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# The role of public school principals and teachers in developing the social responsibility of students with learning disabilities: a joint perspective

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**Introduction:** Public school principals and teachers are crucial in shaping students with learning disabilities to become socially responsible individuals. Beyond academics, educators use adaptive teaching and leadership to instill values of empathy, cooperation, and civic duty in these students, ensuring they can contribute positively to their communities.

**Aim:** The present study aimed to identify the role of government school principals and teachers in developing the social responsibility of students with learning disabilities in the Kasbah of Salt from their viewpoint.

**Method:** A descriptive analytical approach was used, where a random sample was taken from the principals and teachers of some of the Kasbah Al-Salt schools for the primary stage, and thus the sampling unit consisted of (106) principals and teachers, and the scale was used, and it includes (27) items distributed on three dimensions of social responsibility (education, preservation Environment, community service).

**Results:** According to the findings of the study, the degree of social responsibility among students who have learning difficulties is comparable to the average level. However, the study also discovered that there are disparities in the level of social responsibility due to the gender variable, and these differences are in favor of males. In addition, there were no differences that could be considered statistically significant between the levels of social responsibility and the educational level variable.

**Scientific novelty:** The study's novelty lies in its exploration of educators' views on fostering social responsibility in students with learning disabilities in the specific context of the Kasbah of Salt. The research uses a descriptive analytical method, focuses on primary schools in Kasbah Al-Salt, employs the structured Melhem (2018) scale for evaluation, and reveals gender as a significant factor in social responsibility, while educational level is not.

## KEYWORDS

social responsibility, learning disabilities, school principal, cross-sectional study, Jordan, public school

## Introduction

Education is recognized as a fundamental human right and a cornerstone for sustainable development, as emphasized by the United Nations (UN). Over the years, the UN has launched numerous initiatives aimed at enhancing the quality, accessibility, and relevance of education across the globe through its various specialized agencies. Among these efforts, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) stands out. Since its inception in 1945, UNESCO has been a key advocate for education as a means to foster global peace and promote sustainable development. One of the central goals of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Plan is to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" (UNESCO, 2020). This objective is being pursued through UNESCO's Global Education 2030 Agenda.

In addition to the UN's efforts, other international bodies, such as the Council of Europe, have also contributed significantly to the promotion of inclusive education. The Council of Europe, through its Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, promotes education that values diversity and cultural rights (Council of Europe, 1995). Furthermore, the International Association of Universities (IAU) works alongside UNESCO to emphasize the transformative power of research and higher education in fostering peace, collaboration, and global development (International Association of Universities (IAU), 2018).

At the core of sustainable development is the ethical principle of social responsibility. Every individual's actions have direct implications for society, and this principle extends deeply into the realm of education. Educational institutions are not merely tasked with imparting academic knowledge but also with shaping students into socially responsible individuals who contribute positively to society. In particular, schools play a pivotal role in this regard, going beyond the traditional functions of disseminating knowledge to fostering values such as empathy, cooperation, and civic duty among learners.

One pressing challenge within this broader educational goal is the need to foster social responsibility among students with learning disabilities. These students often face unique cognitive and developmental challenges, which may stem from a variety of factors including brain injuries, chemical imbalances, or environmental influences. These difficulties, however, are distinct from intellectual disabilities or sensory impairments (Grigorenko et al., 2020). Students with learning disabilities may struggle with language, literacy, mathematics, or basic cognitive skills such as attention and memory, which further complicates their ability to engage fully in societal and academic responsibilities (Israel et al., 2021; Saloviita, 2020).

The role of educators, particularly school principals and teachers, is crucial in developing the social responsibility of students with learning disabilities. Schools are expected to provide a conducive environment where these students can grow, not only academically but also socially. Educators serve as role models, influencing students through their actions, values, and behaviors. The curriculum plays a vital role, offering students the opportunity to engage in educational activities that foster a sense of responsibility toward family, school, and society at large. Educational institutions must thus ensure that their

curricula include lessons on social responsibility, community service, and environmental stewardship, all of which are critical for students' holistic development (Chen and Liang, 2024; Godefroidt and Langer, 2020; Coelho and Menezes, 2021).

In this context, the present study aims to explore the role of public school principals and teachers in promoting social responsibility among students with learning disabilities in the Kasbah of Salt, Jordan. The study seeks to answer the following key questions:

- 1 What is the current level of social responsibility among students with learning disabilities from the perspective of school principals and teachers?
- 2 Are there significant differences in the perception of social responsibility based on variables such as gender, and educational level?

By addressing these questions, this study contributes to the understanding of how educators can support the development of social responsibility in students with learning disabilities, a group often at risk of social exclusion. The findings will provide insights that may guide future educational strategies and policies aimed at improving the quality of life for students with learning disabilities and ensuring their integration into society.

In this study, the focus is on the significant topic of the social responsibility of public-school principals and teachers toward students with learning disabilities. The research aims to develop a scale to assess the current state of social responsibility within this group, providing a useful tool for educators and decision-makers. This tool can help them understand the role these educators play in supporting students with special needs, who are crucial to the educational process. Additionally, the study contributes to the educational field by offering insights that will help prepare students with learning disabilities for real life. It expands the scientific knowledge of their characteristics at the basic educational stage and provides valuable literature for researchers and scholars to reference, enriching the Arab library with new educational resources.

From a practical perspective, this research highlights important issues for educators and policymakers regarding students with learning disabilities, encouraging the adoption of suitable programs, curricula, and teaching methods to enhance their learning abilities. The study is expected to benefit school principals and teachers by suggesting seminars, courses, and activities that can be implemented in schools that accommodate students with learning disabilities. Moreover, the research aims to offer recommendations for improving the level of social responsibility among educators, supporting their role in fostering the educational development of these students.

## Literature review

### University social responsibility (USR) and social justice

Meikle (2023) examines how universities serve as platforms for advancing social justice through their institutional policies and

practices. The study emphasizes the importance of universities in addressing systemic inequities, providing access to education for underrepresented groups, and fostering a commitment to social justice. Meikle introduces the concept of “start at home,” suggesting that universities should integrate social responsibility within their campus environments. This perspective is crucial for understanding how higher education institutions can be catalysts for societal change. However, the study lacks a detailed examination of how these policies are practically implemented across different types of universities. This raises questions about the consistency of USR practices across global contexts, highlighting the need for more empirical evidence on how universities operationalize these goals.

## Public schools and social responsibility development

[Alsaeed \(2022\)](#) highlights the role of public schools in fostering social responsibility among students, particularly in the areas of family, community, and nation. The study’s descriptive-analytical approach reveals that public schools play a critical role in instilling a sense of responsibility in students, with teachers emphasizing national unity and moral values. However, the study’s reliance on self-reported data from educators may introduce bias, as it does not capture the perspectives of students or external observers. Moreover, while the study identifies barriers to promoting social responsibility, it does not thoroughly address how these challenges can be overcome in diverse educational settings, suggesting an opportunity for further research on intervention strategies.

## School administrators and social responsibility programs

[Doygunel and Koprulu \(2022\)](#) use a qualitative case study approach to explore how social responsibility programs in elementary schools can enhance school communities. Their findings suggest that these programs not only improve academic performance but also foster a sense of responsibility and engagement among students. This research is significant because it links social responsibility initiatives with tangible academic outcomes. However, the study is limited to a small sample size and does not explore the long-term sustainability of these programs. Future research should investigate the scalability of such initiatives and their impact across different educational contexts and school types.

## Social integration and responsibility in classrooms

[Khusheim \(2022\)](#) explores the social integration of students with special needs and how this contributes to their social responsibility. The study found that students with special needs benefited from social interactions, which positively influenced their behavior and social responsibility. The research also identified significant differences based on educators’ qualifications and work experience. This study is valuable in its focus on inclusive education, but it could benefit from a more detailed analysis of how specific teaching practices contribute to social responsibility. Additionally, while the findings are promising,

they are based on a relatively small sample from Saudi Arabia, which may limit their generalizability to other regions or educational systems.

## The impact of university social responsibility on performance

[Latif et al. \(2022\)](#) investigate the relationship between university social responsibility (USR) and university performance (UP), focusing on service quality, student satisfaction, reputation, and trust. The study demonstrates that USR positively impacts UP in Pakistan but not in China, highlighting regional differences in how USR is perceived and implemented. While the research provides valuable insights into the role of USR in higher education, it does not explore the underlying cultural factors that may influence these differences. This points to the need for comparative studies that examine the cultural and institutional contexts shaping USR’s effectiveness in different countries.

## Educator training and social responsibility

[Martínez-Valdivia et al. \(2020\)](#) focuses on how educational crises, such as social, economic, and health challenges, necessitate a greater emphasis on social responsibility in teacher training. The study advocates for incorporating social responsibility into university curricula to better prepare future educators. The findings suggest that training in social responsibility leads to more socially committed professionals. However, the study’s reliance on descriptive quantitative methods limits its ability to explore the deeper mechanisms through which social responsibility training influences long-term professional behavior. Further research is needed to explore how these competencies are translated into real-world educational practices.

## Students as agents of social change

[Fonseca et al. \(2019\)](#) explore the role of students as catalysts for social change, examining their commitment to social responsibility in the context of higher education. The study reveals that students demonstrate a high level of dedication to social responsibility, particularly in professional practice and teamwork. However, the study highlights a gap in students’ commitment to environmental and community service. This suggests a need for educational programs that emphasize the broader dimensions of social responsibility, including environmental stewardship. The findings support the argument for a more holistic approach to social responsibility education that integrates both personal and professional dimensions.

## Social responsibility in Jordanian schools

[Melhem \(2018\)](#) focuses on Jordanian schools and their role in developing students’ social responsibility. The study, conducted in the Ajloun Governorate, found that school principals perceive their institutions as playing a significant role in fostering social responsibility. However, the study does not account for differences across school types, and it focuses exclusively on the perspectives of administrators, potentially overlooking the views of teachers and

students. Future research should adopt a more comprehensive approach that includes multiple stakeholders to gain a fuller understanding of how schools promote social responsibility.

## Social responsibility in Saudi secondary schools

Al Saud (Al Saud, 2014) examines the role of Saudi secondary schools in promoting social responsibility. The study finds that secondary schools play a moderate role in this regard, with no significant differences based on academic specialization or qualifications. While the study provides useful insights, its descriptive approach limits the ability to explore causal relationships between school policies and students' social responsibility development. This suggests a need for more robust, longitudinal studies that can assess the long-term impact of secondary education on students' social values and behaviors.

## Promoting social responsibility through leadership in high schools

Al-Zubaidi (Coelho and Menezes, 2021) proposes strategies for high school principals to enhance social responsibility among students. The study reveals that principals are highly effective in promoting responsibility toward family, school, and community. However, it does not explore how these strategies are implemented in practice, nor does it assess their impact on students' actual behaviors. Future research should focus on evaluating the effectiveness of these leadership strategies in diverse educational environments and assessing their long-term outcomes.

## Social responsibility and disability awareness

Shuaib, Muhammad, and Hammad (Shuaib et al., 2011) explore how social responsibility programs influence attitudes toward people with disabilities. The study finds a positive correlation between social responsibility and disability awareness, suggesting that such programs can effectively change societal perceptions. However, the research is limited by its focus on a specific demographic and does not explore how these programs can be adapted to different educational or cultural contexts. Further studies should examine how these findings can be generalized across broader populations and educational settings.

## Terms of the study conceptually and procedurally

### Social responsibility

It is a person's commitment to others, and acknowledgment of what he does in terms of deeds or sayings, and the results resulting from them (Ahmad et al., 2020). It is operationally defined as the degree to which research participants scored high on a scale measuring (self-) collective (group) moral and religious (community) and national (government) responsibility.

## Students with learning disabilities

According to the definition of the federal government of the United States of America (IDEA): They are students who suffer from a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes that are involved in understanding or using the written or spoken language, which may appear in the inability to listen. Or thinking, speaking, reading, writing, spelling, or arithmetic operations (You et al., 2013).

## Study methodology

### Study design

This study employed a descriptive research design, which is appropriate for identifying and analyzing the role of public school principals and teachers in promoting social responsibility among students with learning disabilities. The descriptive approach allows for the collection and analysis of quantitative data from a representative sample, providing insights into the study's objectives and research questions.

### Study participants

The study population consisted of all directors and teachers of public elementary schools affiliated with the Directorate of Education and Teaching of the Kasbah of Salt in the Balqa Governorate, Jordan. The target population included 13 government schools for males and 11 for females. A random sample of schools was selected based on geographical distribution, comprising 6 male and 5 female schools. The final sample included 11 managers and directors, as well as 104 male and female teachers. After distributing the questionnaires, 106 valid questionnaires were returned and analyzed. The distribution of the study sample is shown in Table 1.

## Instruments

### Social responsibility scale

The instrument used in this study was the Social Responsibility Scale, adapted from Melhem (2018) scale. It consists of 27 items designed to assess social responsibility across three key dimensions: education, preservation of the environment, and community service. Participants responded to the items using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from "strongly agree" (5 points) to "strongly disagree" (1

TABLE 1 Distribution of the study sample according to the actual study sample.

Variables		Actual sample	Percentage
Gender	Male	64	60%
	Female	42	40%
Educational level	Diploma	7	7%
	Bachelor	72	68%
	Postgraduate	27	25%
Total		106	100%

point), with reverse coding applied to negatively worded items. The education dimension includes 12 items, the environmental preservation dimension contains 9 items, and the community service dimension consists of 6 items.

### Validity

The validity of the scale was assessed in three key areas. First, face validity was established by having a panel of experts in special education and educational psychology review the instrument for clarity and relevance of its items. Second, content validity was ensured through feedback from the expert panel, leading to modifications for linguistic accuracy and appropriateness. Six items were reworded to better capture the intended dimensions, and only items that achieved 80% agreement or higher among the reviewers were retained. Finally, construct validity was confirmed by aligning the scale with the theoretical dimensions of social responsibility and referencing its successful application in Melhem's original study.

### Reliability

To assess the reliability of the Social Responsibility Scale, an exploratory sample of 10 principals and teachers from the study population (but not part of the final sample) was used. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated to determine the internal consistency of the scale. The results, as shown in Table 2, indicate high reliability across all dimensions.

The internal consistency coefficients ranged from 0.79 to 0.84, with a total reliability coefficient of 0.81, indicating acceptable reliability for use in this study.

## Statistical analysis

The data collected from the questionnaires were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), employing several statistical methods. First, descriptive statistics, including percentages, arithmetic means, and standard deviations, were calculated to describe the demographic characteristics of the participants and their responses to the social responsibility scale. Next, the Pearson correlation coefficient test was used to assess relationships between the various dimensions of social responsibility and demographic variables such as gender and educational level. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was then applied to examine differences in social responsibility scores based on demographic factors. Finally, Cronbach's alpha was used to assess the reliability of the scale and its subdimensions. This comprehensive approach ensured that the study's findings were both robust and reliable, offering valuable insights into

TABLE 2 The value and dimensions of the stability coefficient of internal consistency using the Alpha Cronbach equation for social responsibility.

Social responsibility	The current study	Melhem study
Education	0,79	0,80
The preservation of the environment	0,82	0,90
Local community service	0,84	0,88
Total social responsibility	0,81	0,89

the role of educators in promoting social responsibility among students with learning disabilities.

## Results

### Social responsibility of public-school principals and teachers toward students with learning disabilities

To address the first research question, the arithmetic averages and standard deviations for each dimension of social responsibility were calculated from the responses of the study participants. Table 3 presents the results for the three dimensions: education, preservation of the environment, and community service.

### Differences in social responsibility based on gender, and educational level

To answer the second research question, arithmetic averages and standard deviations were calculated for the variables of gender and educational level to assess their relationship with social responsibility. Table 4 presents the findings for these variables.

To confirm the statistical significance of these differences, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted. Table 5 presents the results of the variance analysis.

## Discussion of the results

The primary aim of this study was to explore the role of public school principals and teachers in developing the social responsibility of students with learning disabilities in the Kasbah of Salt, Jordan. The study also sought to assess whether there were significant differences in social responsibility based on variables such as gender, and educational level. Through a descriptive approach and analysis of the responses from educators, this research aimed to provide valuable insights into how schools contribute to fostering social responsibility in students with learning challenges.

The results of the study revealed that, overall, the level of social responsibility among public school principals and teachers in the Kasbah of Salt was moderate. Of the three dimensions examined—education, local community service, and environmental

TABLE 3 Arithmetic averages and standard deviations of the social responsibility dimensions.

Dimensions	Arithmetic average	Standard deviation	Rank	Level
Education	3.11	0.61	1	Average
Preservation of the environment	2.92	0.49	3	Average
Local community service	2.95	0.52	2	Average
Total social responsibility	3.01	0.41		Average

preservation—education was rated as the most important. This suggests that educators prioritize the academic and moral development of students with learning disabilities over other aspects of social responsibility, such as community engagement or environmental awareness. This finding aligns with the cultural and religious context of the region, where education is often viewed as a critical pathway to moral and intellectual growth.

The study’s results also highlight the role of cultural and religious factors in shaping educators’ attitudes toward social responsibility. Islamic principles, which emphasize moral conduct and communal responsibility, likely play a significant role in guiding educators’ approaches to instilling social responsibility in their students. The strong influence of these values suggests that educational interventions designed to enhance social responsibility should be culturally sensitive and aligned with the values of the local community. Future research could investigate how specific cultural values influence the development of social responsibility in students with learning disabilities.

A key finding of this study is the difference in attitudes toward social responsibility between male and female educators. Male educators were found to place slightly more importance on social responsibility than their female counterparts. This result might be attributed to differences in social roles and expectations between men and women in the region, with men potentially feeling more accountable for instilling communal values. However, the differences were relatively minor, indicating that both genders share a strong commitment to promoting social responsibility in their students. Further research could explore these gender differences in more detail, particularly in different educational and cultural contexts.

The study also found that educational level had a significant impact on the perceptions of social responsibility. Teachers with bachelor’s degrees showed the highest levels of social responsibility, followed by those with postgraduate degrees, and finally, those with diplomas. This suggests that higher education may equip teachers with a broader understanding of social issues and a stronger commitment

to fostering responsibility in students. However, the lack of significant differences between these groups suggests that factors other than educational attainment—such as personal values or professional development opportunities—may also play a role.

Despite the overall positive role of educators in promoting social responsibility, the study highlights certain limitations in their approach. For instance, the emphasis on education over other dimensions, such as community service and environmental preservation, suggests that more holistic approaches to social responsibility may be needed. Schools could benefit from integrating community-based projects or environmental initiatives into their curricula to provide students with a more well-rounded understanding of social responsibility. Such initiatives would help students with learning disabilities to apply their academic knowledge in real-world contexts.

### Study limitations

One limitation of this study is the use of self-reported data from educators, which may introduce bias. Educators might overestimate their efforts or the effectiveness of their programs in promoting social responsibility. Future studies should consider incorporating student perspectives or external evaluations to gain a more objective understanding of how well social responsibility is being fostered in schools. Additionally, the sample was limited to schools in the Kasbah of Salt, which may not be representative of other regions in Jordan or beyond. Further research could expand the geographical scope to include rural and urban schools across the country.

Another limitation is that the study focused solely on public schools, which may have different resources and priorities compared to private institutions. The inclusion of private schools in future studies would provide a more comprehensive view of how different types of schools approach the development of social responsibility in students with learning disabilities. Moreover, the study did not examine how specific teaching practices or curricula contribute to the development of social responsibility, an area that warrants further exploration.

TABLE 4 Arithmetic averages of the dimensions of the variable of gender and educational level.

Variables	Number	Arithmetic average	Standard deviation	Rank
Gender				
Male	64	3.98	0.42	1
Female	42	3.90	0.44	2
Educational level				
Diploma	7	3.26	0.46	3
Bachelor	72	3.95	0.76	1
Postgraduate	27	3.66	0.63	2

### Conclusion

In conclusion, this study highlights the critical role public school principals and teachers play in fostering social responsibility among students with learning disabilities. While the findings indicate that educators are largely focused on academic instruction, there is significant potential to enhance social responsibility in areas such as community service and environmental stewardship. This underscores the importance of integrating broader social responsibility frameworks into educational curricula.

For policymakers, particularly in Salt schools and other regions of Jordan, this study provides valuable insights. It suggests the need for

TABLE 5 Results of the binary variance analysis of the differences in the level of social responsibility of the study sample according to gender and educational level.

Social responsibility	Sum of squares	Degrees of freedom	Mean square	F value	p-value
Gender	1.466	1	0.366	0.197	0.037
Educational level	0.467	2	0.156	0.862	0.461

policies that encourage the development of comprehensive social responsibility programs tailored to the needs of students with learning disabilities. Policymakers can leverage these findings to implement strategies that promote inclusive education, encourage community involvement, and support environmental initiatives within schools. Additionally, professional development programs for teachers and school leaders should emphasize the importance of these broader aspects of social responsibility, ensuring that educators are equipped with the necessary tools to foster holistic development in their students.

The study's limitations point to the need for future research to expand its scope by using more diverse methodologies and larger, more varied samples. This will help create a fuller understanding of how social responsibility can be nurtured effectively in educational settings, ensuring that policies are both evidence-based and aligned with the evolving needs of students with learning disabilities.

## Recommendations

- 1 Implementing a set of volunteer activities, whether at the school level or at the community level, because of their clear impact on promoting social responsibility.
- 2 Awareness of the importance of the environment and its preservation by students with learning disabilities, and the inclusion of values and trends of social responsibility in school curricula to increase the level of student awareness.
- 3 Conducting more studies and research to identify the most important behavioral problems associated with students with learning disabilities and their effects on social responsibility.
- 4 Developing specialized training programs to develop a sense of social responsibility among students with learning disabilities.

## Data availability statement

The raw data supporting the conclusions of this article will be made available by the authors, without undue reservation.

## Ethics statement

The studies involving humans were approved by the IRB-committee at AL-Balqa Applied University. The studies were conducted in

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## Author contributions

KA: Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal analysis, Funding acquisition, Investigation, Methodology, Project administration, Resources, Software, Supervision, Validation, Visualization, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing. AA: Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal analysis, Funding acquisition, Investigation, Methodology, Project administration, Resources, Software, Supervision, Validation, Visualization, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing. OA-S: Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal analysis, Funding acquisition, Investigation, Methodology, Project administration, Resources, Software, Supervision, Validation, Visualization, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing. SA: Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal analysis, Funding acquisition, Investigation, Methodology, Project administration, Resources, Software, Supervision, Validation, Visualization, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing.

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