The Motivations, Attrition and Job Satisfaction of Jordan’s Teachers: Findings from Jordan’s 2018 National Teacher Survey

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Disclaimer

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Suggested citation

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Key findings

1. Nationally, the majority of teachers do not report passion for teaching as their main reason for joining the profession; with approximately 4 in 10 teachers reporting it as the main reason.
2. Ministry of Education school teachers were the least likely to report passion for teaching as a reason for joining the profession (40%), compared to private and UNRWA teachers (approximately 50-55%).
3. One in every 5 teachers reported plans to leave the profession in the next 5 years.
4. Teachers’ most frequently reported reason for planning to leave the profession was low salary.
5. Teachers largely believed the profession is undervalued in society; with more than 6 in 10 teachers disagreeing that the profession is valued.
6. Male MoE teachers were generally the least satisfied and motivated for the profession, when compared to their female counterparts, and counterparts from UNRWA and private schools. They also reported the highest plans of leaving the profession within the next 5 years.

General introduction

A substantial proportion of student achievement is accredited to their teachers. It is vital for ministries of education at large, and schools in specific, to maintain teacher satisfaction and motivation, as research suggests these factors relate to performance and turnover.

Several factors have been noted as influencing decisions to pursue a career in teaching. These can include extrinsic motivations (such as job guarantee and holidays), intrinsic motivations (interest in the profession, personal satisfaction, and a desire for the profession), or altruistic motivations (the opportunity to support people and society). This motivation may influence teachers’ early performance but later on in their career, teachers have different perceptions regarding job satisfaction that impact their intention to remain in the teaching profession (teacher attrition) or the school (teacher retention).

Teacher attrition is a worldwide issue influencing many education systems, threatening their stability. Attrition can cause staff shortages, hinder the continuity of the learning experience, and has detrimental effects on student learning. Plans to leave the profession may be a result of teacher age; where older teachers nearing the age of retirement may have higher plans to leave the profession, or may be a result of job stress and dissatisfaction.

This brief will describe Jordanian teachers’ motivations for the profession, attrition and perceptions of the profession based on the 2018 National Teacher Survey.
**Teachers’ main reason for joining the profession was not a result of passion for teaching.**

On a national level, fewer than half of grade 1-6 and 7-10 teachers reported their main reason was a passion for teaching (45% and 44% respectively). Meanwhile, more than 1 in 4 teachers reported the profession’s suitability for their gender was the main reason. This was followed by teachers’ restricted options due to their academic achievement and lastly a lack of job alternatives. This may suggest the teaching profession is not one prospective teachers in Jordan are intrinsically motivated for; with the profession being largely chosen out of convenience – either for the teacher’s gender or their lack of other alternatives, rather than interest. It essential to note that this question asked teachers about their “main” reason for joining the profession. Hence, while passion for teaching was not the main choice for the majority of teachers, it may have still been an influential factor to teachers to some extent. Future iterations of the survey could ask teachers to rate the importance of each factor in their choice of becoming a teacher, to better understand teachers’ motivations regarding entering the teaching profession.

Findings around reasons for joining the profession varied among teachers within different school types (Figure 1). Ministry of Education (MoE) teachers were least likely to report choosing the profession due to a passion for teaching, and were more likely than private and UNRWA school teachers to report choosing it due to a lack of job alternatives. This could have implications for the screening and recruitment of teachers within MoE schools; higher stress may need to be placed on teachers’ motivations for joining the profession prior to their hiring.

**Figure 1: Teacher reported reasons for joining the teaching profession, by school type and grade level**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>MoE Grade 1 to 6</th>
<th>MoE Grade 7 to 10</th>
<th>UNRWA Grade 1 to 6</th>
<th>UNRWA Grade 7 to 10</th>
<th>Private Grade 1 to 6</th>
<th>Private Grade 7 to 10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suitable for gender</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of other job alternatives</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restricted options due to academic circumstances</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passion for teaching</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reasons for joining the profession also varied based on teacher gender. There were no substantial differences between genders in their reports of choosing the profession as a result of passion (Figure 2). However, females were more likely than males to report choosing the profession due to its suitability for their gender, while male teachers were more likely to choose the profession due to their academic...
circumstances or lack of other job alternatives. The national response distribution, observed in Figure 2, is similar to that among MoE male and female teachers. However, variation in the distribution between genders is more obvious amidst teachers from private and UNRWA schools. Among these 2 school authorities, male teachers were more likely than their female counterparts to report choosing the profession due to a passion for teaching.

Figure 2: Teacher reported reasons for joining the teaching profession, by grade level and teacher gender

Teachers who reported completing pre-service training reported similar reasons for joining the profession as teachers who did not report completing pre-service training. Teachers who reported receiving pre-service training were not more likely to report choosing the profession due to a passion for teaching. In fact, grade 7-10 teachers who reported completing a pre-service qualification were less likely to report passion for teaching as the main reason (41%), when compared to those who did not complete a pre-service qualification (45%). This is surprising as a pre-service qualification was not mandatory under the teacher licensing bylaw that was in place at the time of survey data collection. Therefore, it was expected that those who completed pre-service training would be more passionate about teaching and the profession. It would also be interesting for future studies to explore why prospective students were choosing to complete a pre-service qualification.

One reason that prospective students may choose to complete a pre-service qualification is their Tawjihi (secondary leaving examination diploma) score, as Tawjihi scores play a large role in career decisions in Jordan. Tawjihi requirements for degrees teachers typically pursue are lower than requirements for other degrees. As such, it would be expected for teachers with lower Tawjihi scores to have entered the profession due to limited university degree options, which may also consequently limit career options. Teachers who reported achieving the lowest Tawjihi scores were the most likely to report a lack of other job alternatives as their main reason for joining the profession (Table 1). However, they were
among the most likely to report their main reason for joining was a result of restricted options due to academic circumstance. As aforementioned, this question asks teachers about their “main” reason for joining the profession, hence, restricted options due to academic circumstances may have also played a role in choice of the profession, but was not the main reason.

Teachers who were among the lowest performers in Tawjihi were the most likely to report a passion for teaching as their main reason for joining the profession, when compared to teachers who achieved higher Tawjihi scores (Table 1). It is also important to highlight that teachers with higher reported Tawjihi scores were more likely to report suitability for gender as the main reason for joining the profession. Considering that female teachers were more likely to report higher Tawjihi scores when compared to their male peers, this explains why a higher proportion of teachers reporting higher Tawjihi scores had reported suitability of gender as their main reason for choosing the profession; as more female teachers reported choosing the profession due to its suitability for their gender on a national level when compared to their male counterparts (Figure 2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons for joining the profession/Tawjihi score</th>
<th>Passion for teaching</th>
<th>Restricted options due to academic circumstance</th>
<th>Lack of other job alternatives</th>
<th>Suitable for gender</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-69</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-79</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-89</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90-99</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Considering the differences in Tawjihi scores among males and females, the data on joining the profession was further disaggregated by gender and reported Tawjihi scores. Figure 3 shows that males who were among the top performers in Tawjihi, were more likely to report that a lack of other job alternatives was their main reason to join the profession. These findings suggest that individuals may be prioritizing finding a suitable job; rather than their career passions, considering Department of Statistics data reveals unemployment rates are high in Jordan.
Figure 3: Grade 7-10 teachers’ main reported reason for joining the profession, by gender and Tawjihi scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Passion for teaching</th>
<th>Restricted options due to academic circumstance</th>
<th>Lack of other job alternatives</th>
<th>Suitable for gender</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90-99</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-89</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-79</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-69</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>90-99</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-89</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-79</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>60-69</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>22%</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On a national level, 1 in every 5 teachers reported planning to leave the profession in the coming 5 years.

Attrition of male teachers appeared to be a more pressing issue than attrition of female teachers. On a national level, 27% of grade 7-10 male teachers reported they did not plan on remaining in the profession in the next five years, compared to 16% of their female counterparts.\textsuperscript{xvi}

Plans to leave the profession did not vary by age for grade 1-6 teachers; 20% of teachers aged 21 to 30 or 41 or older, did not plan on remaining in the profession in the next 5 years, compared to 19% of teachers aged 31 to 40.\textsuperscript{xvii} However, variations on a national level were evident among grade 7-10 teachers. Teachers aged 31 to 40 were the least likely to report plans to leave the profession in the next 5 years (16%), while teachers aged 41 or older were the most likely (23%).\textsuperscript{xviii} These results are somewhat surprising, as average ages of grade 1-6 and grade 7-10 teachers were similar; 35 years compared to 36, respectively. The differences observed may be due to having a larger proportion of male teachers in grade 7-10, when compared to grade 1-6. One in every 3 grade 7-10 teachers was...
male, compared to only 23% of grade 1-6 teachers. This is essential considering more male teachers reported plans to leave the profession when compared to their female counterparts.

**Plans to leave the profession were lowest among private school teachers, when compared to MoE and UNRWA school teachers.**

More than 1 in every 5 grade 7-10 MoE and UNRWA school teachers reported plans to leave the profession in the coming 5 years, when compared to 15% of private school teachers. Private schools had the lowest proportion of male teachers, when compared to MoE and UNRWA schools, which may explain why fewer private school teachers reported plans to leave the profession compared to UNRWA and MoE school teachers. Male teachers in MoE schools were among the most likely to plan on leaving the profession, when compared to their female counterparts or to teachers in UNRWA and private schools (Figure 4). In comparison to their female counterparts, MoE male teachers were almost twice as likely to report plans to leave the profession. Male and female teachers from private and grade 1-6 UNRWA schools showed no substantial differences in their plans to leave the profession. However, grade 7-10 male teachers from UNRWA schools were more likely than their female counterparts to report plans on leaving the profession. This is despite them having similar average age (~40 years). This may suggest that male teachers from grade 7-10 UNRWA schools are less satisfied with the profession than their female counterparts, or face higher job stress.

Additionally, the age of profiles of teachers across school types differed; private school teachers were younger by an average of 8 years than their UNRWA counterparts, and roughly 4 years younger than their MoE counterparts. Younger teachers in private schools were more likely to report plans to leave the profession, when compared to their older counterparts. This trend is reversed in UNRWA schools; older teachers were more likely to report plans to leave the profession when compared to younger teachers. For grade 1-6 MoE teachers, the oldest teachers were the most likely to report plans to leave the profession. Grade 7-10 MoE teachers reported similar plans to leave the profession, despite their age. This may indicate that reasons for leaving the profession across school types and grade levels taught differ. In UNRWA schools overall and grade 1-6 MoE schools, older teachers were more likely to report plans to leave the profession, which may be a result of them nearing the age of retirement. Meanwhile in private or grade 7-10 MoE schools, plans to leave the profession were not higher among older teachers, which may mean attrition is a result of job dissatisfaction, work pressure or other reasons.
Figure 4: Teachers’ reported plans for leaving the profession in the coming five years, by gender and school type

On a national level, 3 in 4 teachers reported low salary as a reason to leave the profession, and was the most frequently reported reason teachers cited.

Despite male and female teachers having differing rates of reported attrition, low salary was the most frequently reported reason for leaving the profession across genders (Figure 5). A lack of career progression was also frequently reported as a reason for leaving the profession among both genders; the second most frequently reported reason for males and third for females. The MoE has been working on developing a more comprehensive career pathway for teachers, which also aims better incentivize teachers. It would be important to explore attrition rates nationally after this suggested career pathway is endorsed.

Interestingly, male teachers were more than twice as likely to report the low prestige of profession as reason to leave the profession than their female counterparts. It is essential to understand the underlying cause of male teachers’ belief that the profession is of low prestige; do male teachers believe the profession is of low prestige because of the limited career progression? Or because the education sector in Jordan is dominated by females due to cultural factors? Exploring this further could support efforts in increasing perceptions of the profession in the public eye, and reducing attrition rates.
Exploring reasons to leave the profession confirmed some of the aforementioned hypotheses regarding the differences evidenced across plans to remain in the profession among teachers within different school types and grade levels taught. For example, 4 in 10 UNRWA school teachers reported plans to leave the profession due to retirement, compared to more than 2 in 10 MoE school teachers and less than 1 in 10 private school teachers. Meanwhile, MoE and private school teachers were much more likely than UNRWA counterparts to report low salary as a reason to leave the profession. However, grade 7-10 UNRWA teachers were more likely than their grade 1-6 counterparts to report low salary as a reason to leave the profession; which may explain why more grade 7-10 UNRWA teachers were planning on leaving the profession when compared to grade 1-6 UNRWA teachers. Grade 7-10 UNRWA teachers were also among the most likely to report that a heavy workload or large class size were reasons for them to leave the profession, when compared to their grade 1-6 counterparts or counterparts from MoE and private schools. These results shed light on the aspects that may be causing teacher dissatisfaction, and help explain the variations evidenced in teachers’ reported plans to leave the profession in the coming 5 years across the different school types and grade levels taught (Table 1 and Figure 3).

Teachers believed their work is undervalued in society.

The majority of teachers disagreed with the statement that the teaching profession is valued in the society. Male teachers were more likely than their female counterparts to disagree with the statement;
approximately 6 in 10 female teachers disagreed that the profession is valued in society, compared to 7 in 10 male teachers. Research suggests that increasing the prestige of the profession can increase its attractiveness, and improve teacher retention. This is essential, considering the issues highlighted in this brief around teachers’ reasons for joining the profession and their plans to remain in it.

Male teachers were also less satisfied with the profession when compared to their female counterparts. Specifically, male teachers were more likely to agree that they regret the choice of profession compared to their female counterparts (Figure 6). Moreover, two thirds of female teacher reported they would still choose to work as a teacher if they could decide again, compared to fewer than half of their male counterparts, and fewer male teachers agreed that they would still choose to work as a teacher if they could decide again when compared to females. These results shed light on the dissatisfaction of male teachers, and imply that the teaching profession is both more appealing and satisfactory to female teachers.

*Figure 6: Teachers’ reported agreement with the statement “I regret that I decided to become a teacher”, by grade level and teacher gender*

Findings regarding teacher attrition, motivations and job satisfaction, hint towards a larger issue; male teachers within MoE schools appear to be the least motivated and satisfied with their jobs, when compared to their female counterparts or counterparts from different school types. Not only were male MoE teachers the least likely to report a passion for teaching as their reason for joining the profession, they were also the most likely to report plans for leaving it. These findings are important given what is known about the reverse gender gap in Jordan; with male students falling behind their female counterparts on several national and international assessments. It is essential to explore whether teacher motivation and satisfaction are contributing to this gender gap in Jordan. Future studies should
explore the link between teacher motivations and student achievement to inform policies around narrowing the gender gap.

Further questions

1. **What is the society's view of the teaching profession?**

A large proportion of teachers reported they do not believe the teaching profession is valued in society. It would be of particular interest to explore how the teaching profession is actually perceived by individuals in teachers’ societies and communities.

2. **What are the implications of teachers’ motivations, attrition and perceptions of the profession on student learning outcomes?**

The survey provided insight into teachers’ perceptions towards the profession, their motivations and plans for remaining in the profession. However, the survey was unable to explore the impact of these factors on Jordan’s students. Future studies could potentially explore the relationship between student learning outcomes and teacher perceptions. This could be especially important in trying to understand the reasons behind the reverse gender gap in Jordan. Such research could be done through the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), where student outcomes are assessed as well as teacher perceptions. Another potential avenue for exploring this would be the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). Jordan’s students and principals participate in the PISA, but teachers do not. It would be valuable if teachers begin participating in the teacher questionnaire for PISA, to increase the data and evidence available in Jordan to explore such questions.

Policy recommendations

The National Teacher Survey finds that the teaching profession is not appealing to many prospective or current teachers. This is especially an issue among male teachers, who were generally less satisfied with the profession, reported higher plans on leaving the profession and were not as motivated as their female counterparts. As such, the following policy recommendations are suggested:

- The teaching profession must become more attractive to join and remain in, especially for male teachers, by reshaping the benefits teachers receive or working on career pathways and incentive schemes.
- Increase the prestige and value of the teaching profession in the public eye, through campaigns or public awareness on the importance of teachers in building tomorrow’s generations, as the prestige of the profession has been shown to influence the extent to which candidates are drawn it.\textsuperscript{xxv xxvi}
- Create varied and motivating career paths for teachers that can incentivize them to join and remain in the profession.
- More attention could be paid to teachers’ motivations and reasons for joining the career upon teacher recruitment.
The 2018 National Teacher Survey (NTS) is a comprehensive nationally representative survey, conducted through a partnership between Jordan’s Ministry of Education (MoE) and the Queen Rania Foundation for Education and Development (QRF), with funding from the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (formerly the Department for International Development) and Global Affairs Canada. The survey design and instruments were aligned with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development’s (OECD) Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS), allowing comparisons to be made with other TALIS-participating countries. Approximately half of the questions of the survey were borrowed from the TALIS trend questions. The remainder were tailored to Jordan’s context.

The survey explored Jordanian teachers’ educational backgrounds, experience, training, attitudes, pedagogical practices, challenges and experiences serving refugee students in various contexts. School and classroom climates were also explored. To explore these areas, 5,722 teachers of basic-level education (i.e. grades 1-10) were surveyed, along with their school principals from 361 MoE, private and United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) schools. The sample was specific to the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) level 2 to allow for comparison with TALIS. This was achieved by disaggregating schools into two groups: schools serving grades 1-6 (ISCED level 1) and those serving grades 7-10 (ISCED level 2). The sampling also allowed exploration of teachers serving in various refugee contexts, including Syrian refugee camps, Syrian second shift schools, schools with Syrian refugees integrated in host community classrooms, and UNRWA schools serving Palestine refugee children.


Teacher turnover refers to both teacher attrition; teachers’ plans to leave the profession, and teacher retention; teachers’ plans to leave the school (Liu & Meyer, 2005)


No major differences between grade 1 to 6 and grade 7 to 10 teachers were observed within the different school types (MoE, UNRWA, and private).
Under the teacher licensing bylaw at the time of data collection (October to December 2018), pre-service training included a Bachelor’s in Education, a community college diploma in Education, the UNRWA Institute of Education program, a postgraduate teacher education program or any other teacher education program.


Similar trends were observed among grade 1-6 teachers.

http://dosweb.dos.gov.jo/unemp_q12020/

Similar trends were observed among grade 1-6 teachers.

Similar trends were observed among grade 1-6 teachers.

30% of grade 1-6 teachers were aged 21-30, 47% were aged 31 to 40, while 23% were aged 41 or older.

27% of grade 7-10 teachers were aged 21-30, 48% were aged 31 to 40, while 25% were aged 41 or older.

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30% of grade 1-6 teachers were aged 21-30, 47% were aged 31 to 40, while 23% were aged 41 or older.

27% of grade 7-10 teachers were aged 21-30, 48% were aged 31 to 40, while 25% were aged 41 or older.

Similar trends were observed among grade 1-6 teachers.

Totals exceed 100% as respondents were allowed to select more than one option.


Information regarding the full survey methodology can be found on the QRF website.