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Vocational Self among Special Education Teachers in Jordan and Its Relationship to Some Variables

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Abstract: This study aimed to identify the level of vocational self among special education teachers in Jordan and its relationship to teacher's gender, qualification, experience and the type of special education center. The study sample consisted of 87 special education teachers from public and centers in Amman City in Jordan. Teachers responded to the study instrument which consisting of 38 items distributed on five themes. The results showed a high level of vocational self for special education teachers in all themes. Personal-self ranked at first level then knowledge self, moral value self, ambitious self and finally self-performance self. In addition, the results showed that there were no statistical significant differences in the level of vocational self for special education teachers due to any of the study variables.

Key words: Vocational self, special education teachers, special education center, relationship, gender, personal-self ranked

INTRODUCTION

Working in the field of special education requires more efforts from workers especially teachers because of the nature of their work which requires professional, personal and practical skills. In addition, teachers may face many problems, challenges and pressures during their work as many studies have already approved such as (Voltz *et al*., 2008; Lazauras, 2006). These studies indicated that special education teachers are more vulnerable to work pressure compared with regular education teachers. However, working with individuals with disabilities may cause different kinds of pressures, frustration, occupational burnout and health disorders for special education teachers. In addition, they may suffer from negative emotional trends and a sense of low achievement because their belief that they are dealing with highly demand students (Lazarus, 2006). Moreover, Hoy (2000) indicated that teachers gets on their self-efficiency from four sources which are completion of performance, alternative experiences, verbal persuasion and emotional investment. In addition, self-efficiency for teachers influenced by the number of contextual variables within the school such as characteristics of teacher, teaching experiences and the extent of the affected community also, the characteristics of the class room (Guo *et al*., 2011).

Literature review: Significantly, self-efficiency linked with vocational satisfaction in many studies. Blackburn and Robinson, reported that there are committed relationship between self-efficiency and vocational satisfaction in a study that contained 80 teachers in Kentucky. Furthermore, there are differences in level of self-efficiency based on the experience in favor of highly experienced, this confirmed by the results by Tschannen *et al*. Moreover, Adebomi *et al*. (2012) claimed that the stability of special education teachers in their work is affected by the characteristics of the work environment. In same field, Stempien and Loeb (2002) indicated that vocational compatibility for special education teachers is less than vocational compatibility for general education teachers. Additionally, Fahjan (2010) indicated that the level of vocational compatibility and flexibility of the ego are above the average for special education teachers and the level of social responsibility is very high.

Additionally, Hijazi (2013) reported that there are statistically significant differences between the averages scores of female teachers who have a high of self efficiency and teachers who have low effective self efficiency based on the vocational compatibility scale and quality performance Scale in the West Bank's schools. However, researches confirmed that the teachers who have a high level of vocational self-efficiency have a strong professional commitment in educating their students as well as planning and supportive skills (Bembenutly, 2006). For example, Rimm and Sawyer (2004) discussed that special education teachers who have a high level of vocational self-efficiency are better in using inclusive strategies than teachers who have a low level of vocational self-efficiency.

In the same field Carlson *et al*. (2002) claimed that special education teachers have a high level of self effectiveness and this level is reflected by their responsibility on the student's performance and planning to stay more in the teaching profession. In accordance with that Kell (2009) reported that special education teachers who have a high level of vocational self-efficiency are less prone to occupational burnout and to leave the teaching profession. Furthermore, Nota in a study that including 146 teachers, reported that special education teachers who teach students with intellectual disabilities have a high level of vocational self-effectiveness, a great deal of confidence in their ability. On the other hand those teachers estimate quality of life and social skills and have a low level of burnout inventory based on Maslach burnout inventory especially in emotional exhaustion. In addition there are a negative relationship between vocational self-efficiency and the levels of burnout inventory.

Likewise, Rankin-Erickson and Pressley (2000) confirmed that special education teachers show a high level self-efficiency in teaching students with reading difficulties. As well Brown (2009) indicated that special education teachers belief that they have high expectations in the teaching process where teachers aged under 30 years and experience <5 years in special education have a less level of vocational self-efficiency than teachers aged above 30 years and experience over 10 years. In addition, special education teachers who hold postgraduate qualifications were more effective than the other teachers. Finally, female teachers were more appreciative of vocational self-efficiency than male teachers.

Ultimately, the results of Jordan and Stanovice's (2004) study confirmed that teacher's vocational self-efficiency have a strong impact on their attitudes towards the inclusive education, practice in the classroom, abilities in achieving the needs of learning disabled students and dealing with student's problems. The study also concluded that the environment of successful inclusive process is attributable to high vocational self-efficiency for those teachers.

Study problem and questions: The problem of the study crystallized from the researcher note of the reality of special education and the difference in satisfaction degrees among special education teachers in Jordan. This satisfaction is responsible of the stability or instability of special education field. However, there is a lack of availability of national and Arabic studies that target vocational self-efficiency for special education teachers. Therefore, the study problem stems from the necessity of providing a knowledge base and theoretical background of this important subject. Hence, this study aims to answer the two following questions:

- What is the level of vocational self-efficiency for special education teachers in Amman?
- Are there statistically significant deference ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between levels of vocational self-efficiency for special education teachers in Amman due to the teacher's gender, qualification, experience and the type of special education centers?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study population and participants: The study population consisted all special education teachers in special education centers (government and privet centers) in Amman and their number until the time of the study is (476) teachers. However, the study sample consisted of (87) teachers and the sample demographic information is illustrated in Table 1.

Study instrument: To achieve the study objectives, the researcher reviewed the educational literature relating to the study topic such as (Hijazi, 2013; Shorfa and Dokan, 2011; Brown, 2009; Nota *et al*., 2007) Nota and Ferrari gathered the opinions of seven specialists in the Hashemite University who hold a doctorate degree in psychology and special education majors to develop an instrument to measure the level of vocational self efficiency for special education teachers. The study instrument consisted of (38) items, distributed on (5) main themes based on answer gradation consisting of (1-5) degrees according on (quintet Likert) as the following:

Table 1: Distribution of the study sample according to the variable

Variables class	Number	Ratio
Gender		
Male	23	26
Female	64	74
Science qualification		
Diploma	12	14
Bachelor	67	77
Master	8	9
Experience (years)		
<5	37	42
From 5-10	38	44
More than 10	12	14
The type of special education center		
Government	28	32
Privet	59	68

Table 2: Correlations coefficient of instrument items and themes

Knowledge self			Performance self			Personal self			Moral value self			Ambitious self		
Items	Theme	Total	Items	Theme	Total	Items	Theme	Total	Items	Theme	Total	Items	Theme	Total
1	0.86	0.58**	5	0.60**	0.37**	15	0.69**	0.29**	24	0.55**	0.23*	31	0.54**	0.21*
2	0.85**	0.52**	6	0.69**	0.46**	16	0.44**	0.42**	25	0.75**	0.52**	32	0.69**	0.64**
3	0.67*	0.48**	7	0.37**	0.64**	17	0.45**	0.66**	26	0.70**	0.40**	33	0.88**	0.33**
4	0.79**	0.45**	8	0.37**	0.60**	18	0.64**	0.56**	27	0.70**	0.39**	34	0.73**	0.33**
-	-	-	9	0.70**	0.42**	19	0.54**	0.53**	28	0.51**	0.76**	35	0.92**	0.57**
-	-	-	10	0.63**	0.58**	20	0.69**	0.43**	29	0.64**	0.76**	36	0.69**	0.46**
-	-	-	11	0.47**	0.52**	21	0.67**	0.71**	30	0.87**	0.63**	37	0.89**	0.69**
-	-	-	12	0.27**	0.39*	22	0.36**	0.25*				38	0.65**	0.44**
-	-	-	13	0.60**	0.40**	23	0.33**	0.32**	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	14	0.63**	0.61**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

*, ** Coefficient values

Table 3: Correlations coefficient between the instrument themes

Theme	Knowledge self	Performance self	Personal self	Moral value self	Ambitious self	Total
Knowledge self	1	-	-	-	-	-
Performance self	0.470**	1	-	-	-	-
Personal self	0.519**	0.461**	1	-	-	-
moral value self	0.750**	0.382**	0.438**	1	-	-
Ambitious self	0.111**	0.781**	0.034**	0.285**	1	
Total	0.707**	0.871**	0.709**	0.722**	0.632**	1

*, ** Coefficient values

Table 4: Reliability coefficient by using cronbach alpha

Theme	Knowledge	Performance	Personal	Moral value	Ambitious	Totally
Reliability coefficient	0.72	0.75	0.61	0.80	0.90	0.84

- Always was given the number (5)
- Often was given the number (4)
- Sometime was given the number (3)
- Rarely was given the number (2)
- Never was given the number (1)

Moreover, the researcher used the following standard to judge on the satisfaction degrees and total score:

- Low-level (1-2,33)
- Intermediate-level (2,34-3,66)
- High-level (3,67-5)

Instrument validity: The researcher had extracted the instrument validity by using the following.

First content validity: The researcher asked 11 professors in psychology and special education in the Hashemite University to review the instrument and give their opinions about the appropriateness and the clarity of the of the instrument's items. Experts had been greed that the instrument is appropriated to use and the items are clear. As a clarification, the experts agreement was 80% to keep the instruments without changes. However, 20% of the experts suggested some changes in some items such as reviewing the item's language.

Second construction validity: The correlation coefficients between items and themes were calculated and with the total score of the instrument as shown in Table 2.

Table 2 showed that the correlations coefficient between self-knowledge theme items ranged between (0.67-0.86 with the total score of the scale ranged between (0.45-0.58). The correlations coefficient between self performance theme items ranged between (0.27-0.70) with the total score of the scale ranged between (0.37-0.64). The correlations coefficient between self-personal theme items ranged between (0.33-0.69) with the total score of the scale ranged between (0.25-0.71). The correlations coefficient between self-moral value ranged theme items between (0.51-0.87) with the total score of the scale ranged between (0.23-0.76). Finally, the correlations coefficient of self- ambitious theme items ranged between (0.54-0.92) with the total score of the scale ranged between (0.21-0.69).

The correlations coefficient between the instrument themes were calculated as shows in Table 3. Table 3 showed that the correlations coefficient between the the me and with the total of score ranged between (0.63-0.87). These coefficients are acceptable for the study purposes.

Instrument reliability: To calculate the instrument reliability, the researcher used Cronbach alpha

equation. The results of the analysis showed acceptable level of reliability based on the performance of (27) teachers from outside the study sample. This value is appropriate for the study purposes and the reliability coefficients are illustrated in Table 4.

Data analysis: To answer the first question, the researcher used the averages and standard deviation of the performance in the instrument's items. To answer the second question he used t-test, ANOVA and (Chevy) for posteriori comparisons to discover if there are differences in the levels of vocational self-efficiency according to the study's variables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The first question: To answer the first question "what is the level of vocational self-efficiency for special education teachers in Amman?". The researcher calculated average and standard deviation for the level of vocational self efficiency for special education teachers in Amman as whole as shown in Table 5.

Table 5 showed that the level of vocational self efficiency for special education teachers was high where the average was (4.15). Personal self ranked as the first level with an average of (4.63), knowledge self with an average of (4.34), moral value self with an average of (4.26), ambitious self with an average of (4.07) and performance self ranked at least with an average of (3.91).

The second question: To answer the second question, the researcher calculated the average and standard deviation of the instrument items by using (t-test) to answer the second question of the study which was "is there statistically significant deference ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between levels of vocational self-efficiency for special education teachers in Amman due to the teacher's gender, qualification, experience and the type of special education centers?" and the results listed in Table 6.

Table 6 showed that there were no statistically significant differences between the averages of the vocational self-efficiency level among special education teachers according to the gender variable where the value of (t) for total performance was (0.844). This mean that the level of vocational self-efficiency for special education teachers does not vary based on their gender. For the qualification variable, the researcher used (ANOVA) method and the results are listed in Table 7.

Table 7 showed that there were no statistically significant differences between the averages of the (ANOVA) method and the results are listed in Table 8.

Table 5: Average and standard deviation of the instrument's themes

Theme	Average	SD	The level of self	Ranks
Knowledge self	4.34	0.424	High	2
Performance self	3.91	0.381	High	5
Personal self	4.63	0.487	High	1
moral value self	4.26	0.367	High	3
Ambitious self	4.07	0.528	High	4
Total	4.15	0.311	High	-

vocational self-efficiency level among special education teachers according to the qualification variable. This mean the level of vocational self-efficiency for special education teachers does not vary by their qualification.

For the experience variable, the researcher used vocational self-efficiency level among special education teachers according to the experience variable. This mean the level of vocational self-efficiency for special education teachers does not vary based on their experience.

Finally, based on the type of special education center, the researcher used (t-test) as shows in Table 9. Table 9 showed that there were no statistically significant differences between the averages of the vocational self efficiency level among special education teachers according to the type of special education center variable. This mean the level of vocational self-efficacy for special education teachers does not vary based on the type of special education center.

The result of first question was consistent with (Nota *et al*., 2007; Rankin-Erickson and Pressley, 2000; Carlson *et al*., 2002). The result of first question and the previous studies showed high level of vocational self efficiency among special education teachers. The researcher explained the high-ranking of the vocational self for special education teachers to the nature of the theoretical pre-service and training that provided for those teaches before and during the teaching carrier that including providing teachers with a renewable theories knowledge which focus on commitment to professional ethics. Hence, teacher's characters and rehabilitation enable them to do their roles. Nevertheless, the low level of performance self could be linked to the limitation of the financial benefits that teachers earned and the pressure that they suffer from in their work especially the average salaries of teachers which ranges between 2000-300 JD. This salary does not encourage teachers to bring professional performance that they learned to the field. Also, it might be due to professional environment routine and this result is consistent with (Hijazi, 2013).

Table 6: Average, standard deviation and t-value for the level of vocational self-efficiency for special education teachers in amman according to gender.

	Gender						
	Male		Female				
Themes	Average	SD	Average	SD	Level of freedom	t-values	Sig.
Knowledge self	4.29	0.452	4.36	0.416	85	-0.627	0.553
Performance self	4,00	0.370	3.88	0.383	85	1.240	0.218
Personal self	4,71	0.724	4.60	0.372	85	0.965	0.337
moral value self	4.22	0.345	4.27	0.377	85	-0.562	0.576
Ambitious self	4.18	0.395	4.03	0.565	85	1.172	0.244
Total	4,20	0.337	4.14	0.303	85	0.844	0.401

Table 7: The results of (ANOVA) for the qualification variable

Themes	The sources of discrepancy	Averages	Level of freedom	Square's average	F-values	Sig.
Knowledge self	Between groups	0.168	2	0.084	0.461	0.632
	Within groups	15.320	84	0.182		
	Sum	15.489	86	-		
Performance self	Between groups	0.700	2	0.350	2.488	0.089
	Within groups	11.807	84	0.141		
	Sum	12.507	86	-		
Personal self	Between groups	1.314	2	0.657	2.880	0.062
	Within groups	19.164	84	0.228		
	Sum	20.479	86	-		
Moral value self	Between groups	0.235	2	0.118	0.866	0.424
	Within groups	11.407	84	0.136		
	Sum	11.642	86	-		
Ambitious self	Between groups	1.079	2	0.539	1.977	0.145
	Within groups	22.924	84	0.273		
	Sum	24.003	86	0.194		
Total	Between groups	0.388	2	0.095	2.044	0.136
	Within groups	7.979	84	-	-	-
	Sum	8.368	86	-	-	-

Table 8: The results of (ANOVA) for the experience variable

Themes	The sources of discrepancy	Averages	Level of freedom	Square's average	F-values	Sig.
Knowledge self	Between groups	0.415	2	0.207	1.155	0.320
	Within groups	15.074	84	0.179		
	Sum	15.489	86			
Performance self	Between groups	0.434	2	0.217	1.509	0.227
	Within groups	12.073	84	0.144		
	Sum	12.507	86			
Personal self	Between groups	0.027	2	0.013	0.055	0.947
	Within groups	20.452	84	0.243		
	Sum	20.479	86			
Moral value self	Between groups	0.955	2	0.477	3.752	0.028
	Within groups	10.688	84	0.127		
	Sum	11.642	86			
Ambitious self	Between groups	1.895	2	0.948	3.601	0.032
	Within groups	22.108	84	0.263		
	Sum	24.003	86			
Total	Between groups	0.478	2	0.239	2.544	0.085
	Within groups	7.890	84	0.094		
	Sum	8.368	86			

Table 9: Average, standard deviation and t-value for the level of vocational self-efficiency for special education teachers in amman according to center type

	The type of special education centers						
	Government		Privet				
Themes	Averages	SD	Averages	SD	Level of freedom	t-values	Sig.
Knowledge self	4.40	0.406	4.31	0.432	85	0.907	0.367
Performance self	3.94	0.403	3.90	0.373	85	0.465	0.643
Personal self	4.61	0.378	4.64	0.534	85	-0.263	0.794
Moral value self	4.34	0.365	4.22	0.365	85	1.463	0.174
Ambitious self	4.14	0.418	4.05	0.574	85	0.691	0.491
Total	4.19	0.302	4.14	0.317	85	0.738	0.462

CONCLUSION

Regarding the study variables result, this study found that there was no effect of the any variable on the teacher's level of occupational self and this result might be attributed to the teacher's beliefs and convictions of the importance of working and dealing with student with disabilities regardless of the teacher's gender, qualification, experience or the type of the center. The study result about gender and qualification is disagreeing with the results of Brown (2009) which reported that the female teacher is more recognition of the self-efficiency than male teachers and for teachers who hold higher academic qualifications. Furthermore, the results of experience variable are disagreeing with (Blackburn and Robinson, 2008) which claimed that there were differences in the level of self-efficiency according to teacher's experience. In favor of teachers highly experienced. Finally, the results of the type of the center variable were consistent with Willig and Carlson, Brauen, Klein, Schroll.

RECOMMENDATIONS

According the finding of the study, the researcher recommends the following. The need for reviewing the financial system of special education teacher, their monthly salary and their incentive in order to enabling them to ful fill their anticipated jobs thoroughly and efficiently. Conducting more studies to know the level of vocational self-efficiency for special education teachers according to other variables and other dimensions that were not included in this study. Holding training sessions, symposiums and performance exercises to raise the level of vocational self efficiency for special education teachers.

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