Teachers suggested that principles should have more awareness to special education and to become more involved in the process of special education. It was surprising that teachers' held an assumption that their roles are to teach academic skills solely and only in resource room settings.

Bataineh (2009) surveyed 83 special education resource room teachers in respect of the source of social support (supervisor, colleagues, friends, spouse, and family) aiming to find the most efficient source of reducing burnout. The researcher found that there was significant positive correlation between family support and increasing accomplishment, whereas, no significant correlations were found between supervisor, colleagues, friends, and spouse support on the three-burnout dimensions (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment). Additionally, there were no differences in burnout dimensions on age, sex, teaching experience, and marital status. The author concluded that family-in the Arab culture- has a very strong multifunction and that may explain this correlation.

Al Khatib and Al Khatib (2008) surveyed special education resource rooms in public schools. They found that these rooms lack proper equipment in many of cases, faced by negative parental attitude, overcrowded, self-defined practices, with no administrative support and flexibility, lack proper monitoring for students' progress, lack collaboration among and between professionals, poorly supervised and assessed for accountability, overwhelmed with huge load of paperwork, and faced by many difficulties transferring student in-and-out of the regular classroom to resource room.

Teacher preparation programs are being criticized for discouraging talented individuals from starting career in education, including special education (Hess, 2001; Walsh, 2001). Additionally, although of the critical role paraprofessional play in educating children with disability, they rarely receive proper professional development as their colleagues teaching and serving those students, which results in low retention rates (Mckenzie, 2011)..

Research in respect to both special and general education teachers suggests higher levels of dissatisfaction among special education teachers in respect to their job. Further, this dissatisfaction is more likely to present among less experienced, inadequate, or uncertified teachers (Miller, Brownell, & Smith, 1999; Stempein & Loeb, 2002). Berry, Petrin, Gravelle, and Farmer (2011) reviewed several studies regarding the issues of recruitment, retention, and professional development of special education teachers and found that many of them stresses the role of professional development in reducing levels of stress, increasing the levels of competency and effectiveness, and increasing their commitment to the field. Billingsley (2004) concluded that professional development has direct effect on teachers' intent to stay in the field.

Emery and Vandenberg (2010) indicate that special education teachers are a high-risk group; they have low job satisfaction, show low self-efficacy, and increased levels of stress and burnout. Additionally, they indicate that attrition rate of special education teachers is exceptionally high comparing to others teaching disciplines , resulting in overall shortage of qualified teachers in the United States. Boe, Cook, & Bobbitt, and Weber (1995) found that special education teacher attrition rates are the highest among any other teacher group; meaning that these issues are the main source of current teacher shortage in the field. In fact, Kozleski, Mainzer, Deshler, and Coleman (2000) found that attrition rates among special education teachers were almost twice as much of their general education teachers. Beginning special education teachers are one and a half times more likely to leave

the field more than general education teachers (Gehrke & McCoy, 2007). Up to 9.3% of beginner special education teachers leave the field at the end of the first teaching year and 7.4% move to general education annually (Boyer & Gillespie, 2000). In order to increase teacher retention, Billingsley (2005) suggested implementing effective professional development programs and introducing reasonable work assignments.

Boe, Cook, and Sunderland (2008) indicate that although teachers' attrition and migration rates were stable from 1991-1992 to 2000-2001 in the United States, but rates are particularly higher in the case of special education teachers comparing to general education teachers. Although the annual turnover (moving to general education positions) increased by 1 of 4 teachers by 2000-2001, the evidence suggests serious improvements in the organization, management, and funding of public education are needed to increase retention in special education.

Several factors contribute to special education teachers' attrition including stress resulted from students' difficult characteristics and workplace conditions (Emery & Vandenberg, 2010); especially working with students with emotional and behavioral disorders (Wisniewski & Cargiulo, 1997), and those with multiple disabilities or classrooms with heterogeneous groups of students with disabilities (Kaff, 2004). Other factors include high caseload, especially when there is a heavy caseload from different disabilities, and the increased demand of paperwork (Kaff, 2004).

Fish and Stephens (2010) surveyed a sample of special education teachers and found that 45% (16) of their elementary special education teachers sample were first interested in pursuing a career in special education in their undergraduate college years. Whereas 50% (11) of secondary special education teachers expressed their desire in pursuing a career in special education in their post-bachelor years. The reason those special education teachers had interest in the field was the desire to serve those in need with 43% (15) of elementary and 69% (15) of secondary special education teachers. Most of the study sample indicated relatively high levels of satisfaction with their jobs; however, special education teachers expressed lower satisfaction levels with their school districts when compared to their job satisfaction levels. Additionally, 83% of elementary and 72% of secondary special education teachers said that the probability of them remaining in the field is still high or relatively high. The most influential factor to remain in the field was their desire to serve those in need. Further, 50% of secondary special education teachers indicated that they have no desire to leave the field, whereas, only 17% of the elementary special education teachers had no desire to leave the field. The most influential factor in leaving the field was another opportunity outside the profession, followed by financial factor. Most of the sample foresee themselves in the field of special education in the next 5 years, but in another position. Most of the study sample believed that their district has not shown the proper effort in recruiting and retaining special education teachers.

Several researchers clustered factors that contribute to special education teacher's attrition to the following six general categories, which will serve as a framework for this study (Billingsley, 2004; Boyer & Gillespie, 2000; Brownell, Smith, McNellis, & Miller, 1997; Gersten, Keating, Yovanoff, & Harniss, 2001; Whitaker, 2000):

1. Employment factors: economic status, poor salaries, job-related problems, and certification issues;
2. Working conditions factors: job assignments, caseload, job stress, heavy paperwork, lack of empowerment, and poor school climate;
3. Personal factors: social-related factors, family factors, lifestyle, and moving to a different location;
4. Lack of support factors: lack of collegial, school administration, and district support; lack of proper professional staff development;
5. Students' factors: poor students' motivation.

### **3. Statement of the Problem**

There are very limited studies concerning personnel serving students with special needs in Jordan that take into consideration giving a comprehensive view of the specific descriptive professional information. Additionally, none of the studies had investigated other descriptive information such as attrition and retention, and factors that affect them in the field. Moreover, one study only surveyed the levels of satisfaction of special education career. The goal of this study is to survey such demographic information.

### **4. Study Questions**

The study aims to find out the types of disabilities being served, the placement where services are being delivered, and grade levels of students being served. Additionally, the study aims to investigate some demographic information related to professionals serving children with disabilities such as years of experience, expected years of services, and when started showing interest in career. Further, the study highlights retention and attrition

factors such as levels of satisfaction with services provided for children and with current job, probability of leaving or remaining in the field and factors related to these two decisions, frustration sources, and future vision regarding career.

## 5. Method

Nonrandom sampling was used to acquire responses. 119 of 200 (59.5%) surveys was acquired from all over Jordan. The survey was distributed through the researcher's colleagues in different locations. The survey was adopted from a previous study conducted by Fish and Stephens (2010) in the United States with permission. The survey was translated into Arabic and was reviewed by several special education faculty members and teachers. The original authors reported sufficient reliability and validity information. The survey consisted of four sets of questionnaires: (a) participants background information (job title, type of disability being served, placement, grade level, years of experience, and expected number of years remaining in the field); (b) factors contributing toward pursuing a special education career; (c) factors contributing toward job satisfaction; and (d) factors contributing toward remaining or leaving the field of special education. The data were entered and statistically analyzed utilizing descriptive statistics. Each item was analyzed with regard to the participants' job title (special education teacher and "Others").

## 6. Results

The first question asked participants to provide their current job title. Respondents indicated that 102(85.7%) were special education teachers (Sp.Ed.) and 17(14.3%) were from other supporting disciplines serving children with disability (paraprofessional, general education teacher, diagnostician, speech and language therapist, occupational or physical therapist, administrator, or from other disciplines). Due to the small number of respondents out of the special education profession, they were grouped into one group called "Others".

The second question asked to provide the type of disability those professional serve. Multiple responses were allowed for this question. Almost half of special education teachers (48%, or 49) were serving primarily students with learning disabilities (LD). Only 7 (or 41.2%) of the "Others" group were serving students with LD. Fifty-six (47.1%) of the survey sample were serving students with LD. The second most served type of disability was mental retardation (MR), where 34 (or 33.3%) of Sp.Ed. teaches and 9 (or 52.9) of the "Others" group were teaching children with MR, which constitutes 43 (or 36.1%) of the total sample. Results indicated that 32 (or 31.4%) of Sp.Ed. teacher were serving students with Hearing impairment (HI), and 5 (or 29.4%) of the "others" group were serving this group of students. Of the study sample, 37 (or 31.1%) were serving students with HI. Table 1 presents the number and the percent of disabilities being served.

Table 1. Type of disability served

Type of disability	Sp.Ed. teacher		Others		Total	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
LD	49	48%	7	41.2%	56	47.1%
MR	34	33.3%	9	52.9	43	36.1%
HI	32	31.4%	5	29.4%	37	31.1%
Speech/Language Disorders (SLD)	29	28.4%	6	35.3%	35	29.4%
Autism	9	8.8%	3	17.6%	12	10.1%
Visual Impairment (VI)	7	6.9%	4	23.5%	11	9.2%
Emotional/Behavioral Disorders (E/BD)	5	4.9%	4	23.5%	9	7.6%
Multiple Disabilities	4	3.9%	3	17.6%	7	5.9%
Health and Physical	4	3.9%	2	11.8%	6	5%
Deaf/Blindness	4	3.9%	2	11.8%	6	5%
Other (Health Problems)	3	2.9%	2	11.8%	5	4.2%
Traumatic Brain Injury	2	2%	2	11.8%	4	3.4%
Developmental Delay	1	1%	2	11.8%	3	2.5%

The third question asked to provide the placement where these professional provide service. Accordingly, multiple responses were allowed for this question. Forty-seven (or 46.1%) Sp.Ed. teachers deliver services in resource room settings. Moreover, other professionals deliver their services in the same setting (5, or 29.4%). The second most common placement for Sp.Ed. teachers was special day school with 30 or (29.4%), likewise, seven (or 41.2%) of other professional deliver their services at that placement. However, None of Sp.Ed.

teachers nor other professionals of the study sample indicated that they deliver services in hospitals; and none of the other professionals deliver their services to students with disabilities at home. Further, none of the Sp.Ed. teachers are involved in transition/vocational planning and instruction. Table 2 provides information about placements where professionals provide services.

Table 2. Placement

Placement	Sp.Ed. teacher		Others		Total	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Resource Classroom	47	46.1%	5	29.4%	52	43.7%
Special Day School	30	29.4%	7	41.2%	37	31.1%
Regular Classroom	17	16.7%	2	11.8%	19	16%
Residential School	16	15.7%	1	5.9%	17	14.3%
Self-Contained Classroom	13	12.7%	2	11.8%	15	12.6%
Early Childhood Special Education	5	4.9%	1	5.9%	6	5%
Home Instruction	5	4.9%	0	0.0%	5	4.2%
Transition Planning	0	0.0%	1	5.9%	1	0.8%

Next, the participants were asked to provide grade levels of the students they are serving. One-hundred fourteen professional responded to this question. Results indicated that the vast majority of respondents (76 or 66.7%) are working with children P-5 grades (68 of Sp.Ed. teachers and 8 of the “Others”), whereas only 4 Sp.Ed. teachers (or 3.5%) are serving students in the post 12 grade and none of the “Others” are. Additionally, it is noted that 26 (or 22.8%) were serving students of all levels or more than one level (21 Sp.Ed. teachers and 5 “Others”). Table 3 provides detailed information about grade levels participants are serving.

Table 3. Grade levels

Grade levels	Sp.Ed. teacher		Others		Total	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
P-5	68	68%	8	57.2%	76	66.7%
6-8	7	7%	1	7.1%	8	7%
Post 12	4	4%	0	0.0%	4	3.5%
All levels or more than one level	21	21%	5	35.7%	26	22.8%
Total	100		14		114	

When participants were asked to indicate numbers of years working with children with disability, 118 responded to this question. Seventy-two (or 61%) responded indicated they have been working for less than 5 years with children with disabilities (65 or 64.4% Sp.Ed. teachers, and 7 or 41.2% “Others”); 26 (22%) of the sample are working for 5-10 years (22 or 21% Sp.Ed. teachers, and 4 or 23.5% “Others”). Unexpectedly, the least of the sample were those with 11-15 years of experiences (8 or 6.8%), whereas 12 (10.2%) were with more than 15 years of experience. Table 4 provides further details on respondents’ years of experiences.

Table 4. Years of working in the field of special education

Years of working	Sp.Ed. teacher		Others		Total	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Less than 5	65	64.4%	7	41.2%	72	61%
5-10	22	21%	4	23.5%	26	22%
11-15	6	5.9%	2	11.8%	8	6.8%
More than 15	8	7.9%	4	23.5%	12	10.2%
Total	101		17		118	

Respondents were asked to indicate number of years they foresee themselves remaining in the field of special education. Of 117 responded to this question, 37 (36 or 35.6% Sp.Ed. and 1 or 6.3% “Others”) indicated that they will remain in the field for less than 5 years, and 35 (28 or 27.7% Sp.Ed., and 7 or 43.8% “Others”), and will remain in the field for 5-10 years. Additionally, only 9 (8.9% Sp.Ed. and 9% of total sample) will remain for

11-15 years. Further, 11 (10.9%) Sp.Ed. teachers and 3 (18.8%) of the “Others” planning to retire in 5 years (14 or 12% of total sample). Table 5 presents expected years of services.

Table 5. Expected years of service

Expected years of service	Sp.Ed. teacher		Others		Total	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Less than 5	36	35.6%	1	6.3%	37	31.6%
5-10	28	27.7%	7	43.8%	35	29.9%
11-15	9	8.9%	0	0.0%	9	7.7%
More than 15	17	16.8%	5	31.3%	22	18.8%
Retiring in 5 years	11	10.9%	3	18.8%	14	12.0%
Total	101		16		117	

Then, the survey investigated the time when respondents realized that they have the interest in working in the field. Surprisingly, 44 of 117 (37.6%) of respondents have never shown any interest in pursuing a career in special education (37 or 37% of Sp.Ed. teachers, and 7 or 41.2% of “Others”). The period in respondents’ life when they have shown interest in the field was during their college years (28 or 23.9% of total respondents, 23 or 23% Sp.Ed. teacher, and 5 or 29.4% of “Others”). Table 6 provide further details on the time of respondents’ life where they have shown interest in special education career.

Table 6. Interest in career

Interest in career	Sp.Ed. teacher		Others		Total	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Before high school	5	5%	1	5.9%	6	5.1%
During high school	13	13%	2	11.8%	15	12.8%
In college	23	23%	5	29.4%	28	23.9%
After college	22	22%	2	11.8%	24	20.5%
Never	37	37%	7	41.2%	44	37.6%
Total	100		17		117	

Next, the survey asked respondents to express which factors initially influenced their decision in pursuing a career in special education. Sixty (50.8%) indicated that the initial factor in pursuing the career was their desire to serve students with disability (51 or 50.5% Sp.Ed. teachers, and 9 or 52.9% of “Others”). Society influence had the lowest influence in their decisions pursuing the career (1 or 0.8% of total respondents with only 1 Sp.Ed. teacher or 0.9%), followed by laws and policies with 2 (1.7%) respondents (1 or 0.9% Sp.Ed. teachers and 1 or 5.9% “Others”). See Table 7 for details.

Table 7. Factors influencing pursuing career

Factors	Sp.Ed. teacher		Others		Total	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Desire to serve	51	50.5%	9	52.9%	60	50.8%
Volunteer experience	7	6.9%	2	11.8%	9	7.6%
Laws and policies	1	0.9%	1	5.9%	2	1.7%
Job market	21	20.8%	2	11.8%	23	19.5%
Society influence	1	0.9%	0	0.0%	1	0.8%
Family member	7	6.9%	1	5.9%	8	6.8%
Mentor	7	6.9%	1	5.9%	8	6.8%
Other	6	5.9%	1	5.9%	7	5.9%
Total	101		17		118	

The respondents were asked to indicate levels of satisfaction with special education services provided for children with disability. Most respondents indicated relatively high or high levels of satisfactions of special education services at schools or center where they work (48 or 40.3%, and 34 or 28.6%, respectively). Forty-one

(40.2%) of Sp.Ed. teachers and 7 (41.2%) expressed relatively high levels of satisfaction with services provided; 29 (28.4%) of Sp.Ed. teachers and 5 (29.4%) of the “Others” expressed high levels of satisfaction (see Table 8). Similarly, respondents’ levels of satisfaction with their jobs rated relatively high and high (55 or 46.2% and 33 or 27.7%, respectively). Of Sp.Ed. teachers, 51 (50%) and 26 (25.5%) indicated that their level of satisfaction with their jobs are relatively high and high, respectively. Accordingly, 7 (41.2%) and 4 (23.5%) of “Others” group indicated that they have high and relatively high levels of satisfaction, respectively (Tables 9).

Table 8. Levels of satisfaction regarding special education services

Levels of satisfaction	Sp.Ed. teacher		Others		Total	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Low	6	5.9%	0	0.0%	6	5%
Relatively low	8	7.8%	3	17.6%	11	9.2%
Neutral	18	17.6%	2	11.8%	20	16.8%
Relatively high	41	40.2%	7	41.2%	48	40.3%
high	29	28.4%	5	29.4%	34	28.6%
Total	102		17		119	

Table 9. Levels of satisfaction with current job

Levels of satisfaction	Sp.Ed. teacher		Others		Total	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Low	4	3.9%	0	0.0%	4	3.4%
Relatively low	7	6.9%	1	5.9%	8	6.7%
Neutral	14	13.7%	5	29.4%	19	16%
Relatively high	51	50%	4	23.5%	55	46.2%
high	26	25.5%	7	41.2%	33	27.7%
Total	102		17		119	

Accordingly, respondents were asked to indicate the probability of remaining in the field of special education. Over two-thirds of the study sample indicated relatively high and high probability of staying in the field (36.1% and 30.3%, respectively). Although 39 (or 38.2%) of Sp.Ed. teachers indicated “relatively high” probability remaining in the field, and 26 (or 25.5%) indicated “high” probability remaining in the field; only 4 (or 23.5%) of the “Others” group indicated “relatively high” probability remaining in the field, with 10 (or 58.8%) indicating “high” probability remaining in the field. Additionally, respondents were asked to choose factors that mostly influence their current decision remaining in the field. Respondents’ desire to serve was the most influential factor in remaining in the field (66 or 57.4%), the next most influential factor was the place where they work (16 or 13.9%). It is noted that 12 (or 12.2%) of Sp.Ed. teachers do not want to stay in the field. See Tables 10 and 11 for further information.

Table 10. Probability of remaining in the field of special education

Rates	Sp.Ed. teacher		Others		Total	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Low	13	12.7%	2	11.8%	15	12.6%
Relatively low	13	12.7%	0	0.0%	13	10.9%
Neutral	11	10.8%	1	5.9%	12	10.1%
Relatively high	39	38.2%	4	23.5%	43	36.1%
high	26	25.5%	10	58.8%	36	30.3%
Total	102		17		119	

Table 11. Factors currently influencing remaining in the field

Factors	Sp.Ed. teacher		Others		Total	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Don't want to stay	12	12.2%	1	5.9%	13	11.3%
Career advancement	9	9.2%	2	11.7%	11	9.6%
Desire to serve	56	57.1%	10	58.8%	66	57.4%
Laws and polices	1	1%	0	0%	1	0.9%
Volunteer experiences	3	3.1%	0	0%	3	2.6%
The place I work for	14	14.3%	2	11.8%	16	13.9%
Society influence	1	1%	0	0%	1	0.9%
Mentor effect	0	0%	1	5.9%	1	0.9%
Family effect	1	1%	0	0%	1	0.9%
Other factors	1	1%	1	5.9%	2	1.7%
Total	98		17		115	

Next, the survey asked to arrange 8 factors that may influence workers' future decision remaining in the field, respondents have chosen to give the most influential factor in their decision. However, the autonomy in doing their work was the most influential factor with 32 (or 27.8%) believing it will determine their future decision. The second most influential factor was "continuous inservice training" (25 or 21.7%). The third most influential factor was the administrative support (19 or 16.5%), followed by their students' success (18 or 15.7%). Table 12 provide further details in respect to retention factors.

Table 12. Factors influencing remaining in the field

Factors	Sp.Ed. teacher		Others		Total	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Continuous inservice training	20	20.2%	5	31.3%	25	21.7%
Administrative support	18	18.2%	1	6.3%	19	16.5%
Resources and materials	2	2%	0	0.0%	2	1.7%
Mentorship opportunities	7	7.1%	0	0.0%	7	6.1%
Paraprofessional support	2	2%	0	0.0%	2	1.7%
Higher education	9	9.1%	1	6.3%	10	8.7%
Students' success	14	14.1%	4	26.6%	18	15.7%
Autonomy	27	27.3%	5	31.3%	32	27.8%
Total	99		16		115	

The survey then requested respondents to provide factors that may influence their future decision leaving the field. 58 (or 51.3%) indicated that they "don't want to leave", however, 22 (or 19.3%) indicated that they may leave to another job out of the special education field to be the second most influential factors leaving the field. 15 (or 13.3%) indicated that financial factor may be an influential factor in leaving the field. Table 13 provide detailed information.



Table 13. Factors influencing leaving the field

Factors	Sp.Ed. teacher		Others		Total	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Don't want to leave	47	49%	11	64.7%	58	51.3%
Another job out of the special education	19	19.8%	3	17.6%	22	19.3%
Lack of mentoring, guidance, and support	8	8.3%	1	5.9%	9	8%
Laws and legislations	3	3.1%	0	0.0%	3	2.7%
Schools or where I work	3	3.1%	0	0.0%	3	2.7%
Financial factor	13	13.5%	2	11.8%	15	13.3%
Other factors	3	3.1%	0	0.0%	3	2.7%
Total	96		17		113	

The next question asked to the respondents to indicate which factors may be the source of their frustration with their jobs. Results indicate that 31 (or 28.4%) of the study sample suggest that child's parents/family can be the source of the highest level of frustration; the second most reported source of frustration is the lack of administrative support (25, or 22.9). The third possible source of frustration is the lack of resources (19 or 17.5%), and the fourth possible source of frustration is students' discipline (14 or 12.8%). See table 14 for further information on sources of frustration.

Table 14. Frustration sources

Sources	Sp.Ed. teacher		Others		Total	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Lack of administrative support	21	22.1%	4	28.6%	25	22.9%
Child's parents/family	28	29.5%	3	21.4%	31	28.4%
Disconnection/isolation	4	4.2%	0	0.0%	4	3.7%
Students' discipline	14	14.7%	0	0.0%	14	12.8%
Lack of resources	14	14.7%	5	35.7%	19	17.4%
Lack of status	6	6.3%	0	0.0%	6	5.5%
Paperwork	5	5.3%	2	14.3%	7	6.4%
Meetings	3	3.2%	0	0.0%	3	2.8%
Total	95		14		109	

Finally, when respondents were asked to foresee their professional future within the next 5 years, 41 (or 34.7%) indicated that they will remain in the field, while 34 (or 28.8%) indicated that they are looking for pursuing another position within the field. However, 15 (or 12.7%) indicating that they are looking for leaving the field due to their dissatisfaction. Another 14 (or 11.9%) indicated that they might move to pursue another position within general education arena, while 13 (or 11%) indicated that they might leave the field due to retirement. For further details, see Table 15.

Table 15. Foresee professional future

Response	Sp.Ed. teacher		Others		Total	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Remaining	35	34.3%	6	37.5%	41	34.7%
Pursuing another position within the field	31	30.4%	3	18.8%	34	28.8%
Pursuing another position within general education arena	14	13.7%	0	0.0%	14	11.9%
Leaving special education due to retirement	9	8.8%	4	25%	13	11%
Leaving the field due to dissatisfaction	13	12.8%	2	12.5%	15	12.7%
Others	0	0.0%	1	6.3%	1	0.8%
Total	102		16		118	

## 7. Discussion

The vast majority of respondents were special education teachers ( $n = 102$ ). The type of disability most served was LD (56, or 47.1%), followed by MR (43, or 36.1%). The current finding presents a true reflection of services being provided; the service model being applied by the MOE and schools focuses on inclusion of children with LD and other mild disabilities in public schools. Additionally, MSD focuses on its centers on serving students with MR, as their primary type of disability to serve. Additionally, services provided for children with MR were one of the earliest in Jordan. However, 37 (31.1%), 35 (29.4%) of students being served were students with HI and SLD, respectively. These numbers are a reflection of society and service providers' interests rather than a genuine representation of prevalence of these type of disabilities. It is well known that HI is one of the first disabilities to be served in Jordan, whereas SLD services are expensive, and thus, many professionals are attracted to pursue a career in providing these services. Further, 12 (10.1%) of professionals are serving children with autism. Because of ambiguity and lack of proper professional practices, many diagnosticians are diagnosing increased numbers of children with autism.

Most of special education services are being delivered in resource rooms (43.7%), and that is due to the model being implemented by MOE (MOE, 2012), which focuses on providing services in the form of resource room inclusion model (Al Khatib & Al Khatib, 2008). Al Khateeb and Hadidi (2009) found that resource room is the most satisfying job location. Additionally, MSD is providing services in special day-schools spreaded all over Jordan (37, or 31.1%). Unfortunately, there were only one professional involved in transition and vocational planning, and none providing services in hospitals. Transition planning services are very limited and is not of the main priorities for service providers. Although the current law states providing these services, the practice is much far behind the law. Likewise, not many hospitals and service providers are very interested in serving children with terminal diseases. Additionally, very few special education teachers provide services at home (5, or 4.2%), were no other professionals are. This is due to the lack of programs intended to provided services for those children at home; families have to seek services at center/school location rather than services seek children in need and their families, especially supporting services.

Because of the inclusion model adopted by MOE, most students serviced in their elementary classes (76, or 66.7%). Likewise, MSD focuses its effort in the early school years (P-5) in their centers. The current finding can be attributed to the current policy of MOE and MSD, however, many parents may find these services ineffective or very limited and, thus, they might withdraw their children out of such programs. Twenty-six (22.8%) professionals serve students at all levels. The reason for this finding may be attributed to the chaos of practice in the field, which was found in Al Kahtib and Al Khatib (2008), Al Khateeb and Hadidi (2009), and Bataineh (2009) studies. There are not clear duties for professionals and they have to work with all kind of disabilities in different levels, and variety of placements.

Most professionals are still maturing in the field (83%); where 72 (61%) and 26 (22%) have less than 5 years and 5-10 years of experience, respectively. The field of special education is not new in Jordan. However, in recent years there is increase attention on organizing and increasing services provided by highly qualified personnel. This is a global consensus, not only a national one. Regardless, 37 (31.9%) are expected to serve for less than 5 years, where 35 (29.9%) are expected to serve for 5-10 years. These low expected years of services can be attributed to the many obstacles faced by special education professionals found in many national studies (Al Khatib & Al Khatib, 2008; Al Khateeb & Hadidi, 2009, Bataineh, 2009) that led to lower satisfaction levels with special education jobs and services.

Showing interest in the field is attributed in many cases to a sibling/family member with disability (Marks, Maston, & Barraza, 2005), however, 44 (37.6%) have never shown any interest in the field. Where 28 (23.9%) started showing interest in the field during their college years. The Jordanian higher education system distribute high school students depending on their high school GPA to different universities and study fields. Usually, medical field and engineering are the most respected and the highest in demand for students and society. Therefore, many students enter lower social status fields because this is the best they can have based on their GPA. This include the college of education and special education, indeed. This can be the reason for this finding. Regardless, 60 (50.8%) pursued a career in special education later on because of their desire to serve those children. This finding is consistent with the findings of Fish and Stephens (2010). Job Market was another important influential factor in pursuing a career in special education. Financial factor plays a major role in an individual's decision in pursuing a career. Additionally, there is an expansion of special education services, meaning that the chance in finding a job increases comparing to other educational field. Al Khateeb and Hadidi (2009) indicate that financial factor is one important element in job satisfaction.

The majority of professionals expressed relatively high and high levels of satisfaction regarding special education services (40.3% and 28.6%, respectively). Likewise, most of them indicated relatively high and high levels of satisfaction with their current job (46.2% and 27.7%, respectively). The current finding contradicts with previous studies findings (Al Kahtib & Al Khatib, 2008; Al Khateeb & Hadidi, 2009, Bataineh, 2009; Stempien & Loeb, 2002; Echinger, 2000; Miller et al., 1999, Emery & Vandenberg, 2010) where special education teachers expressed low levels of satisfaction. Most of professional in this study deliver services in resource rooms, where Al Khateeb & Hadidi (2009) found that resource room teachers are highly satisfaction working in this placement. Consequently, most of them indicated relatively high and high probability in remaining in the field. The current finding is a logical consequence of the high levels of satisfaction with services and job circumstances.

Still, the most current influential factor in remaining in the field is professionals' desire to serve children with disability. Autonomy and continuous inservice training are future factors indicated by professionals as the most influential one in retaining in the field. Gravelle and Farmer (2011) and Billingsley (2004) indicate that continuous inservice training plays a major role in job satisfaction and, thus, in higher retention rates. Consequently, most professionals stating that they have no desire leaving the job, and if they are to, they may move to another job within the special education field.

Professionals' source of frustration comes mainly from three different sources: child's family, lack of administrative support, and lack of resources. This finding is consistent with Bataineh (2009) findings that indicate very limited support from colleagues and administration for special education teachers. Al Khateeb and Hadidi (2009) found that support provided by administration and lack of resource are one of the main obstacles faced by special education resource room teachers, and do contribute toward job frustration and dissatisfaction. The same can be said concerning the child's family.

## **8. Recommendations**

Jordanian public education system needs to be reformed; students with disabilities whom are served in public schools need to be expand and include all those who can benefit from regular education. Consequently, MSD procedures and policy need to be reformed as well. MSD serve many children with disability that can benefit from public education. Additionally, there should be better guidelines and practice procedures that assist professionals doing their jobs in more organized, effective ways. Additionally, MOE should consider expanding its special services to all school years (P-12) rather than have them limited to the first six grades.

Although MOE is spreading its inclusion model, but it should be noted that MSD is still preserving many students in special day schools. Thus, a comprehensive review should be conducted concerning their efficacy and implementation. Moreover, the quality of these programs are not clearly documented; many essential elements are missing form these programs such as transitional and vocational planning. Early childhood special education and early intervention programs are not set either; parents have to seek services and, in most cases, they have to pay for them in private special centers. There should be a national strategy for early intervention and early childhood special education services. Likewise, society and its agencies such as hospitals need to be aware of the importance of providing special education services for children in need. MSD should have in consideration expanding its services to later years of the age of children with disabilities who are not benefiting from regular education.

Most professionals are expecting relatively short period of service in the field. Meaning that those teachers are leaving within less than 5 to 10 years. A closer look regarding the possible causes of this migration/attrition rates should be researched and addressed properly. Those professionals are valuable assets for the field and obstacles that cause this phenomenon need to be addressed by legislators, MOE, MSD, and related agencies.

Most of professionals are motivated by the desire to serve children with disabilities and they never had any interest in the field before college. There is an increase in societal awareness with respect of different issues regarding individuals with disability; however, it is recommended to increase this awareness in the form of legislations and services spreaded in all needed domains. Additionally, proper resources are to be provided to all professionals in order to minimize the effect of any source of frustration. Administrative support and family cooperation need to be addressed through building guidelines for such support and cooperation. Administrators should be trained and guided on their role of special education services. Also, families need to be instructed and trained on their role with their children, schools, and special education personnel.

A comprehensive educational reform is needed in Jordan to address many issues revealed by study's participants. Many issues do persist, and many are emerging. Without such a reform that build the capacities of the field, the chaos will continue and increase up to a level where we cannot reverse its negative effects.

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