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Practice Levels of Special Education's Ethical Standards among Special Education Teachers in Jordan

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ABSTRACT

The current study aimed to determine the degree in which special education ethical standards were presented in special education teachers' professionals practices in Jordan. The study sample consisted of (533) male and female special education teachers. A (100) items scale for measuring the degree of preset ethical practices was built. Results indicated that ethical standards were presented moderately in special educators practices. Further, there were statistical significant differences in ethical standards presence on gender, institution type, years of experience, type of disability, and geographic location variables, whereas no differences presented on qualification variable.

Keywords: Ethical standards, Special Education Profession, Levels of Practice, Jordan.

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INTRODUCTION

Ethical standards for any profession include the basis that should guide its members in practicing their profession, which should contribute toward the profession development and preserve its image. Additionally, the best method in assessing professionals' levels of commitment to their ethical standards is through its members practices (Qazaq, 2005). Thus, there is no doubt that teachers' commitment to their profession ethical standards contributes toward special education development and enhances services provided for children with special needs. Moreover, if we are to emphasize highly qualified special education teachers and student-oriented, evidence-based practices that benefit students with special needs and their families, then we should emphasize ethical standards. Such emphasis should contribute effectively toward any unethical or illegal practices that violate professional standards that we all agree on (Alkhateeb and Alhadidi, 2005).

Special education profession faces many problems that include the lack of clear national policy of teachers' pre- and in-service preparation programs, and the absence of clear national professional and ethical standards for special education teachers (Alkhateeb and Alhadidi, 2005). Special education teachers are essential element in service providing for children with special needs, thus, teacher preparation programs that include clear professional and ethical standards are a key-element in the success of this effort (AlKhateeb, 2008). However, the field of special education in Jordan has developed dramatically in the last two decades. This development corresponds to the global effort in developing the field. Nevertheless, this development in the field incorporates an emphasis on ethical standards, which works toward organizing the field and having clear standards that indicates their rights and duties (Hardman, Drew, & Egan, 2007).

LITERATURE REVIEW

A close look at special education profession in Jordan indicates several serious problems. Special education teachers are faced by low financial and social status. Moreover, many of special education practices are not clear and can be described as ambiguous and chaotic. One explanation of these problems is the low social attitude toward the profession, ignoring, or even not recognizing it as a profession (Yahia, 1993).

In order to develop the status of special education profession, there should be clear standards in preparing special education teacher, which include ethical standards. Standards are very important element in preparing highly qualified special education teachers. Ethical standards guide special education teachers' practices. Current practices are guided through laws and regulations that lack such clear standards (Abdullah, 2005).

It critical to have ethical standards for special education profession, but the most important is to monitor levels of teachers' commitment to them. Additionally, these standards should be included as one of the main criteria in assessing teachers' accreditation and professional skills. Although the Ministry of Education (MOE) has established ethical criteria for general education in general (Alhasan, 2009), but there are no specific ones for special education.

Special education teachers ethical role implicated in ethical standards are: (1) acquiring knowledge, development, and applying knowledge; (2) ensuring positive and supporting classroom leaning environment; (3) setting positive and professional relationship between teachers and children with special needs and their families; (4) respecting and considering individual differences; (5) setting limits for other professionals relationship with special education; (6) using technology properly in special education; (7) recruiting qualified special education colleagues; (8) seeking professional development; (9) assessment and evaluation; (10) planning extra curriculum activities; (11) teaching and developing critical thinking skills; and (12) connecting learning to society (Owen, 2010; Hechinger & Golden, 2007).

Previous Studies:

There is an increase global emphasis on ethical standards that is considered to be one of the modern trends in the field of special education. Thus, there are many contemporary studies on this topic being conducted, and how special education teacher are committed to them.

Alhadidi (2008) developed a list of the best contemporary international practices in the field of visual impairment in Jordan. Then, she investigated current practices compatibility with this list. Results indicated that current special education programs for individuals with visual impairment in identification and referral, evaluation, program building, learning environment, quality of teachers, general curriculum, extra curriculum activities, and team-work is nothing but random practices that lack the minimum scientific background. These practices relays on teachers' personal experiences; there are no specific and clear guidelines leading these practices.

Almomani (2008) investigated teachers' practices compatibility with international standards from their point of view. The study sample consisted of (436) special education teachers from all over Jordan. Teachers indicated that compatibility levels with international standards were moderate. Additionally, a statistically significant differences were found on teachers' qualification (educational level), experience, number of students in classroom, and in-service training; where compatibility levels were higher in the case of teachers with 2-year degree (Diploma), (+17) years of experience, more students in the classroom, and those who received in-service training.

Obidat (2011) studies (95) intellectual disability special education teachers' professional skills and compared them to professional standards of Counsel for Exceptional Children (CEC). Results indicated high levels of teachers' awareness of the importance of professional skills on all domains and in general. However, there were statistical significant differences found on educational level; teachers with special education degree scored lower than teachers coming from other disciplines on the domains: teaching strategies, learning environment, planning to teach, evaluation, and in general score. Moreover, teachers with long experience indicated higher levels of importance on learning environment and teaching strategies variables. There were no differences on gender variable.

Calabrese and Raymond (1993) concluded in their study that teachers who have clear, consistent ethical standards affect positively on students behavior in classroom. Additionally, they found that teachers need to focus more on ethical practices that have direct connection to student motivation, classroom activities, fairness, professional growth and development, and teacher-parents relationship. Holmes (2003) concluded that special education teachers are usually confused about their professional identity. Thus, special education teachers have to evaluate their ethical practices on three dimensions in order to determine their professional identity: Practice Commitment, verbal commitment, and procedures.

Collinsan, Killeavy, and Stephenoson (1998) compared cultural and philosophical differences between U.S., Australia, and Britain special education teachers. The authors indicated that culture and philosophy are the basis of ethics in society. Individualized interviews were implemented collecting data from special education teachers in the three countries. The study concluded that special education ethics require a raw-model that provide teachers with knowledge and skills through different means. Means include interacting with their students in order to know their cultural backgrounds. Knowing students cultural backgrounds helps teachers to utilize proper ethical practices in the teaching profession.

Beamish and Brayer (1999) developed a checklist of the best ethical practices in early intervention programs in Queensland, Australia. They developed this list on a sample of parents and special education teachers interacting in early intervention programs. Then, both groups were asked to express their opinion in respect to the ethical practices. Parents and teachers indicated high levels of support for the developed checklist. However, both groups indicated the highest level of support for parents' ability accessing teachers. Nevertheless, teachers group levels of support were higher than parents group, meaning that ethical standards and practices are major elements in setting quality of services provided for those children and their families.

Campbell (2002) concluded in her study that ethical standards are important in the teaching profession, and these standards can be used as a quality indicator of special education practices. She also suggested that teacher-student interaction (one of the ethical standards) is very efficient mean in reaching the preset educational goals. Additionally, special education teachers should master the proper content knowledge, skills, and technological proficiency delivering services. Moreover, teacher-student relationship should be based on trust, and teachers should know their social roles in the community they teach.

Craig and Carl (2009) studies ethical levels of special education teachers. They noticed that special education teachers' ethical role is being increasingly researched in recent years. Also, teacher behaviors across all times and situations is an ethical issue and, thus, teaching is an ethical behavior. the main finding of this study is that special education teachers presents lower levels of moral (ethical) thinking comparing to other professionals pursuing other profession; this finding apply to all teachers-in general.

Conclusion of the previous studies

There is no doubt that ethical standards guide teachers' professional practices and provide us with indicators of practices that can benefit students with special needs. Several studies indicated that students' performance has increased when ethical standards were provided for special education teachers. Additionally, previous studies indicated that many educational systems are now using ethical standards as one major criterion in assessing the quality of its educational system and the effectiveness of services provided. Therefore, ethical standards and the extent that teachers practice them is becoming a key-element in educational quality accreditation and assurance systems.

Ethical Standards of Special Education Profession in Jordan

Beirat and Al-hiary (in press) developed ethical standards for special education profession in Jordan in a previous study. These standards were developed based on ethical standards published by several global professional organizations in the field of special education, and developed in other western countries. The final list of ethical standards consisted of (100) items spreaded over four domains:

1. Ethical standards related to special education teacher
 - A. Personal behavior
 - B. Professional behavior
 - C. Content knowledge
 - D. Personal skills
2. Ethical standards related to teacher-student relationship
3. Ethical standards related to teacher-colleagues relationship
4. Ethical standards related to teacher relationship with families and society.

Teachers indicated high levels of importance on all domains, and on ethical standards in general, with exception to the fourth domain, where they believed it was moderately important standard.

Study Problem

Ethical standards is an essential element in organizing the field of special education and ensuring the quality of special education teachers, along with other professional standards. Thus, an essential indicator of services provided for children with disabilities are the quality of special education teachers' practices. After constructing a proposed model of ethical standards for the special education profession in Jordan (Beirat and Al-hiary, in press), it was important to investigate what ethical standards were presented in special education professional practices in Jordan.

Study Questions

The study aims to answer the two following questions:

1. What are the special education teachers practice levels of the ethical standards in Jordan?
2. Are there any statistical significant differences on practice levels between teachers on gender, type of institution (government, private, voluntary), educational level (diploma, bachelor, higher education), experience (less than 5 years, 5-10 years, more than 10 years), type of disability (mental, physical, learning disabilities, visual, hearing, autism, multiple and severe disabilities), and geographic location (north, center, south) variables?

Study Limitations

This study is limited to its instrument validity and reliability data, its sample selection and responses, time and location of study, and any limitations correspond to this type of studies.

METHOD

A survey design was utilized in investigating the study questions. The study sample consisted of (553) special education teachers selected randomly from all special education teachers working in MOE, special education government and private centers, and voluntary special education institutes. The sample was recruited from all over Jordan. Only teachers with special education degree and currently working with children with disabilities were included in the study. Table (1) presents further information in regard of the study's sample,

Table 1: Study sample demographic information

Variable	Variable levels	Number
Gender	Male	180
	Female	373
Type of Institution	Government	219
	Private	237
	Voluntary	97
Educational Level	Diploma	146
	Bachelor	252
	Higher Education	155
Experience	Less than 5 Years	278
	5-10 years	142
	More than 10 years	133
Type of Disability	Mental Retardation	67
	Physical Impairment	55
	Learning Disabilities	89
	Visual Impairment	120
	Hearing Impairment	128
	Autism	53
	Multiple and Severe	41
Geographic Location	North	181
	Center	271
	South	101
Total		553

Instrumentation

The study's instrument was developed in earlier study (Beirat & Al-hiary, in press). The study consisted of (100) item of different ethical standards and five-points Likert scale used to indicate the importance of each item, on the right side of the survey. The left side of each item was used to indicate teachers' level of practice of each ethical standard. Investigation method was developed for each ethical standard. The rater has to indicate whether it presented or not in each teacher's practices based on the criteria listed next to each ethical standard. The standards was written operationally to facilitate teachers' responses and raters' investigations.

Validity and Reliability of the instrument

The original copy of the ethical standards consisted of (135) items. These items were built based on ethical standards issued by several professional organizations in the field of special education and other educational systems in foreign countries. Next, it was sent to several special education and higher education special education faculty members in Jordan to provide their opinions of the items precision and suitability. Only items that had the agreement of 90% of the faculty members were included in the final instrument.

Then, reliability coefficients were calculated using Cronbach's Alpha. Table (2) presents reliability coefficients of the instrument domains, and overall reliability.

Table 2: Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficients

	Domain	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Practice Levels	Ethical standards related to special education teacher	53	0,97
	Ethical standards related to teacher-student relationship	23	0,98
	Ethical standards related to teacher-colleagues relationship	12	0,95
	Ethical standards related to teacher relationship with families and society.	12	0,96
	Total	100	0,98

Scoring on the instrument

The rater had to indicate whether the ethical standard found in teacher's practice (score = 1) or not (score = 0) based on the investigation criteria found next to each standard. In order to classify practice levels into three groups: low, moderate, and high, the following formula was used:

Range = highest score - lowest score / 3

Range = $1-0/3 = 0.33$

Thus, the following three classification groups were used:

1. Low (range from 0 - 0.33),
2. Moderate (range from 0.34 - 0.66), and
3. High (range from 0.67 - 1).

RESULTS

After the data were collected, it was entered and analyzed using SPSS software. Means and standard deviations, t-test, One-Way ANOVA, and Scheffé's method were used in answering the study questions.

Results in respect to the first question "what are the special education teachers practice levels of the ethical standards in Jordan?"

In order to answer the first question, means and standard deviations were calculated. Table (3) presents results for each domain, and the overall score.

Table 3: Levels of practice means and standard deviations

No.	Domain	Mean	Standard Deviation	Practice Level
3	Ethical standards related to teacher-colleagues relationship	0.56	0.39	Moderate
4	Ethical standards related to teacher relationship with families and society.	0.56	0.39	Moderate
1	Ethical standards related to special education teacher	0.55	0.36	Moderate
2	Ethical standards related to teacher-student relationship	0.55	0.39	Moderate
	Overall score	0.55	0.36	Moderate

Table (3) indicates that teachers' practice levels of ethical standards were moderate in general and all domains ($m = 0.55$, $SD = 0.36$). However, the third and the fourth domains scored the highest practice levels ($m = 0.56$, $SD = 0.39$) comparing to the first and second domains.

Results in respect to the second question "Are there any statistical significant differences on practice levels between teachers on gender, type of institution (government, private, voluntary), educational level (diploma, bachelor, higher education), experience (less than 5 years, 5-10 years, more than 10 years), type of disability (mental, physical, learning disabilities, visual, hearing, autism, multiple and severe disabilities), and geographic location (north, center, south) variables?"

In order to answer the second question, each variable's results will be presented separately.

1. **Gender:** Table (4) presents means and standard deviations, and t-test results in respect to gender variable. T-test results ($t = 8.278$) indicate significant statistical differences between males and females teacher in favor of female teachers ($m = 0.64$, $SD = 0.32$) on all domains.

Table 4: Gender *t*-test results

	Gender	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i> -test	Sig.
Levels practice	Male	180	0.38	0.40	8.278	*0.000
	Female	373	0.64	0.32		

Sig. on $\alpha = 0.05$

2. **Type of institution:** Table (5) presents mean and standards deviations of practice levels on type of institution variable. Results indicate mean differences, where teachers working in private special education centers have the highest practice level ($m = 0.67$, $SD = 0.32$) and teachers working in voluntary centers scored the least ($m = 0.45$, $SD = 0.43$). In order to determine whether these differences were statistically significant ($\alpha = 0.05$), a One-way ANOVA test was utilized as shown in Table (6).

Table 5: Type of institution means and standard deviations

	Type	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Levels of practice	Government	219	0.67	0.36
	Private	237	0.45	0.32
	Voluntary	97	0.55	0.43
	Total	553	0.55	0.37

Table 6: One-Way ANOVA result for type of institution

	Source	Sum squa	<i>df</i>	Mean Squa	<i>F</i>	Sig.
Levels of practi	Between grou	5.519	2	2.759	21.942	*0.000
	Within groups	69.167	550	0.126		
	total	74.686	552			

Sig. on $\alpha = 0.05$

Table (6) results indicate significant statistical differences ($F = 21.942$) on overall practice of ethical standards. To determine the source of this statistical significant difference, a Scheffé's post-hoc was used (Table 7). Scheffé's test results indicate that teachers in governmental institutions practice ethical standards higher than teachers in private and voluntary institutions; meaning that governmental institutions are more committed to ethical standards in their practices than the other two type of institutions.

Table 7: Scheffé's post-hoc test results for type of institutions

	Type	<i>M</i>	Voluntary	Private
			0.55	0.45
Levels of practice	Government	0.67	*0.12	*0.22
	Voluntary	0.55		0.10
	Private	0.45		

Sig. on $\alpha = 0.05$

3. **Educational Level:** Educational levels' means and standard deviations are presented in Table (8). Consequently, differences are shown between the three educational levels (diploma, bachelor, and higher education). Thus, a One-Way ANOVA test was used to determine whether these differences were statistically significant (Table 9). One-Way ANOVA test results indicated no statistically significant difference in levels of practicing ethical standards than can be referred to teachers' educational levels.

Table 8: Educational levels means and standard deviations

	Education	<i>N</i>	<i>m</i>	<i>SD</i>
Levels of Practice	Diploma	146	0.58	0.34
	Bachelor	252	0.54	0.38
	Higher education	155	0.55	0.37
	Total	553	0.55	0.37

Table 9: Educational Level One-Way ANOVA results

	Source	Sum square	<i>df</i>	Mean Square	<i>F</i>	Sig.
Levels of practice	Between groups	130	2	0.065	0.480	0.619
	Within groups	74.555	550	0.136		
	total	74.686	552			

Sig. on $\alpha = 0.05$

4. **Experience:** Teachers' years of experience means and standards deviations levels of practice of ethical standards indicate that teachers of "less than 5 years" have the highest mean ($m = 0.65$, $SD = 0.33$), where teachers of "more than 10 years" scored the least mean ($m = 0.29$, $SD = 0.36$; Table 10).

Table 10: Experience means and standard deviations

	Experience	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Levels of Practice	Less than 5 years	278	0.65	0.33
	5 – 10 years	142	0.61	0.33
	More than 10 years	133	0.29	0.36
	Total	553	0.55	0.37

Next, One-Way ANOVA was utilized to examine whether there are significant statistical difference between groups on ethical standards practices (Table 11).

Table 11: Experience One-Way ANOVA

	Source	Sum square	<i>df</i>	Mean Square	<i>F</i>	Sig.
Levels of practice	Between groups	12.791	2	6.396	56.833	*0.000
	Within groups	61.894	550	0.113		
	total	74.686	552			

Sig. on $\alpha = 0.05$

One-Way ANOVA Results indicate that there are significant statistical difference on ethical practices levels between teachers of different years of experience ($F = 56.833$). Then, to determine source of these differences, Scheffé's post-hoc test was utilized (Table 12). Post-hoc test indicated that levels of practice were higher for "less than 5 years" and "5 – 10 years" groups, than "more than 10 years" group.

Table 12: Scheffé's post-hoc test results for experience

	experience	<i>M</i>	More than 10 years
Levels of practice	Less than 5 years	0.65	*0.36
	5 – 10 years	0.61	*0.32

Sig. on $\alpha = 0.05$

5. **Type of Disability:** Table (13) presents levels of practice of ethical standards means and standards deviations. Teachers who teach children with autism indicated the highest levels of ethical practices ($m = 0.68$, $SD = 0.24$) and teachers working with children with multiple and severe disabilities indicated the least ethical practice ($m = 0.30$, $SD = 0.38$). Next, One-Way ANOVA was used to investigate any statistical differences in ethical practice levels (Table 14).

Table 13: Type of disability means and standard deviations

	Type of disability	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Levels of practice	Mental	67	0.67	0.25
	Physical	55	0.58	0.33
	L.D.	89	0.60	0.37
	Visual	120	0.59	0.38
	Hearing	128	0.45	0.40
	Autism	53	0.68	0.24
	Multiple and severe	41	0.30	0.38
	Total	553	0.55	0.37

Table 11: Type of disability One-Way ANOVA

	Source	Sum square	<i>df</i>	Mean Square	<i>F</i>	Sig.
Levels of practice	Between groups	6.332	6	1.055	8.429	*0.000
	Within groups	68.354	546	0.125		
	total	74.686	552			

Sig. on $\alpha = 0.05$

ANOVA results indicate significant statistical differences between groups in ethical practices ($F = 8.429$). Consequently, Scheffé's post-hoc test was used to determine these differences. Results indicate that teachers working with children with autism, mental retardation, L.D., visual impairment, and physical impairment practice ethical standards higher than teachers working with children with multiple and severe disabilities. Further, teachers working with children with autism and mental retardation indicate higher levels of ethical practices than teachers working with hearing impairment do (Table 15).

Table 15: Scheffé's post-hoc test results for type of disability

	Type of Disability	M	autism	Mental	L.D.	Visual	Physical	hearing	Multiple and sever
			0.68	0.67	0.60	0.59	0.58	0.45	0.30
Levels practice	autism	0.68	-	0.01	0.08	0.09	0.10	*0.23	*0.38
	Mental	0.67		-	0.07	0.08	0.09	*0.22	*0.37
	L.D.	0.60			-	0.01	0.02	0.15	*0.30
	Visual	0.59				-	0.01	0.14	*0.29
	Physical	0.58					-	0.13	*0.28
	hearing	0.45						-	0.15
	Multiple and sever	0.30							-

Sig. on $\alpha = 0.05$

6. **Geographic Location:** Teachers' means and standard deviation of levels of practice on geographic location indicate that teachers work in the southern part of Jordan scored the highest level of ethical practices over their colleagues working in the central and northern part of Jordan (Table 16). In order to investigate the significance of mean differences between groups, a One-Way ANOVA test was used. Results indicate statistically significant differences between groups in ethical practices ($F = 15.289$; Table 17). Therefore, Scheffé's post-hoc test was used to further investigate the source of these differences (Table 18). Results indicate that teachers working in the south present higher levels of ethical practices compared with their colleagues working in the center and the north of Jordan. Further, teachers working in center Jordan do present better ethical practices than teachers working in north Jordan do.

Table 16: Geographic location means and standard deviations

	Location	N	M	SD
Levels of practice	North	181	0.45	0.40
	Center	271	0.57	0.36
	South	101	0.69	0.26
	Total	553	0.55	0.37

Table 17: Geographic location One-Way ANOVA

	Source	Sum square	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Levels of practice	Between groups	3.934	2	1.967	15.289	*0.000
	Within groups	70.752	550	0.129		
	total	74.686	552			

Sig. on $\alpha = 0.05$

Table 18: Scheffé's post-hoc test results for Geographic location

	Type	M	South	Center	North
			0.69	0.57	0.45
Levels of practice	South	0.69		*0.12	*0.24
	Center	0.57			*0.12
	North	0.45			

Sig. on $\alpha = 0.05$

DISCUSSION

The goal of this study was to investigate levels of ethical practices among special education teachers in Jordan. This study completes the previous study conducted by authors constructing ethical standards for the special education profession in Jordan (Beirat & Al-Hiary, in press). In that study, teachers were asked to indicate levels of importance of each ethical standard (item) on the right side of the instrument, and on the left side, there was an indicator (differs based on the item) indicating levels of ethical practices during their work. Following, a discussion of the results of the study questions results.

First question results:

Results indicate that the third domain "Ethical standards related to teacher-colleagues relationship" and the fourth domain "Ethical standards related to teacher relationship with families and society" are the

most practiced ethical standards on a moderate level. Although the first and second domains are moderately practiced, they remain second comparing to the third and fourth domains. These current finding can be attributed to the lack of knowledge and emphasis in teacher preparation programs on ethical standards. Additionally, professional practices place low emphasis on ethical practices providing services for children with disabilities in Jordan; the emphasis is placed heavily on teaching and providing other services. Additionally, there are no official ethical standards that teachers can rely on guiding their practices. Abdullah (2005) indicate that there are no standards currently constructed for the field of special education in Jordan. This current finding contradict with previous study conducted by Darawsheh (2004) that indicate high levels of ethical practices can be found in Jordanian teachers' work.

Second question results:

1. **Gender:** Female teachers present higher ethical commitment in their practice. This can be attributed to the female sensitivity to ethics in general, and their awareness of their importance and commitment to them. Further, most of special education professionals in Jordan are females, and female nature tend to have more compassion with students of disabilities and, thus, this nature was reflected in higher commitment practicing ethical standards. This current finding contradicts with Almomani (2008) study that indicated better male commitment to ethical practices, and contradicts with Obidat (2011) study that indicated no differences between males and females teachers in respect to ethical practices.
2. **Type of institutions:** Results indicated higher government institution teachers' commitment in implementing ethical standards in their practices when compared to private and voluntary special education settings. This can be attributed to the stable and better-established standards in governmental special education institutions. Many authorities supervise the institutions that include Ministry of Social Welfare, the Higher Counsel for Affairs of Persons with Disabilities, and MOE. Additionally, there is higher emphasis on teacher's accountability. Besides, society looks up to governmental sector as more reliable and committed to the best practices and services, which include ethical standards and practices. Additionally, government teachers are more secured about their jobs. Private special education institutions are commercially based and that can affected the level of professional practices, while voluntary institutions are short funded in a way that may affect its ability in recruiting better-qualified special education teachers.
3. **Education level:** the study recruited only special education teachers as its sample and there were no differences in ethical practices that can be attributed to their educational level. This finding can be attributed to fact that all teacher preparation programs in Jordan do emphasize ethical standards to the same extent. Thus, teaches' commitment to ethical practices remain the same across educational levels. Beirat and Al-hiary (in press) indicated high importance levels of ethical standards from teachers' perspective, and this can be attributed to teacher preparation programs that emphasize professional and ethical knowledge. Albishri (2006) reached the same conclusion that there is no effect of education level on teachers' ethical practices. The current finding contradicts with Almomani (2008) study that indicated higher ethical commitment levels in favor of the least special education degree (diploma).
4. **Experience:** Teachers with "less than 5 years" of working experience, where they presented higher levels of ethical practices than teachers of more years of experiences. Further, teachers of "5 - 10 years" of experience have advantage over teachers of "more than 10 years" of experience. The conclusion is that teachers with less years of experiences have advantage and better commitment to ethical practices than those with longer years of experience. Least experienced special education teachers received better, up-to-date preparation programs that emphasize professional and ethical practices. This finding contradicts with Almomani (2008) study that found that special education teachers' commitment to global standards improves over years of experience(17+ years of experience).
5. **Type of disability:** Teachers who teach children with autism, mental retardation, learning disabilities, visual impairment, and physical impairment indicated higher ethical practice levels doing their work. Autism is a separate category that was just separated from emotional and behavioral disorders category, and teacher preparation program staled for working with those children are quit new programs utilizing "state of the art" criteria in teacher preparation, which include ethical standards and practices.
6. **Geographic location:** Teachers working in south Jordan in special education institutions present ethical practices higher than their colleagues working in the center and north of Jordan. Additionally, teachers working in center of Jordan present ethical practices higher than their colleagues working in the north do. Special education services in south Jordan are newly established, and most of special

education teachers are coming from modern special education preparation programs that emphasize professional and ethical practices. Additionally, special education centers and services in south Jordan are under very strict supervision from several authorities. Moreover, special education teachers are locally hired, and this do add more pressure toward better commitment and service quality to their community.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Emphasizing the role of ethical standards in teacher pre- and in-service preparation programs, especially these standards related to special educator personal behavior, professional practices, and content knowledge. These standards are essential in improving the quality of services provided for children with disabilities and their families.
- Advocate toward having ethical standards formalized and to be accredited from the Ministry of Education, Ministry of social Welfare, Higher Council for Affairs of Persons with Disabilities, Universities, and inservice special education preparation programs.
- Emphasizing special education teachers' relationship with other colleagues through training in pre- and in-service programs.
- Emphasizing special education teachers' relationship with parents and community in teacher preparation programs.
- Conducting further studies on ethical standards importance and practice from parents' perspective.
- Conducting further studies on ethical standards importance and practice from administrative and programs' supervisors perspective.
- Conducting further studies on ethical standards importance and practice on term of other variables such as financial support, working hours, budget, etc.

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