

## RESEARCH ARTICLE



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## The leadership roles of Saudi special education teachers from their own perspectives

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### Abstract

**Objectives:** To examine the leadership roles of Saudi special education teachers from their own perspective and to survey their views toward challenges in leadership. **Methodology:** The study used the survey method, for which a questionnaire was developed and distributed to a sample of (n = 200). The results indicated that special education teachers had little experience in leadership roles, where they considered participation in conflict resolution among colleagues as their most important leadership role participation in mentoring, follow-up or training is the least important. **Findings:** The results of the study revealed that there were no statistically significant differences between male and female special education teachers in their level of enacted leadership. The level of education and years of experience were found to have a significant impact on the leadership level of teachers. **Novelty of the study:** the inclusion of students with special needs in regular schools require teachers with leadership skills. Therefore, this study came as the first study to tackle this topic in Saudi Arabia.

**Keywords:** Leadership; special education teacher; perceptions; educational reform

### 1 Introduction

Leadership refers to the practice of influencing individuals to create an atmosphere of cooperation between them and a set of practices that enhances the performance and growth of an organization, faces challenges and obstacles, and increases the satisfaction and loyalty of subordinates by paying attention to their psychological needs [1]. Teachers' leadership role is manifested in their right to practice an effective role in the education process and in achieving learning outcomes [2]. There is a direct impact of leadership inside schools on the performance of teachers and academic achievements of students, which is achieved by focusing on the humanitarian values and standards, motivation, intellectual loyalty, empowering teachers, engaging them in decision-making, designing the mission and vision of the school, and developing and supporting teachers [3]. Moreover, distributed leadership is a set of group activities, operating through teamwork, and not through individual efforts [4], which engages teachers in the process of decision-making and requires strengthening the teachers' capacities to promote students' academic achievements [5].

The literature on education describes different kinds of the leader-teacher roles, such as the school headmaster, the association leader, head of department, educational supervisor, and peer-to-peer coach [6]. The leader-teacher can also play a role in developing school plans, promoting curricula, teaching, and evaluation of students at the level of schools. He also plays a leading role in providing new ideas on education and learning that depend on school research on different curricula, drafting educational policies and rules, assessing the quality of school education and participating in career development plans based on teachers' training needs [7]. The special education leader-teacher contributes to nurturing students with special needs in the school while still faces many problems related to the treatment of these students. Therefore, he needs assistance and cooperation in all educational situations and settings to satisfy the needs of students with special need and to solve their problems [8]. The literature stresses on the importance of leadership as a main factor in the new practices of teaching students with special needs [9].

The special education teachers usually work in isolation and do not have clear control on important decisions in school [10]. They usually suffer from other problems, such as the lack of training before and during service and the huge number of students in each classroom [11]. Therefore, special education teachers should be given the opportunity to play a leading role in decision-making, to motivate and encourage learners, to deepen the cooperation between students, to solve rising problems, and to take precautionary measure to prevent such problems. In addition, part of their leading role, teachers can form working groups and assign roles to learners according to their abilities and interests [12].

Different previous studies tackled the issue of leadership among teachers from various perspectives. One study conducted in Turkey on the servant leadership style showed that the recognition level of this style of leadership among administrators indicated a significant difference in favor of male teachers and schools' headmasters working in special education schools more than teachers in arts and sciences centres.

In another study conducted in Jordan [13], investigated the teacher leadership and classroom management practice on special education with learning disability. The study found that teachers have practiced leadership on high levels and that the perception of special education teachers towards practicing classroom leadership correlated positively with the leadership style of the teacher. In a similar study, the leadership experience of Jordanian special education teachers was investigated. The study found that the perceived leadership roles of special education teachers were limited in scope and frequency. Special education teachers realized many barriers to the leadership roles, which are the lack of time to take leadership roles, absence of laws and regulations related to teacher leadership, lack of pre-service training, negative attitudes towards special education teachers, overload of responsibilities and disharmony between roles, and the lack of communication opportunities within the Ministry of Education [14].

A study was conducted in Malaysia and China on the level of consensus on inclusive teacher leadership recognized by special education teachers [15]. The results showed that there is a strong consensus among Malaysian and Chinese special education teachers on the importance of teacher leadership skills in engage them in the management of their classroom.

In [16] conducted to define early intervention/ early childhood educational service systems as required by the Education for Individuals with Special Needs Act. The results of the study showed the necessity of having competence and knowledge aspects among teachers, who intend to become leaders in the field of special education. The study recommended further similar research on another sample and support leaders who can satisfy the needs of children and their families.

In a systematic review of different studies in the US, the concept of leadership associated with effective private education and emerging standards for effective management were investigated. The study identified, through extrapolation of studies related to the standards required in effective schools, five priorities for the educational leadership of the principals: (a) identifying and communicating the educational mission of the school; (b) managing the curriculum and teaching; (c) supporting and supervising teaching; (d) monitoring students and (e) promoting a learning environment. The study concluded that the training methods of school principals are rather weak and require more support, as stated in many previous studies. The study also concluded that university preparation programs, professional organizations, educational researchers, educational bodies and local communities must be involved to ensure the development of the basic leadership skills needed in school principals [17].

Another study conducted in the US, educational leadership and its relationship with special education was investigated. The results showed that following-up with educational vision and the development of standards of trust and cooperation, academic journalism and teacher support, and monitoring instructions and innovations were among the most important principles. The study also insisted on the importance of the role of practicing educational leadership to help teachers in their daily works [18].

The leadership qualities mentioned by John Adder (2009) were linked with the qualities that special education teachers must possess in order to reach collaborative advantages with the supporting teacher in one of the studies. The results of the study concluded that the teachers indicated a shortage in the cooperative process between the teacher and the supporting teacher and the lack of training in the leadership aspects of the teacher [19].

Finally, a study conducted in Ireland was to identify the role of leadership and management in inclusive private education in

six middle schools. The study explored the role of the special educational needs coordinator in addition to exploring the role of teachers who have daily executive responsibility for the policies of solidarity with teachers from the point of view of six special educational needs coordinators and their managers. The study followed the qualitative research design by developing a model explanatory approach that links individual and narrative stories. The results showed that the role of teacher-coordinator and coordinator is surrounded by human interactions, which further complicates their functions and increase their burdens. The results confirmed that the school context plays an important role in leadership roles in inclusive private education. The role of managers was also important in building a comprehensive, collaborative and effective culture [20].

#### **The Saudi context**

The emergence of the educational system development in Saudi Arabia gave the space to focus on leadership among teachers. The development agenda recognizes the role of teachers in delivering a high degree of efficiency and effectiveness in achieving their goals and describes them as the true architects of change in the midst of development [21]. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia launched its 'Vision 2030', which requires a strategy for the development of education in Saudi Arabia through effective initiatives to thoroughly modernize curriculum, teacher performance and improve the school environment. The Vision 2030 was considered as a Royal initiative to achieve creativity, knowledge management and excellence in the learning environment [22].

Services for children with special needs in Saudi Arabia are provided in several forms. Some of these programs depend on integration and segregation plans implemented by the Ministry of Education. There are also special education centres for day care and internal accommodation, implemented by the Ministry of Labor and Social Development (MLSD). King Salman Centre for Disability Research and Community-based rehabilitation and the private sector also provide some of these services [12].

Since the declaration of the Salamanca Statement and Framework Action for Special Education in 1994, many countries have adopted inclusion practices for people with special needs [23]. Inclusive education can be successful when managed by strong leadership that fosters a collaborative school culture, supports professional partnerships, and facilitates learning for students with special needs [24]. In Saudi Arabia, the first experiment to integrate students with special needs into general education programs happened in Al-Noor Institute in Al-Hofuf region in 1984, where the experiment achieved great success and led to the emergence of other similar experiences such as the establishment of the General Secretariat for Special Education in 1987 [25].

#### **Statement of the problem**

There is a consensus in the literature that leadership among general education teachers and the leadership roles of special education teachers are rarely mentioned [14]. This gap is particularly important, not only because the restructuring of education changes the tasks and behaviour of workers in education, but also changes the management of professional relationships. The main challenge is not to identify who is the leader-teacher, but to change the school culture and create leaders from all teachers [26]. Leadership and support to special education teachers help in improving the quality of educational services for students with special needs as well as other students [27]. In addition, distributed leadership is the distribution of leadership tasks and responsibilities to all staff, teachers and administrators [28]. Undoubtedly, the role of the school leader in caring for people with special needs is to help them overcome feelings of despondency and futility [29].

Based on the above review and in line with the development of the educational system in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which considers the teacher to be the core of the educational process, the present study aims to explore the leadership experience of Saudi special education teachers by answering the following questions:

1. What leadership roles are preferred by special education teachers?
2. What are the constraints faced by special education teachers that prevent them from achieving leadership?
3. Are there any statistically significant differences in the perceptions of special education teachers towards their leadership role due to their gender, educational level, years of experience or type of school (regular school or special education school)?

#### **Significance of the study**

Developing the educational system in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia requires the improvement and development of the administrative environment in the Ministry and education departments as well as the adoption of decentralized administrative orientation. Moreover, giving powers to local departments and schools to take decisions regarding the service of the educational system and to identify the leadership roles of teachers in special education is very important to this development. Leadership among Saudi Arabia's special education teachers seems relatively limited and is often absent from school reforms due to lack of understanding of leadership roles and functions, which has not yet been assessed. There are also in institutions Saudi Arabia that nurture the needs of teaching people with special needs and provide support to all groups. However, education needs to expand in those institutions [30]. The level of collaboration between special education teachers and schools affects the levels of support and opportunities provided to students with special needs within the school. If teachers are isolated and marginalized, their

students are likely to be so. Teachers-leaders must work collaboratively and expand their knowledge and skills to successfully manage and support their students with special needs [14].

Therefore, this study is an initial step towards exploring the leadership roles of special education teachers in Saudi Arabia and will be an important addition to the theoretical literature on the roles of teachers as leaders in special education. This study will discuss the practical applications of leadership among teachers to support education development.

## 2 Methodology

### Research design

This study is based on the correlative survey method, for which the "Teachers' Conceptual Leadership Scale" and the "Personal Information Model" were used. The data were analyzed by using frequencies, mean scores, standard deviation, T-test, single variance analysis (ANOVA), correlation analysis and regression analysis methods of SPSS.

### Sampling and setting

In order to achieve the objectives of this study, the researcher contacted the Department of Education in Asir region in Saudi Arabia and asked to provide a list of teachers and schools that provide special education services. The study population consisted of 300 teachers. The sample was representative of all special education teachers in Asir region (50% of the total number of teachers). Therefore, the sample consisted of 200 special education teachers, who were randomly selected, and who occupy full-time teaching positions in various schools of the Department of Education in Asir region. Data were collected during the 2017-2018 school year. Table 1 shows the distribution of the study sample according to the variables.

**Table 1.** Distribution of the study sample according to gender, level of education and years of experience

| -                   | Variable                 | Number (%)  |
|---------------------|--------------------------|-------------|
| Gender              | Male                     | 80 (44.4%)  |
|                     | Female                   | 100(55.6%)  |
| Level of education  | Diploma                  | 10 (5.5%)   |
|                     | Graduate                 | 150 (83.3%) |
|                     | Post-graduate            | 20 (11.2%)  |
| Years of experience | 1-2                      | 5 (7.2%)    |
|                     | 3-10                     | 100 (55.6%) |
|                     | More than 10             | 75 (54.7%)  |
| Type of school      | Regular school           | 170 (94.5%) |
|                     | Special education school | 10 (5.5%)   |

All special education teachers in the schools of the Department of Education in Asir region were arranged in alphabetical order and then 200 teachers were randomly selected for this study. The questionnaires were completed and returned to the researcher in a sealed envelope. Four weeks after the questionnaires were sent, 180 out of the 200 questionnaires were returned to the researcher; the return rate was 90%.

### Ethical considerations

The official ethical consent was obtained from the Ministry of Education. Participants were first contacted and invited to participate in the study, and then were briefed on its objectives. Consent of the participants was obtained before conducting the study and they were assured that their identity and confidentiality would not to be revealed.

### Instrumentation

#### Survey

The questionnaire consisted of two parts. In the first part, teachers provided demographic information by checking and ticking the applicable information. The second part consisted of (18) paragraphs designed to inquire about the leadership aspects of the teacher, and was measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from [5] "always" to [1] "never".

To construct the survey of the present study, the researcher developed the scale and identified items based on the literature review, which was validated and approved by the appropriate methods, as mentioned in the next section.

### Validity and Reliability

The validity of the scale means to investigate whether the scale measures the intended objectives of the questions of the study [31]. The validity of the questionnaire was achieved by presenting it to ten experts working as educational leaders to be

reviewed and to provide their feedback. Their suggestions, comments, and changes have been considered accordingly. Paragraphs have been revised until all reviewers have approved the phrases used and the correctness of the content. The validity indicators of the scale were verified by running a pilot study on a sample of (20) teachers similar to the population of the study. The paragraphs of the questionnaire were analyzed and the coefficient of discrimination of each paragraph was calculated. The coefficient of discrimination is an indicator of validity for each paragraph in the form of a correlation coefficient between each paragraph and its associated variable. The correlation coefficient was between (0.732-0.855), which represented a statistical significance at the level of (p) = 0.05, and therefore, the scale can be considered generally valid (see Table 2).

**Table 2.** Correlation coefficients of the paragraphs to the overall score of the scale

| paragraph | correlation coefficients | Paragraph | correlation coefficients |
|-----------|--------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|
| 1         | 0.703**                  | 10        | 0.755**                  |
| 2         | 0.684**                  | 11        | 0.855**                  |
| 3         | 0.682**                  | 12        | 0.704**                  |
| 4         | 0.709**                  | 13        | 0.790**                  |
| 5         | 0.787**                  | 14        | 0.802**                  |
| 6         | 0.594**                  | 15        | 0.613**                  |
| 7         | 0.790**                  | 16        | 0.765**                  |
| 8         | 0.677**                  | 17        | 0.740**                  |
| 9         | 0.711**                  | 18        | 0.761**                  |

\*\* Significant at (0.01)

The reliability of the scale was determined using the test-retest method by applying it to a pilot study of (20) special education teachers. Pearson correlation coefficient between scores was calculated on the two tests. Spearman correlation coefficient using the return method was (0.825 \*\*) for the scale as a whole. The stability coefficient was calculated using the Cronbach alpha, and the final internal consistency coefficient was (0.896), which indicated that the scale has an appropriate level of reliability.

**Data analysis**

The returned questionnaires were recorded and tabulated with the assistance of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) of windows 17.0. Different statistical methods were used to achieve the main objectives of the present investigation. These methods included descriptive statistics, independent sample T-Test, and analysis of variance (ANOVA). Descriptive statistics included mean scores, standard deviation and frequencies, which were employed to calculate the demographic data of the special education teachers with regard to gender, Level of education and years of experience. An independent sample T-test is a statistical method employed to demonstrate the variations among the mean scores of two groups of a variable. In the current study, this statistical method was used in order to identify the significant differences between the levels of leadership in special education teachers and their gender. An analysis of variance (ANOVA) is a method of statistical analysis used to determine differences among the mean scores of more than two groups according to a variable (Corbin, Strauss, & Strauss, 2014). In the present study, this statistical method was used to determine the relationship between the levels of leadership in special education teachers in relation to two variables; years of experience and the level of education.

**3 Findings and discussion**

This section provides the findings obtained from the present study. These findings are presented based on the research questions that guided the research.

**Levels of leadership of special education teachers**

To answer the first question of the study concerning the leadership roles exercised by special education teachers, the mean scores and standard deviations were extracted as shown in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Mean scores, standard deviations and ranking of the sample responses to paragraphs related to leadership roles exercised by special education teachers

| Paragraph  | Mean score | St. dv | Ranking | Order |
|--|------------|--------|---------|-------|
| Participate in resolving conflicts between colleagues                                  | 2.58       | 1.258  | Low     | 1     |
| Participate in the formulation of educational policies and rules                       | 2.50       | 1.318  | Low     | 2     |
| Participate in mentoring, follow-up, training, or developing new teachers' performance | 2.48       | 1.016  | Low     | 3     |

*Continued on next page*

Table 3 continued

| Paragraph   | Mean score | St. dv | Ranking  | Order |
|---|------------|--------|----------|-------|
| Working as one team   | 2.46       | 1.133  | Low      | 4     |
| I use strategic educational management planning to improve student performance.   | 2.44       | 1.219  | Low      | 5     |
| Take leadership roles in an institute or organization (e.g. Teachers' Council, Teachers' Club or Teachers' Association) | 2.39       | 1.011  | Low      | 6     |
| Participate in professional development activities that contribute to improving students' academic achievement.         | 2.35       | 0.998  | Low      | 7     |
| Work as a trainer in training courses   | 2.34       | 1.156  | Low      | 8     |
| Participate in finding innovative ways to develop school curricula.   | 2.32       | 1.052  | Low      | 9     |
| Participate in promoting curriculum, teaching and assessment of students at school level                                | 2.27       | 1.086  | Low      | 10    |
| Using research as an important tool for solving educational and learning challenges.                                    | 2.24       | 1.000  | Low      | 11    |
| Participate in introducing new teaching and learning ideas based on school research                                     | 2.20       | 0.927  | Low      | 12    |
| Participation in the development of school plans (long-term, middle-term and short-term)                                | 2.16       | 1.062  | Low      | 13    |
| Participate in the establishment of effective cooperation between families, school and community.                       | 2.03       | 0.969  | Low      | 14    |
| Participate in the performance evaluation to assess the quality of education in the school.                             | 1.91       | 0.938  | Low      | 15    |
| Participate in designing a professional development plan based on the training needs of teachers.                       | 1.85       | 0.942  | Low      | 16    |
| Participate in the decision-making process of the school.   | 1.82       | 0.961  | Low      | 17    |
| I encourage colleagues to express their different points of view more than before.                                      | 1.71       | 0.922  | Very low | 18    |
| Total score   | 2.23       | 0.698  | Low      |       |

Table 3 shows that the mean scores ranged from (1.71 - 2.58) for the paragraphs. The paragraph "Participate in resolving conflicts between colleagues" ranked first with the highest mean score of (2.58) and a low level while the paragraph "participation in the formulation of educational policies and rules" came at the second rank with a mean score of (2.50) and a low level.

**The impact of variables on teachers' leadership**

In order to check whether the teachers' gender affects their perceptions of leadership, T-test was performed for independent samples of teachers' responses on the leadership scale (n = 180). The results indicated that there were no statistically significant differences between special education teachers in their perceptions of leadership levels of teachers according to their gender. Table 4 presents these results.

Table 4. Results of T-test to find differences in the perceptions on leadership among the sample according to gender variable

| Gender | No. | Mean score | St. dv | T     | F value | Sig.  |
|--------|-----|------------|--------|-------|---------|-------|
| Male   | 100 | 2.24       | 0.588  | 0.268 | 178     | 0.789 |
| Female | 80  | 2.22       | 0.571  |       |         |       |

To verify whether the level of education of teachers affects their perceptions of leadership, T-test was conducted for independent samples of teachers' responses on the Leadership Scale (n = 180). The results indicated that the differences between the first level (diploma) and the second (graduate) and between the third levels of education (post-graduate) were high at as shown in Table 5.

Table 5. The results of the Kruskal Wallis test to identify the significance of difference sin perceptions about leadership according to the level of education variable

| Level of education | No. | Rank average | Chi Square | F value | Sig.  |
|--------------------|-----|--------------|------------|---------|-------|
| Diploma            | 10  | 88.55        | 32.335     | 2       | 0.000 |
| Graduate           | 150 | 82.33        |            |         |       |
| Post-graduate      | 20  | 152.73       |            |         |       |

Table 5 shows that the value of the level of significance was (0.000), which is less than (0.05) and indicates that there are statistically significant differences in the perceptions of respondents about leadership due to the variable level of education, and the differences were in favor of post-graduates.

To find out the impact of years of experience of teachers on their perceptions of leadership, the Kruskal Wallis test was used, which revealed significant differences in the total score of the scale of leadership for special education teachers. The results indicated that these differences were between the first level (1-2) and the second level (3-10), and between the second level (3-10) and the third level (more than 10) as shown in Table 6.

**Table 6.** The results of the Kruskal Wallis test to identify the significance of difference sin perceptions about leadership according to the years of experience variable

| Years of experience | No. | Rank average | Chi Square | F value | Sig.  |
|---------------------|-----|--------------|------------|---------|-------|
| 1-2                 | 5   | 3.00         | 28.453     | 2       | 0.000 |
| From 3-10           | 100 | 80.31        |            |         |       |
| More than 10        | 75  | 109.93       |            |         |       |

Table 6 shows that the value of the level of significance reached (0.000), which is less than (0.05) and indicates the existence of statistically significant differences in perceptions about leadership due to the variable of years of experience. The average ranks show that these differences were between those with (1 - 2) years and (3-10) years, and in favor of teachers with (3-10) years of experience, and between those with (3-10) and (more than 10) years and in favor of those with more than 10 years of experience.

Finally, regarding the type of school, the Mann-Whitney test of independent samples was conducted. The results of the test showed that there were no statistically significant differences between teachers working in regular and special education schools with respect to leadership among teachers as shown in Table 7.

**Table 7.** Results of Mann Whitney Test to determine the differences in leadership perceptions according to school type variable

| School Type          | No  | Rank average | Ranks Sum | Mann Whitney U | Z value | Sig.  |
|----------------------|-----|--------------|-----------|----------------|---------|-------|
| Regular school       | 170 | 88.79        | 15093.50  | 558.500        | -1.824  | 0.068 |
| Special needs school | 10  | 119.65       | 1196.50   |                |         |       |

It is clear from Table 7 that the value of the significance level was (0.068) which is greater than (0.05). This indicates the existence of significant differences in the perceptions of teachers on leadership due to the school type variable.

## 4 Discussion

This study explored the levels of leadership among Saudi special education teachers. The results showed that special education teachers have a low level of leadership. This result agrees with the findings of previous studies, which found and confirmed that the perceived leadership roles of special education teachers were limited in scope and frequency [14]. The results of this study disagree with the results of a previous study, which stated that special education teachers play leadership roles at high levels, and the perception of special education teachers regarding the practice of classroom management has been positively correlated with the practice of teacher leadership [13]. These results also differ from the results of the study conducted in China and Malaysia, which showed that teachers are taking leadership roles at high levels [15]. These similarities and differences with other studies in the field could be attributed to the educational system followed in each country, and could be due to the nature of the sample of the study and their perception toward leadership.

Competence and knowledge are important features for teachers' transformation into leaders in special education [16]. Moreover, there is consensus in the literature in the stressed the need for creating partnership between university preparation programs, professional organizations, educational researchers, educational institutions, and local communities to ensure the development of essential leadership skills in school principals, teachers and administrators [17]. The theories of education in general, and special education in particular, stressed also on the existence of major leadership in the teacher-leader, which are following the educational vision, developing standards of trust and cooperation, acquiring academic journalism, supporting teachers, monitoring instructions and innovations [18].

The results of this study showed the effective role of practicing educational leadership in schools leaders' daily work. This finding is supported by previous investigation in the field, which highlighted the effect of poor training in teacher leadership aspects [19]. The responses of this study sample indicated that one of the most common challenges is the workload. This finding

is supported by other studies that noticed the role of teacher and coordinator to be full with human interactions and further complicate their functions and increases their burden, in addition to major role-played by the context of the school in fostering leadership in comprehensive special education [20].

Male and female special education teachers did not differ significantly in their perception on leadership roles. This result is similar to results of previous studies that indicated no gender influence on the leadership roles of the special education teacher [14]. This result could be contributed to the fact that males and females teachers in Saudi Arabia work in the same environment and face the same challenges.

The results revealed that there were statistically significant differences in the total scores of perceptions toward leadership among special education teachers due to the years of experience. The difference was in favor of teachers with more than 10 years of experience. This finding could be explained by that experienced teachers provided useful information by developing teaching strategies, guiding and mentoring teachers, and providing the psychological and emotional support other teachers need.

The results also suggested that there are statistically significant differences in perceptions about leadership attributable to the level of education level, and the ranks averages showed that these differences were in favor of teacher with post-graduate level of education. This finding is expected because teachers with higher education levels may have had more leadership experiences, making them more efficient in leadership roles.

The results related to the school type variable showed that there were no statistically significant differences between teachers working in regular schools and special education schools concerning teachers' leadership. This result may be attributed to the similarity of the environment in these schools because they are all public government schools.

## 5 Conclusion and recommendation

This study found that teachers working in special education in Saudi Arabia perceive themselves as taking low standard leadership roles and that there is a lack of training in the leadership aspects in relation to leadership in special education environments. The study emphasizes the need to reform the special education teachers' preparation programs to promote leadership among teachers. In addition, schools should give teachers opportunities to take leadership roles. The results of this study indicates the urgent need to include the topic of leadership of special education teachers in teacher preparation programs. This study encourages research into the issue of special education leadership and calls for changing the role of special education teachers from service providers to potential leaders in the educational process.

### Delimitation of the study

The generalization of the results of this study is closely related to the study sample and alternatives of special education in the Asir region. The current study is determined by the special education teachers who work in the schools of the Department of Education in Asir during the first semester of the academic year 2017-2018. The generalization of the results of the research is determined also by the correct procedures of applying the research tools, and the extent of representation of sample representation to the research population.

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