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What Kind of Support Do New Special Education Teachers in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Need?

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WHAT KIND OF SUPPORT DO NEW SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS IN THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA NEED?

by

Abdulhakeem M. Almoneef

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate College
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
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August 2020

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WHAT KIND OF SUPPORT DO NEW SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS IN THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA NEED?

Abdulhakeem M. Almoneef, Ph.D.

Western Michigan University, 2020

The purpose of this research was to explore the challenges faced by new special education teachers of hearing impaired students in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the support they identified that they would like to receive during the first years of their teaching experience. Exploring the concerns of special education teachers of hearing impaired students in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is an important step in determining how these concerns may be addressed in order to improve instruction for deaf and hearing impaired students. The identification of the challenges and desires of new special education teachers of deaf and hearing impaired students in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was investigated using a qualitative, phenomenological research approach. Qualitative, phenomenological research allows a researcher to discover and understand in greater depth a specific phenomenon related to the life experience of an individual or a group of people (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Data collected by interviewing special education teachers of hearing impaired students obtain deeper information regarding their concepts, perspectives, and concerns on the challenges they have faced and the support they have been given during their teaching career. This will be

compared with what the literature related to effective support for new teachers around the world. The findings from this study may provide important information that can be used for the collaborative development of support activities or induction programs by universities, school administration, and school leaders to support and develop special education teachers of deaf and hearing impaired students throughout Saudi Arabia. The literature indicates that with appropriate induction and support, the teachers will be less anxious in meeting the challenges of special education students which can ensure that they will provide deaf and hearing impaired students with the appropriate teaching and education service.

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Abdulhakeem Mohammed Almoneef

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION-BACKGROUND

Beginning a career in education can be a daunting experience, but beginning a career as a special education professional brings on added difficulties. New teachers, those in their first years of teaching, have voiced the problems they faced as they entered the teaching force (Sweigart & Collins, 2017). These problems focus around learning about the expectations of their new school, locating materials that are required for their classes, creating engaging lessons that can reduce negative student behaviors, and learning to work with a myriad of support specialists who focus on the special needs of the students in the new teacher's classrooms (Cutler, 2014; Ferry, 2012). This is especially true of special education teachers of hearing impairments who are expected to have a large toolbox of skills, strategies and materials related to identifying the needs of special needs students and addressing these needs (Billingsley, 2004).

Support Needs of Teachers

Previously, researchers have investigated the needs for support of general education teachers in order to assist them in expanding their teaching abilities and encourage them to stay in the teaching field (Murry & Alqahtani, 2015), but recently, researchers have focused on support for special education teachers (Billingsley et al., 2009; Vasilis & Magda et al., 2012). Billingsley et al. (2009) identified problems faced by first-year special education teachers. The problems identified for new special education teachers of hearing impairments are related not

Only to teach but also to other requirements for the special needs population. First, there is applying what they learned in their pre-service programs to the classroom without losing their excitement for teaching. In addition, there are layers of paperwork that must be completed and followed which require learning how to collaborate with classroom teachers, specialists and other special education staff members. Moreover, all new teachers have to be ready to address new educational standards and new generations of students who have different capacities for learning and levels of expectations. Assessing students and identifying gaps in knowledge and skills that match a student's learning needs consume the time of special education teachers of hearing impairments (Vannest & Hagan-Burke, 2010). Finally, many schools do not have an on-going support system for the new special educators so they can concentrate on best teaching practices for special needs students while building a support network so their students' learning goals can be accomplished (Duffy & Forgan, 2005).

Special Education Teachers of the Deaf and Hearing Impaired in Saudi Arabia

Even with the research regarding new teachers' needs during their first years of teaching, there is relatively little information is available regarding the needs of support for new special education teachers of deaf and hearing impaired students in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Currently, all public-school teachers are negotiating through change in Saudi Arabia, but special education teachers are faced with additional challenges when working with special needs students (Billingsley, 2004). Saudi Arabian special education has been going through transitions, and special education teachers have not only become more responsible for improving their knowledge and skills to better serve students with special needs, but also for identifying how the changes in the system are affecting their work (Aldabas, 2015).

The regular public school system run by the Ministry of Education (MoE), has been evaluating the effectiveness of its outcomes and methods (Bingimlas, 2018). The government has expanded the choices of schools from public, private and international to include some specialized public schools. These specialized schools may be for highly gifted and talented students or for special needs students. Additionally, in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, there are special education institutes that focus on students with specific needs such as deaf and hearing impaired students, severely cognitively impaired students, or emotionally impaired students (Aldabas, 2015).

With the increase in the number of schools, there is a need for additional teachers who can work with the students who require more help and support and for special education classes for students with mild to severe cognitive and/or physical needs (Alanazi, 2012; Aldabas, 2015). Within each special education institute, the teachers have students with diverse abilities. One of the basic issues when addressing the needs of the students is the level of training that teachers have received before entering the institutes. Some teachers come right from the universities with only basic training in special education while other teachers decide to transfer from general education to a special education setting. After attaining their special education certificate, the newly certified teachers return to teaching but in a special education setting (Murry & Alqahtani, 2015). The problem arises because all new teachers in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, as in other places, have limited knowledge, pedagogy and experience in working with special needs students (Bingimlas, 2018). To expand their knowledge and skills, they require additional support in their first years of teaching so they can better meet the needs of the population they teach by using the appropriate teaching strategies and resources while building an understanding of the rules and procedures of the education system (Murry & Alqahtani, 2015).

Problem Statement

Though these teachers often have many questions and need guidance through their first years in the classroom, there is no official procedure for ongoing support to give them the assistance they may need or want. Each school has its own procedures for orienting a new teacher and deciding what types of support and training to offer. Some assistance begins at the time a teacher is hired and continues through their first years of teaching. At the current time, responsibility for the support and guidance of new special education teachers of hearing impairments in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is provided by educational leaders called regional supervisors with some support given by more experienced teachers, but little support is given by the principal or administration of the deaf institutes or public schools that have programs for the hearing impaired, but not deaf students.

Because there are no specific recommendations for orientation and support of new special education teachers of the deaf and hearing impaired students and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is going through education reforms, this is an excellent time to evaluate the needs of special education teachers of the deaf and hearing impaired in order to inform the development of best-practice orientation and support programs that would benefit special education teachers of the hearing impaired from the start and across their teaching careers in order to meet the new vision of Saudi Arabia 2030. It is anticipated that such knowledge will help to focus the development of education services and employees' performance in a way that will help increase teacher effectiveness and encourage them to continue in this profession.

Significance of the Study

The purpose of this study is to provide educational leaders of special education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia with data drawn from special education teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing regarding the need and importance of providing on-going support to new teachers,

especially those assigned to special education deaf and hearing impaired institutions and school settings. This data can be used to provide valuable information to the Ministry of Education, universities, the General Directorate for Special Education, Special Education Departments under all education agencies, school administrators, and district supervisors for the development of teacher induction programs. It is believed that the development of induction programs will make it possible to support new teachers from their first critical days of teaching through their first three to five years. Such programs will help to ensure that new teachers have the proper support, feel more confident about teaching special needs students, and provide continued guidance for special education teachers of the hearing impaired, while ensuring that they are qualified to meet deaf and hearing impaired students' needs for learning.

Purpose Statement and Research Questions

The purpose of this research was to explore the challenges faced by special education teachers of the hearing impaired in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and identified the support they would like to receive during the first five years of their teaching experience. Exploring the concerns of special education teachers of the hearing impaired in Saudi Arabia is an important step in determining how teacher concerns may be addressed in order to improve instruction for the deaf and hearing impaired students. The identification of the needs for support of these special education teachers in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia investigated using a qualitative, phenomenological research approach because qualitative, phenomenological research allows a researcher to discover and understand in greater depth a specific phenomenon related to a life experience of an individual or a group of people (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Data was collected by interviewing special education teachers of the deaf and hearing impaired to obtain deep information regarding their concepts, perspectives, and concerns about the challenges they have faced and the support they had in their first ten years of teaching. This

was compared with what the literature says about effective support for their counterparts around the world. The findings from this study may provide important information that may be used for the collaborative development of activities or induction programs by universities, school administration and school leaders to support and retain special education teachers of the hearing impaired throughout Saudi Arabia. The researcher believes that with appropriate induction and support special education teachers of the hearing impaired will be more excited to continue working in their special education classrooms and will ensure that they will provide deaf and hearing impaired students with appropriate services.

Research Question and Sub-questions

This study will address the research question: What types of professional support do special education teachers of deaf and hearing impaired students in of Saudi Arabia need so they can better support students with special needs and be motivated to continue teaching hearing impaired students? This question will be addressed by exploring three factors: (1) the nature of the current challenges faced by special education teachers of deaf and hearing impaired students (“NEEDS”); (2) the types of support desired by special education teachers of deaf and hearing impaired students (“WANTS”), and (3) the nature of the support services that are being provided to teachers (“CURRENT SUPPORT”).

Overarching Research Question

What types of professional support do special education teachers of deaf and hearing impaired students in Saudi Arabia need so they can better support students with special needs and continue to be motivated to meet student needs and provide them appropriate services?

Sub question (1) (Needs of Support): What knowledge, skills, and experiences do teachers believe they need in order to meet the challenges when working with deaf or

hard of hearing students?

Sub question (2) (Wants of Support): What types of professional support and/or services would special education teachers in Saudi Arabia like to receive in order to better support students with special needs?

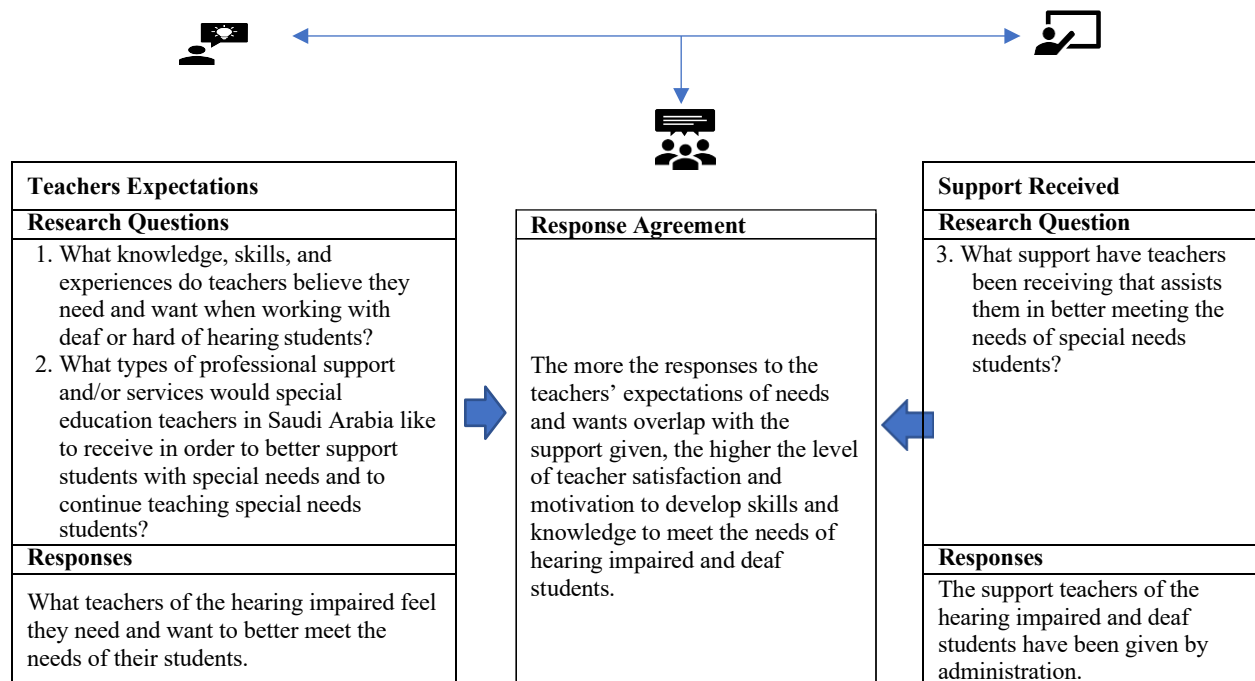
Sub question (3) (Current Support): What support have teachers been receiving that assists them in better meeting the needs of special needs students?

Sub question (4) (Satisfaction; Better Instruction): If the perceived needs and wants of teachers better align with the support given by supervisors, school administrators and experienced colleagues, would more teachers of the deaf and hearing impaired feel they are better able to meet the needs of their students?

Conceptual Framework Narrative

A conceptual framework clarifies what the researcher expects to find in the research and how the variables relate to each other. Also, the conceptual framework assists the researcher in testing, reviewing, and exploring the hypotheses (Swaen, 2019). The framework for this study demonstrates the expectations and the prospective of special education teachers of deaf and hearing impaired students (on the left) and the support they received (on the right). The Response Agreement contains the teachers' responses related to their perceived needs and wants or expectations that match the support the teachers were given either when they started their jobs or during their early years of teaching. The theory is that when the needs and wants of special education teachers of deaf and hard of hearing are met, their satisfaction and motivation for teaching increases as do their teaching skills and knowledge related to their special needs students.

Figure 1: Theory of Action based on Conceptual Framework



The underlying theoretical framework that informs the concept of the support needed and wanted by teachers is that the relationship between teachers and administrations will influence a school's environment and student outcomes. Research demonstrates that the relation between administration and teachers affects satisfaction, cohesion, and commitment levels (Price, 2012). Ideally, schools should work with teachers as a team, sharing the school vision, giving teachers opportunities to share their needs and wants, and clarifying everyone's roles and responsibilities. Each school should set an ongoing schedule of meetings to ensure that special education teachers of deaf and hearing impaired students are being provided an appropriate curriculum to each student according to his/her special needs. In addition, the school should take a team approach with teachers to enhance special education knowledge and skills that improve student outcomes and increase teacher satisfaction (Hussu & Strle, 2010).

The school should be skilled in involving teachers and supervisors in a system that allows them to share their expectations so they create an effective learning environment for students with special needs while ensuring that teachers will have the appropriate support to implement a high-quality teaching/learning cycle. Open conversation and sharing ideas are important as a base of successful improvement for teachers and schools (Israel et al., 2013). The main idea of an open learning environment for adults and students is not only to meet academic goals but also to facilitate the adoption of new strategies and techniques that support teachers in becoming more knowledgeable and skillful at addressing student learning needs. In order to develop a positive effect on teachers' skills and knowledge, the conversations between teachers and supervisors should focus on the strengths and weaknesses of students and then on what teachers need in order to continually move the special needs students to higher academic and social levels (Capko, 2003; Meador, 2018).

Special education teachers of deaf and hearing impaired students have expectations regarding the support they would like to actually receive from a school's administration, district supervisors, and colleagues. This support may be related to learning about the school and community, the organization of the building, the materials available, assessments the students are expected to pass, and the paperwork process for special education students. These teachers should have a process for meeting their needs and building motivation to improve their skills and knowledge. The process should focus on creating teams with experienced and special education teachers to ensure that everyone progresses each year. By ensuring that special education teachers of deaf and hearing impaired students have their needs and wants met, they will have more tools and be more motivated to provide special needs students with appropriate learning programs (Majed, 2015). When special education teachers of deaf and hearing impaired students share their needs and wants, they become more engaged and the school will have an environment that positively impacts special needs students' achievements. This research is to identify the support teachers need and want while understanding their perceptions of the current support they receive. It is believed that the more teachers feel comfortable sharing their needs and wants and find that those needs and wants are being met, the more likely teachers will feel satisfied and motivated to ensure that the special academic and social goals of deaf and hearing impaired students will be met at the highest possible level.

Methods Overview

In order to examine the support that special education teachers of deaf and hearing impaired students need and want, qualitative research was implemented. To be more precise, phenomenological research designed was implemented. This design utilized an exploratory approach by conducting semi-structured interviews. These interviews used a sample of ten special

education teachers of deaf and hearing impaired students in the Saudi Arabia. Each teacher was teaching in a special education environment that required teaching deaf or hearing impaired students, and they reflected back on their first days and years of teaching in a special education setting. The settings included an institute for the deaf and profound hearing impaired and a public elementary school that offered programs for the hearing impaired students. The research process was approved by the Human Subject Institutional Review Board (HSIRB) because of interactions with human participants.

Data during interviews was collected using audio technology and translated using Google translation from Arabic to English, but because the translation was not always accurate, the researcher did an additional translation check. The final translation was checked for accuracy by two Arabic/English colleagues. The transcriptions of the translated text of each participant was analyzed to identify themes, sub-themes and elements during a first and second cycle coding process. Individual case analysis was followed by a cross-case analysis to identify similarities in themes, sub-themes and elements to determine the commonalities of the participants and their perceptions of the support they had been given. From this cross-case analysis, a determination was made concerning whether, or not, the overarching and sub-questions had been answered and to determine implications for the future.

Chapter 1: Summary

The support and guidance given teachers to provide direction to cope with the challenges teaching can ensure success for the teachers and their students. In Saudi Arabia, every school has its own procedures to orient new teachers. Therefore, school administration determines the kind of support and training teachers receive. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to provide educational stakeholders with significant information regarding the needs and wants of teachers and the importance of enhancing orientation support given newly hired special education teachers of the deaf and hearing impaired. The major interest of the current research is exploring challenges experienced by these specialized teachers in Saudi Arabia and determining the best practices that will improve teaching and learning of the deaf and hearing impaired students.

This particular research aims at identifying the kinds of support newly employed special education teachers of deaf and hearing impaired students need when beginning their teaching service. Numerous researchers have conducted significant studies on support for general education teachers with the aim of assisting them not only to expand their teaching abilities but also to encourage them to stay in the teaching field. Despite the large volume of previously published studies supporting teachers, there is little information in the existing literature regarding the needs of the special education teachers of deaf and hearing impaired students in Saudi Arabia. In the next chapter, several studies published previously on different aspects of the research topic will be reviewed. The findings of the reviewed studies will be used to elaborate on the stated research problems that the current study is aiming to investigate.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEWS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION BACKGROUND IN SAUDI ARABIA

Country's Philosophy

Saudi Arabia established the Ministry of Education (MoE) in 1953 when massive movements in education in the country took place in the same year. Special Education in Saudi Arabia started when a group of blind people became excited to learn to read in Braille and encouraged policymakers in education to offer Braille formally in school in order for them to continue their education. Afterwards, educational leaders in the country created the first institutes and colleges that offered evening classes for the blind. In addition, in 1957 a school in Riyadh offered 3- to 4-hour classes during the day and evening to train blind people to use Braille. In 1958, the MoE offered the first official afterschool classes in Braille in Riyadh. In 1960, the MoE established the Al-Noor Institute for training and education of the blind, the first official special education program for blind students in the country. An Iraqi professor trained special education teachers in Braille to service the blind students at the Institute (Alshahrani, 2014).

In 1962, the MoE established the Department of Special Education to serve three types of disabilities: visual, hearing, and mental. The role of this department was to ensure that people with these disabilities received rehabilitation services. When the Department of Special Education began, the MoE established three Special Education institutes in different cities based on the number of students with special needs. At this time, MoE required that Special Education teachers teach the same general education curriculum goals to hearing impaired students but allowed the teachers to create special curricula to meet the specific needs of their students. This

included extending the services to the blind, which addressed students with visual disabilities. In 1964, the first institute for deaf children was opened in Riyadh with residential facilities to serve deaf and hearing-impaired students. However, it was not until 1997 that the Department of Special Education changed its philosophy and began providing early intervention services for students with hearing impairments (Alquraini, 2014). This new way of thinking encouraged earlier assessment to diagnose students with a wider variety of needs and then provide programs to meet these needs (Alquraini, 2014).

Also, in 1997, the Department expanded its services to serve more students with special needs, such as autism, physical disabilities, as well as other disabilities. The MoE asked the Department of Special Education and the Special Education professors at King Saud University, who had earned their degrees from the United States, to review American Special Education policies that were included in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in order to develop appropriate policies for Special Education in Saudi Arabia (Alquraini, 2014). IDEA is the 1975 American federal law that protects the rights of people with disabilities in public education institutions and has had several updates and developments. In 2002, IDEA was aligned with another law called No Child Left Behind (NCLB), which is related to education for all children in the entire primary and secondary education system. Today, IDEA and NCLB laws are applied collaboratively to ensure that children with disabilities receive quality services, education, and teachers to maintain a high quality of life (Cortiella, 2006).

In 2006, qualified general education teachers with bachelor's degrees in one of three fields—math, Arabic (language), and science began to be trained in special education to teach deaf and hearing-impaired students in different grade levels from the elementary to high school levels. To become special education teachers, the general education teachers had to satisfy four requirements: 1) achieve a high diploma (i.e. 32 credit hours) in Special Education in hearing disability; 2) pass written exams; 3) have a personal interview; and 4) have a clear record with no penalties of any kind in the last three years (Alshahrani, 2014).

Special Education Laws in Saudi Arabia

In 2001, the Ministry of Education established the first Regulations of Special Education Programs and Institutes (RSEPI), which was the result of collaborative work between the MoE and special education professors at King Saud University. This led to the creation of Law Number 224 that secured rights for children with disabilities to have appropriate services and education (Murry et al., 2015). After reviewing the United States' special education policies, the Department of Special Education expanded its services through the RSEPI to include ten categories related to: hearing, visual, intellectual and learning disabilities, gifted and talented abilities, autism, multiple disabilities, physical and health impairment, communication disorders, and emotional and behavioral disorders. In addition, when the Department of Special Education expanded its services to these ten categories, the RSEPI emphasized having a multidisciplinary team to ensure that children with special needs would be assessed and receive the proper diagnosis for appropriate special education services to be provided. At this time, the RSEPI described an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for students to improve their skills to be at the same level as their classmates (Alquraini, 2014). The multidisciplinary team would consist of a

special education teacher, general education teacher, psychologist, parents, and any specialists needed to complete the process.

The MoE in Saudi Arabia is responsible for improving special education services by establishing regulations that ensure a comprehensive education system for all students to have full rights to live an independent and safe life. Also, all regulations have been written to ensure that students with special needs have qualified teachers who are able to give them an appropriate education and ensure their equal rights. Under the RSEPI, students with special needs now have free services from the government, such as early intervention services, school programs, and transition services that are to be implemented by personnel trained in special education. These new policies mean that more teachers and a multidisciplinary team must be trained to assess, diagnose and teach a wider variety of special needs students (Alquraini, 2013). In addition, according to the King Salman Center for Disability Research (KSCDR), students who are deaf or hard of hearing would have full rights to receive appropriate services that can follow them through all education levels beginning in pre-school through grade 12 and include higher and vocational education. This would ensure a higher quality of life so that people with disabilities can contribute to their families and communities (KSCDR, 2019).

The MoE in Saudi Arabia has laws and guidelines that are similar to those provided by the United States' IDEA. These guidelines emphasize providing preparation programs for special education specialists who are part of a multi-disciplinary team. This is to ensure that the specialists are knowledgeable and qualified in giving services beyond teaching that are legal and accurate. Along with the specification of special needs categories in 2001, Law Number 224 indicated that trained specialists would implement special education with early services and interventions such as diagnosis and education programs. In addition, special education

professionals would receive the appropriate training through high quality special education programs, such as teacher and parent preparation guidelines so that students with special needs would be served properly. The special education regulations in Saudi Arabia provide early family services from birth that include physical and social services to create special education programs that meet a child's disability needs (Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia, 2020). Included in Law 224 is the belief that the special education teachers and specialists of the hearing impaired in Saudi Arabia must be aware of the laws and policies that require universities to offer pre-service programs that support staff members so all students with disabilities are given appropriate special education services (Aldabas, 2015; Alqahtani, 2015; Murry & Alqahtani, 2015).

Special Education System in Saudi Arabia

The education system in Saudi Arabia has shown huge progress in improving the Special Education system since 1958 when services were first established for adults with disabilities. Previously, Saudi Arabia did not have any type of services for other categories of disabilities than visual impairments (Alquraini, 2014). The services were held after school in Riyadh, the capital city of Saudi Arabia, until 1960 when the Ministry of Education established the Al-Noor Institute to serve only visual impairments (Aldabas, 2015). In 1962, the education system established the Special Education Department to extend the services to create institutes for not only visual impairment but also for other disabilities, such as hearing impairment. The Special Education system showed significant development in providing services from 1987 to 2000 when the government established the disability law to ensure that each person with a disability would have the rights to appropriate and free rehabilitation and educational and mental health services offered in public organizations. Special Education in Saudi Arabia has two types of

services for disabilities: institutes for those with high levels of disabilities and special education programs in public schools in inclusive schools (Aldabas, 2015).

In 1997, the Special Education Department extended the services for early assessment of children with disabilities, such as students with physical, learning, and multiple disabilities, and autism (Aldabas, 2015). As mentioned previously, in 2001, the Special Education Department in Saudi Arabia collaborated with the United States to make laws for eligibility for Special Education policy in order to provide high-quality services such as transition education and associated services, early intervention programs, and individual educational programs, as well as appropriate and free special education for any disabilities (Aldabas, 2015). However, children with disabilities in Saudi Arabia do not have enough services to support their needs, and parents struggle with health care and support to meet the needs of their children's disabilities. The services must support the ten types of disabilities that were identified in 2001 by the Regulations of Special Education Policies (RSEPI) and the United States Special Education policies, including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). However, there are many researchers who have reported that Special Education centers and institutes lack medical health care, physical therapy, speech and language therapy, psychological school counseling, and social services (Alquraini, 2014). There is a lack of professionalism in public services, but Saudi Arabia has expensive private services for parents to use for their children, especially for families who live in Riyadh where they can have professional services in Sultan Bin Abdulaziz Humanitarian City, a non-profit charity organization. On the other hand, Saudi Arabia has shown improvement in serving children with disabilities since Special Education policies were established.

The improvement presents itself in serving mild and moderate disabilities. Special Education services have been extended to children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and emotional and behavioral disorders to meet their special needs in public schools and provide support for them. However, Saudi Arabia has a lack of special education services that should be offered because these services can affect the students with special needs in starting their school so having more professional services in Saudi Arabia could decrease teachers' challenges and difficulties in dealing with special education students additionally, they need to increase the number of specialists who can work in related services, such as transition, vocational, and multidisciplinary team services (Murry, & Alqahtani, 2015). Special Education centers and institutes in Saudi Arabia should have all services for all types of professional development programs related to children with disabilities, in order to keep the continuance of support to improve special education early intervention services by the inclusion of services for each child from early childhood (Alquraini, 2014). These services could provide specialists with information that would help them offer more effective preservice for children before entering school, during school years, and after graduation (Aldabas, 2015). The center should have all ten departments: hearing, visual, intellectual and learning disabilities (LD), gifted and talented abilities, autism, and individual planning for special cases like students with psychological and multiple disabilities. In addition, the center should have experienced faculty members who observe classrooms and collect and analyze the data to keep improving special education services. Moreover, the center could include preparation of general education teachers for any transition students with special needs, so the schools can be inclusive schools that support students with special needs and provide equal education for all (Aldabas, 2015).

Hearing Impairments Identification Services

The MoE in Saudi Arabia applies special education laws, similar to those in the United States. Identification for early intervention is an important part of IDEA legislation and statutes (Murry, et al 2015). In 2004, the United States passed a law, No Child Left Behind (NCLB), which ensures that children with disabilities have fair, equal, and significant opportunity services that give them a high quality of education and enable them to reach the minimum of the academic standards (Cortiella, 2006). Saudi Arabia has a similar law to this one which is Law Number 224 that was established in 2001. All early services and intervention services must be accurate in order to ensure that hearing-impaired children receive appropriate services and support before entering K-12 schools (Alquraini, 2014). Special education in Saudi Arabia provides early intervention with five services for children with disabilities: special education services, health care services, psychology services, family services, and social services from birth. The services are provided within the Support Special Education Services Center such as the Prince Sultan Center for Special Education Support Services in Riyadh (Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia, 2020)

A child's hearing impairment can be determined within the first year of life through early intervention development or newborn and infant hearing screening (NHS) (Alyami, Soer, Swanepoel, & Pottas, 2016). For example, evaluating and diagnosing a child with a hearing impairment could be accomplished during the first five weeks of life in order to create an educational program for the child and his/her parents. A study conducted in Saudi Arabia indicated that children with hearing impairment identified before six months of age with early intervention showed significantly better language abilities than those who were identified through early intervention later in their youth. However, early identification and intervention in

Saudi Arabia are not implemented in the same manner as the Special Education laws and policies of IDEA in the U.S. (Alyami, Soer, Swanepoel, & Pottas, 2016). In the United States there is a good reduction in on providing early services such as Early Hearing Detection and Intervention EHDI that was established in 2001 as a part of public health system in the all states of USA. (White, et al., 2010).

Early identification and intervention in Saudi Arabia lack trained professionals who can assess and diagnose infants with hearing impairments. This in turn affects the family support of deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) children as they prepare to enter an institute or public school. (Aldabas. 2015). Also, studies conducted in Saudi Arabia have examined five types of special education services: early identification, hearing technology, communication, educational options, and social support (Murry et al., 2015). These studies show that the majority of parents do not receive the five types of services identified as necessary during a child's early years, and not all types of services are available in Saudi Arabia. Hearing-impaired students who did not receive identification services, such as early diagnosis during the first year of birth, related to early interventions for speech-language and academic skills are below the average of hearing-impaired students who had been identified early (Alqahtani, 2017). Hearing-impaired children need NHS as soon as possible because this can ensure early diagnosis and affect language and other essential skills. The problem is that NHS technology is limited to hospitals in Saudi Arabia, which means deaf and hearing impaired children who live outside urban areas will not receive an early diagnosis or support for their parents (Alyami, Soer, Swanepoel, & Pottas, 2016). However, in 2016, the Ministry of Health in Saudi Arabia established the first phase of National Newborn and Infant Hearing Screening service for all hospitals and care centers. Prior to that,

the service was limited to only main military medical centers, specialized pediatric centers, and some private hospitals (Alshawhi Y A, Al-Gazlan N, Alrawaf F, et al. , 2019).

Hearing Impairments Intervention Services

After children with hearing impairments have undergone identification services with early intervention, they and their parents can find educational programs to meet their needs through inclusive and appropriate services, especially for parents who need professional programs to help them adapt to new experiences associated with hearing-impaired children. The programs should include parents working with a multidisciplinary team, a professional psychologist to support their emotional issues, and programs that teach parents how to deal with deaf children using effective techniques such as sign language to ensure that each child has the proper support from his/her first day of life (Alqahtani, 2017).

Each institute for the hearing-impaired in Saudi Arabia offers early interventions as well as other services to diagnose children with hearing impairments before they begin their preschool education and before a multidisciplinary team completes the diagnosis. However, there is a lack of multidisciplinary team members in each deaf institute, so Special Education personnel give an IQ test to the students with some observations to determine if the student with hearing impairment will continue in an institute for the deaf or in a hearing-impaired program in a public elementary school that is prepared to meet the student's needs (Alquraini, 2011). According to his article "Special Education In Saudi Arabia: Challenges, Perspectives, Future Possibilities," Alquraini mentioned that early identification and intervention for children with disabilities in Saudi Arabia is not professional or adequate to determine the level of hearing disability to ensure that these children will have an appropriate education program that will assess the children's knowledge and skills to improve their education and keep it ongoing. "Most of the special

education institutes as well as public schools lack a multidisciplinary team, IQ tests, adaptive behavior scales, and academic scales that are appropriate to cultural standards of Saudi Arabia” (Alquraini, 2011) (p. 144).

Hearing Impaired Education Opportunities: (IEP)

To better meet the needs of children with different learning disabilities, the MoE has implemented new approaches. In 1964, the MoE established the first institute to serve students with all levels of hearing impairments. Since 1964, the deaf and hearing impaired students have been divided into two separate institutes: one for boys and one for girls (Aldabas, 2015). In 2001, RSEPI was erected with purposes similar to the United States federal IDEA. The regulation established Law Number 224 to provide children with disabilities the rights and services of high quality by a multidisciplinary team located in each special education institute or school with inclusive seating in classrooms (Aldabas, 2015; Alqahtani, 2015; Alquraini, 2014).

Children with hearing impairments in Saudi Arabia can begin school from three years of age, and based on the level of disability, the children will be selected by the education programs that meet their individual needs. To choose which education programs are best suited for the children with hearing impairments, the children, along with their parents, need to complete some steps to select an appropriate education program. The first step is to visit the Measurement and Diagnosis Departments, which are attached to hearing impairment institutes, the Support Special Education Services Center, or public elementary schools with inclusive seating. Here, data is collected by observing and interviewing the parents with the multidisciplinary team that includes the principal, principal’s assistant, special education teacher of hearing impairment, the general teacher, and any specialist for the particular needs of the children (Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia, 2020).

The second step is the transition services in which the children with a hearing disability will be measured and evaluated through a process to determine the level of disabilities—deafness or hearing loss. Within the initial process, the multidisciplinary team makes the decisions regarding the children's needs of education and services to create IEPs with an assessment procedure that involves the parents playing a role with the multidisciplinary team in making any adjustments that will be in the IEP to ensure that the children will have an appropriate education that meets the individual curriculum needs of the children with disabilities. The IEPs are documentation about the children with the disability status that show what type of services, support, and education services will meet the children's needs. The IEPs documentation will help to set up short and long term goals for progress and prediction of appropriate services for the children and their parents.

The IEPs are important for maintaining the life-providing services that give children with disabilities solutions to meet their special needs for appropriate education and living. The RSEPI in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia emphasize providing each student with special needs IEPs to ensure that each student will have appropriate education and services. However, studies in Saudi Arabia examined the quality of implementing IEPs and indicated that, while special education teachers do the IEPs, they frequently lack the professional multidisciplinary team member required by the policy e.g., that all the team members must be part of the continuous procedure to ensure that the students with hearing impairment will receive follow-up with special education teachers, including the multidisciplinary team member (Alquraini, 2014).

Special Education in Saudi Arabia provides two education programs for hearing impaired children at the elementary level: 1) institutes for deaf children and 2) Hard of Hearing programs. The two education programs are designed based on the children's level of hearing loss. The deaf

institutes serve two types of deaf children: severe hearing loss level from 70 to 94 decibel (dB) who cannot hear shouting and profound hearing loss level 94 decibel (dB) who cannot hear very loud sounds. The Hard of Hearing programs serve two types of hearing-impaired children: mild hearing level 25 to 39 decibel (dB) who cannot hear whispers, and moderate hearing levels from 40 to 69 decibel (dB) who cannot hear conversations (Alshahrani, 2014). However, because special education in Saudi Arabia has insufficient precision in diagnosing children, severe-hearing impaired children are still assigned to Hard of Hearing Programs and or hearing impaired with multiple disabilities (Alquraini, 2014).

Consequently, today students with different levels of hearing loss can be in the program that best meets their needs (Aldabas, 2015; Alqahtani, 2017). But there are still concerns because the children who are deaf or hard of hearing do not receive early intervention or services before the age of five. “Unfortunately, the majority of children who are deaf or hard of hearing in Saudi Arabia do not receive educational services before they are 5 years old” (Alqahtani, 2017) (p.48). Special Education in Saudi Arabia offers 26 centers, most of which are attached to deaf and hard of hearing centers. All centers offer diagnosis, equipment, and services, such as hearing technology devices that help children improve communication and learning. The classrooms in the institutes have assistive technology that helps teachers teach effectively (Alqahtani, 2017). In addition, Saudi Arabia has the Cochlear Implant Program service that was established in 2008 in the King Abdulaziz Medical City (KAMC) in Riyadh. This program offers rehabilitation services for ear, nose, and throat. However, the Cochlear Implant Program service is limited. Also, parents in Saudi Arabia who have children with DHH are not satisfied with the existing early intervention services and technology services, which should provide more training and support programs to help parents who face certain issues with their children (Alqahtani, 2017).

Special Education teachers of Hearing-Impaired in Saudi Arabia use assistive technology as methods, tools and devises to teach deaf or hard of hearing students and create different teaching strategies to improve student outcomes. Also, Special Education teachers of Hearing-Impaired use assistive technology to extend learning opportunities. Special Education teachers of Hearing-Impaired are trained in using assistive technology at the universities, so they integrate this technology into their classrooms to ensure that students receive appropriate support for learning. However, even with university training, Special Education teachers of deaf and hard of hearing need to improve their use of assistive technology, such as training on integrating assistive technology to meet deaf and hard of hearing students' needs. Alqahtani (2013) showed that there is a need to provide special education teachers of deaf and hard of hearing with training programs in creating assistive technology plans and implementing assistive technology in the classrooms (Alqahtani, 2013).

Preparation of Special Education Teachers Under Special Education Laws (IDEA)

According to IDEA, the United States can prepare Special Education staff based on the needs of the children as well as in accordance with the standards set by the statute and regulations. There are many sections with details to establish Special Education organizations to implement the requirements of IDEA. Also, in section number 300.156, the law explains how a Special Education organization has to set up the qualifications to hire Special Education employees such as Special Education and general education teachers, principals, administrators, and related services personnel. This section has information about how to prepare and train Special Education faculty to ensure that they have the knowledge and skills to serve and meet the needs of children with disabilities in an appropriate way. Also, under IDEA, section number 1462 entitled as "Personnel development to improve services and results for children with

disabilities,” there are explanations and requirements to prepare and improve Special Education staff. In addition, the section has details about what principals, superintendents, and other administrators should be provided with by the special education agency (“IDEA,” n.d.). Special Education in the United States offers preparation programs in universities for Special Education bachelor's or higher degrees. Each state has different requirements to join the programs, but most have minimum requirements which entail having a Special Education degree with teaching certification to ensure that the Special Education teachers will be qualified and able to serve hearing-impaired students in an appropriate way (How can I become a deaf educator?, 2012).

Preparation Special Education Teachers in Saudi Arabia

Special Education training in Saudi Arabian prepares students to become Special Education teachers in universities that have special education departments. For example, King Saud University has Special Education departments in which the students must finish 128 credits hours to earn a bachelor's degree in Special Education. After finishing fifty-one credit hours in general special education, students in the second year of the program can choose to study one minor, such as hearing or learning difficulties. In the third year of a special education program, the students take specific classes related to their minor (Hussain, 2010). Teachers of deaf and hearing impairments are not prepared to teach specific content such as math or science; teachers are prepared to teach only in elementary level and they will not be provided with training in teaching content because the Moe believe that teachers have an appropriate preparation for elementary level at the university, so they do not require teachers to be experts in teaching a specific subject. Teachers who teach middle and high school level's will be teachers who have a bachelor's degree in a specific area as well as a diploma in special education for sign language.(Alsalem, 2015)

Special Education Teachers of Hearing-impaired in Saudi Arabia

The Ministry of Education has five Education agencies south, east, north, west, and central region with the MoE in Riyadh the capital city of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. This study focused on The Education Agency in the eastern region of Saudi Arabia. The Education Agency has a special education department responsible for all special education programs in institutes and general education schools. Each special education department follows the General Administration of Special Education under the Ministry of Education in Riyadh, which allows the special education departments to follow the same organizational guidelines, procedural manual, regulations, and laws of special education to ensure teachers, supervisors and school administrators are working together to serve students with hearing impairments.

The General Administration of Special Education established a set of knowledge and skills to ensure teachers are qualified to teach the deaf and hearing impaired students. Teachers must be able to:

1. Commit to using formal language and mastering the communication language of deaf students: sign language, bilingual, total communication.
2. Continuously evaluate and take into account individual differences: proficiency in planning and implementation of the individual educational program for the disabled.
3. Teachers should use the blackboard, books, materials, and teaching electronic aids to serve the deaf and hearing impaired students: students must wear hearing aids before starting the lesson and use technology aids throughout the class.
4. Demonstrate skill in class presentation and classroom management: teachers must adapt lessons to suit the characteristics and capabilities of deaf students.

As mentioned previously, Special Education in Saudi Arabia was established in 1962. After two years, the number of teachers of hearing-impaired was around eleven. Then in 1968, the government collaborated with UNESCO to train and prepare 40 forty special education teachers of the hearing-impaired. Until 2002, Saudi Arabia had only two universities to prepare special education teachers of the hearing-impaired (Alzahrani, 2018). In the article, “Special Education Teacher Preparation in the Arab Gulf States,” Keller, Al-Hendawi and Abuelhassan (2016) examined the preparation of Special Education teachers of the hearing-impaired in the Arab Gulf States. Using Bray and Thomas’s framework to complete a comprehensive analysis of data collected from 32 universities in the Arab Gulf States from 2014-2015, they discovered that 24 universities in Saudi Arabia prepared students for teaching Special Education, but they also discovered that, in Saudi Arabia, the MoE did not offer a training programs for Special Education teachers of deaf and hearing impaired students. Also, Saudi Arabia has 23 institutions that provide services for students with special needs, which means that the teachers of deaf and hearing impaired students have been prepared to serve the deaf and hearing impaired students appropriately. In Saudi Arabia, they had a considerable challenge to offer an effective preparation program that concentrated on improving the knowledge and skills for Special Education teachers of deaf and hearing impaired students that matched the students’ unique needs (Keller, Al-Hendawi & Abuelhassan, 2016).

In a recent study which has been conducted in Saudi Arabia, entitled “Teaching Special Education Law in Saudi Arabia: Improving Pre-Service Teacher Education and Services to Students with Disabilities,” Francie Murry, Ragea Mohammed and Ali Alqahtani (2015) examined the knowledge of pre-service teachers graduating from a major teacher preparation university in Saudi Arabia in regards to Special Education laws and implementation of

educational programs for students with disabilities. The study found that Special Education teachers in universities in Saudi Arabia lacked a sufficient knowledge base in pre-service for preparing Special Education teacher candidates to teach and serve children with disabilities.

New Teachers' Needs—Overview

A preliminary examination of current literature indicates that new teachers enter their classrooms with a basic understanding of teaching theory, pedagogy, and student behaviors (Orchard & Winch, 2015). But personal experience and professional articles point to the fact that teachers still require assistance as they begin teaching, and this is particularly true of special education teachers (Billingsley, 2004; Duffy & Forgan, 2005).

New teachers may participate in some pre-service experiences in classrooms that include visiting and observing schools as they complete course requirements and/or when they participate in their internships (Locasale-Crouch et al., 2012). These experiences may establish a solid foundation for new teaching positions, but there is so much more that must be learned when applying knowledge and skills to full-time teaching. The challenge comes with making sure that each teacher receives the assistance needed to become a high-quality teaching professional and with ensuring that he/she does not drop out of teaching.

At the beginning of the first years of teaching, many schools require that new teachers complete an induction program to become familiar with the school's rules, procedures and overall environment (Locasale-Crouch et al., 2012). Once the induction program is completed, many new teachers are left alone to teach without support (Berry et al., 2011). The induction program gives the new teachers temporary assistance, but once the students enter the classroom, these new teachers require on-going support to help them hone their skills. This ongoing assistance can be done in a variety of ways, but many schools and even states require that new

teachers receive the ongoing assistance from a mentor (Locasale-Crouch et al., 2012; Matthews, 2003).

Ongoing support for new teachers usually comes from an experienced teacher who is to work shoulder-to-shoulder with the new teacher to help improve the teacher's performance and student achievement. Support from an experienced teacher, who has been in the profession for a number of years and is qualified to support new teachers, often includes helping the new teacher set goals and strategies to improve classroom performance (Beutel et al., 2017; Gilles, 2013).

Almost all new teachers have problems during their first years of teaching, but special education teachers often have more difficulties than general education teachers because they have students with a wide variety of disabilities. In addition, the new teachers are learning to teach multiple subjects at multiple grade levels in the same classroom at the same time. Furthermore, special education teachers must complete additional paperwork related to qualifying students for services and meeting IEP goals (Hussain, 2010). Without high quality support, new teachers, and especially special education teachers, can become frustrated or overwhelmed and drop out of the teaching profession.

New Special Education Teachers' Needs

New special education teachers have many factors on which to focus in their teaching to ensure learning. This includes learning how to prepare lessons plans that meet individual learning goals stated in an IEP. These plans are for students with a lower level of knowledge than the general education population, so teachers must consider a wide variety of academic levels and learning styles because students from several different grade levels may be in the special education classroom at the same time. Special education teachers may become frustrated during their first years because they know the theories related to teaching students with disabilities but

lack a large enough toolbox of strategies and resources. In order to increase new teachers' level of self-esteem and build satisfaction in their teaching ability, these new special education teachers must receive assistance, especially during their first five years of teaching (Whitaker, 2010).

When reviewing data from a survey of 156 teachers, Whitaker (2003) found that new special education teachers need emotional support in order to have a good feeling about their teaching and increase student performance and learning. To achieve this, teachers need preparation for different roles and responsibilities that will increase their level of teaching quality and solve behavior problems with students who have special needs. In addition, Whitaker found that new special education teachers need to learn special education policies, procedures and paperwork. Therefore, new special education teachers need to receive emotional support and assistance in management issues. In some schools, special education teachers receive support from experienced teachers who have been working in special education a number of years.

Although special education teachers of the deaf and hearing-impaired may be in demand based on the growing population of students with these particular disabilities, retention of these professionals is problematic. New teachers enter the profession and realize they do not have administrative support teaching support during their initial years in the classroom. Not only do they need to navigate required paperwork for individual students, such as IEPs, student evaluations, meetings, grading, and lesson planning, but they are given additional job responsibilities they were not prepared for in their university or practical training. For example, at their first real teaching assignment, new teachers may be assigned to teach subjects they are not certified in simply because there is a need in their particular school. They may also be asked to oversee extracurricular activities, which are well out of their preparation and/or interest.

However, to keep their job, they may succumb to the extra work, especially if the environment in the school is such that other more experienced teachers have been doing this. The work environment dictates what the new teacher has to do, whereas teacher preparation courses can never prepare anyone until they are in the particular environment. Given all of these extra tasks, any person would literally burn out and feel s/he cannot meet the demands placed on them. This will drive them to leave the profession.

In the United States, a number of remedies to this growing crisis have been suggested. These are based in the government. First of all, funding various of programs and teachers would encourage new teachers to join the field as well as stay in it. Strong preparation programs with certification/eligibility exams or state requirements would ensure a teacher's future in the profession. In such programs, mentoring is most necessary regardless. This additional training opportunity (after college) can build a new teacher's confidence and make him/her actually want to continue to service the population they are trained to work with.

Finally, compensation. Money talks. If salaries can compensate qualified teachers, the job will become more sought after. Since special education teachers have so many tasks dumped on them—sometimes naturally and sometimes on purpose—pay scales need to be adjusted for additional job responsibilities, just like in industry. Areas of greatest need should offer teachers compensation for taking on the challenge of working with more students in a single classroom, and sometimes the students may have more than one disability, thus making the challenge even greater for the teacher.

The support for having a mentor can be found in articles such as Cutler (2014) and Lynch (2016) that promote the importance of mentors. Both Cutler and Lynch explain the need for new teachers to build confidence, and a supportive mentor can show a new teacher how to build on

his/her strengths. That means the mentor must be a good observer who can help a new teacher do self-reflection and begin to decide the good and not-so-good parts of a lesson, or to understand how students are reacting to the lesson. When a mentor works with a teacher, that mentor must be a confidant. The new teacher must trust the mentor to help with problems, but to not share problems that the new teacher is having for example with pedagogy or with student behavior. When a new teacher has a mentor, who has high quality mentoring skills (Wiebke & Bardin, 2009), it is likely that the teacher will grow in his/her profession and stay in teaching.

Mentoring New Teachers

Mentoring seems to be a key to building high-quality teachers (Mathews, 2003). If mentoring is necessary for general education teachers, it is even more important for special education teachers. Billingsly (2004) examined the problem of teacher quality and retention in special education. Through his studies, he found that because of the shortage of special education teachers, there were people teaching special education who were not certified. These non-certified teachers needed extra assistance during the first year of teaching, and if the teachers did not receive their certification, they had to be replaced, which added to lower retention rates. Billingsley found problems that are faced by first-year special education teachers. These problems included applying what they learned in their pre-service programs to the classroom without losing their enthusiasm for teaching. In addition, new special education teachers have a lot of layers of paperwork that must be completed and followed, and this requires learning how to collaborate with classroom teachers, specialists and other special education staff members. Finally, many schools do not have an on-going system for the new special educators so they can concentrate on best teaching practices for special need students while building a support network for students so that learning goals can be accomplished (Duffy & Forgan, 2005). These factors

are not only important in the U.S., but also in Saudi Arabia.

Deficiency Statement

Research has suggested ideas about supporting teachers, but the research lacks clear procedures regarding how this continuous support should guide the teachers. Through this research, I will explore the needs of special education teachers of the hearing-impaired, especially those who work with specific populations of students with more severe cognitive and/or physical impairments, in order to identify ways to improve teacher knowledge and skills, and ensure that they will receive continuous support for meeting student needs. Researchers have identified the importance of assisting new teachers (Gilles, et al., 2013), and many have determined that support from administrators and colleagues is extremely effective if done properly. However, in Saudi Arabia, there is a lack of an ongoing mentoring program that can be used for supporting and retaining special education teachers.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This study explores the experiences of special education teachers in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as they move through their first years of teaching hearing impaired and deaf students. A qualitative research design was selected because it allows the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of human behavior and perspective. In other words, this qualitative research led to the answers of the overarching and sub-questions: What types of professional support do special education teachers in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia need so they can better support students with special needs and continue to be motivated to teach special needs students?

Sub question 1: What knowledge, skills, and experiences do teachers believe they need in order to meet the challenges when working with deaf or hard of hearing students?

Sub question 2: What types of professional support and/or services would special education teachers in Saudi Arabia like to receive in order to better support students with special needs?

Sub question 3: What support have teachers been receiving that assists them in better meeting the needs of special needs students?

Sub question 4: If the perceived needs and wants of teachers better align with the support given by supervisors, school administrators and experienced colleagues, would more teachers of the deaf and hearing impaired feel they are better able to meet the needs of their students?

Research Design, Approach and Rationale

Qualitative research best gathers the information to answer the question related to the types of support special education teachers believe could assist them in becoming skilled professionals and in continuing to work in the teaching profession. Of the five types of qualitative research traditions described by Creswell (2007), the one most appropriate for this study is phenomenological because phenomenological research allows the researcher to interview a number of participants and record their experiences in their own words. In order to understand the phenomena related to beginning teacher needs and the types of support that can assist in meeting those needs, semi-structured interviews with probing questions enabled the researcher to use ten participants and gather in-depth information without having a well-formed hypothesis.

According to Gall, Gall and Borg (2007), phenomenological data lends itself to an interpretational analysis that allows for “closely examining and grouping elements in case study data in order to fully describe, evaluate, or explain the phenomenon being studied” (p.350). The constructs of the experiences and perceptions can be organized into themes in order to identify similarities, differences and patterns (relationships between phenomena) in order to identify trends and develop generalizations and/or conclusions (Creswell, 1998). Using phenomenology in this study was an appropriate qualitative method that allowed the researcher to understand the perspective of a small group of people (n=10) who have experienced this phenomenon. Through conversations, a clearer picture of the phenomena from the participants’ point of view and experience regarding how new special education teachers view their experiences during the first three to ten years of their teaching experience was discovered.

This phenomenological study allowed the researcher to use open-ended questions and gain experience of the phenomena, so a phenomenological study is usually more focused on how a small group of individuals views a single event over time. The data collection relies on a variety of sources, such as interviews and questionnaires, and the findings are not generalizable. The intent of this research was to understand the lived experience of a small group of individuals to see how each interprets the phenomena of their beginning years of teaching (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2007). Therefore, to gather the best information to answer questions about what types of support new special education teacher require, the phenomenological research methods best met the purpose of the research.

Semi-structured interviews were used to begin the conversation for collecting data. According to Doody and Noonan (2013), semi-structured interviews allow the researcher to gather richer information related to perceptions and experiences about the phenomena being studied. For this research, the basic questions were asked of all participants, while follow-up or probing questions were asked to clarify the initial answers to each of the basic questions.

The data collected during this exploratory approach allowed for the discovery of detailed information related to each participant's life story. The beginning of each interview included demographic data regarding the number of years the teacher has been teaching, the level of the students being taught, the college that the teacher attended, and the training received related specifically to special needs students. There was a set of open-ended questions related to the participant's perceptions of his needs as a beginning teacher, how or whether his needs for support were being met, if a mentor, colleague or other professional was instrumental in meeting those needs, and if the teacher believed that he would continue teaching special education in the future. Additional questions about the type and nature of professional supports and/or services

received and desired rounded out the end of the interview. During each interview, the researcher worked to avoid asking any leading questions in order to reduce bias and not delimit the information that the participants were willing to share. Even though there were differences in experiences and perceptions, a number of categories and themes related to the needs and wants in the first years of teaching experiences and support and reasons for staying in the teaching profession were identified.

Reflections on My Identity

The first step in phenomenological research is for the researcher to reflect on his own experiences to understand his own feelings about the phenomena. The idea of the phenomena of needs of beginning teachers came when I was teaching at The Hope Institute in Al Ahsa in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (2006-2011). During my first years of teaching students with special needs at the elementary level, the support that I was given was not enough for me to improve my skills as a teacher of deaf students because I had no ongoing support. I had a supervisor who observed my work ones or twice every year and gave me a good evaluation. At that time, I was not satisfied with my teaching methods and wanted to improve myself so I could be a more effective teacher for my students. I often used different online sources to locate or explore ideas to teach the students in ways that would improve achievement of their individual educational plan (IEP) goals, and I spoke with many special education teachers to make sure I was not the only teacher struggling. Through conversations with colleagues, I found that most of the teachers were having similar problems in different subjects and did not have very much support from the administration or special education supervisors. The feeling that I was not satisfied with my teaching continued and led me to actions to understand what was lacking that caused new special

education teachers to struggle in their first few years of teaching. If I could understand the needs of the new teachers, I believed I could solve the problem.

About that time, I decided to move to the United States to study for a master's degree and take a deeper look at the U.S. special education system so I could better understand how universities and colleges prepare new teachers in the field, explore the history of policies that improve a system, and investigate programs that make sure new special education teachers have appropriate support. When starting my master's degree at Western Michigan University (WMU), I was lucky to attend many classes focused on leadership styles. Many assignments and projects on special education could be applied to Saudi Arabia and the United States.

After completing my master's degree in educational leadership at Western Michigan University, I realized that as a new teacher who received little support, I may have set views on the problems that special education teachers face, but by applying my leadership and special education knowledge and research skills, I could find solutions that would improve special education of the deaf and hearing impaired in Saudi Arabia. What I learned about programs, such as mentoring and on-going teacher observations, may influence the findings of this research on the current induction and support of special education teachers of deaf and hearing impaired students in Saudi Arabia as I investigate the needs and wants provided by the participants and the recommendations I make once I return to the workplace.

After speaking with special education personnel, such as the first director of hearing impairments in the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia and director of Managing Growth and Need Departments, professors, principals and regional supervisors of hearing impairments in Saudi Arabia, I found that special education of the deaf and hearing impaired requires a high-quality teacher support and evaluation system where the principals and supervisors are an

integral part of teacher improvement and the support process. The evaluation system for teachers in Saudi Arabia will be more effective if the evaluation and the appraisal system includes training each school's administration who will then be able to support, mentor and coach teachers to provide to them good assistance. Because I desire that this research improve the deaf community and special education personnel of hearing impairments, I believe this desire could affect how I collect and/or interpret data from interviews and conversations. Because I know these things about myself and my desires to improve the teacher support system in Saudi Arabia, I will work hard to stay neutral and unbiased as I carry out interviews and interpret data and information collected for this to be a fair study of the issues that special education teachers in Saudi Arabia face and the support they want and need in order to be considered high-quality teachers who wish to continue teaching special education students beyond their first years of teaching.

Finally, I have observed teachers and shadowed administrators in American schools and have seen how they interact with teachers and students. It is through this type of academic leadership that teachers learn and grow. In Saudi Arabia, the principal is not seen as an academic leader. My desire to move principals into an academic leadership role in special education may affect my vision during this research. However, the teachers of deaf and hearing impaired students should receive the support that meets their students' needs. Knowing myself, my previous experiences and my desires will help me watch carefully so I do not let these influence what I learn from the participants in this research study.

Population, Sample, and Site

The special education system in Saudi Arabia was established in 1958, and the number of special education programs has been increasing (Aldabas, 2015). In Saudi Arabia, there are 23 institutes that enroll only students with special needs who require high levels of services and include students with hearing or visual impairments and physical handicaps. There are also special education programs offered in public K-12 schools for students with less severe needs that relate to academic and behavioral issues (Aldabas, 2015). The population for this research was special education teachers of deaf and hearing impaired students. The purposeful random sample was comprised of 10 teachers with five teachers coming from deaf institute settings and five teachers from the public elementary schools that offer hard of hearing program.

Population

The 10 special education teachers of purposeful sample of have varying levels of teaching experience from seven years to ten years but were new to teaching deaf and hearing impaired students. They represent a variety of preservice training and experiences, and had different degrees of support as they began their first years of teaching in their own classrooms.

Sample, Sampling Strategy and Numbers

In accordance with traditional cultural standards, the Saudi Arabia school system educates students of different genders in separate schools, i.e. male and female students attend schools specifically designed for their gender. Faculty members are hired according to gender. Because I am male, this research was conducted with all male teachers, supervisors and students. Therefore, a purposeful sampling of male special education teachers was selected for this research. According to Palinkas et al. (2015), purposeful sampling “is widely used in qualitative research for the identification and selection of information-rich cases related to the phenomenon

of interest” (p. 1). Each participant must meet the criterion of being in his first ten years of teaching special education in either a special education institute or in a public school that offers special education programs.

In order to obtain a purposeful sample of 10 special education teachers who represent the deaf institutes and hard of hearing program attached to public elementary schools, the researcher implemented the following steps:

1. Visited hard of hearing program schools in the Al Ahsa area of Saudi Arabia in order to build a relationship with the principals and regional special education supervisors.
2. During the visits, explained to the administrators the research project and the questions to explore.
3. Once the principals and supervisors understood the project, identified prospective participants who met the criterion.
4. Contacted each teacher for a face-to-face discussion about the project and to solicit participation in the study. Each participant participated in a 45-60-minute conversation with the researcher and was assured of the confidentiality of the interviews with no name attached, and the finding for research purposes only (WMU HSIRB, n.d.).
5. Once the special education teacher agreed and signed the Informed Consent letter, set an appointment for an interview.

Site or Setting

The interviews with each participant were conducted in a quiet place that met their approval and schedule so the interviews would not be interrupted. It was imperative that the interview setting be neutral, comfortable and free from any type of threat that would make the participant anxious or fearful (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The participants were asked if the

researcher could use an electronic device to record the conversations, but if the participant was not comfortable, the researcher asked if the participant minded note taking during the conversation instead. Overall, the researcher ensured that the participants felt completely comfortable to talk freely about all aspects of their experiences.

Instrumentation

Phenomenology requires gathering in-depth information surrounding a single concept or idea (Creswell, 2008). Therefore, this research was centered around one-on-one, semi-structured interviews (Jamshed, 2014), with a set of interview questions designed to open a conversation with the participants. In beginning, the participants were asked a question that encouraged them to engage with the researcher and feel comfortable. From there, the questions moved the discussion into talking about the first days in their teaching position, especially their successes and frustrations. Additional questions encouraged the participants to talk about experiences that were problematic and how any problems were addressed. This led into encouraging them to share the parts of their orientation and induction into special education that were positive and experiences where they needed assistance and what kinds of assistance would have been helpful. From there, the participants were asked to specify the types of orientation and induction programs they felt would be helpful to other teachers who enter special education for deaf and hearing impaired students. Finally, the participants were asked about how long they believe they will be motivated to continue teaching special needs students.

Pilot Testing

The interview instrument was shared with colleagues and analyzed to ensure that the questions would gather information related to the basic research questions (Agee, 2009). Once the semi-structured questions had been examined by colleagues and analyzed, a pilot study

(Majid, at all, 2017) was conducted with three teachers who were not involved as participants. From the pilot study responses, adjustments were made to the interview instrument (Table 1).

Table 1 : Crosswalk of Research Questions with Interview Questions

Research Question and Sub-questions	Possible Interview Questions
Sub-question 1: What knowledge, skills, and experiences do teachers believe they need in order to meet the challenges when working with deaf or hard of hearing students?	1.a. What challenges have you faced for which you would like to have professional support and/or services provided to assist you to address? 1.b. What types of skills and knowledge do special education teachers desire to receive additional or increased professional support and/or services?
Sub question 2: What type of professional support and/or services would special education teachers in Saudi Arabia like to receive in order to help support students with special needs and continue to be motivated to teach special needs students?	2.a. From whom (e.g., principal, regional supervisors, colleague teachers, other) would you like to receive professional support and/or services? 2.b. Would be like the professional support and/or services provided formal, established programs or informal, “point in time” support and/or services? 2.c. What topics or content area would you like to have had covered as professional support? 2.e. How likely are you to continue teaching special needs children in the future?
Sub-question 3: What is the nature of your experience with current professional support and/or services reported by special education teachers in Saudi Arabia?	3.a. What college did you attend? What training did you receive? 3.b. From whom (e.g., principal, regional supervisors, mentor, colleague teachers, other) did the teachers receive professional support and/or services? 3.c. Was the support and/or service provided part of a “formal” or established program, or was it provided informally in response to a personal need of the teacher? 3.d. What was the topic or content area covered by the professional support and/or service you received? 3.e. In what form was the professional support and/or service provided (such as, face-to-face meeting, instructional training class or workshop, online, video, written materials, etc.)? 3.f. How satisfied were you with the effectiveness and helpfulness of the professional support and/or service you have received?

Table 1 – continued

<p>Sub question 4: If the perceived needs and wants of teachers better align with the support given by supervisors, school administrators and experienced colleagues, would more teachers of the deaf and hearing impaired feel they were better able to meet the needs of their students?</p>	<p>4.a. If perceived needs and wants were better met, would teachers feel they had enough skills and strategies when starting their teaching career?</p> <p>4.b. Would a better designed support system reduce some of the challenges and anxieties in meeting the needs of special education students?</p>
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Data Collection Procedures

Human Subject Institutional Review Board (HSIRB)

An important step in conducting qualitative research is gaining permission to work with human participants. I followed the steps required by Western Michigan University’s Human Subject Institutional Review Board (HSIRB). This was to ensure that the research done and the data collected were protected and would not harm the participants in any way (WMU HSIRB, N. D). This process included completing a form that was submitted to the HSIRB requesting permission to conduct research with human participants.

Informed Consent

A copy of the Informed Consent form disclosed the study to participants, ensured the confidentiality of the information shared, and explained the use of the results (Creswell & Poth, 2018) (See Appendix A, Appendix B and Appendix C.). In addition, the consent form included information about the research and any risks or costs to the participant that might be involved in the research process. To assist the participants, the consent form included the time involved during the interview process and any follow-up. Information was given concerning the benefits to the participants and/or to others. Participants were advised of their right to stop participating at

any time throughout the process along with their ability to review the transcripts and findings to give feedback to the researcher. The form advised participants that during the research process, all documentation, recordings, notes and transcripts would be stored in a locked, secure location. Perhaps most important, the consent form reassured the participants that their identity would be kept completely confidential during data collection, during storage leading up to and through data analysis, and during the preparation of the research findings. Finally, when the research was completed, the transcripts and tapes would be archived and later destroyed according to WMU protocol. This consent form was reviewed carefully with each participant and required signature before the interview phase could begin.

Risks and Cost of Participation

Each participant was informed that there were no risks or costs to them during this project. Because names and information were confidential and coded, no name would be associated with the findings.

Benefits to Participants and Others

The first benefit of this phenomenological study was related to obtaining accurate facts regarding the needs and wants of special education teachers of the deaf and hearing impaired students in Saudi Arabia. The second benefit was that the findings were to be shared with the regional General Education Office, the special education supervisors and school principals so they would become more aware of the needs and wants of this specialized group of teachers. The third benefit was that the orientation and continuing support given to the teachers would contribute to developing higher level teaching skills in these special education teachers who work with a very specific student population. Through on-going methods of support, the teachers

could then not only develop their academic skills to better meet the needs of their students but would also continue working in deaf and hearing impaired institutes or programs.

Also, each participant was advised that the greatest benefit that could come from this project would be recommendations and a handbook for administrators and supervisors to use in the future to better assist new teachers in beginning their special education teaching career. So, though there is minimal benefit for the participant, there is the opportunity for numerous benefits for others.

Confidentiality

As pointed out in the consent form, names of participants were coded, recorded materials were kept under lock and key in a safe place; therefore, any information from the interviews used in the research process was completely anonymous.

Saudi Arabian Procedures

The data collection process that I used began with obtaining permission from the Ministry of Education (MoE), primarily, the MoE regional supervisor for special education of the hearing impaired. With the assistance of the regional supervisor and the principals of deaf institutes and schools that offer special education programs for the hard of hearing, we were able to identify a purposeful sampling of participants. For this research, a purposeful sampling was appropriate (Creswell & Poth, 2018) because I wished to gain information regarding the experiences of teachers who had completed their first through tenth year of teaching deaf and hearing impaired students. In other words, the information collected was from participants who had experiences with the orientation and beginning years of teaching in a special education environment for deaf and hearing impaired students. Once the participants were identified, I obtained their email addresses and the names of the schools in which they taught.

To enlist participants, I sent an email to each teacher identified by the regional supervisor and principals. In this email, I explained my research project and asked them to participate. At the same time, I made personal visits to the schools in which the participants worked. This enabled me to become known to the potential participants and begin building a relationship with the school and teachers. Through these personal contacts, I began answering questions that the teachers had and shared the consent form. The goal was to have four to five teachers from an elementary deaf institute and four to five teachers from a hard of hearing program that was attached to a public elementary school. The Deaf institute and hard of hearing programs have different demographics depending on if it is a public school with an inclusive design or a separate deaf institution. If there were more than five teachers from a single school or institute who would like to participate, I choose those who represented different years of experience.

Once the participating teachers signed the consent form, I began scheduling interviews. The interviewer conducted the interviews in a setting that was agreed upon and in a quiet, private room in the school or off school grounds. The goal was to keep each participant's anonymity and help them feel comfortable about sharing their information. At the beginning of each interview, the participant agreed to have the interview recorded via my laptop. If they did not feel comfortable with a device, the interviewer would have taken notes, but all participants agreed to recording the interviews and taking notes at the same time. At the end of the first interview, the interviewer asked if the participant would be available for another interview if additional information were required.

During each interview, the researcher was aware of the participant's emotional feelings in order to understand and decide how to create a balance between descriptive notes (participants' factual information) and reflective notes (interviewer's observations, thoughts, concerns). "It is

important that the researcher maintain a balance between descriptive notes and reflective notes, such as hunches, impressions, feelings, and so on” (Groenewald, 2004, p. 48). The interviewer’s notes on the emotions of the participant would be useful when reading through the transcriptions of each interview.

After each interview, the interviewer completed a transcript of the conversation from the audio device and from the notes taken. These transcripts were shared with the participants to make sure that the information contained in the notes was accurate. Once interviews were completed and notes were accepted, the participant was sent a thank you letter and informed that he would receive a copy of the research report. Once the data was approved, the transcriptions and notes were ready for coding and organizing.

Insight into the Process

When conducting qualitative research using interviews, gaining access to the site of the phenomenon and building a relationship with the school leadership and participants is extremely important (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In the beginning, the researcher must understand the culture of the school in which the participants work. In order to gain this information, I went to the schools to meet with the school leaders and ask them to do a walk-through of the facilities. During this time, I watched and listened in order to gain an understanding of what the people do (behaviors), how they speak with each other (language), and any tensions that may exist. This took time but was extremely valuable. As Creswell and Poth (2018) point out, “The researcher needs to have an understanding of cultural anthropology, the meaning of a social-cultural system, and the concepts typically explored by those studying cultures” (p. 163). Gaining access to the site allowed me to begin building a rapport with the administrators and the teachers/participants.

Ethnography can be done overtly or covertly, but “engaging with participants in the real world poses several challenges; first the researcher must decide whether to adopt an overt or

covert approach to data collection and observation” (Jones & Smith, 2017). This research was overt because the participants were asked if they would be willing to participate, and they knew that I was doing the research. That made me a known observer, but an outsider to the school and the participants. This required that I build a rapport with the administrators who were allowing me into the school and with the participants who are allowing me to share their experiences.

Throughout this research, I maintained my identity as an outsider (Jones & Smith, 2017), but I had gained the trust of the school administration, staff and teachers in order to gain “an ‘insider’ perspective” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 100). To establish rapport with the school administrators, I kept them informed of my research and how I planned to use the results. It was important that they know that neither their names nor their school names were to be used in reporting the findings, and that the information collected was to be kept in a locked location. At the same time, I had to build a rapport with the participants. Like with the administrators, I assured them that their identity would not be known, and that any data collected would not be associated with a person or a school. At the same time, they knew that I had been a teacher in a similar educational setting, but that I would not substitute what they shared with my own experiences. I wanted to learn about their stories and their experiences. Building this rapport with the participants built a trust that better allowed them to honestly share their experiences and feelings about those experiences. As Jones and Smith (2017) shared, building rapport can ensure that “the purpose of the research was clear, adding depth to the data collected” (p. 99).

Data Analysis

In this study, phenomenological data analysis helped me create a comprehensive picture of the support participating teachers identified as their needs and wants in their first ten years of teaching deaf and hearing impaired students because this type of data analysis allowed me to

understand the common experiences and perceptions shared by the special education teachers of deaf and hearing impaired students who were participating in this study. This understanding led to developing or improving the support of new special education teachers of deaf and hearing impaired students in their first ten years of teaching. Phenomenological data analysis requires becoming familiar with the content of the transcripts of interviews and any notes taken by the researcher. Though phenomenological analysis gives a clearer understanding of a phenomenon, it has its challenges (Creswell, 2006).

Data Analysis Procedure

Throughout the study, simultaneous data collection and analysis were used. After each interview with participants, the recordings were transcribed into script form, and these scripts were analyzed to determine repetitions or contradictions of ideas/experiences. The analysis of written materials began with identifying significant points from the interviews to understand the common experiences of the teachers (Creswell, 2006). It was important to examine each teacher's statements without considering what had been said by others or my own experiences or bias. From the highlighted statements, themes were identified. Creswell (2006) refers to this as finding *clusters of meaning*. Merriam (2009) and Moustakas (1994) refer to this as phenomenological reduction that begins as soon as the first transcripts or data sets are collected. The technique of horizontalization gives equal value to each significant point that carries meaning. These points are gathered into themes. In this way, the significant points and themes are synthesized to create a textured description that tells what was experienced during the experience.

The second step involves taking the common themes and writing descriptions that focus on the context or setting that may have influenced the experiences of the participants. These

descriptions are referred to as *imaginative variation* or *structural description* (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The descriptions were examined from a variety of perspectives (imaginative variations) in order to understand the structure of the experience, or the how (Creswell, 1994; Moustakas, 1994). In this way, each participant had a textural-structural description that later was combined with the textural-structural descriptions of the other participants (Moustakas, 1994).

Using these structural and textural descriptions, a composite description was written to get at the core, or *essence*, of the phenomenon. Thus, the commonalities of the participants' information were combined to give a clearer picture of the needs and wants during the first seven to ten years of teaching deaf and hearing impaired students in a special education setting.

During this process, I asked peers to check my translations to better ensure that my bias would not affect the responses of the participants. In addition, participants were asked to review their transcripts for accuracy and intent. Finally, the results were reviewed by peers and advisors to check for accuracy and bias.

After **the pilot testing** with three participants who were not involved in this research, I found the best way to conduct the interviews was to send a copy of possible interview questions to allow the participants time to prepare themselves for the interviews. On a day and time that was comfortable, participants shared their experiences that were saved in a file that included all the forms in the end, and I added the interview transcriptions after analyzing each of them. In the beginning, I had notes that I used as I translated each interview to create a transcription. Then, I listened intently and carefully to each audio recording until I became familiar with the words and events that each participant had shared. I gave each participant several days to process his experience, contacted him to clarify some information, and shared with each the script to ensure everything was correct.

Each participant received a transcription in Arabic and English with notes that I wrote during each interview. Then, I allowed several days for each interview script to be read by each participant to ensure that I had highlighted the important information the participant shared. These transcripts were analyzed individually, and a chart was created for each participant. Each chart had the three same general themes of Needs, Wants, and Current Support, and each theme contained similar and different subthemes, elements, and participant quotations. After inviting an Arab who speaks both Arabic and English to review the charts, I started **the cross-case analysis**.

First Cross-Case Analysis. After each participant's interview chart (case) was analyzed to identify themes, sub-themes and elements, all of the participants' interview charts were displayed on a wall. Then, a cross-case analysis identified similarities in sub-themes and elements to determine the common needs and wants of the participants along with similar insights into the process for orientation and ongoing professional development. Repeated terms, sub-themes and insights were organized with a large chart that contained the three themes-Needs, Wants, Current support- with the common subthemes and elements of all participants.(See Appendix D)

Second Cross-Case Analysis. The second cycle analysis looked deeply at each participant's interview chart to ensure the reliability of the first analysis but in a more detailed way than the first cross-case analysis. The transcriptions of each participant (case) were re-examined and notations were added to the cross-case sub-themes and elements from the first cross-case coding process to ensure that important information had not been omitted. During this stage of the cross-case analysis of sub-themes and elements, I determined that the common needs and wants of the participants melded together, but from the analysis, a determination could be made concerning whether, or not, the overarching and sub-questions of the research had been answered and implications made for the future. (See Appendix F)

Storing Data

Storing data was absolutely necessary to maintain the anonymity of the participants and protect the findings of the research. Throughout the data collection and analysis stages, the information gathered by the researcher was carefully stored in a locked cabinet or file in the office of the researcher's advisor or the principal investigator's office. In addition, according to Western Michigan University's HSIRB, all voice recordings were erased once the transcripts had been completed. In addition to protecting the physical copies of data, the electronic copies of the data were also protected. The most secure location for this was on the iCloud which was backed up to an external drive that was kept in the locked storage area

Overview of Trustworthiness

During the research process, the researcher was laying the groundwork for building trustworthiness of the research findings. According to Creswell and Poth (2018) and Merriam and Tisdell (2016), trustworthiness refers to validity and reliability. This is more difficult in qualitative research because there is no defined, scored measurement instrument, and thus, findings must rely on the researcher's coding and organizing of the responses. Trustworthiness in this phenomenon relies on the credibility, transferability, confirmability and dependability of the researcher's data collection and analysis procedures.

To summarize the meaning of these terms as explained by Creswell and Poth (2018) and Merriam and Tisdell (2016), credibility refers to how accurate the findings are, and the process of triangulation can be used to determine if the findings are credible. Transferability refers to how well the findings from the current research can transfer to other contexts, i.e. similar settings, populations and/or phenomena. One method used by researchers to enhance transferability is to use detailed description. Confirmability refers to the ability of the researcher to interpret the findings in the words of the participants and not from his/her own bias. To ensure

confirmability, the researcher used an audit that was checked throughout the data collection process and in the analysis of the data by allowing participants to review transcripts and results to determine accuracy. Dependability refers to whether, or not, the research can be duplicated by others and if the results would be consistent with the original study. When each of the elements of trustworthiness is met, the research done using qualitative methods can be considered of a high quality.

Trustworthiness in Collecting Data

The three areas of trustworthiness that I focused on during the data collection process were credibility, transferability and confirmability. This allowed me to ensure that the data collected was truly the reality of the experiences of special education teachers, that others can duplicate my research study, and that the data is accurate according to what each participant said and is not biased.

Credibility is making sure that the data collected is linked to the reality of the situation being studied (Shenton, 2004). The main check for credibility is triangulation (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015) or looking at the data from different points of view to ensure that it is consistent. During data collection, I used triangulation of the sources of data (Olivia, 2018) by including supervisors and teachers who work in public schools where inclusion is the basic special education model for the hearing impaired or in institutions where all students have special needs from deafness or extreme hearing impairments. I also included more than one supervisor in each school to ensure that their memories of the assistance offered by the school administration and other teachers was consistent. In addition to triangulation of settings, I asked colleagues to review my transcripts and notes (analyst triangulation) to perform a member check or respondent

validation (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015) and give feedback to ensure that I was consistent with the information I collected and how I recorded that information.

In order to assure that there is transferability, or external validity (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015), I used a process of in-depth examination of the data that included details related to where and when each interview occurred, the background of each participant, and information about each participant's school culture. Each interview was recorded, but during every conversation, I made additional notes regarding the participant's emotions and non-verbal actions that might relate to why certain responses were made. By adding additional information about the setting and context, it prevented generalizability (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015), but other researchers would be able to duplicate my research data collection process.

Finally, during the data collection process, confirmability was established. As transcripts and notes were created, copies were shared with each participant (Olivia, 2018; Shenton, 2004). Each participant was asked to review the transcripts and notes to ensure accuracy.

Phenomenological research must be based on the responses, or information, given by the participants and not on the experiences of the researcher. This is to reduce bias. Because of having experiences as a beginning teacher in a special education setting in Saudi Arabia, I did not want my experiences to affect the information shared by each participant during interviews. Therefore, I requested a colleague to review the transcripts and notes to check that I was not adding comments about my experiences (Shenton, 2004). Overall, these steps for confirmability reduced any bias in my research findings.

Delimitations and Limitations of the Study

This qualitative research on the phenomena of the support needed and wanted by new special education teachers of deaf and hearing impaired students and the support they received in their first ten years of teaching was affected by several variables. With any qualitative research

that collects data through an interview process, time affected the number of participants in the study (Creswell, 2013). In this study, only ten special education teachers of deaf and hearing impaired students were interviewed. This gained a deeper understanding of the needs and wants of these teachers in Saudi Arabia but would not allow for generalization to a larger population of teachers. The study was focused on only teachers with ten or fewer years of experience because these would be considered teachers who may require more assistance than a teacher with more years of experience. These teachers came from schools where the principal was accepting of the research process taking place in his school. In this way, the researcher could work to build positive relationships with the principals and teachers of the schools where special education services for deaf and hearing impaired students are offered. Qualitative research that uses interviews in a phenomenological approach can require extra time and effort (Creswell, 2013), but the richness of the stories and the findings provided a deeper understanding of the phenomena and the perception of those who live in that world. Even though the findings may not be generalized or replicated, they will tell the story of the participants and give insight and understanding of the perceived needs and wants of the new teachers, which can be examined and used to improve the support for new special education teachers of deaf and hearing impaired students in Saudi Arabia.

Limitations

Even though phenomenological research can give a deeper understanding of the participants' perception of a phenomenon, it is limited in several ways. First, it may be difficult to obtain permission from all principals of schools where special education is offered, or there may be a smaller population of new teachers in the year of the study because Saudi Arabia has put a hiring freeze on teachers. Another important limit may be connected to the participants'

ability to express their perceptions or feeling clearly for fear of insulting someone or of losing their job. To improve the information gathered, the researcher assured the participants that all data collected would be anonymous which helped the participant feel more comfortable as noted from their body language during the interview process (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In addition, the researcher may have had some bias toward the phenomenon because he has been in the position of a new special education teacher in Saudi Arabia and has preconceived ideas as to what would have made his experience as a new teacher easier and more productive (Creswell, 2013). It was extremely important to have participants cross check their transcripts, and ask colleagues to check findings in order to reduce bias. There was a small sample of participants, but a large amount of information to review which takes time and is labor intensive (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Even when allowing for extra time during the data analysis portion of the research, the data will not be generalizable (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This may limit creditability of how others such as policy makers view the findings. Even with the limitations of time intensity, sample size, researcher bias and generalizability of the data, the findings from phenomenological research can give a deeper insight into the experiences of special education teachers in Saudi Arabia.

Chapter 3: Summary

The methodology for this research was organized in order to collect data for improving the knowledge and skills of teachers of the deaf and hearing impaired in Saudi Arabia. The elements of a phenomenological study allowed the purposeful sampled population to share their experiences in teaching the deaf and hearing impaired students and the support they received during their first years of teaching. In order to better understand ways to enhance the knowledge and skills of these special education teachers, the researcher used semi-structured interviews to

understand when and if adequate assistance was given to them at the beginning of their teaching careers. The questions that were formulated for the interviews were open-ended to avoid bias and discrimination.

The researcher used a pilot research technique to ensure that the designed questions would gather the information that could help answer the research questions. During the research process, the researcher had to obtain approval from the Ministry of Education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. To adhere to Western Michigan University's Human Subject Institutional Review Board (HSIRB) requirements, confidentiality forms were signed by the participants in the study to protect their interests. Information collected during interviews was stored in a secure location during data collection and analysis.

The results of the research will be used to make recommendations to policymakers and other stakeholders in the education sector so they can better assist early career and current special education teachers who are hired to teach in existing institutions for special education of the deaf and profoundly hearing impaired and in public schools with special education programs for the hearing impaired. The analyzed data will determine what special education teachers need and want to improve their knowledge and skills in teaching deaf and hearing impaired students.

By taking special care in translating, transcribing and analyzing the interviews, the researcher worked to reduce delimitations and limitations in order to better understand the experiences of participants during their years of teaching. Following an analysis process using individual participant coding and cross-case analysis, a rich amount of data was identified that could answer the overarching and sub-questions of this research.

CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH FINDINGS

At the beginning of this research, it was anticipated that the participants would be teachers with five or fewer years of experience in either an institute for the deaf or a public school with a hearing impaired program. What was discovered was that Saudi Arabia had stopped hiring new teachers into these setting. Therefore, the participants have seven to ten years of experience. In light of this, this chapter will present the case descriptions developed from semi-structured interviews with ten teachers of the deaf and hearing impaired. Therefore, themes and sub-themes reflect a wide range of experiences including preservice courses and training, the challenges of starting a classroom because of a lack of basic skills and strategies, the ongoing training teachers felt they wanted, and the support given throughout their years of teaching. A brief highlight of each participant will be presented, while the cross-case analysis will highlight the commonalities and differences expressed.

Participants

Description of Sample

For this research, information was collected from ten special education teachers who met the following criteria: 1) Be a male special education teacher of the hearing-impaired in his first ten years of teaching deaf or hearing impaired students. 2) Hold a position in a special education deaf institute or in a public elementary school in Saudi Arabia.

Description of School Sites

Ten participants were drawn from each of two different sites that represent the two primary types of educational institutions in Saudi Arabia at which deaf and hard of hearing students are taught. Five were identified at an institute that serves students who are completely or

almost completely deaf. The students are from age four through all elementary levels. The Institute has many departments such as a unit of measurement and diagnosis. A local supervisor is responsible for supporting the special education teachers. According to the Special Education policy, the supervisor must observe and evaluate the teachers in their classrooms and during school activities. These five participants selected for the study were in their first ten years of teaching deaf students.

The second site was a public elementary school that provided programs for hard of hearing students. The five participants selected provided services in the regular education classroom. The special education program has a local special education supervisor who has the responsibility of ensuring that the teachers are working with the classroom teacher to provide the proper services to the hearing impaired students. Supervisors evaluate teacher performance every year and offer them support as needed. The five participants selected from this site had from seven to ten years of experience.

Background of Participants

Background information obtained on each participant is summarized in Table 2.

Table 2: Participant Background

Teacher	Type of Special Education program	Highest Degree attained	Years of Teaching
1	Deaf Institute	Bachelor of Special Education in Hearing Impairment; King Faisal University	10
2	Deaf Institute	Master of Special Education in Issues of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children in Pre-School; King Faisal University	9
3	Deaf Institute	Bachelor of Special Education in Hearing Impairment; King Saud University	10
4	Deaf Institute	Bachelor of Special Education in Hearing Impairment; King Faisal University	7
5	Deaf Institute	Bachelor of Special Education in Hearing Impairment; King Saud University	10
6	Hard of Hearing program	Bachelor of Special Education in Hearing Impairment; King Faisal University	8

Table 2 – continued

7	Hard of Hearing program	Bachelor of Special Education in Hearing Impairment; King Faisal University	9
8	Hard of Hearing program	Bachelor of Special Education in Hearing Impairment; King Faisal University	9
9	Hard of Hearing program	Bachelor of Special Education in Hearing Impairment; King Faisal University	10
10	Hard of Hearing program	Bachelor of Special Education in Hearing Impairment; King Saud University	10

Participants Profiles

The purposeful sample of 10 special education teachers had varying levels of teaching experience from seven years to ten years, but they were fairly new to teaching deaf and hearing impaired students, and none had more than ten years' experience teaching special education. All were teaching in the elementary level in Saudi Arabia.

Teacher One

The first participant was a graduate from King Feisal University, who said he loved and enjoyed teaching deaf and hearing impaired students in mathematics, and stated that he had been improving himself since he was a student at the university. He received a bachelor's degree in Special Education in Hearing Impairments, with ten years of experiences in teaching, the first five years of teaching was in a hard of hearing program attached in an elementary school. Then he moved to the current institute. Recently, he received an interpreter certification of The Deaf Association in Riyadh, and created a YouTube channel as a source for sign language to help his students learn and practice. In addition, he has presented some workshops for employees at public place such as the airport in the Al Madinah and the train station in Al-Ahsa

Teacher Two

The second teacher graduated from King Feisal University with a bachelor's degree in special education, and attended some courses in sign language that were not at the university. He had eight years of experience in teaching hearing impaired beginning in Tabuk city for two years in a hard of hearing program at the elementary level, where he had a unique experience. The school was in a small town and there were only four students of different levels of ages, knowledge and needs. Because this was a one-room school, the students were in one classroom with one in second-grade level and the rest in fourth-grade. He had only one general education teacher with a diploma in special education who helped him in beginning then he had to work alone with the four students. After two years, he moved to the current institute where he found many teachers with good teaching experience, so he had more help and support from them when teaching religion subjects to deaf students in fourth and sixth grade.

Teacher Three

The third participant has a bachelor's degree in special education from King Feisal University, and master's in special education from King Saud University, along with ten years of experience in teaching deaf and hearing impaired students. He was in a hard of hearing program in Muhayil city for two years then in the small town of Salwa for three years before he moved to current institute where he is teaching the first grade Arabic class. Through these experiences and relying on himself, he has become more skilled in teaching. A deaf employee helped him improve his teaching even more. Different supervisors in different school settings have given him a good knowledge of what the students from pre-kindergarten through 6th grade need.

Teacher Four

Participant Four graduated from King Feisal University with a bachelor's degree in special education in hearing impairments. He has seven years of experiences in teaching deaf

students from first grade through fifth grade in three different education settings which started in Jazan city for three years then moved to Hafar Al Batin for two years, and finally moved to the current institute. Currently, he teaches first grade reading and writing.

Teacher Five

Participant Five has a bachelor's degree in special education from King Saud University, and teaching experience in a hard of hearing program then he moved to his current position at an institute. The teacher has ten years of experience at the elementary level, and currently teaches first grade Arabic and mathematics.

Teacher Six

Participant number six has a bachelor's degree in Special Education in Hearing Impairments from King Feisal University in Al-Ahsa. He has eight years of experience in teaching hearing impaired students who have mild to moderate hearing loss. He is teaching reading in first grades in a hard of hearing program at an elementary School.

Teacher Seven

Teacher number seven has a bachelor's degree from King Feisal University in Special Education in Hearing Impaired with nine years of experience in teaching deaf and hearing impaired students. He started teaching in a deaf institute for three years then moved to the current hard of hearing program at an elementary school where each semester he teaches different subjects for grade one to grade four hearing impaired students.

Teacher Eight

Teacher number eight has a bachelor's degree from King Feisal University in Special Education in Hearing Impairments with nine years of experience in teaching deaf and hearing impaired students. He started teaching in Mecca City then moved to the current hard of hearing

program at an elementary school teaching to teach deaf and hearing impaired students first grade Arabic, and is now teaching third grade. This teacher has two noteworthy experiences in teaching deaf and hearing-impaired students: the first experience was in Mecca city where he had a good supervisor who helped him in the classroom by improving his knowledge and teaching skills by having him attend courses that met his needs when he was beginner teacher. This experience was in contrast to his second experience in the current hard of hearing program. During the interview, he noted the differences in the support between two programs. This teacher stated he wants to have the same or better level of support now that he had in Mecca, so that his deaf and hearing impaired students will receive appropriate support.

Teacher Nine

Teacher number nine has a bachelor's degree in Special Education in Hearing Impairments from King Saud University in Riyadh city with ten years of experience in teaching hearing impaired students. The teacher has three experiences in different cities under different education departments with similar hard of hearing programs attached to a public elementary school. His hearing impaired students were in separate classes from the general education students and are integrated only at breakfast time. Of his ten years of experience, the first three years were in Yanbu then in Khafji town for two years, and finally, he moved to the current elementary school.

Teacher Ten

Teacher number ten has a bachelor's in Special Education in Hearing Impairments from King Saud University with ten years of experience in teaching deaf and hearing impaired students. The first experience was in a deaf institute in Dammam city then he moved to the current hard of hearing program at an elementary school.

Data Collection

Location of Data Collection

This study was conducted in part in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and in part via online methods, including Skype and FaceTime. Each teacher choose the location for their interview, which meant some interviews occurred in their school, at a quiet location off campus, or in their home.

Methods of Data Collection

Each participant was informed about participation details such as choosing a pseudonym that represented his personality, choosing the best time for the interview in a private location, and selecting the dates that worked best for his convenience. If he did not reply within two days, I sent each a reminder email (Appendix G). I also emailed the participant a copy of my interview protocol and questions (Appendix H). because when I did the pilot study, I found that participants were better able to organize their thought regarding each question. Participants being familiar with the questions provided richer information during the interview. Some participants even gathered materials that were given to them during their orientation process, guidelines during meetings, or follow-up workshops during the first years of teaching to which to refer during the interview. It was important to gather information from each participant that represent what was offered by the administration and supervisors, and how this information or materials met the needs of the participant.

Data obtained during the interviews were collected using audio technology and transcribed using a transcription program. Because the participants were Arabic speakers, the transcription process required translation from Arabic to English then from English to a text

format. As part of this process, I asked a Ph.D. student at Western Michigan University who speaks Arabic and has an English bachelor's and master's degree to read each interview with me in two languages to ensure that the translation did not change the meaning of participants' information. After I collected and transcribed each interview, I emailed a transcription to each participant and asked them to provide feedback to check the accuracy of my interpretation.

Instrumentation

Phenomenology requires gathering in-depth information surrounding a single concept or idea (Creswell, 2008). Therefore, this research was centered on one-on-one, semi-structured interviews (Jamshed, 2014), and the set of interview questions were designed to open conversation with the participants. The participants were presented the basic questions with the interview protocol (Appendix H). In the beginning, the participants were a question that encouraged them to engage with me and feel comfortable. From there, the questions invited them to talk about the first days in their new teaching position, especially their successes and frustrations.

Additional questions encouraged the participants to talk about experiences that were problematic and how any problems were addressed. This was led into encouraging them to share the parts of their orientation and induction into special education settings that were positive and experiences where they needed assistance and what kinds of assistance would have been helpful. As follow-up, the participants were asked to specify the types of orientation and induction programs they feel would be helpful to other teachers who are new to special education. Finally, the participants were asked about how long they believed they would be motivated to continue teaching deaf and hearing impaired students.

Coding and Data Analysis

Prior to each interview, a file was created for each participant that included all their consent forms to which the interview transcriptions were added. Notes were taken that were used while analyzing each transcription. After listening repeatedly to each audio recording to become familiar with the words and events that each participant shared, the audio was transcribed. During each interview, notes had been taken and were now used when transcribing each participant's script. Each participant was sent the Arabic script to clarify the information, and each returned their script within two days with notes regarding the accuracy.

Each participant's script was translated into English. The translated scripts were read numerous times to ensure accuracy then the important information shared was highlighted and analyzed to create a chart for each participant. Each participant's chart represented major theme separated into subthemes related to needs, wants, and current support. On each participant's chart with themes, subthemes, and elements were added (Appendix D). After checking the interview scripts and charts, a colleague who was proficient in both Arabic and English reviewed the transcripts and charts for accuracy and bias before the cross-case analysis was begun.

To begin the cross-case analysis, all charts were hung on a wall and examined to identify repetition of ideas. Through this cross-case analysis, the themes of Preparation Program, Curriculum and Educational Aides, Supervisors Knowledgeable in Teaching Special Education, and Professional Development Courses and Workshops were identified (Appendix E).

Presentation of Themes, Sub-Themes and Elements

Teachers of deaf and hearing impaired students in Saudi Arabia have expressed their experiences related to the teacher preparation programs, entering their classrooms for the first

time, the assistance they received following their employment in either an institute for the deaf and hearing impaired or a regular public school that offers services the hearing impaired.

Experiences and ideas shared related to their basic needs to meet the expectations of special education teachers and frustrations during their first years of employment, the support they received from their special education supervisor and school administration, and what they felt they currently want in order to better meet the needs of this special population of students.

Though the initial examination of participant data focused on the themes of Needs, Current Support, and Wants, the cross-case analysis identified the more specific themes of Preparation Program, Curriculum and Educational Aides, Supervisors Knowledgeable in Teaching Special Education, and Professional Development Courses and Workshops. Within these themes, the sub-themes of needs, wants and current support were examined and specific elements and frequency of each element were recorded (Appendix I).

Theme 1: Preparation Program

As teachers of deaf and hearing impaired students in Saudi Arabia expressed their ideas regarding their experiences when entering their classrooms and the following years in either a special deaf and hearing impaired institute or a regular public school that offers services for hearing impaired students, thoughts shared referred to their basic needs related to frustrations during the first years of employment, the support they received from their special education supervisor and school administration, and what they felt they currently wanted to better meet the needs of this special population of students.

Preparation - Basic Challenges and Needs. Responses from teachers of hearing impaired students in both the institute setting and the general education school expressed some basic needs they would have liked to possess before being assigned their special education

classrooms. to better meet the deficits of their students. The first need expressed by eight of the participants related to knowledge in developing and examining Individual Education Program (IEP) goals with a multi-disciplinary team, and in using the goals to develop and implement lessons in the classroom. The second need expressed by six of the participants related to receiving more instruction and practice in using sign language for teaching and communicating during activities. Other needs related to the fact that the teachers of the hearing impaired are assigned to teach different content areas and grade levels each semester, plus they felt a lack of knowledge in assessing students to determine their level of learning or improvement. The teacher with the most experience and highest level of training summed up the ability to meet the expectations of beginning teachers as the need for a strong preparation and induction program.

Individual Education Program: Eight special education teachers shared their experience in using Individual Education Programs (IEPs), since they were asked to create and use IEPs only when the supervisors requested these because the parents asked to have IEPs or when the teachers found students were having difficulties in learning. The teachers could not use the IEPs effectively and expressed that they needed training.

Guidance and training in developing and using IEPs was need. Teacher One shared, “I use Individual Education Programs only for students with a reduced level of knowledge, and I do this in a personal effort; no one asked me to use it. I learned that while at the university, but I did not get any courses or support in using them.” Also, Teacher Five was trying to use Individual Education Plans with his students, but he did not know how to design them and said, “I had a student with multiple disabilities, and I could not deal with him even in assessing his performance because he was lower than other students in the same class. We needed knowledge in diagnosing behavior and understanding how to deal with it.” Teacher Six said, “Each

curriculum has general education goals designed for normal students. Some of the goals may match the deaf or hard-of-hearing student, but not all of them so we need a plan to define the standards and goals for each student.”

Often teachers shared different degrees of the usefulness of IEPs. Teacher Three used the Individual Education Plans (IEPs), but expressed he needs training in using them effectively because he said, “Yes, I use them, but I do not rely on them. I do them because the administration requires it of me, but I do not care much about them. I have better strategies.” In that same line of thinking, Teacher Seven mentioned that he does not use the Individual Education Plans because “I have not been asked to design them.” Similarly, Teacher Eight mentioned, “I tried the individual plan once, but the supervisor doesn't ask for them except in the case when the student’s parents request an IEP. IEPs are not required.”

Development and use of IEPs come from a team approach. “There must be a group to assist the teachers in setting the Individual Educational Programs that keep students on track” (Teacher Ten). But, throughout the interviews and conversations, the special education teachers expressed the need for training in using IEPs with a multidisciplinary team. The teachers did not seem to understand the purpose or significance of having ongoing IEPs for each student or the value in updating them yearly with a multidisciplinary team that is expected to meet with the students, special education teachers and parents frequently to provide an appropriate education for the students.

Sign Language - Communication Skills Needs. Six teachers felt the need for a preparation program at the university to gain knowledge and practice for their communication language skills before starting their own classrooms. Participants expressed that the preparation at the university was not sufficient. The teachers who had studied sign language by themselves or

had a relationship with a deaf person expressed fewer needs, but all participants expressed some need for a university program that prepared them for communicating with students and their parents. The university's preparation communication program "had deficiencies in developing sign language. I learned at the university the sign language for numbers, colors and letters, and very simple words, but teachers of the hearing impaired have a very simple knowledge of sign language when they leave the university. If he does not use signs or do personal diligence, he will lose the language" (Teacher One).

The need for sign language skill was realized by Teacher Two who sought training. "We had one sign language class before starting our internship. This class was not taught in stages of development. We should have sign language class every semester after the first year of the program. For example, after I transferred to the current school, I met a supervisor who was teaching a course that I attended and enjoyed. I benefited from the course that was presented and wished it had been offered in the university's program in the form of a subject." Teacher Six had to work by himself to improve his sign language to communication with the students appropriately. "My university studies consisted of eight semesters. I learned sign language in the seventh semester during a unit course of two or three hours in the semester, but the professor was not familiar with sign language. So,... the professor was trying to teach us in the best way available by using videos and other sources to learn sign language."

Sign language is considered necessary when teaching content in a classroom of hearing impaired students, but the sign vocabulary goes beyond basic sign taught at the university as expressed by Teacher Eight.

At first, I taught third-grade science, which was challenging even for general education teachers, ... As much as possible, I tried to do the basic activities that would benefit the

students. I asked for help from fellow teachers, but each one of them was having the same problem. They requested that supervision and the special education department assist them in finding a solution for teaching students in a science. We finally asked the general education teachers who had a special education diploma to help us with some of the difficulties we faced and try to simplify the information for students, but some abstract concepts are difficult for students to learn.”

These participants expressed the need for a preparation program that offered training in using sign language for deaf students. When teachers wanted to improve sign language, they needed to participate in some activities that built a relationship with the deaf community. The deaf community has club activities such as sports that provide services for the deaf after school. Because the institute and hard of hearing programs do not have a schedule of activities with the deaf community, the teachers participated in the deaf community’s activities to improve their sign language. Teacher Seven mentioned, “The first thing we need to have is activities such as summer activities with the deaf community so we can benefit in a personal way. We hope to mix more with the deaf each day of the week.”

Beginning teachers often relied on colleagues. “The reception was awesome for me when I started my formal work. I was afraid at the beginning, but there was an old teacher who eased the awe and stress, and assured me that the situation was good and that he would help me with anything I needed, and they would be with me. But, the school did not have a preparatory program for me as a new teacher of the hearing impaired. There was nothing in either a course or an introductory program. At the beginning of the year, it was just the normal preparation of the school for students" (Teacher Two).

Additional Preparation Needs. Having proficiency in sign language was not the only barrier in the area of communication. Teacher Five expressed the need for training in diagnosing and dealing with students with more than one disability. “I faced a student who had multiple disabilities, and I could not deal with him even in performing an evaluation because of my lack of knowledge in dealing with him, and his level was very low compared to his peers. In this sense, we need knowledge in diagnosing behavior and knowledge for dealing with multiple disabilities because we need to know the appropriate education plan for their capabilities.”

Special education teachers who teach students with hearing aids noticed that the students could improve their hearing and pronunciation (speaking). Teachers who had students with hearing aids felt the need to collaborate with speech-language pathologists to improve a student’s ability for speaking. “We need a speech specialist for every ten hard-of-hearing students to improve their language level; meaning that we need roughly three pathologists. Unfortunately, our hearing impaired students do not receive assistance from a pathologist until sixth grade, and their pronunciation is very poor” (Teacher Ten).

The challenges and difficulty level can be different from one teacher to another based on the knowledge the teacher had gained before entering the classroom. The teachers understand that they need to improve themselves and expressed their need for more in-depth training so they could better assess student needs and design lesson plans that met those needs. Teacher Ten said, “We need knowledge and clear mechanisms that help the teacher teach well.”

Preparation Program – Current Situation. The participants expressed that the present preparation programs included university courses and pre-service experiences in addition to any inductions or orientation programs offered by the institute or school. Regarding university classes, participants expressed the need for more instruction in communicating with the deaf,

especially sign language courses, preparation in teaching a wide variety of content areas, and instruction in using IEPs so they could make a smoother transition from the university classes to the classroom. Participants felt that procedures used during their internship were not adequate. In addition, when entering a new teaching assignment, there was little or no orientation or induction program offered by the school or supervisors.

Present University Preparation Courses: Three special education teachers expressed the need for improving skills and knowledge in communication with the deaf. The teachers shared their experiences in the field beginning with their internships. The greatest need expressed was to improve their skills and knowledge in communicating. They did not expect to start teaching with the highest level of communication language, but they did feel they needed enough skills that would allow them to communicate with the students in appropriate ways.

I graduated from the College of Education at King Saud University in Riyadh. The first two years were a comprehensive study of the subjects of special education in general and were in the form of theoretical lectures. In the first half of the fourth year, we were in a specialized study on the path of teaching students with a hearing disability. It was often theoretical lectures, and I was not asked to visit the educational field except maybe twice. In the last half of the year, we had a full practical application in schools. University study was 80% more theoretical than practical, and when we got into our teaching positions, we discovered weakness in practical matters and weak support. (Teacher Five).

Overall, there seemed to be a disconnect between university courses and fieldwork. Teacher Nine mentioned, “It has difficult communicating with hard-of-hearing students. There is a difference between learning everything about hearing impairments in lecture classes at the

university without field implementation. What we learned from the university was not enough, not at the level of the student needs.”

Present Situation Regarding Internships: Internships should be time when university students can observe teachers and students to experience how classrooms can be managed effectively. Then, the pre-service student needs to become the teacher and work with hearing impaired students to practice and learn by experience. Two teachers expressed the present internship program lacked opportunities for observing and practicing that effected their performance when teaching in their own classrooms. “It is true that in the semester before the internship, I was in the classroom watching in the primary institute. The semester of the internship was in the intermediate institute of deaf students, and I had a hard time in dealing with students and teaching content without support from the university and the school. I thought I would have another course to improve my skills before I started my official job, which did not happen... I remember in the internship phase when I was not given support. They just asked me to teach students without any help, and the students were in the middle school” (Teacher Two).

Internships need to focus on hearing impaired teaching and learning, but that does not always happen. “During the university period, we were in the internship phase of each program for the hearing impaired in a public school and asked to supervise students with general education instead of those attending a class in which a hearing impaired teacher may learn the teaching methods for deaf and hard of hearing students” (Teacher Eight).

New teachers need knowledge and practice in teaching content to the deaf and hard of hearing. Teacher Six shared, “Existing prep programs are insufficient. ... Students from the university specialize in teaching, whether hearing impaired or deaf. They should be prepared to teach the subjects such as the Arabic in a way that explains the material for the deaf or hard of

hearing. I have experience in the deaf program but without specialization. I try to adapt and find solutions that can be transferred to the hearing impaired program.”

Present Preparation for Teaching Content Using Sign Language. When entering a position, there are difficulties in teaching content of the curriculum using sign language. When entering a new school, Teacher One shared a lack of preparation. “Of course, I taught math without taking courses to teach students with hearing impairment and without knowing what was required of me to teach them.” Currently, to meet expectations, Teacher Eight “asked peer teachers to support me in teaching the content, but each one was having the same problem. Every teacher had asked for supervision and the Department of Special Education to offer a solution for teaching students content material.”

Another missing element during university preparation related to learning and practicing sign language. Teacher Seven mentioned, “My story was in my first year at a deaf institute, and my sign language was very weak. I wished I had better sign language so I could better communicate with the deaf but I did not have any program to enhance my sign language” When the teacher was transferred from the school setting to a deaf institute, he was not provided a program to improve his sign language to communicate and teach the students. During this situation, the teachers rely on any teachers who has good sign language or rely on themselves to improve their skills.

The current preparation programs for teachers of the hearing impaired do not adequately align with the assigned positions after graduation. “I taught math without taking courses to teach students with hearing impairments and without knowing what was required of me to teach them... I did not have a preparatory program before entering the classroom.” When teachers

found they lacked knowledge or skills, they began to explore what they still needed and how to obtain it.

Preparation Program – Wants. After some reflection, the participants were able to express what they wanted new teachers of hearing impaired students to possess when entering their classrooms. The main want focused on programs that provided more training in strategies using sign language for teaching content areas. This included training for assessing and diagnosing students and improving students' articulation. In addition, the desire for using IEPs was expressed. Overall, these experienced teachers wanted incoming teachers to be prepared to identify and meet the needs of students, communicate and work with other professionals, and interact with and guide the families of the hearing impaired students.

Desire for Preparation for Instruction. Being properly prepared during university courses and internships to teach a variety of subjects with teaching strategies designed for the hearing impaired was expressed by participants. Several felt that preparation programs in special education should screen special education personnel to ensure they have the knowledge and skills derived from practice of scientifically based special education research. These types of skills are needed to be successful in serving children with special needs.

In relation to wanting more training, Teacher Two shared his desire to teach the deaf and hearing impaired students content information with more appropriate special education strategies. The teacher shared how he improved his knowledge and skills in teaching the hearing impaired students by relying on himself to improve his performance, but he wanted more training from his university programs. One of his solutions was to receive training in strategies to teach content from general education teachers because they were prepared to teach a specific subject. "I noticed that a Sudanese teacher who specialized in mathematics had a diploma in

Special Education, and he was creative so the students benefited. Of course, he was better than me in mathematics because I learned only the basic principles of mathematics” (Teacher Two).

A desire for a stronger preparation program was mentioned by Teacher Four. “There was no preparatory program to confirm my readiness to teach. They only asked me to enter the classroom without training or any program. Even when I transferred to a new school, I was not offered any preparatory program for the subject that I would be teaching, so I wish there had been formal preparation with experienced teachers or supervisors in teaching the content I was assigned.” Teacher Nine added, “At the university level, we did not receive classes in our bachelor program to teach specific curricula for the hearing impaired at the elementary level. At the university, we learned teaching methods to teach general education students and made a study plan for those students. When we started working in the field, we were not trained in how to teach students who were hard of hearing or deaf, so we need training in teaching students with hearing impairments by incorporating clear and scientific methods.”

Teachers want communication skills, especially sign language, required to teach specific subjects. Teacher Five expressed, “The teacher must be proficient in sign language for teaching different subjects in order to be able to correctly communicate the information to students.” The desire for content specific sign language was supported by Teacher Ten. “Teachers should have actual training in sign language, modern educational resources, scientifically researched methods, and how to obtain assistance from specialists in providing educational methods that help students in the educational process.”

Teacher Seven expressed the desire for training by experienced teachers in specific subjects. “In the hard of hearing program, new teachers should be supported by an experienced teacher of more than 20 years. At the institute, there are teachers who have served more than 20

years, and I wish they had helped us. But, unfortunately, their support was insufficient because it was informal support and not ongoing.”

Desire for Additional Training in Assessing, Diagnosing and Rehabilitating Students.

One of the elements missing during university training and internships, but desired by participants, was identifying student needs.

The problem at the beginning is the lack of diagnosis and rehabilitation knowledge in our training. We are weak in terms of auditory strengthening, ... so we faced difficulties in dealing with students because of the lack of providing them with appropriate educational programs. We also have hearing impaired students who have intellectual disabilities or autism. In addition, parents have problems with the services provided to them to help reduce difficulties and challenges. I have distinguished students, and the reason is sometimes that their capabilities are high, and sometimes the parents enter and take care of them. We face embarrassment sometimes because parents are better than we are in teaching and communicating information, so we benefit from them in class activities to help other students. (Teacher Ten)

Training in rehabilitating students who have the benefit of hearing aids was mentioned “For example, students who have received a cochlear operation do not receive training well, which causes difficulties in distinguishing between words so they require continual pronunciation training. Therefore, teachers must be trained in activating hearing aids and teaching pronunciation to hard-of-hearing students” (Teacher Five). “We have deficiencies in the basics of some hearing impairments, or a lack of knowledge of the characteristics of the deaf and the aids they use. We want training in the use of students' hearing aids and technology that suit

their needs. Some aids and technology that are considered ineffective may be effective for some teachers, but I need better ones” (Teacher Eight).

Desire for Additional Skills for Interacting with other Professionals and Families.

Teamwork is needed in order to meet the needs of the hearing impaired. Skills to improve interaction between the special education multidisciplinary team members and parents must be developed. “It is preferable that the teacher has a team that supports the shortcomings of the teacher and shares the work with parents. The new teacher needs to work with a specialized team that helps him in providing students with the appropriate educational services, and helps the new teacher work with parents to maintain student performance.”

Preparation programs are important to ensure that children with special needs have the appropriate special education services. Universities can provide pre-service knowledge and experiences and the school staff can provide introductory programs to ensure that teachers have the knowledge and skills to identify student needs, implement effective services, and teach using strategies effective for the hearing impaired, classroom-based techniques, and interventions to ensure appropriate student achievement. Through the data shared by these special education teachers of the hearing impaired, there are weaknesses in the preparation programs at the universities, during internships and when teachers begin their positions, which led the participants to express their desires for stronger preparation programs that can better meet the needs of teachers of hearing impaired students while supporting their families.

In short, the preparation currently provided by universities and sites where pre-service teachers have internships are not in-depth enough to provide the basic needs and wants of these teachers of the hearing impaired. The courses and experiences to develop sign language to communicate with students and teach content areas, a stronger program to assess needs,

strategies for teaching the hearing impaired, and knowledge of technology could strengthen the preparation of these special education teachers.

Theme 2: Curriculum, Teaching Materials and Technology for the Hearing Impaired

Special education teachers shared the difficulties and challenges they faced when they started teaching because of the variety of subjects and levels they were assigned. The teachers were provided with a curriculum designed for general education students, but there were no expectations of learning for each subject, which led teachers to express their need to have a curriculum and materials designed for deaf and hearing-impaired students.

Curriculum, Teaching Materials and Technology for the Hearing Impaired - Needs.

Teachers expressed a frustration in determining what to teach in each subject at each grade level. As mentioned previously, the teachers were not trained on, required to use, and assisted with creating IEPs, which led to the need for a comprehensive curriculum for deaf and hearing impaired students. Different thoughts regarding the curriculum and teaching materials were expressed based upon the teacher's experience and teaching environment.

Need for Preschool Education Materials. The participants in the study taught at the elementary level which could include preschool and kindergarten along with grades one through five. Teachers responsible for preschoolers noticed the weakness in communication. Because of this deficiency, they expressed the need for having preschool education materials for the hearing impaired students to ensure that they would begin elementary school with better knowledge and skills to communicate using sign language and other techniques. "When students come to us in primary school, it is often with zero language, cognitive, behavioral, and other skills. Students and their parents should be provided with pre-school materials before they reach primary school" (Teacher Three).

The need for preschool materials to improve student communication and reduce some difficulties and challenges for teachers when students enter school was emphasized by Teacher Five. "The student who comes from the home at the age of four years has a very little sign language, and sometimes faces a new teacher, or teachers, who are weak in sign language... Also, the parents have a weak knowledge of what their child needs and how to deal with him." It was believed that this lack of communication skills contributed to a weakness in reading and writing of hearing impaired students from the first level through his eight years. "Hearing-impaired students share poor reading and writing. I used to think that only deaf people face difficulties in reading and writing, but I think this is because of the lack of curriculum [at the early levels]" (Teacher Six).

Access to a preschool curriculum and materials could assist teachers in meeting student needs. "The curricula needs to be designed for the deaf so we can make a clear individual plan for teaching subject matter that can be adapted to student needs [and begin before they come to primary school]" (Teacher Seven).

Need for a Curriculum That Meets Students' Needs. A preschool curriculum that includes teaching sign language for students and their families was just the beginning of the curricular needs. Teachers expressed their need to have a curriculum and materials designed for hearing impaired students at not only the early childhood level but through the elementary level. Most students did not receive preschool programs at home or hearing education materials with their parents to gain sign language appropriate for the deaf or hearing impaired. The teachers noticed that the deaf or hearing impaired students with good communication language had a family members who was deaf, or parents who took care of them. The parents who care for their children rely on themselves to improve their children's ability to communicate rather than just

the teachers and the deaf community. Even when students had some support with communication, the teachers expressed problems with teaching the general education curriculum to the hearing impaired students. Basically they needed a curriculum that would meet the students' needs and provide teachers with appropriate materials for each subject. Teacher Seven said, "The existing curricula are general education curricula. The teacher of the hearing impaired does not have materials for teaching each subject. The students do not have materials so they can practice and learn in school and at home with parents."

Need for Sign Language Support for Students and Teachers. The development of a curriculum seemed to begin with including strategies and materials to improve communication skills. A sign language curriculum for each stage of development for students and teachers could facilitate planning and teaching. Teachers need sign language not only for themselves but also so children and their parents can improve their communication skills and improve student learning. This curriculum would include a sign language dictionary for each subject. "Providing a dictionary that simulates terminology in each curriculum area, such as the vocabulary for the oceans, should be provided with a specialized guide. The teacher can then use the dictionary to develop concepts in each content area, and it can be a reference. With repetition, the teacher and students will learn the appropriate sign language" (Teacher Four).

A curriculum that provides sign language for each subject could decree difficulties and challenges.

In my first year, I was surprised that the curriculum was not designed for students with hearing impairments but was the curriculum for general education that was supported with pictures to help in teaching deaf but was not designed for them. Summarizing the general education curriculum in order to meet the communication levels of the deaf

requires a lot of effort to focus the curriculum so that it suits the students and this takes away from the time a teacher of the hearing impaired could be teaching. In addition, it is difficult to match the students' disabilities and students' skills because their disabilities demand a special adaptation of the curriculum. From my experience, we need to have sign language for each curriculum at all stages" (Teacher Ten).

Need for a Curriculum with Teaching and Learning Materials for Each Subject. As the examination of transcripts progressed, it became evident that the need for a written curriculum that teachers could reference included developing language for communicating to developing language that could be used in each content area. In addition, the teachers often referred to their struggles in teaching content areas at every level of primary school.

Teachers expressed difficulties in teaching students using the general education curriculum because it did not include expectations of learning for students with multiple impairments.

For the subject I teach..., I find it difficult to teach the general curriculum to students with hearing impairments because students sometimes other disabilities besides the hearing disability. Also, sometimes they have a low degree of intelligence and, this increases the difficulty in teaching... I repeat many curricular concepts that fit their needs. The general curriculum needs to explain how the concepts can be adjusted to suit students with hearing impairment... We also need hearing aids for students and techniques that suit their needs" (Teacher Eight).

At first it seemed that once a curriculum was provided with vocabulary and concepts appropriate for the hearing impaired, the problem would be solved, but Teacher Three expressed needing a curriculum that included learning expectation for the hearing impaired students

because there is a “lack of agreement in education regarding teaching a special curriculum that addresses the needs of the deaf and hard of hearing.”

Special education teachers have expressed the desire to teach students using a curriculum that guides teaching and learning by providing teachers with the appropriate teaching materials for each subject. Teacher Seven said, “The existing curricula are for general education. The teacher does not have materials for teaching specific subjects. The students do not have materials so they can practice exercises and learn at home with parents.”

In addition, Teacher Nine expressed not only the need for a more comprehensive curriculum, but the need for new hearing aids and technology. “The tools available are very simple, but we do not have knowledge in using them or in how to deal with them. We need hearing aids for students and special tools along with training in their use and training in how to benefit from them.” Therefore, the need for a comprehensive curriculum with grade level expectations and materials along with appropriate hearing technology are needed to assist teachers.

Curriculum, Teaching Materials and Technology for the Hearing Impaired –
Current Situation. The special education teacher shared the current situation of teaching using the general education curriculum and the difficulties and challenges they faced when teaching hearing impaired students. The participants expressed the fact that there is currently no curriculum for the hearing impaired. The special education teachers of the hearing impaired work to plan lessons based on student needs, which means adapting the general education curriculum to fit the students’ needs. But, the general education curriculum and materials do not meet the needs of the hearing impaired.

Current Knowledge of the Subject Content. Being expected to teach students using the general education is one factor, but having enough content knowledge to teach a variety of subjects is another problem. “I started teaching mathematics without taking courses for teaching students with hearing impairments and without knowing what was required of me to teach them because the curriculum is designed for students of the general curriculum and is not designed for students with auditory disabilities. I did not know where to start teaching the curriculum and what criteria I must achieve by the end of the term” (Teacher One). “Sometimes, I have difficulty understanding the subject so that I can explain it to students.” (Teacher Five).

Teachers have access to general education curriculum but no standards or expectations for hearing impaired students. “Each curriculum has general education goals designed for normal students. Some of the criteria may match the deaf or hard-of-hearing student, but not all of them, which means that teachers need to define the standards and goals for each student” (Teacher Three). Teacher Four mentioned, “When I began teaching, I taught all the subjects in a fifth grade. In the beginning, the curriculum was better than now. The curriculum changed almost a year ago... the new curricula has no standards.” “I need clarification on how the curriculum can be summarized and adjusted for students with hearing impairments” (Teacher Eight).

The current lack of a curriculum that includes specified standards and appropriate teaching strategies for the hearing impaired makes it more difficult for teachers who do not feel they have enough knowledge of content areas. Teacher Four summarized the difficulties in teaching the current general curriculum that does not have standards or learning expectations that clarify what or how teachers should teach. “I shared with the supervisor the difficulties in teaching students using the general curriculum. The supervisor was cognitively good, skilled, and knew the students’ weaknesses and the importance of teachers to have the ability to teach

subject content... I was teaching the multiplication lesson and discovered that students did not know addition or subtraction until I repeated it many times because the curriculum did not suit students. I have to teach the curriculum required by the ministry.” The teacher went on to express the lack not only in the appropriate curriculum but also in keeping the students at grade level. Teachers want to improve academic achievement for their hearing impaired students, but are having a difficult time with the current curriculum.

Current Ineffective Special Education Technology Aids. Discussion of a curriculum for the hearing impaired led to the current lack of appropriate technology for the hard-of-hearing students. Teachers in the hard of hearing program at the public school shared the ineffective special education auditory technology and expressed that they should be provided with the newest hearing aids that meet the students' academic needs. “The aids and technology that are considered ineffective by one teacher may be effective for some teachers, but I need better ones” (Teacher Eight). To explain the current situation, Teacher Ten mentioned, “There are no suitable resources for the curriculum and for students, even in terms of the diversity of technological aids through which it raise the level of students and help them learn.”

The current desire to have the proper tools for teaching was expanded beyond the curriculum and technological aides when Teacher Seven expressed there was the lack of teacher handbooks and student materials. “The existing curricula are for general education, and the teacher does not have a handbook to teach the subject while the students do not have exercise materials so the students can practice at home with parents. Everything must be made by the teachers based on the students' needs.”

The discussions of the current general education curriculum and the preparation program to teach a variety of content at different grade levels helped clarify why the participants could

define what teachers coming into the deaf institute and public school hearing impaired programs needed. The more the teachers shared the needs of new teachers, the more those needs became current wants of these teachers who had seven to ten years of teaching experience.

Curriculum, Teaching Materials and Technology for the Hearing Impaired –

Wants. Special education teachers shared the difficulties and challenges they faced during their experiences in teaching the deaf and hearing impaired because they lacked a curriculum with learning standards materials that match the needs of the deaf and hearing impaired students. In addition, the teachers had difficulties teaching the subject content and expressed their lack of knowledge in identifying essential skills and concepts for each student in each subject.

According to the teachers, most students did not have the IEPs that could address the difficulties and challenges in teaching the students. To reduce the deficits in the area of curriculum, teaching materials and technology, the teachers expressed their wants.

Desire for Materials and Curriculum for Each Specific Subject and Grade Level. The most notable need that the teachers expressed related to teaching multiple subjects at a variety of grade levels was a hearing impaired curriculum that would reduce their difficulties and challenges when teaching content. To address this need, the teachers expressed their desire for a curriculum and materials for each grade level and educational aids to facilitate teaching and learning.

This began with needing the appropriate materials. Teacher One expressed the desire to have materials for each specific subject. “Because the curriculum is designed for general education students, it was not designed for students with hearing impairments. Also, I do not know what I should teach the students because the curriculum and materials [must be] adapted for deaf students.” Teacher Three and others mentioned that “we need sign language dictionaries

for each stage of the deaf and hard-of-hearing students along with the special curriculum for each subject. Each curriculum needs manuals for students to learn at home." Then, Teacher Seven expressed the desire to "add sign language to the curriculum for each subject at each educational stage for deaf students from the school stages from preschool through entering the university."

With the availability of a written curriculum and appropriate materials, Teacher Eight expressed it would meet his desire to have standards for teaching each subject and "clarification on how the curriculum can be summarized and adapted to students with hearing impairments."

Desire for Hearing Aids and Equipment. Just meeting the desire for a curriculum and teaching materials would not complete the wants of the participants. There was a desire for hearing aids and equipment.

I have been working as a teacher in this institute for two years, and I have not found suitable teaching aids for my students. The problem is we have mismanagement and poor organization. What happens is when the Education Department sends educational aids to the institute during the summer or the end of the school year, the principal takes the educational aids and puts them in the school storage without informing the teachers. By chance, I met the warehouse employee and asked him to allow me to go with him and search for something that would be of benefit in teaching my students. I was surprised and amazed at the amount of old educational aids that are not useful these days but had not been presented to previous teachers. Still, we have them because they were not used and will not meet my needs. We need a means for teachers to request the appropriate technological aids and receive them. (Teacher Three)

With new equipment and aids came additional wants to learn how to use new hearing aids and equipment. "The tools available are very simple, but we do not know how to use them

and how to deal with them. We need hearing aids for students and special tools for them, but we need training in their use and how to apply them to our teaching” (Teacher Nine).

Desire for Standards for Teaching Each Subject with Instructional Materials. There were a number of reasons the participants wanted a comprehensive curriculum for the deaf and hearing impaired. “Each curriculum must have a clear plan to help the teacher know what he is required to teach and work on with students. With this knowledge, the teacher can design a plan that touches student needs and meets academic expectations. This would be especially helpful when detailed with the tasks required of the teacher... I think if there is a special curriculum for the deaf that defines the goals, standards and criteria that are appropriate, it will be better” (Teacher Six). The desire for clear standards was supported by Teacher Eight who expressed that “I need a clarification on how the curriculum can be... adjusted to students with hearing impairment.”

Desire for Sign Language Books for Kids. A specific curriculum the participants wanted developed was for teaching sign language. Teachers expressed their desire for sign language books for deaf kids so they could learn sign language at each stage and for each subject area that could prepare kids for the next grade. In this way, when the deaf students entered a class, they would understand the vocabulary and the topics of the class. “Deaf people need sign language brochures for each subject in order to have a larger amount of words, definitions, and concepts for each subject. These brochures should be developed over time and be of benefit to the students and the families” (Teacher One).

Desire for Visual Learning Sources for Each Subject. Deaf students must rely on senses other than hearing when learning. Teacher Four expressed the desire for visual learning sources for each subject. “I have tried to ask a colleague who teaches the same subject for

teaching ideas, but they all have the same problems, and everyone strives in his own way. I found YouTube clips of sign language, especially for teaching the Quran, but in general, the educational aids are limited, and all teachers suffer from different needs. The visual and auditory teaching aids need to be added to the curricula for deaf people, and it is preferable for each curriculum to be supported by educational hearing aids that help teachers teach appropriately because students rely heavily on visual aids.”

The adapting of the general education curriculum was high on the minds of the participants. That adaptation would include specifying appropriate teaching and learning strategies, additional knowledge for teaching a variety of subjects at different grade levels, materials for teachers, students and families, and technology that will facilitate learning. If teachers had access to an appropriate curriculum and support, they would feel less anxious about their teaching assignments and more able to meet the needs of their students.

Theme 3: Support from Knowledgeable Educational Personnel

The conversations with the participants from both the institute for the deaf and the public school hard-of-hearing programs indicated that they wanted assistance from a variety of special education professionals. The key was that the professionals must be knowledgeable about not only special education but specifically, the hearing impaired. As these teachers shared their needs, the current situation and what they wanted, it became evident that the support could come from their special education supervisor, administrators, experienced teachers, university instructors, and other knowledgeable professionals with experience at teaching hearing impaired students.

Support from Knowledgeable Educational Personnel – Needs. Special education teachers mentioned the difficulties and the challenges they have faced and still are facing

because of the schools' system for assigning students to teachers each semester. In the institution, Teachers can be asked to teach a different grade level of students and varied subject matter each semester, but there were difficulties and challenges in teaching the hearing impaired students without support or preparation before teaching the subject. An example would be that one semester a teacher may have third grade level students and be required to teach sign language, reading and writing. The next semester, the teacher may have a different grade level of students and teach only science or mathematics which have more difficult abstract concepts. Having this constant change in levels of students and subject matter requires having additional support from supervisors.

Most of the teachers shared that they did not have supervisors who mentored, guided, and improved them in classroom teaching. The supervisors focused more on administrative matters than on teachers and student learning. The participants who worked in the institute shared that they had some support in the classroom from special education teachers with more than ten years of experience in teaching content to deaf students. But, the participants from the general education settings who worked with hard-of-hearing students taught a wider range of students and all subjects, so they often went to the general education teachers for support with specific subjects rather than wait for a supervisor. No matter the setting, the participants expressed needing support for teaching the content of subject matter for multiple grade levels. All the participants expressed the need to improve their knowledge and skills, to meet the deaf and hearing impaired students.

Need for Mentoring and Assistance in the Classroom. Regarding mentoring and assistance in the classroom environment, six teachers expressed that as new teachers, they did not have enough support from the supervisors to meet expectations and adjust teaching strategies

to the academic content for varying academic levels of students. The teachers mentioned the need for ongoing mentoring and assistance in classrooms that could come from a variety of sources.

The teachers felt a need to have someone who knew what and how they were teaching. Teacher One said, "There is no follow-up. For example, the supervisor or principal of the school should enter to follow-up and write notes or thank the teacher for the effort in the event that my work is correct. In the event that I am successful, the supervisor or school director may need me to train the rest of my colleagues so everyone may benefit and develop their skills in the classroom. The supervisor must have knowledge of the sign dictionary and how to teach and communicate with students so that he can support the teacher and raise their professional level." Only if the someone knows the teacher can they give the appropriate support to improve teaching and learning.

At the same time, the participants wanted that support to come from an experienced educator. Teacher Three who expressed the need for mentoring and assistance in the classroom environment mentioned, "Most supervisors I have noticed have less than my level of knowledge in terms of experience. In my experience, the supervisors have not mentored teachers with follow up and support. The problem is the selection of supervisors does not focus on high standards and professionalism to provide appropriate support for teachers of the deaf or hearing impaired. According to my experience in more than one education department, I have noticed that supervisors focus only on administrative procedures." The need for knowledgeable assistance is very strong.

Need for Rich Knowledge and Skills in Teaching Deaf and Hearing Impaired Students. Participants felt strongly about their need for continuous support from professionals

who not only know special education, but who have experience with the hearing impaired. Four participants shared their difficulties and challenges meeting teacher expectations because they needed support in teaching content. While they had different degrees of support, some relied on themselves and colleagues to overcome the difficulties and challenges in different areas of teaching content. Overall, the teachers expressed their need to have support from supervisors with rich knowledge and skills in teaching hearing impaired students.

Teacher One loves and enjoys teaching deaf and hearing impaired students in mathematics and has been improving himself since he was a student at the university. When the teacher started his first day in his classroom, the principal asked him to choose any subject to teach, but even though he knew mathematics well, when he began teaching, he faced difficulties in teaching the content to the hearing impaired. The supervisor did not provide support because the supervisor only supported teachers with tasks out of the classroom. This teacher expressed the need of having supervisors with rich knowledge and skills in teaching and mentioned, “Of course, the supervisor did not enter my class. I taught mathematics without taking courses for teaching students with hearing impairments and without knowing what was required because the curriculum was not designed for students with hearing disabilities. Also, I did not know where I should start teaching the students. In the beginning, I had a very difficult time, but I found assistance at the university and from the deaf community, which benefited me a lot. Beyond just mathematics, neither the education department nor the education agency asked us to take courses in sign language, so improvement came from personal effort and outstanding students in my classroom.”

The need for support from a knowledgeable special education supervisor was expressed by others. Teacher Seven mentioned, “The supervisor should help the teacher in how to diversify

teaching methods and topics that the teacher needs to know. When the teacher has a reference, such as a professional supervisor, the teacher will become more expert in understanding the issues.” At the same time, Teacher Ten expressed that the supervisors should be a professional not just in teaching but in finding solutions for teaching content. “Most supervisors I have faced were not high quality teachers, so most of them perform supervisory work because they had no better teaching experience than the remaining teachers.”

Need for Support from Experienced Teachers. When special education supervisors could not meet the needs of teachers, they looked elsewhere for support. Four teachers explained that they had supervisors who had a bachelor's degree in special education for hearing impairments. Still, the support the teachers received did not meet their expectations of support or assistance in addressing classroom concerns. The teachers expressed their need to have practical assistance with teaching content. Two teachers at the institute expected support from supervisors, but the practical support they received was from special education teachers with experience in teaching the subject.

Support from experienced teachers were expressed by teachers in both the institute and the public school. Teacher Three had been with different supervisors in different school settings, but they made few visits to the classroom so they could not support him. In the end, experienced teachers helped him more than the supervisors. “Sometimes when I face a problem, I contact experienced teachers in order to ask them to consult about the issue, or to find the appropriate solution in regard to a problem with students. I communicate with them, and they help me.”

The situation was similar in the hard-of-hearing programs in the general education environment. The teachers expressed that they sought support in teaching content from experienced general education teachers with diplomas in special education who were teaching

the same subject. The support was not official or formal, but was friendly support, which sometimes led teachers to feel embarrassed to ask for support from experienced special education teachers or from general education teachers with the diploma in special education.

An example of asking for support came from Teacher Five who taught students Arabic and mathematics in fourth through sixth grade. When he was teaching hearing impaired students attached to a public elementary school, he had support from an experienced general education teacher with a special education diploma. “General education teachers help us a lot, but we are embarrassed that we must ask them for help because we benefit from their experience, especially in the fourth, fifth and sixth subjects. Those levels contain difficult topics that you must be able to explain.” The support from general education teachers with special education diplomas was extremely effective because they graduated with a bachelor’s degree in a specific subject and had knowledge and skills in communicating content using sign language.

The need for receiving support from educators with knowledge and skills in both content and hearing impairments can be summarized by Teacher Eight who had great support in the classroom from a highly experienced special education teacher of the hearing impaired. “Surely, it is best that support is provided by experienced teachers because they notice mistakes and problems that new teachers make.”

Need for Official Support. Most of the special education teachers had support in the classroom from experienced special education teachers and qualified general education teachers, and several had supervisors who improved their knowledge and skills in teaching hearing impaired students. But, the support the teachers received from their peers was in an informal manner, which led participants to express their need for official support. In other words, the supervisors would give the experienced teachers official approval to work with and support the

new teachers. By providing official support, teachers would set a schedule of meetings to work with experienced teachers who could give ongoing support in formal ways. The teachers expressed their need to work together to not only meet their needs, but also improve student outcomes. The teachers expressed how each teacher worked individually with their students without asking the previous teachers or future teachers to collaborate and share each student difficulties and achievements to find appropriate strategies of teaching that better met the student needs. In short, official support that encourages working together could improve a teacher's and their students' performance.

“Actually, the unofficial support services were from teachers, who made classroom visits, exchanged experiences to acquire and develop sign language, and was by virtue of the experience of teachers. They helped me initiate strategies for dealing with students and teaching” (Teacher Seven). The teacher went on to express the value in setting time for official support because the teacher felt that the experienced teachers could give ongoing assistance, and over time, this interaction would benefit all teachers and students.

This official, ongoing collaboration was noticed by Teacher Five who expressed that there was a lack of collaboration between the supervisors and teachers, which did not meet the intent of the Special Education System that he learned at the university. High quality teaching and learning needs to rely on a teamwork style. He mentioned, “We need support that is formal and systematic because each teacher tends to work and strive for his own classroom condition. As for what we have learned at the university, special education is teamwork. Also, there is no correlation in the teaching of subjects between teachers, and this causes confusion for the student because he may move to the next stage and is not able to complete required tasks because of the lack of communication between the teachers.”

The special education support system must ensure that the teachers, students and their parents have everything for an appropriate education program that meets the needs of the hearing impaired students. An official support system must include the vision and plans for reaching goals and the objectives of teachers. Participants see the need for a support system that would allow teachers to ask for support without feeling uncomfortable when making requests regarding the student and/or teacher needs. Teacher Four believed, “The role of the supervisor is more of an administration role, not an academic role in the classroom and leaves me without practical support... We need the support to be clear and formal, not random and unorganized in order to have a clear system.”

Need for Support in Understanding the Students’ Needs. Each of the deaf and hearing impaired students has unique needs, so special education teachers must be able to understand student needs when learning so the teachers will be able to provide the appropriate education options based on those needs. Teacher Three expressed his need for support in understanding student needs to ensure an appropriate education. “I have a lot of experience. I know what the deaf need through my experiences in education and through personal effort. Initially, teachers need support in understanding student needs and the difficulties they face that limits learning in order to provide each student an education that suits his needs.”

Needs for Teamwork and Clear Tasks and Responsibilities for Teachers. Developing formal and informal teams that understand the tasks to be accomplished were identified by two teachers who expressed that any education program for the hearing impaired should have a multidisciplinary team. The team members should include the teachers and student’s parents along with a group of specialists. In addition, a multidisciplinary team member can be selected based on the student’s specific needs. The idea of having a multidisciplinary team is to maintain

the students' progress and provide him with appropriate services. The participating teachers expressed their need in having a support team and some of them mentioned having a multidisciplinary team.

Teacher Eight explained that he had a good supervisor who guided and assisted him at the beginning before he moved to his current special education program. When he moved to the current program, he did not have the same support that he previously had so he expressed his feeling regarding his current experience where he is hoping to experience teamwork and clear tasks and responsibility. “We need to work together and have periodic meetings with teachers and management, solve problems faced by teachers and know the type of assistance they need. The supervisor’s role is to present the needs of teachers to other supervisors who have a high level of experience, and to experts in the field of hearing disability to find a solution that will assist us in the educational process while providing the appropriate program for students.”

Through the support of these teams, a variety of professionals could share strategies for teaching each student every year so the students would have a clear education plan for the next grade. For example, if a student is going to the second grade, three teachers should be working together before the beginning of the year. The first-grade teacher would share what the student had completed and what the second grade teacher needs to know to teach the student appropriately. The third teacher would observe and support the current teacher to prepare an education plan for the student for next year. Teacher Four mentioned, “I check my students’ knowledge before I start teaching math subjects, but the problem is after the student passes the fifth grade and goes to sixth, the student should be provided with the skills that should be known at that grade level. Still, the sixth-grade teacher will be surprised if the student does not have

necessary skills. So, the issue is sequential and has become accumulated based on a lack of collaboration between teachers.”

The need for ongoing support from knowledgeable professionals was extremely important to the participants. That support needs to prepare the teacher to meet the needs of the students. In order to meet student needs properly, teachers need guidance on setting student goals, teaching content concepts, improving teaching and learning techniques, and working with an official team of educators who can identify teacher and student needs and help teachers address problems in the classroom.

Support from Knowledgeable Educational Personnel – Current Situation.

Expectations are that supervisors in special education play a substantial role in supporting teachers in meeting the needs of hearing impaired students. Therefore, teachers have high expectations of the support they need from supervisors, and have the belief that the supervisors should be able to provide support to meet those needs so teachers can teach students properly. Teachers feel that supervisors of hearing impaired programs should be knowledgeable to best support new special education teachers and ensure that they are qualified to teach students. In order to provide the proper assistance, the supervisors should observe and offer teachers support in and out of the classroom so teachers continue improving their knowledge and skills in educating hearing impaired students.

Special education teachers shared the support they needed and the current support they received in their current programs. Both the teachers who are teaching in the deaf institute and the hard-of-hearing programs shared the current support they were given, and expressed that the guidance they have received has not meet their expectations.

Current Basic Support. Currently, there are special education supervisors assigned to each school plus each school has a principal. The teachers expressed that the current basic support does not meet the needs of teachers of students who are hearing impaired. “The previous supervisor made few visits because the office of the Administration of Education is 500 km away. He visited us only once or twice per semester. At first, he helped me in a very simple ways. The current supervisor has visited me almost every month and has given me some notes... The school principal does not support me by virtue of his lack of specialization in the field of special education” (Teacher Two).

Often the supervisor and administration focus on other tasks that do not support teaching and learning. “Unfortunately, no one has given me classroom assistance. ...Often the supervisor, director and administration believe what matters to them is attendance. The lesson plans and what is taught in teaching session are not as important as administrative worksheets... Our needs or the needs of the deaf do not have sufficient importance so their support does not touch our needs” (Teacher Four).

Currently, teachers need supervisors and administrators who can help meet the needs of hearing impaired students. “The supervisor does not know how difficult the courses are and how he can support me because he does not have much experience” (Teacher eight). "The support we have received [from supervisors] is not clear. So, it has not provided us with the help we need to receive better hearing aids and prepare an appropriate environment for students” (Teacher Nine).

Current Leadership with Knowledge and Skills in Teaching Content. In addition to not having the time and ability to work with teachers to prepare classroom and obtain basic equipment, participants expressed that the supervisors lack knowledge and skills for teaching a variety of subjects to the hearing impaired. Special education teachers who were not prepared at

the university to teach a specific subject and use appropriate teaching methods felt that they did not have support in teaching content from their current supervisors. “The current supervisor is doing more administrative tasks than supporting teachers in the classroom. The last time the resident supervisor entered my classroom and observed me teaching a lesson was ineffective in meeting my needs. The supervisor needs more knowledge in teaching the deaf” (Teacher Four). Teacher Five mentioned, “I did not benefit from the supervisor a lot, and his visits were routine normal things. I thought that he would follow me and develop my teaching, but he was only asking me to complete official papers. He was basically a teacher who was not able to teach and had little experience in teaching.”

Because teachers desire to use their time wisely, Teacher Six mentioned, “Support is limited in the classroom, so most teachers work separately.” But, teachers want guidance and advice as voiced by Teacher Eight. “The situations require support and not neglecting teachers and students with hearing disabilities. Also, services are weak compared to the needs of hard-of-hearing students. [Supervisors] must be periodically meeting with the teachers and solving the problems they face.” The current situation related to supervisors seems to echo Teacher Ten’s observation that “most supervisors I have faced, do not have the sufficient experience in high quality teaching, so most of them perform supervisory work because they have no better teaching experience than the classroom teachers.”

Current Support from Experienced Teachers. Participants shared the importance of support they currently receive from experienced teachers. Teacher Five mentioned that “in the beginning, most support was from the teachers who had a lot of experience in teaching. I had been in training sessions for five days, but it was not enough... Because we do not have formal support, the new teachers find informal ways to obtain support, which is the cooperation between

the new teacher and experienced colleagues. The best solution has been visiting the highly qualified teachers in their classrooms.” This was especially helpful when teaching content as expressed by Teacher Seven.

In addition to the experienced teachers, Teacher Six shared that “support is available from both administration and former teachers. When you are a new teacher, you get support from all school members, but I benefited more from the previous teachers.” This was especially true in the general education setting. “We depend on the general education teachers who have had special education courses to help us with some of the difficulties we face and try to simplify the information to the easiest form for students” (Teacher Eight).

Current Support is Lacking. From their experience, the participants were not satisfied with the given support. Some expressed that the current support does not have guidance in teaching content. “There is no guidance or directives. We rely on personal experiences or asking colleagues who have more experience. I mean personal efforts and colleagues” (Teacher Nine).

Overall, currently, teachers rely on unofficial support because official support is hit or miss. “The support is weak. Unfortunately, the official support has been only with courses. In my experience, there was a supervisor from the administration visiting the schools who helped me for a short period and after that, I think he was transferred” (Teacher Five).

“We need to add services and support for hearing impaired teachers that are appropriate for student needs because the teacher should not work individually and without professional and continuous support” (Teacher Three). “I need continuous courses in special education to adjust curricula to suit the needs of the deaf. The supervisor needs to reach each teacher at least once every week and give some notes. They should identify a distinguished teacher who can provide a course for the rest of the teachers to benefit. This way, I will be satisfied.”

The lack of an official, ongoing system of support can be summed up by Teacher Eight who expressed that the supervisors and the school administration have a lack of knowledge in educating the hearing impaired. The teacher had experienced different programs and expressed a feeling of frustration in receiving insufficient support. “The current situation requires professional support and not neglect of teachers and students with hearing disabilities. Also, the support and services are weak compared to the needs of hearing impaired students. You must be periodically meeting with the teachers and solving the problems they face.”

Current Support from the Community. When teachers express that “the support we have received is not sufficient. We need clear support that addresses our needs and helps us provide better assistance to prepare the appropriate environment for students” (Teacher Nine), it can be believed that the teacher will seek assistance from respected sources. Teacher Three shared his experience of current support from different special education personnel, then expressed that he had excellent support from deaf employee. The deaf employee was 45 years old, completely deaf and using sign language. “A deaf employ is my best supporter, and I learned from him because he is familiar with all the updated sign language dictionaries and knows the difference between old and modern sign language. I was gathering with him and his deaf friends to improve my sign language and know them well.”

The current support for new and experienced teachers of the hearing impaired come from a variety of sources. The sentiment echoes by these participants was the lack of a viable system with the emphasis on using a variety of knowledgeable individual who would work together to improve teaching and learning in the hearing impaired schools and communities.

Supervision from Knowledgeable Educational Personnel – Wants. These special education teachers shared their wants for professional support that would meet teacher and

student needs. The supervisors of hearing impairments must be able to provide professional support to ensure that all the deaf and hearing students will have appropriate services and education. Therefore, the wants of the teachers focus on receiving extra support that will improve their knowledge and skills in dealing with the hearing impaired students. "The supervisors must conduct periodical meeting with the teachers to solve the problems that we face every semester and month, and how to help us solve them. This support needs to have a clear procedure" (Teacher Eight).

Desire for Ongoing Support. The participants feel that the current support does not meet needs and expressed ongoing, professional support that is more permanent. A repeated thought was that "the supervisors should be visiting at least once every week for each teacher and giving some notes" (Teacher One). These frequent interactions were sometimes expressed as permanent support. Teacher Three stated, "I prefer that the support be official, stable, regular and planned, and that there is no objection to obtaining support from colleagues. The school must have a vision, clear goals, and a team that works together."

As expressed by Teacher Seven, "We would like better support that is provided clearly and focuses the tasks the teachers need to accomplish. This support should cover my needs as a hearing impaired teacher and the needs of my students because this type of support will help me and my students. With proper, ongoing support, there will be higher satisfaction and an increase in productivity at work."

Desire for Supervisors to Provide a Special Education Team for Support. The desire for a Special Education Team was expressed specifically at least five times with a school vision of support. This team would not only support the teacher, but would work toward the school vision.

“The school should have a vision, clear goals, and a team that works together with the supervisor to follow up with new teachers, especially with explanations on better teaching methods to reach the goals. The new teachers must have an experienced person with them at the beginning of school year, then for as long as needed” (Teacher Three). The desire is that “there must be a work team and a supervisor monitoring [the classroom] more than just observing our attendance and leaving the class for administrative matters. For example, in the beginning, when I started directing my first job, the school principal gave me only a magazine about teachers, and the supervisors did not provide permanent support. It should be a group of teachers working together with the role of the supervisor being more directive than observing without practical support... We need the support to be clear and formal, not random and unorganized, in order to have a clear system” (Teacher Four).

The rationale for wanting this came from Teacher Eight. “Support will come if everyone works together continuously to solve problems faced by a new teacher or a teacher who has difficulty with an issue. Teamwork will increase enthusiasm to work on teaching and also increase the level of student learning. The role of the supervisor should be to follow up and ensure that teachers have everything they need to provide the best education for students who are hearing impaired.”

Desire for Supervisors to Provide Experienced Teachers. Several teachers voiced the desire for the supervisor or administration to provide a clear procedure of support from experienced teachers who can give formal assistance in teaching. “The new teacher needs assistance from proficient teachers so they can benefit from their experience in class management, steps in teaching lessons, and ways to deal with students’ specific needs. An excellent teacher should have an opportunity to support the newer teachers” (Teacher Five). This

teacher felt that this collaboration between the general education and special education teachers would improve content knowledge if the interaction were ongoing.

The desire for assistance should not come from any experienced teacher. “The leadership, especially the school administrators, are not specialized in special education, and some of them do not know the differences between learning disability and hearing impairment needs because they do not have much knowledge of the characteristics of the deaf” (Teacher Four). In short, the desire is for support from colleagues who know the subject matter and can help teachers apply teaching strategies to teach the content to the hearing impaired students.

Desire for Supervisors to Provide Collaboration with Specialists. Several times, the desire to improve the support system went specifically to assistance from a speech pathologist or specialist. “Students who have had a cochlear implant do not receive assistance from a speech pathologist after the implant. Once they can hear voices, you find that the students are not able to recognize differences between words and need pronunciation training” (Teacher Five). This included collaboration between the speech pathologist, teacher and family in order to improve a student’s communication skills in hearing and speaking.

Desire for Encouragement to Interact with the Deaf Community. Teamwork that included supervisors, administration and teachers was desired, but the teamwork should not stop at school. “A lack of collaboration and cooperation between parents and the school can lead to a lack of learning. Interaction with parents to discuss difficulties and challenges can reduce teacher and student abilities to succeed” (Teacher Ten). The parents are often the first members of the deaf community with whom a teacher interacts, but there are other community who can be key resources.

Teacher Two shared his experience in receiving support from the deaf community to improve his sign language. Through his experiences, he expressed the desire of ongoing interaction through activities with the deaf community. This teacher lacks sign language skills to hold conversations with his students so his reasonable solution to improve his sign language was to visit the deaf community and recommended encouraging the new teachers to interact with the deaf community. "I think the new teachers have to come into contact with the deaf community on an ongoing basis. I remember during my internship stage when I was not supported by the university or the school. They only asked me to study students without any assistance." When he interacted with members of the deaf community, he was able to participate in their activities and improve his understanding of the deaf and how to better communicate with them.

Developing a system of support for new and experienced teachers was wanted by the participants of this study. That system must include a team approach that includes the supervisors, school administration, teachers, specialists, parents and hearing impaired community beyond the school walls. The teachers want to better meet the multiple needs of students, and they feel that organized, ongoing support is a step toward student success.

Theme 4: Additional Professional Development Courses and Workshops.

Through the interviews, the teachers shared that when they started teaching hearing impaired students, they expected to be provided courses that would fill the gaps in their knowledge and skills in teaching deaf and hard-of-hearing students. These gaps included the lack of knowledge, skills and practice in communication, lack of content knowledge of the subjects they were assigned, lack of teaching strategies, and a lack of experience in working in teams to identify and address the needs of students. The teachers thought they would receive ongoing

support and even courses and workshops to meet their needs to teach the hearing impaired students in appropriate ways.

There is a training center under each Education Administration Agency that can offer courses for teachers when students are not in school. The teachers shared that they had attended courses and workshops from different training centers, and noticed that each training center offered different courses, workshops and content. Teachers attended some workshops, but expressed the lack of content that met their needs and wants as teachers of the hearing impaired.

The desire for ongoing professional development courses and workshops that would address their lack of knowledge and skills in different areas of teaching, but they did not receive courses that filled the gaps left after completing their university programs in special education. The participants clearly expressed their needs ~~and wants~~ for receiving ongoing professional development in their schools. The focus of conversation was on practical, continuous courses that would improve their classroom instruction and better meet the needs of hearing impaired students.

The Need for Ongoing Professional Development. The teachers felt that their jobs as teachers of hearing impaired students required that they make continuous improvement. Because student needs change, teachers require ongoing professional development to meet those needs. Some of the difficulties and challenges have come from gaps in preparation programs and teaching content using a general education curriculum while other difficulties come from a lack of interactions with supervisors, school administrators and experienced teachers and specialists. But issues such as teaching content using sign language or expanding teaching strategies require ongoing training from specialists in those areas. Therefore, participants shared their needs and wants for ongoing professional development in teaching content with specific vocabulary,

improving knowledge of specific subjects, learning how to use specific technology, and building relationships with the deaf community must be met.

Need for Courses to Improve Sign Language and Communication for Teachers and Students. Several teachers shared their experiences in communicating with students. They expressed the need for having additional sign language and communication courses. Teacher Two had transferred from a hard-of-hearing program to teaching more profound hearing impaired students. In the hard-of-hearing program, he did not rely on using sign language to communicate with students but when he was transferred to the institute, he had to become proficient at using sign language to communicate with deaf students. There were no courses to improve his sign language. “My internship at a deaf Institute was for one semester from 7 am to 11 am every day. Of course, in the beginning, we were extremely weak in sign language. We learned only the alphabet and some words. I had an experienced teacher who supervised in the beginning, but the university instructor visited the school and supervised us only one day every week or two. After I started my official job at a deaf institute, the teachers would help me. Still, there were no activities that strengthened sign language or gave sign language training courses.”

To improve skills, teacher will often look for classes, but if they cannot find classes, they turn to other resources. Teacher Seven needed assistance with communicating. “What helped me at this stage was that I was doing after-school activities for deaf people... I was going to improve my sign language. By mixing with the deaf, I learned more words by playing sports activities with them We met every Wednesday after school from afternoon to evening." The teacher gained sign language skills because the activities with the hearing impaired students enhanced his vocabulary. “Activities such as community centers have benefits. To improve our communication, we need activities with the deaf community.”

Another need for formal training is in speech techniques for hearing impaired students in order to improve student pronunciation. Teacher Six mentioned that some “hearing impaired students need to improve pronunciation so we need teaching strategies and techniques to help students. The speech therapist helps me, but we need a mechanism that works properly.” Teacher Nine noticed that some hearing impaired students can hear when using hearing aids so they need assistance to improve pronunciation. “I attended two courses, but both were in sign language... I was hoping that we could integrate our teaching with pronunciation and communication, because we need to strengthen student pronunciation.” Communication systems are extremely important for teachers and students.

Need for Courses That Meet the Special Needs of the Hearing Impaired. Several teachers shared that their needs can be different based on student needs and on more difficult levels of subject content. Teacher One mentioned “I had a course for learning through play, but it did not meet student needs, especially deaf people. The workshops are always developed for general education.” He continued by sharing his experience and difficulties in teaching students when he did not have any support in the classroom and had to rely on himself and experienced teachers to help him with his challenges. Teacher One needed a course in organizing the classroom and lesson plans. “The principal asked me to teach a subject without giving me a curriculum and I had no practical basics.”

Teachers need courses throughout semester and year. “Unfortunately, many courses are not offered, such as class preparation and others. The education departments offer many courses, but they do not fit the needs of special education. There may be one or two courses for special education in using sign language or teaching autism” but these are not enough (Teacher One). If a teacher has certification as a trainer, he does not have the opportunity to design or present a

course for teachers based on their needs. “There are many distinguished teachers, but I do not have the right to enter and learn from their experience. Only the supervisor has the authority to enter classrooms. The supervisor is supposed to provide opportunities for distinguished teachers to present a session or meeting, whether in the form of hours or days, but this does not often happen” (Teacher One). These trainers could help meet the needs of teachers.

Teachers can take “courses through the Education Department, but courses are offered randomly and do not take into account the needs of the hearing impaired teacher” (Teacher Three). Therefore, when teachers face difficulties in teaching subject content and are looking for courses in teaching strategies, the opportunities may not be available. “I needed courses in teaching methods and strategies in basic subjects (Arabic and mathematics) to raise my level of proficiency in sign language to ease communication with deaf students” but there was nothing available (Teacher Five). Teacher nine added, “I did not get any courses except two courses, and both were on the sign language dictionary, but these courses will not help with the difficulty in communicating with the students.” This need for courses and ongoing workshops on specific skills and strategies are very important to these participants.

Need for Courses on Teaching Specific Subjects Using Sign Language. The most prevalent need expressed by teachers was for courses and ongoing workshops that teach sign language that can be used for specific subjects like mathematics, science or Arabic. Teacher Two explained, “After I transferred, I met an expert teacher who was doing a course that I attended, enjoyed and benefited from. I wished that the course was offered in the university’s program because it covered sign language grammar... The course helped me to teach content and I needed it two years ago. When I asked the teacher why he did not do more courses, he said no one asked. If they offered that same course again, I would attend.”

“Often the courses they offer are not useful, even though they are supposed to be courses for teaching a specific subject in sign language. I think we need more teaching methods, especially in Arabic and science” (Teacher Four). “Most existing courses are repeated, not developed or updated in content, and the teacher gets them annually without interest. I shared with a trainer that the courses are inappropriate, and we need effective courses. There are no specific sign language courses for teaching a specific subject” (Teacher Ten).

Need for Courses and Activities with the Deaf Community. Teachers shared their experience in needing courses and activities that would meet teacher needs and involve the deaf community. The teachers tried different ways to improve themselves, and because of their experiences, they expressed the need for interacting with the deaf community. The teachers felt the activities could continue through the school year and into summertime and would improve communication and relationships with students and their parents along with improving the communication skills of teachers.

The informal interaction between teachers and the deaf community after school does not reduce the importance of formal training “especially for new teachers, who need more courses on communicating with the deaf community to improve relationships with classes. At the university, the classes were more lectures than practical activities and we did not interact that much with the deaf community to improve our communication skills” (Teacher Three). Teacher Six expressed a similar value in interacting with the deaf community. “Among the difficulties with sign language is that it needs practice. For example, after the summer vacation, four months before returning to school, we face difficulties at the beginning of the school year using sign language. So, continuity is essential.”

Teacher Five felt that “ the weak sign language skills of deaf children is due to the weakness of early intervention programs, which results in difficulties communicating with them, so we need at least to have courses with activities that include the deaf community to improve communication language with the children."

“[University] students need to be integrated with the deaf through activities because hard-of-hearing and deaf students are separated into different programs. We need group activities and courses to communicate periodically or weekly through training courses that bring us together” (Teacher Ten).

Need for Practical Courses in Using IEPs Effectively. Individual Education Program development was understood and implemented in varying degrees by teachers because of a lack of training and use. Teacher Four expressed the need of having practical courses in using IEPs effectively. “The current general curriculum is more complicated than the previous one. I wish the schools allowed us to use the individual educational plans (IEPs) because students do not have the same levels of disability. The individual educational plans are not used frequently because many supervisors and administrators want us to treat students as general education students. Also, if you were asked to make an individual educational plan, the leadership does not care how you design it or how you implemented it” even though IEPs are suggested in the special education handbook.

Need for Courses Focusing on Characteristics of and Devices for the Hearing Impaired Students. Hearing impaired students are not the same as general education students. They do not learn the same or react the same to stimuli around them. Teacher Eight shared his need for courses specifically designed to develop an understanding of the characteristics of hearing impaired students. “There are deficiencies in the basic knowledge of some teachers about

the hearing impaired. Some of the new teachers lack knowledge of the characteristics of the deaf and about the aids they use. We also need hearing technology with courses in the effective use of a variety of technologies with students and applying techniques that suits their needs.”

The participants in this study reflected on their needs when they began teaching the hearing impaired. These needs focused on gaps they possessed in their knowledge and skills and what additional training was necessary to close those gaps to better meet the needs of students with hearing impairments.

Ongoing Professional Development – Current Situation. The special education system in Saudi Arabia has had many updates in the last twenty years to give each special education department under each Education Administration Agency autonomy to offer professional development to the staff working with the hearing impaired in institutes and public schools. Teachers shared what they learned at the university and their expectation that the special education system should require ongoing development of knowledge and skills because the special education teachers deal with students possessing unique needs that require improvement every semester to better address student needs.

Participating special education teachers shared their difficulties and challenges related to their knowledge and skills in dealing with students. The teachers have expectations of qualifications that they should possess before starting their official positions. Through their experiences, teachers found that high quality and ongoing professional development could reduce difficulties and challenges, and increase professionalism to meet the student needs. But, the current courses and workshops offered often repeat course content.

When it comes to professional development, teachers shared that they often rely on themselves or experienced teachers who had of experience in teaching specific subjects, but the

support from experienced teachers was not formal and caused extra work for the experienced teachers. It was expressed that training needed to be a formal system organized by the supervisors who should know teacher and student needs. These courses or workshops could be facilitated by experienced teachers and other experts which could make them more beneficial for all school staff.

Current Courses Effectiveness. Participants shared their thoughts on how effective the current professional development program is for teachers of the hearing impaired. Teacher Two expressed the lack of enabling special education experts in schools to offer professional development. “After I transferred to the current program, I had a resident supervisor and because we had a teacher with many years of experience, he was allowed to be an assistant supervisor who supported the teachers. I do not depend on an external supervisor because their visits are few, and they do not follow us inside the school. Our assistant supervisor benefits us a lot because of his experience in helping students in the classroom. But, we need to activate those experienced teachers to provide professional services and raise the level of performance for teachers and students.”

Often teachers attend professional development activities because they feel that they must. Teacher Three shared that he attended courses “because I needed to move to another school, so I had to attend some courses. If I didn't need to move to other schools, I wouldn't have attended the courses... All of them were random courses, lectures, and activities for three hours and days without any benefit. All the courses were for general education.” This was similar for Teacher Four. “I attended three courses in sign language,... and they were all simple words and ineffective, and covered only three to five days. But, what would be effective are courses in each subject with teaching methods done in sign language at an advanced level... But, the official

support was only courses with lectures without practical application. We are filled with information from the university that we need to know how to implement inside the classroom.”

Each Regional Educational Agency has the autonomy to design professional development activities, but as Teacher Five experienced, “current courses that are given by the administration are repeated and... the duration of the courses is short, so they were only lectures and did not benefit special education teachers... In the beginning, most support was from the teachers who had a lot of teaching experience. I did attend a training session for five days, but it was not enough to give experience in class management, lesson development and how to deal with students.”

Effectiveness of Sign Language Courses. Often “the duration of the courses is short and they are only lectures without implementation which does not benefit teachers of the hearing impaired... Most special education teachers attend hearing impairment courses but only on sign language, and these have repetitive content and little effectiveness”(Teacher Six).

Because opportunities for effective trainings for teachers of the hearing impaired are not provided by the school or regional agency, teachers rely on themselves or experienced colleagues. Teachers is “in the field are required to teach different subjects each semester, and this causes us to learn what to teach in that new subject and the appropriate teaching methods” (Teacher Seven). This teacher improved himself by visiting the deaf club in the community, which “helped me because I was doing after-school activities for deaf people... and by mixing with the deaf, I learned more words while playing sports activities with them. We meet every Wednesday after school from afternoon to evening and I learn sign language by mixing with them.”

Teacher Nine expressed that no courses meet their needs because the same courses in sign language are repeated. "I am required to take only two courses, both of which are sign language, and these courses do not help with the difficulty in communicating with the students." Teacher Ten shared that "courses are offered once yearly for four days and repeated annually with the same content, but there are no courses that address the hearing impaired and these do not meet the requirements for special education teachers set by the Ministry of Education and the General of the Special Education Department.

Though many of the professional development experienced by these participants were termed ineffective and did not meet the needs of teachers of the hearing impaired, there was one case where the current professional development support was satisfactory. Teacher Eight had a good supervisor in his previous school. "My experience in Mecca was with a supervisor who was very cooperative and gave us directions such as which types of courses would be appropriate according to the information that he had when observing us in classes. He directed us to get courses that fit our needs." So, the current system can have positive results if the correct people are involved.

Ongoing Professional Development – Wants. These teachers expressed the desire to have professional development courses or workshops that meet their need to provide their deaf and hearing impaired students effective education and improve the services for students and their parents. All ten teachers shared their experiences in improving themselves in different areas of professional development. The teachers felt the desire for practical courses or workshops to be provided in their schools so they could apply what they learned from the workshops or seminars. Many times participants expressed that they wanted professional development courses to be

presented by experts in special education, and the experts should work with teachers to ensure that the teachers could apply what they have learned from the professional activities.

The ten teachers expressed that the desire for professional development appeared when they started their official jobs, and realized that the knowledge and skills they learned from the university classes were not insufficient for teaching the deaf and hard-of-hearing. In addition, the teachers expected to have courses provided by the school or regional center that would keep them improving because teaching deaf and hearing students requires teachers to be developing their knowledge and skills in dealing with students who possess a variety needs. Upon reflection, these teachers with seven to ten years of experience believe that new teachers can benefit from professional development if the trainings fill the gaps of knowledge and skills required to meet student needs. The ongoing professional development is not only to fill the gaps of the lack in knowledge and skills but also to ensure that everyone understands the need for special education teachers and specialists to work together to serve hearing impaired students in appropriate way that meet their needs.

The teachers want to have a variety of courses or workshops that meet their wants and most of their wants relate to courses from experienced teachers in teaching using Sign Language, courses with speech therapy to practice communicating with students, professional courses that meet teachers' needs, and courses on teaching strategies specific to hearing impaired settings. Teachers want to have ongoing professional development to improve school not only in teaching but also to enable the schools to be updated every period of time.

Desire for Practical Courses for Teaching Strategies. Because hearing impaired students have special needs, four teachers shared their desire to improve their knowledge and skills specific to teaching the hearing impaired and these would be practical courses taught in

classroom sittings. “I was at the university studying scientific subjects in physics and biology, but when I started teaching, I could not teach these subjects... When I moved to my current position, there was a Sudanese teacher who specialized in mathematics and had a diploma in sign language. He was creative, and the students benefited... I had learned the principles of mathematics but not the sign vocabulary... [The university] should teach us how to teach a specific subject for deaf and hearing impaired students in the elementary level” (Teacher Two). During his internship, he wanted support in teaching strategies. “In the training phase, there was a supervisor... who gave us difficult subjects without training to prepare for the class... I had difficulties in teaching science. I think teaching methods are very important for a hearing impaired teacher, and new strategies that need more training.”

The importance of learning teaching strategies in the classroom setting was voiced. Teacher Four reflected, “A course for developing an educational plan was the first course, but I did not benefit from it a lot because I learned it in a lecture course. It was not practical with a lecture. The courses should be taught in a practical way, so teachers can apply it effectively.” This was supported by Teacher Four. “[Professional development should be practical courses that meet the students’ needs, and the courses should simulate teaching each subject or teaching students. Finally, instruction should allow teachers to have the students during the course so the techniques can be applied.”

The desire to have practical professional development courses was supported by Teacher Ten. “During my experience in teaching mathematics for the fifth grade, I was trying to discover a way to teach a subject and found methods that did not depend on theory, and the methods were successful for students... There are no practical courses to improve teachers' knowledge and skills... There is no official courses that include all teachers of hearing impairment and provide

experiences to apply knowledge.” The courses are frequently repeated by the trainers who are mostly distinguished teachers, but the courses that are offered are not effective because the ministry is focused on the courses that teach a lot of teachers. But, these courses do not address my need for teaching methods in a specific subject such as mathematics or science, and the courses I attended were developed for general education with very few for special education.”

Desire for Professional Development Programs. Participants were in agreement that they wanted ongoing professional development rather than just a single lecture course. Teacher Three expressed, “New teachers must provide with a complete program. Generally, new teachers must have a light schedule and a training program for the materials they will gradually teach. The teaching schedule should be relaxed with more intensive training to familiarize them with special topics for the hearing impaired before the new teachers start teaching a full schedule. What is not correct is for the teacher to start teaching more than one subject without qualification, training or guidance.”

“Teachers must be provided with an official plan with clear goals and scope. I mean, the Ministry of Education must have a plan for teachers of deaf students, not a plan for general education. The plan should provide courses or workshops that will be developed according to the needs of students and teachers, and the courses must include a process that applies knowledge and strategies with the students.” In addition, these “courses can be provided by someone who has experience in teaching a specific subject to provide training on the explanation of the material using sign language for the courses” (Teacher Six). In short, “We want courses in teaching methods, class organization, use of teaching aids, and use of reinforcers. We want to have training in using communication language to teach students. These would be special courses for the teacher in hearing impaired programs who have different students every year and

sometimes every semester. So, it is necessary to provide programs and courses that take into account the needs of teachers of deaf and hard-of-hearing students.”

Desire for Professional Courses that Meet Teachers’ Needs. Because of the varying needs of students, teachers often find that they need training on specific issues. Three teachers shared their desire for training in specific areas. Teacher Five mentioned, “I had a student with multiple disabilities, and I could not deal with him even to assess student performance because he had more needs than other students in the same class. We need knowledge in diagnosing behavior and knowing so we can deal with it.”

Teachers often change positions and schools. When Teacher Eight transferred, he did not have the same courses as his previous experience. “My point is that each administration is different from the other administration. The previous administration was much stronger than the current Education Department, and they were encouraging professional development, because they were interested in the teacher’s education, the student and parents in everything related to special education. But I do not know why the current administration does not have the same level of support despite the same possibilities.”

An area that requires specific training relates to assisting students in developing speech skills. Teacher Nine shared his desire for courses in speech therapy that would assist him with practical activities for students in the classroom. “I was hoping we could combine our lessons with pronunciation and communication. I want students to enter the sixth grade knowing how to read, write and communicate. Because my students are mildly hearing impaired, they have some hearing, so they can learn to pronounce better than the deaf student.”

Desire for Courses from Experienced Teachers. Several participants expressed the desire to receive ongoing training from experienced teachers of the hearing impaired. Teacher

One mentioned that schools “must have hardworking and enthusiastic teachers who have a role in developing skills and strategies, especially when the teacher is knowledgeable in a specific subject and becomes an expert. These experienced professionals could help prepare new teachers. For example, if you focus on mathematics and become a creator, you can prepare a new teacher who loves to teach the same subject, and so on in all subjects. With time and years, the educational outcomes for teachers and students will improve” (Teacher One).

Teacher One went on to explain that these “special education teachers of the hearing impaired must provide formal services, offer continuous courses within an institute of distinguished teachers, and have high level of skill in using sign language to communicate with students. We want courses in sign language that are subject specific, for example a sign language course for mathematics, a sign language course for science, and so on.” The teacher must have a certification in training, have taught workshops and courses on his own and attended many special education workshops... Unfortunately, some of these instructors offer courses outside the institute, for example courses for airport employees and the Ministry of Health and Training, and they have a translation card from the Translators Association in Riyadh, but they have not been encouraged to submit a request to provide courses inside the institute.”

Summary of Themes

The Special Education teachers with seven to ten years of experience in teaching shared their experiences in teaching deaf and hearing impaired students. The challenges and difficulties the teachers shared indicated that universities programs for preparing students to become special education teachers played a part in increasing and decreasing the challenges and difficulties the teachers face when taking positions in schools. Based on the information shared by these participants regarding their experiences, the information indicates that the institutes and the

programs for the hearing impaired in public schools have instructors who lack some specific knowledge in meeting the needs of their students. The teachers shared that the deaf institutes must provide teachers with the special education tools mentioned by the Ministry of Education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. These tools include having a Special Education multidisciplinary team with a vision and plan to ensure that the teachers have the support necessary for meeting academic, physical and emotional needs of the hearing impaired students.

Participants felt that the current university courses in special education are not related or sequential for teachers of the hearing impaired. For example, the communication or sign language classes must be divided into programs and give sufficient periods of instruction and practice for each stage so teachers experience continuous learning. Also, the teachers mentioned that they were prepared with general education courses to teach the deaf and hard of hearing, and they were not provided with courses to teach the specific subjects at the elementary grade levels. Also, the current professional development offerings were repeated and not developed or improved to raise the level of knowledge and skills of teachers, which caused them the continuation of difficulties and challenges. Though the teachers develop themselves or work informally with a colleagues to develop their skills, teachers would like ongoing classroom support that is provided by knowledgeable professionals who have taught the hearing impaired.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this research was to explore the challenges faced by new special education teachers of hearing impaired students in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the support they identified that they would like to receive during the first years of their teaching experience. Exploring the concerns of special education teachers of deaf and hard-of-hearing students in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is an important step in determining how to improve instruction for hearing impaired students. The identification of the challenges, needs and wants of new special education teachers of hearing impaired students in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was investigated using a qualitative, phenomenological research approach. Qualitative, phenomenological research allows a researcher to discover and understand in greater depth a specific phenomenon related to a life experience of an individual or a group of people (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Data was collected by interviewing special education teachers of the hearing impaired to obtain deeper, rich information regarding their needs related to the challenges they faced and the support they received as they began their teaching careers. This will be compared with the literature related to the support new teachers from around the world need. The findings from this study may provide important information that can be used for the collaborative development of courses and activities offered by universities, regional centers, and school leaders to support and develop special education teachers of hearing impaired students throughout Saudi Arabia. As was stated in the literature, if teachers feel they are supported in meeting the challenges of teaching, they feel more satisfied and provide students with a higher level of educational service.

The overarching question that began this investigation was: What types of professional

support do special education teachers of deaf and hard-of-hearing students in Saudi Arabia need so they are motivated to better meet student needs? In order to dig deeper into this question, the following sub-questions guided the conversations with ten teachers of the hearing impaired.

Sub question 1 (challenges/basic needs): What knowledge, skills, and experiences do teachers believe they need in order to meet the challenges when working with deaf or hard-of-hearing students?

Sub question 2 (wants): What types of professional support and/or services would special education teachers in Saudi Arabia like to receive in order to better support students with special needs?

Sub question 3 (support received): What support have teachers been receiving that assists them in better meeting the needs of special needs students?

Sub question 4 (better instruction): If the perceived needs and wants of teachers strongly align with the support given by supervisors, school administrators and experienced colleagues, would more teachers of the hearing impaired feel they are better able to meet the needs of their students?

The original intent of the research was to interview teachers of the hearing impaired who were in their first five years of their teaching career. When seeking participants, the researcher found that there had been a hiring freeze on new teachers in deaf institutes and public school hard-of-hearing programs, so all participants have between seven and ten years of special education teaching experience. Therefore, their responses required reflection the needs of their first years of teaching which moved quickly into their current wants. Because of having a sampling of experienced teachers reflecting on needs and wants, the responses often outlined what the participants felt new teachers needed as they began teaching then on what more

experienced teachers wanted in order to improve themselves to better meet the needs of students and the requirements of current special education laws and regulations. This combination took the findings beyond the basic needs and wants of new teachers to recommendations that could impact initial training and ongoing professional development for teachers of the hearing impaired community.

Sub-Question 1 (Needs)

What knowledge, skills, and experiences do teachers believe they need in order to meet the challenges when working with deaf or hard-of-hearing students? This question was designed to investigate the nature of the challenges and difficulties the ten special education teachers faced when they began serving hearing impaired students plus basic knowledge and experience they needed to conquer those challenges. The rich information obtained indicated that the preparation for teaching related to the university programs did not match the needs of beginning teachers of the hearing impaired. In addition, the support the new teachers received was not well organized so teachers could meet challenges and student needs.

Previous Research Regarding Needs. The majority of the literature into the preparation and induction of teachers referred to general education and/or general special education teachers and not specifically for teachers of the hearing impaired. The literature indicated that beginning or early career teachers require induction programs, ongoing support for meeting student needs, support for designing and implementing Individual Education Programs (IEPs) and lessons, and the importance of support that would attain satisfaction in teaching special education populations.

Induction Program: An induction program is necessary to become familiar with the school system, school policies, and procedures (Berry et al., 2011; Locasale-Crouch et al., 2012;

Matthews, 2003;). Locasale-Crouch et al. (2012) mentioned that most teachers after finishing induction programs will be alone without permanent support that meets the teachers' needs.

Ongoing Support: The literature reported that new teachers require ongoing assistance from experienced colleagues who can give support in improving knowledge and skills for using different strategies in teaching special needs students (Beutel et al., 2017; Gills, 2013). Cutler (2014), Billingsly (2004), Wiebke and Bardin (2009, and Lynch (2016) emphasized that teachers should be provided mentors to ensure that new teachers can apply what they learned in their pre-service program without losing their excitement for teaching students with special needs.

Special Requirements: Special education teachers have extra paperwork compared to general education teachers, which means they should be provided with mentors who can ensure that they are ready to work with multidisciplinary teams to develop the Individual Education Programs (IEPs) (Alquraini, 2014). The literature mentions the importance for teachers being able to prepare lesson plans to meet each student's IEP goals. Hussain (2010) found that special education teachers must be provided with support to serve students with special needs, or the teachers will become frustrated. Whitaker (2010) found that special education teachers have a lack of tools to help them apply theories and strategies to teach students with disabilities, which may increase the frustration.

The literature mentioned that special education teachers should be provided support in their first five years, which includes emotional support in order to increase satisfactions in their teaching ability (Whitaker, 2003). In addition, support will not only improve a teacher's level of performance but prepare them for different roles and responsibilities that increase teaching quality and student achievement. Teachers of students with special needs require support in their first years not only to complete required paperwork such as IEPs, student evaluations, meetings,

grades, and lesson planning, but they need emotional and professional support to remain satisfied with their career.

Current Findings Regarding Needs. The deeper dig into the needs of the deaf and hearing impaired teachers in Saudi Arabia indicated that they need more preparation, a written curriculum, support from knowledgeable professionals, and ongoing professional development. The basic needs reiterated by the participants related to communication in sign language, a written curriculum, knowledge of the Individual Education Program system, and on-going support that transcended the major themes in the cross-case analysis. The participants expressed these over-arching needs in a variety of ways, but most often when they were sharing what knowledge and skills a new teacher should possess when coming into their institute or school.

Sign Language. The basic needs grew from issues that the teachers encountered when establishing their own classrooms. The most prevalent professional need was to communicate with hearing impaired students. Teachers who are teaching deaf students rely on sign language and participants emphasized the lack of sign language preparation during their university years. All ten participants mentioned that one of the many factors that affected their sign language was not enough training at the university level. This meant that they had to rely on themselves to enhance sign language basics. Six of the participants felt the need for a stronger preparation program so they could communicate with students, especially when teaching subject content. The teachers who extended themselves or had a relationship with the deaf community at large had fewer needs, but most important expressed they needed a stronger sign language preparation program from the university and pre-service experiences.

This was clarified when Teacher One shared, “Unfortunately, the university had deficiencies in the outputs in sign language. At the university, I learned the sign language for

numbers, colors, letters, and very simple words, but teachers of the hearing impaired have only very basic sign language, and if they do not use it or have personal diligence, they will lose the language.” In addition, Teacher Five expressed that “the university study program was mostly theoretical, and the practical application was not enough, which caused a lack of professionalism in many matters, the most important of which is the weak sign language due to the lack of hours of study and practice before entering the field.” Teacher Nine mentioned, “It is difficult communicating with hard-of-hearing students... What we learned from the university was not enough, not at the level of student needs.” The participants often expressed that the frustrations they had when beginning their teaching careers were tied to the level of training they had received at the universities.

Written Curriculum. A second basic need that caused teacher frustration was the lack of a written curriculum that included the content to be taught in each subject and at each grade level. Teachers of the hearing impaired are assigned to teach subjects at different grade levels. These teaching assignments can change from one semester to the next. Therefore, participants shared that they did not feel confident in teaching the content because they did not have courses at the university for teaching subjects such as mathematics and science that have a wide range of subject specific vocabulary. This led to the need for a larger sign language vocabulary that would address the terms and abstract concepts. In addition, they were trained primarily in teaching/learning strategies for general education students so they lacked strategies for teaching the hearing impaired. Without a written curriculum that was designed for hearing impaired students and covered the content to be taught for each subject at each grade level, the teachers felt inadequate and frustrated.

Curricular needs were expressed in different ways. Teacher Five emphasized, “The student who comes from the home at the age of four years has very little sign language, and sometimes faces a new teacher or teachers who are weak in sign language... Also, the parents have a weak knowledge of what their child needs and how to deal with him.” Teacher Three mentioned, “My master's research came after my knowledge of what we need, and we struggle as teachers of the hearing impaired. When students come to us in primary school, it is often with zero in terms of cognitive, behavioral, and other skills. Students and their parents should be provided with pre-school materials before they reach primary school.” Teacher Eight expressed difficulties in teaching students using the general education curriculum and the lack of expectations for student learning. “For the subject I teach..., I find it difficult to teach the general curriculum to students with hearing impairments because students sometimes have more than one disability ... Also, sometimes they have a low degree of intelligence and, this increases the difficulty in teaching. ... I repeat many curricular concepts that fit their needs. The general curriculum needs to explain how the concepts can be adjusted to suit students with hearing impairment.” In addition, he mentioned the need for providing appropriate special education aids. “We also need hearing aids for students and techniques that suit their needs.”

The need for a written curriculum was voiced by teachers from the institute and public school. In order to meet this need, teachers from the institute sought assistance from more experienced teachers who could guide them in what concepts to teach at each grade level and the teaching strategies that would be effective. In the public schools, the teachers relied on the classroom teachers who could develop their knowledge of content to help the teachers of the hearing impaired develop the vocabulary for abstract ideas. This basic need for a curriculum led to conversations regarding the development and use of an Individualized Educational Program

for each student.

Individual Development Program. The utilization of an Individual Development Program (IEP) was shared by participants who had differing knowledge and use of the IEP system. The system should begin with the meeting of a multi-disciplinary team that includes the teachers of the hearing impaired, a hearing specialist, speech and language specialist, classroom teacher, and special education administrator (supervisor or school principal). The specialists would do the initial assessments of the student and share their findings with everyone while the teachers and parents would share their insights. From these findings, a set of goals would be set to assist the student with academic, social and emotional needs. As the goals are set, a set of strategies would be specified on how to reach the goals and what each member of the team would be responsible for accomplishing. The teachers of the student will then implement the plan and take time to do formative assessments to ensure that the student is coming closer to attaining the IEP goals. During this time, the student may also receive assistance for a speech and language specialist to support goal attainment, or from a behavioral specialist if that was an identified need. At the end of the school year, the multi-disciplinary team would reconvene to review the most recent formative assessments and any assessment done by the specialists to decide if IEP goals had been met or not. They would then set new goals and objectives with suggestions for strategies to reach those goals.

When listening carefully to the participants, their comments focused on needs regarding the IEP and the process for developing and implementing the plan. Over-all, there was a desire expressed for learning more about the IEP process and working with multi-disciplinary teams to meet student needs. In addition, there were differing opinions as to the benefit of the plans and little mentioned about goals and strategies for reaching goals, but there was some discussion

regarding extending teaching strategies and assessing hearing impaired students.

Teachers shared their way of using Individual Education Plans (IEPs) as teachers expressed the using of IEPs just when students have low academic levels compared to their classmates. Teacher One mentioned, “Yes, I use [an IEP] only for students with a poor level of knowledge. [Otherwise], it’s a personal effort.” Teachers expressed the need of assisting in using IEPs because they tried to improve the students’ performance, but they have expressed the need of assisting from a personal special education and the students’ parents because it consumes more time. Teacher number eight mentioned “Each student needs, in the event of an individual plan, to have a specific time in the class. For example, we have 45 minutes per class, and you have five students, meaning each student takes time from 5 to 10 minutes, depending on the capabilities of the student, and also depends on the interest of the home, but some students get tired with it by virtue There is no support at home. I had a student in the second grade and so far, I can find out his problem because he has very high dispersion and there is no interest from the parents ’side either.”

The deeper dig indicated that the perceived need for the development and use of IEPs varied with the knowledge of each participant. Many expressed that this was a basic need to reduce issues they faced, but there were differing opinions on how to convene a multi-disciplinary team, the value of specifying the goals and objectives and how to reach the goals, and summative and formative assessments that would verify the process.

On-Going Support. In order to reduce issues and frustrations, participants agreed on the need for on-going support. They spoke often about support from knowledgeable professionals, whether these were official, such as special education supervisors or school administrators, or mentors or experienced teachers in the school. Regarding official professionals, participants

wanted supervisors or others to come into the classroom to observe teaching and learning so the feedback received would be useful to improve planning, instruction and learning. The conversations needed to include how to plan lessons and teaching strategies in order to improve learning. This interaction needed to happen frequently. Participants often sought assistance from experienced teachers, but several would have liked a more formal system because they sometimes felt like they were taking advantage of their peers rather than having professional conversations.

“There is no follow-up. For example, the supervisor or principal of the school should enter the classroom write notes and follow-up or say thank for the effort in the event that my work is correct... The supervisor must have knowledge of the sign dictionary and how to teach and communicate with students so that he can support the teacher and raise their professional level” (Teacher One). Teacher Three shared, “In the beginning, we needed assistance in the field when we faced difficulties. The first time we taught deaf students, we needed someone to help us in teaching, preparing the classroom, and with lesson plans.”

The need for ongoing support was an important need expressed by each participant. The level of support and who would be responsible varied, but on-going support from knowledgeable educators was a need that could not be ignored.

Sub-Question 1 Answered. Regarding the needs of beginning teachers of the hearing impaired in Saudi Arabia, the participants in this study expressed the need for on-going support from knowledgeable educators and assistance with specific special education requirements and expectations. The need for an induction program was not often mentioned, but the need for a more extensive preparation program at the university level was expressed. Points in the preparation program described in this research were included in the literature review’s induction

program, but the participants in this study expressed the need to develop the knowledge, skills and experiences before beginning their own classrooms. The on-going support often focused on the assistance participants needed from their special education supervisors and school administrators, but the participants shared that the assistance was often sought from colleagues in their schools. Overall, the information provided by these participants through their experiences as beginning teachers give a clearer picture of what new teachers of the hearing impaired need when they first enter a classroom. The next examination of the data was to determine the current support new teachers are receiving.

Sub-Question 2 (Wants)

What types of professional support and/or services would special education teachers in Saudi Arabia like to receive in order to better support students with special needs? By carefully reading the transcripts of interviews, as teachers with seven to ten years of teaching experience reflected on their experiences as beginning teachers and what they needed at that time, their needs began to turn into the wants of experienced teachers. Therefore, the need for more training in sign language while they were at the university turned into wanting content specific sign language and experiences with the deaf community in order to guild social conversation skills. The beginning teacher's need for a curriculum that was designed for hearing impaired students became a desire to adjust the general education curriculum. The need for a knowledgeable supervisor or mentor became the desire for more time with experienced teachers at school and during ongoing professional development. The participants were very passionate about what they felt teachers of the hearing impaired wanted in order to improve their skills for meeting the needs of their students and the students' families.

Previous Findings Regarding Wants. The previous literature provided insight into

what beginning teachers want. These wants included having a mentor and time to meet with that person on a regular basis, intervention services, assistance with paperwork and Individual Education Program plans and goals, and the importance of preservice experiences.

Mentoring. The literature mentioned that if mentoring is important for the general education teachers, it is even more important for special education teachers (Mathews, 2003). Billingsly (2004) examined the problem of teacher quality and retention in special education and found that teachers who are not certified to teach need extra assistance during first years of teaching.

Interventions Services. The literature indicated that trained specialists are wanted to implement early services and interventions such as diagnosis and education programs (Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia, 2020). The literature mentions that intervention services in Saudi Arabia can provide the child and parents with services that will prepare the child to enter an institute or public school (Aldabas, 2015). Based on the literature, a lack of early services will affect student and teacher performance (Alshawi, et al., 2019; Murry & Alqahtani, 2015).

Using Individual Education Programs(IEPs). The literature mentioned the use of the Individual Education Program (IEPs) as a student reference and to provide everything the teachers require to improve a student's skills. The teachers play a part in the development of the IEPs and a multidisciplinary team assists with the educational goals for each subject (Alquraini, 2014; Hussain, 2010).

Laws and Regulations. In want that the teachers had was for a more organized, official support system for special education teachers. The literature indicated that the USA and KSA have similar laws and regulations of Special Education (Murry et al., 2015). In 2001, the Ministry of Education (MoE) in Saudi Arabia established the first Regulations of Special

Education Programs and Institutes (RSEPI), which was the result of collaborative work between the MoE and special education professors at King Saud University (Alqahtani, 2017).

The literature indicated that the Laws and Regulations of special education created to ensure that teachers and students are provided services that prepare them for entering the classroom (KSCDR, 2019; Ministry of as other students Education in Saudi Arabia, 2020). This indicated there was high value in providing the child and family services that would allow them equity in life, the ability to start school with their peers, and the permission of the hearing impaired community to play an effective role. In addition, Laws and Regulations of special education mentioned the importance of having preservice for special education faculty to ensure that they can serve the hearing impaired students in an appropriate way. Therefore, the wants of teachers were supported by the law.

Current Findings Regarding Wants. The current research findings indicate that the teachers want to have experiences that address the needs of beginning and the continuing growth of experienced teachers. For beginning teachers, the desire for a more intensive university program that get teachers in the field to do observations and interact with teachers and hearing impaired students is high on the list. The desire to have a curriculum that adapts the general education curriculum to include objectives, teaching strategies and materials for the hearing impaired students comes next. Having a variety of professionals in the universities, regional centers, institutes and schools is wanted so all teachers can continue learning. The wants are tied into the desire for a professional development that will take a teacher from their current level to higher levels that will better meet student and family needs.

More Sign Language. These teachers shared the desire to have better sign language for teaching content. Teachers felt that the university should offer more content classes that are

taught in sign language. In this way, they would be able to better communicate abstract ideas that are very difficult in some subjects.

Well-Developed Curriculum. The teachers shared that they wanted a curriculum that was designed for the hearing impaired that included goals and objectives, teaching and learning methods, and materials. This curriculum would include each subject area from preschool through high school and would eliminate many challenges faced by teachers.

“Because the curriculum is designed for general education students and not designed for students with hearing impairments, I do not know what I should teach the students” (Teacher Two). Teacher Three and others mentioned, “We need sign language dictionaries for each grade level for the hearing impaired students along with a special curriculum for each subject. Each curriculum needs manuals for students to learn at home.” Teacher Seven also expressed the desire to “add sign language to the curriculum for each subject at each educational stage for deaf students for the school stages from preschool through entering the university stage.”

Wants for Ongoing Support. Teachers shared their experience with previous and current support. They often felt that the current support does not meet what they are looking for, and they want support that is permanent and helps teachers to fill their lack of skills in teaching hearing impaired students.

“The supervisors should be visiting at least once every week... and giving me and other teachers some notes, and identifying the excellent teacher to provide a course for the rest of the teachers to benefit everyone” (Teacher One). Teacher Three mentioned, “I prefer that the support be official, stable, regular and planned, and there is no objection to obtaining support from colleagues but in a formal way and not just asking in a friendly way. The school should have a vision, clear goals, and a work team that is trained in hearing disabilities.” Teacher eight

expressed, “The supervisors must have periodical meeting with the teachers to solve problems that we face, and help us identify solutions.”

The teachers shared the support they would like to receive, which showed that they have a little help, and they shared that the supervisors are working with principals and school administration more than working with teachers and students. The wants of support appeared with the teachers shared their needs of assistance, and then they expressed the wants to cover the needs and improve the support system to meet the students' needs.

Sub-Question 2 Answered. These participating teachers were able to articulate their wants which often began with the needs of beginning teachers of the hearing impaired in Saudi Arabia. As teachers became more experienced, they were better able to express the desires beyond basic needs. The desire expressed included ongoing support with clear vision that improves their performance and provides them with courses that improve their skills and the success of their students. These wants often addressed the need they felt for developing communication skills in sign language, having a comprehensive curriculum for the hearing impaired, having ongoing interaction with experienced teaching professionals who had worked with the hearing impaired, and having opportunities to improve themselves through courses and trainings offered by the universities and their regional centers.

Sub-Question 3 (Current Support Provided)

What support have teachers been receiving that assists them in better meeting the needs of special needs students? The question design to investigate the types of support the special education teachers received in order to understand the factors that could affect the motivations in appropriately teaching hearing impaired students. Even though Saudi Arabia has rules and regulations related to the support that teachers of the hearing impaired should be receiving, that

is not always the case. The teachers shared that the support they have received did not meet their expectations and were different than what they thought. Some participants shared what they would like to receive and that made them to share their experiences with the current support system. Other teachers shared the previous support they received before transferring to their current hearing impaired institute or program, which that led them to see the differences of support that teachers receive.

Previous Research Regarding Current Support. The literature indicated that the special education laws in Saudi Arabia emphasize the preparation of Saudi teachers to be skilled in communicatee with hearing impaired students using Arabic Sign Language (Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia, 2020). In addition, the laws indicate that if there is a lack in providing pre-service to hearing impaired students in Saudi Arabia, this could affect the students' preparation to enter the classrooms. Finally, Alsalem, in 2015 indicated that the universities system in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia do not prepare special education teachers to become experts in teaching specific subjects such as math, science, or history.

Laws for the Hearing Impaired. In the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the teachers must be prepared to meet the hearing impaired students' needs (Alquraini, 2013). The special education laws required the General Special Education departments to provide early services for deaf and hearing impaired children and parents, and training for special education personnel working in early intervention services and school programs such as transition services. (KSCDR, 2019).

Pre-Service Training Literature. Previous studies indicated that services and programs for the hearing impairments have a lack of trained specialists serving children from birth until they begin school. Studies discovered that there is not a strong Special Education system that develops multidisciplinary teams that work with teachers to ensure students will be provided

with educational programs that meet academic needs (Murry & Alqahtani, 2015). Also, the literature mentioned limited early diagnosis of newborns and infants using hearing screening, and how this can affect hearing impaired children because of a lack of language development and other essential skills (Alshawhi, Al-Gazlan, Alrawaf, et al., 2019; Alyami, Soer, Swanepoel, & Pottas, 2016).

The Current Universities System. According to the literature, Special Education teachers of the hearing impaired are prepared to teach only at the elementary level without preparing them to teach specific subjects. For example, King Saud University has Special Education Departments in which the students must finish 128 credits hours to earn a Bachelor's in Special Education (Hussain, 2010). Finding the content of the hearing impairments programs to determine how the universities designed these program to meet the criteria of the hearing impairment laws was not possible. In addition, the literature indicated that teachers who teach at the middle and high school levels would be teachers who have a bachelor's degree in general education to teach specific subjects such as mathematics, and several of these teachers have a diploma in Special Education for sign language (Alsalem, 2015).

The Ministry of Education (MoE) in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is responsible for the General and Special Education Departments to ensure that all special education programs will follow the special education laws. Still, the literature showed that there are few early detection services (Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia, 2020). Since literature related to hearing impairment research in Saudi Arabia is limited, and most of the literature indicated a lack of preservice, this indicates that the university outcomes do not meet the standards for preparing not only teachers but also specialists who should provide services for hearing impaired children and their parents.

Current Findings Regarding Current support. The participating teachers believed they would have assistance from supervisors in teaching content because they were not prepared to teach a specific subject when at the university. When expressing the lack of classroom support, teachers mentioned that the supervisors lacked knowledge in teaching content with basic sign language skills. In addition, teachers were provided a new general education curriculum that had fewer pictures than the previous general education curriculum, but the hearing impaired need more visuals to develop understanding. Plus, the professional courses attended by special education teachers were often repeated and for beginners. Over-all, the support given teachers of the hearing impaired and professional development activities offered have not been supporting teachers as they had expected.

Current University Programs. The first area in which teachers needed support was sign language and the second was a curriculum that addressed the hearing impaired. Teachers shared their experience with a lack in sign language and content instruction, which led them to express how the university affected need. During the total university program, only two classes of sign language were offered near the end of their third year in college. Added to this, teachers were not provided experts in sign language during their internship so their sign language improved. In addition, participating in activities with the deaf community during their university program was not required.

“Sign language classes were required once during the third year at the university, which was before starting the internship. The class was only words, and it was not taught in stages. [Teachers] should have the sign language class every semester after the first year of the program... After I transferred to my current program, I met a supervisor who was teaching a course that I attended and enjoyed, and I benefited from the course that was presented. I wished

that it was in the university's program in the form of a subject" (Teacher Two).

Support for Curriculum and Individual Education Programs (IEPs). Currently, these teachers are given a general education curriculum to teach the hearing impaired students. The teachers expressed difficulties in teaching this curriculum, so they expected that they would be provided with curriculum and materials from the supervisors that would meet the needs of the hearing impaired students. But, this did not happen. This required that the teachers be able to redesign the curriculum to meet the students' needs. This has been difficult because the curriculum for each subject does not have clear academic standards. As Teacher Six said, "Each curriculum has general education goals designed for normal students. Some of the goals may match the deaf or hard-of-hearing student, but not all of them, which mean that teachers need a plan to define the standards and goals for each student."

Working with a multidisciplinary team to design IEP goals could lend support, but when the teachers shared their experience in using IEPs, it was discovered that they are not required to use IEPs with all students. And IEP is used basically when the supervisors asked teacher to do this. Through the interviews and conversations regarding the use of Individual Education Plans (IEPs), the teachers could use the IEPs to align instruction with the general education curriculum. But, the special education teachers expressed they did not have training or support in using Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and did not understand the purpose or significance of having IEPs for each student, especially these plan must be updated yearly by the multidisciplinary team. The teachers expressed that support is not being provided by the multidisciplinary team to better meet student needs. "There must be a working group to assist teachers in setting the individual educational plan to keep students on track" (Teacher Ten).

Current Support in the Classroom. Teachers expressed that when they started teaching

subjects, they faced difficulties and challenges, which led them to ask the supervisors to help them in their classroom. The teachers shared that the supervisors helped them only with essential support such as signing papers for the administration and organizing classes. When the teachers needed more help such as teaching subject content, the supervisors told them they could ask older teachers. The latter had years of experience teaching content. The support received from experienced teachers in teaching content was appreciated, but sometimes new teachers felt embarrassed to ask because this would give extra work to the experienced teachers.

During the interviews, the teachers reflected on the support they received from the universities during preservice and when beginning their teaching careers. When university support did not match teacher needs, the teachers felt they should be provided with a support system from their supervisors. In addition, the system should include a special education multidisciplinary team who would assist them not only in teaching content but in working together as they learned the special education system to serve the hearing impaired students. “We need to add services and support for teachers of the hearing impaired that are appropriate for students’ needs, because the teacher cannot work individually and without professional and continuous support” (Teacher Three).

Current Professional Development. Information in the transcripts indicated that when teachers found they did not have knowledgeable supervisors who could assist in teaching content and improving their knowledge and skills, they asked for courses, but found that the courses and workshops were only offered at the end of the school year. The teachers shared that they had attended some of the current courses and workshops offered by the Education Administration Agency, but there were only a few courses for special education, and they did not meet what these teachers were looking for to improve their knowledge and skills. In addition, the special

education courses repeated content and did not develop teaching using sign language, teaching content, using Individual Education Plans, or other courses related to needs of hearing impaired students. This led teachers to rely on their own research. “What happens with us in the field is that we are required to teach different subjects each semester, and this causes us a high level of effort to learn a new subject and also effort to identify teaching methods” (Teacher Seven).

When this occurs, some teachers have turned to attending activities offered by the deaf community. In this way, they improve their sign language and expand their support system.

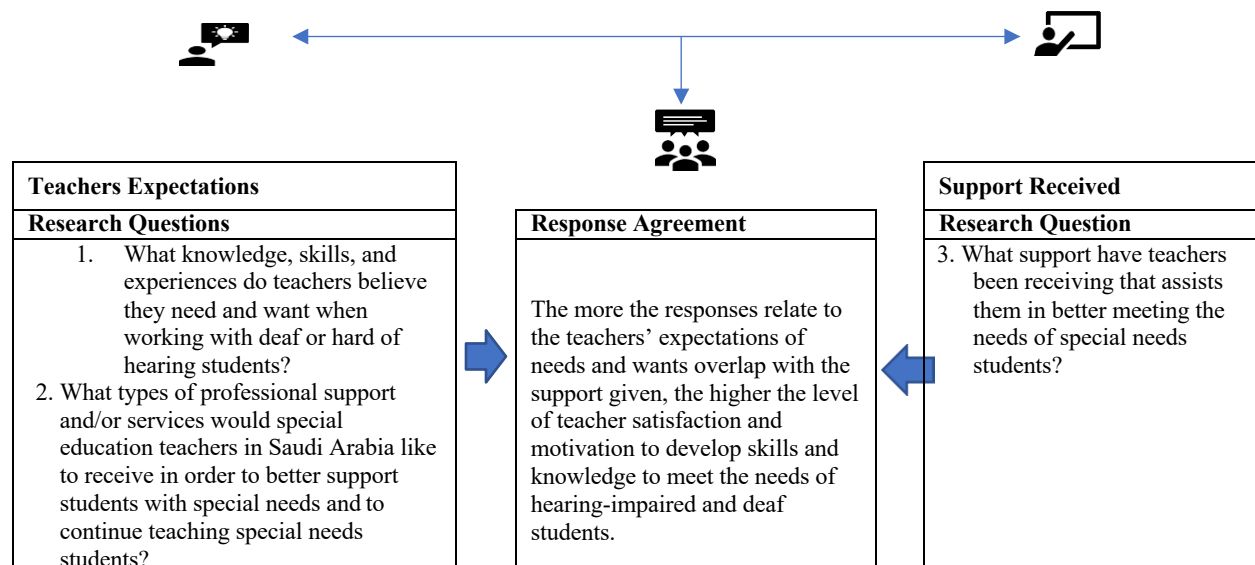
The current support offered the participants in this study has not matched their needs or the needs of their hearing impaired students. The teachers have not been satisfied with the current support, and though they have been resourceful to find some support in a variety of ways, they feel that there should be a better system of support that begins at the university level and carries through to district centers and schools. The teachers shared that if they received support what they have expressed the needs and wants of support and shared the current backing and they showed that it will affect not only their performance but also will improve the deaf and hearing impaired students.

Sub-Question 4 (Strength of Support)

The fourth research sub-question asked: If the perceived needs and wants of teachers strongly align with the support given by supervisors, school administrators and experienced colleagues, would more teachers of the hearing impaired feel they are better able to meet the needs of their students? In returning to the conceptual map for this research, determining the degree to which the needs and wants of teachers are addressed by a support system of supervisors, administrators and other professions became extremely important.

Previous Research Regarding Strength of Support. The literature indicates that teachers should be provided with education program and ongoing support, plus that the special education teachers require a higher level of assistance (Berry et al., 2011). Locasale-Crouch et al. (2012) and Matthews (2003) indicated that if special education teachers are not provided with induction or preparation programs and ongoing support, the teachers will be frustrated. The previous research mentioned those special education teachers know that they need to apply theories related to teaching students with disabilities (Beutel et al., 2017; Gilles, 2013). Still, they may not have a large enough toolbox of strategies and resources to use methods for teaching hearing impaired students. The literature emphasized that special education teachers must build their confidence by being provided experts who can mentor them. A mentors who the teacher respects and trusts can gradually improve a teacher’s knowledge and skills, starting with the classroom arrangement, the study plan, the individual plan, evaluation of students, and other services appropriate in meeting needs of students (Whitaker, 2010). The belief is that the stronger needs and wants of teachers are addressed by the support provided, the higher the level of teacher satisfactions and student achievement. (See Conceptual Map.)

Figure 2: Theory of Action based on Conceptual Framework



Responses		Responses
What teachers of the hearing impaired feel they need and want to better meet the needs of their students.		The support teachers of the hearing-impaired and deaf students have been given by administration.

Current Findings Regarding Overlap of Needs/Wants and Support. The participants from institutes and schools in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia shared their needs for a stronger university preparation system that involves more sign language, a curriculum that is designed for hearing impaired students, a knowledgeable, professional support system, and professional development that meets the needs of the teachers. In order to meet those needs, the teachers want a stronger preparation program, a curriculum that is adapted to hearing impaired students and includes appropriate materials and technology, a support system of knowledgeable supervisors and other professionals, and professional development courses/workshops that meet the specific needs of the teachers of the hearing impaired.

By re-examining participant responses to dig deeper into teacher wants/needs and current support, the following areas of satisfaction can be identified.

Preparation and Induction Programs. The ten special education teachers expressed their needs for a stronger preparation and/or induction program. The importance of a preparation program became evident when the teachers entered their classrooms. The teachers found they had difficulties in teaching abstract subject content that required more skills and knowledge of teaching strategies and sign language. Teachers asked for assistance in several areas of needs, and the support rarely came from official sources - supervisors, school administrators or universities, but from unofficial sources – colleagues and the deaf community. Teachers who extended themselves at the university or had a relationship with the deaf community possessed a higher level of knowledge and skills than the teachers who relied on basic university preparation.

Teachers who relied on the university preparation shared that there were no required activities or courses with the deaf community during their program for teaching deaf and hearing impaired students. In short, teachers sought a stronger preparation program to fill the gaps left from university courses and experiences. The preparation program would include more sign language courses, especially for teaching content and more experiences in the field in addition to an internship where they spent all of their time with a special education teacher.

Content Knowledge and Teaching Strategies. A strong ability to communicate with the deaf and hearing impaired is required for teaching academic content. One of the first basic needs that the majority of teachers mentioned was a strong knowledge and teaching skills for academic subjects at multiple grade levels. A lack of preparation at the university level became apparent to the teachers when they began their official job experiences. Teachers expressed they wished they had practical classes related to the academic needs of deaf and hearing impaired students instead of only lecture classes that offered no practical experience in using special education tools and strategies. In addition, they wanted more knowledge in assessing students and meeting with a multidisciplinary team to design and implement Individual Education Program. Teachers expressed that when they started their official jobs, they had only basic knowledge related to special education. However, they were not provided with knowledge and skills to teach the deaf and hard of hearing students. Lectures can give information, but without implementation and follow up, beginning teachers do not have a true understanding of student needs and how to meet those needs.

Basic Curriculum. The participants shared in various ways that a curriculum for each content areas and across the grade levels and required support in teaching content. These teachers expected to be provided with a curriculum and materials from the supervisors that

would meet the needs of the students, but the ten teachers expressed that the supervisors provided them with only a general education curriculum that required the teachers to redesign content and activities to meet the student needs. The curriculum for each subject does not have academic standards.

Individual Education Program (IEP) Development. Often reflections included a lack of understanding regarding developing and IEP with a team of specialists, the teachers and parents. Even though participants expressed the need for assistance in designing and using IEPs to improve student performance, they had not been trained in developing plans with parents and specialists, or have an understanding of the value of the IEP process.

Hearing Assistance. Teachers lack the knowledge of hearing technology that could meet student needs, and enhance student performance. The lack of sufficient access to and training on hearing aids and technology that could improve student hearing and speaking skills was strong.

Over-all, the over-lapping of needs and wants expressed by the teachers of hearing impaired students, and the support they have received to address those needs and wants is not strong. This teachers voiced a low level of satisfaction in a variety of ways. The satisfaction level can be improved in order to assist teachers in addressing the educational needs of hearing impaired students.

Implications and Recommendations for Future Practice

According to the literature review and research findings, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has been improving their Special Education system since its conception in 1958. The special education system began with one class for blind students. Then, in 1962, special education expanded to include more than five categories of special education. From 1987 to 2000, special

education has included institutes for the deaf plus hard-of-hearing programs in public schools. The two educational programs were designed based on the children's level of hearing loss.

This research included ten special education teachers with seven to ten years of experience in teaching hearing impaired students in Saudi Arabia. Because of the small sampling, the findings may not apply to special education programs in other parts of the world. In addition, further research could be conducted with other special education teachers and supervisors around Saudi Arabia and with parents and members of the wider deaf community to determine their needs and perceptions of how well the hearing impaired programs are meeting the needs of the deaf and hard-of-hearing students. But, from the finding of this investigation, several actions could be taken to improve the satisfaction of teachers of the hearing impaired in Saudi Arabia.

Based on to the literature and the current research findings, special education leaders in Saudi Arabia collaborated with the United States to create laws, rules and regulations for eligibility and new special education policies in order to provide high-quality services such as transition education and associated services, early intervention programs, and individual education programs, as well as appropriate and free special education for all disabilities (Aldabas, 2015). Also, law number 224 established in 2001 indicted that special education professionals would receive the appropriate training through high-quality, special education programs. But, the literature and current findings demonstrate the lack of implementation of the law to move special education in Saudi Arabia to the implementation stage (Alqahtani, 2015).

When special education established law number 224, it was to ensure that every child with special needs would have appropriate services provided by trained teachers and specialists. But, the literature and this current research indicated that there are gaps in the preparation of

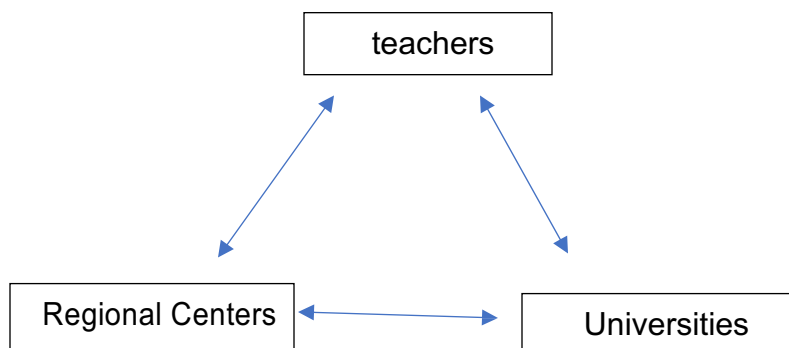
teachers of the hearing impaired. Current findings indicate a lack of development through university and pre-service experiences that could reduce teacher difficulties and challenges in teaching and communicating with the students. In addition, the special education system for the hearing impaired professionals in Saudi Arabia has not adequately addressed professional development as the law number 224 emphasized (Murry, 2015).

Through the information gained during this examination of the phenomena related to the satisfaction of teachers of hearing impaired students, several recommendations to improve the special education system can be made. First, the special education system must rely on teamwork in order to create an effective system that offers services from early intervention through university graduation. Second, special education should update the laws to include the concept of professional development to ensure that special education institutions keep improving their course offerings and trainings to meet teacher and student needs. Third, to move the Special Education system to a true implementation level, the Ministry of Education (MoE) system should develop a system of checks and balances to ensure that special education regulations and laws are being implemented.

A collaboration system of checks and balances would contain three points of service, much like a triangle. At the apex is the teachers, who are on the front line of educating students and require support from a base point of the Regional Education Department and the other base point of the universities. According to the literature, the Ministry of Education has five Regional Education Departments in the north, south, east, west, and central regions of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Each Regional Education Department has a Special Education Department that is responsible for all special education institutes and programs attached to the schools. In addition, all five regions have a university that has a Special Education Department. A collaborative

system between the three points will enable the three axis to work together to collect data and share issues regarding teachers' needs and services that will improve the hearing impaired students' outcomes.

Figure 3: Collaborative System for Meeting Teacher Needs and Student Achievement



The three axes are hierarchical with the teachers are at the top of the pyramid, and the universities and regional administration in the lower corners as the foundation of the pyramid. The mechanism of this hierarchical form allows teachers to communicate with the universities and also with the administration regarding issues teachers and students face and also allows the universities to communicate with the regional administration to share teacher needs and concerns, and to work together to find ways to support teachers through university courses, internships and preservice programs, and ongoing training and graduate level programs.

Regional Supervisors & Administration with Teachers. The teachers and supervisors will work together to ensure that the students have everything that is mentioned on the policies, rules and procedures for special education and collect data regarding the teachers' needs and wants regarding support to provide students with appropriate education and services. The supervisors will collaborate to share issues regarding curriculum, appropriate materials and training, supervision in the classrooms, and ongoing professional development.

Universities with Teachers. The teachers and universities will work together to ensure that the teachers continue improving, and that teacher qualifications meet the needs of hearing impaired students. The university can provide teachers with a strong foundation during their bachelor programs and ongoing professional development that lead to graduate degrees in order to improve experienced beginning teachers and fill the gaps due to a lack of knowledge and enhance the pre-internship and internship experiences for the students at the university. Also, the university can use scientific research tools to gather data from the field and analyze it to improve the hearing impairment programs offered at the university. The collaboration between the universities and teachers to explore what special education needs can lead to opening new programs and jobs, and predict what universities can adjust to provide appropriate services for hearing impaired students.

Regional Supervisors & Universities. Because the supervisors and universities are collaborating with teachers, they will be able to share and communicate their findings regarding special education issues and policies for students then determine how to provide programs from early interventions service that ensure that hearing impaired children are ready to enter the classrooms all the way through high school so students can enter universities or other post-graduate programs. The collaboration between universities and regional supervisors will fill the gaps that can affect the academic success of hearing impaired students and provide support to parents. When the universities have information regarding the number of hearing impaired children and their needs, they will be able to determine how they have to better prepare new teachers or provide new services for experienced teachers.

The idea of collaboration between the groups that impact education, the teachers, universities and regional centers, is to improve the special education system and allow the

universities and regional centers to fill the gaps in order to reach the higher special education standards set by the Ministry of Education. Through this system, the special education will become more effective through the years, because the universities and regional centers will be able to give teachers the support, they desire in order to meet the needs of hearing impaired students in Saudi Arabia.

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Appendix A

Brief Consent Form and Demographic Questionnaire (meet criteria for participating)

Dear _____

Thank you for being interested in my research project on the experiences of new special education teachers (hearing-impaired) in their first five years of teaching. You may be invited to take part in my dissertation project if you meet the criteria of this study. Your participation is appreciated and selecting participants is based on this study's criteria which are:

- A. Identify as a special education teacher of the hearing impaired in their first five years of teaching students with hearing-impaired.
- B. Hold a position in a special education hearing impaired institute AND a public elementary school in Saudi Arabia.
- C. Have five or fewer years of experience teaching hearing impaired or hard of hearing students.

In this dissertation project, I need to find out more about new special education teachers (hearing-impaired) in their first years of teaching, I am also interested in their current teaching experiences to have a clear picture of the challenges they face in their first five years. If you are interested in participating in this study, you may complete a brief demographic questionnaire below.

Participants can fill this survey, which should be completed in no more than three minutes. The participation in this study is voluntary. I will keep your information confidential and protect your identity. You have the choice to not answer any question that you pick. Completing this questionnaire will be considered as your consent for participating in this study.

If you are selected to participate in this study, you will receive a consent form that explain your rights. The Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (HSIRB) at Western Michigan University approved this study on What Kind of Support Do New Special Education Teachers in Saudi Arabia Need?

For further questions about this study, you may contact my chair, Dr. Nancy Mansberger at (269-387-4307) or email her at nancy.mansberger@wmich.edu or contact me at (269-276-6980) or email me at abduhakeem.m.almoneef@wmich.edu. You may also call the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board at (269-387-8293) or the Vice President for research at (269-387-8298).

Please complete the following questionnaire and return to
abduhakeem.m.almoneef@wmich.edu
Thank you

Demographic Questionnaire

For the purpose of my dissertation project, I must only interview new special education teachers of hearing-impaired students who meet the criteria that I selected for this study. I also must be able to provide in-depth understanding and description of my participants' features as well as their professional information. Therefore, please take a few minutes to complete this brief demographic questionnaire.

Name: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

1. Best day and time you are available: _____
2. Gender: Female _____ Male _____ Other _____
3. Age: _____ 21 – 35 _____ 36-45 _____ 46-55 _____ 56-65 _____ 66 and over
4. Highest Degree attained:
 _____ Bachelors _____ Master's _____ PhD _____ Professional degrees (MD, JD, etc.)
5. University attended: _____
6. Area of study: _____
7. What is your race or nationality? _____
8. Years of experience as special education teacher (hearing-impaired): _____
9. Current Position Title: _____
10. Type of institution you work in:
 _____ Special Education Institution
 _____ Public School with hearing impaired program
11. How long have you been in the position? _____ years

I have read and understand the information above. I will consent to participate in this study by signing my name below.

Name of participant: _____

Signature: _____

Appendix B

Email to Participants Who Meet the Study's Criteria.

Email to Participants Who Meet the Study's Criteria

Dear (participant's name);

Thank you for your interest in participating in my dissertation project on What Kind of Support Do New Special Education Teachers in Saudi Arabia Need?

After your completion of the demographic questionnaire, I found that you met the criteria regarding the participation in this study. These criteria are: (a) identify as a male special education teacher of the hearing impaired, (b) hold a position in a special education hearing impaired institute or a public elementary school in Saudi Arabia, and (c) have five or fewer years of experience teaching hearing impaired or hard of hearing students. I appreciate your unique contributions to my study and value your participation. I also appreciate the time you took to fill out the demographic questionnaire.

The purpose of this email is to identify a date and time to set up the interview, send you a consent form, and pick a pseudonym for yourself. This study is designed to allow participants to remain anonymous; therefore, please select a pseudonym that will act as your name throughout your participation in the study and use it when you reply to this email.

In order for me to schedule an interview with you I would like you to pick a time, date and location that works best for you. During the following weeks I am available on Wednesdays from 10 am to 4:00 pm, Thursdays all day, and Fridays all mornings to 5:00 pm. The interview will be done through FaceTime or Skype. If these times and dates do not work for you please suggest a date that is convenient for you.

Additionally, if there is an issue with using FaceTime or Skype, please inform me, and I will find another technology way that are more convenient for you. After the data, time, and location are finalized, you will receive a conformation email. Conformation emails will be sent two days before your scheduled interview date.

Typically, interviews will last for 60 - 90 minutes. However, the most important thing for me as a researcher is to leave enough time for you to tell your stories and communicate your experiences as thoroughly as possible. Therefore, if your schedule allows it, please reserve up to 3 hours in your schedule, which would allow us time for short breaks in case we need them during the interview. If you only have limited time and would like to share more, then we can reschedule another time to complete your interview.

Attached is a copy of the consent form to this email. Please take time to thoroughly read the form and confirm both your understanding of the content and your intent to participate in the study by signing the consent form. Keep in mind that the signed consent form must be received by me, either via email or in person, before the interview can be conducted. We will review the consent form together in person just before the interview begins. During the interview I will ask you some semi- structured open-ended questions. This means I will ask questions that help in capturing your full descriptions of your experiences; there are no right or wrong answers.

Please reply to this email in two days. If I did not receive your response during this time I will send you a reminder email.

For any questions or details please contact me at (269-276-6980) (+966503333498) or email me at abdulhakeem.m.almoneef@wmich.edu

Kind regards

Abdulhakeem Almoneef
Western Michigan University

Appendix C Consent Form

Western Michigan University
Department of Interdisciplinary Studies Doctorate

Principal Investigator: Nancy Mansberger, Ph.D.
Co- Principal Investigator: Sarah Summy, Ph.D.
Student Investigator: Abdulhakeem Almoneef, Doctoral Candidate
Title of Study: What Kind Of Support Do New Special Education Teachers In Saudi Arabia Need?

You have been invited to participate in a research project titled "*What Kind of Support Do New Special Education Teachers in Saudi Arabia Need?*" This project will serve as Abdulhakeem Almoneef's dissertation project for the requirements of the doctoral degree in the Department of interdisciplinary studies Doctorate at Western Michigan University under the two supervision of Dr. Nancy Mansberger and Dr. Sarah Summy. This consent document will explain the purpose of this research project and will go over all of the time commitments, the procedures used in the study, and the risks and benefits of participating in this research project. Please read this consent form carefully and completely and please ask any questions if you need more clarification.

What are we trying to find out in this study?

I would like to know about the experiences of new special education teachers (hearing-impaired) on their teaching statues regarding to their experiences and challenges they have faced in their first five years of teaching deaf students and hard of hearing.

Who can participate in this study?

Ten men who have a special education (hearing-impaired) degree, five special education teachers will be teaching hearing-impaired students at Al Amal (The Hop) Elementary Institute in Al-Ahsa and five special education teachers will be teaching hard of hearing students at Prince Saud bin Nayef Elementary School, Al Mubarraz in Al-Ahsa.

Where will this study take place?

This study will be conducting in Saudi Arabia at Al Amal (The Hop) Elementary Institute and at Prince Saud bin Nayef Elementary School in Al-Ahsa by interviewing face to face special education teachers (hearing-impaired) it will be sit up by using available technology (Skype, Face time, telephone, etc.).

What is the time commitment for participating in this study?

You will be asked to participate in an interview. This interview will take one to three hours based on how much information you choose to share and how many short breaks we might need.

What will you be asked to do if you choose to participate in this study?

You will be asked to share your demographic information such as age, gender, ethnic and racial identities, education, and years of experiences. In addition, you will be asked to provide your position title, marital status, and type of organization you work. You will be asked about your work background and reflect on your experiences within the position. You are also will be asked to provide answers to the interview questions and our conversations will be audio-recorded. Later, you will be asked to review my interpretations of your experiences and provide feedback to see if the information is accurate or not. I might call you for follow up questions or if I need you to clarify any information.

What information is being measured during the study?

You will be asked to answer questions in an interview format. These questions will focus on your experiences in your career.

What are the risks of participating in this study and how will these risks be minimized?

The risks of participating in this study are limited. However, the risks can include physical or emotional inconvenience through the interview. You may take short breaks to avoid being tired during the interview. If the interview questions cause physical or emotional inconvenience you can stop answering them at any point.

What are the benefits of participating in this study?

You might benefit from being aware that you are a participant in a study that gives a voice to Ministry of education and special education leaders in Saudi Arabia. Your notions might help in understanding the experiences of new special education teachers (hearing-impaired) the workplace as well as having a comprehensive knowledge about their challenges that they face.

Are there any costs associated with participating in this study?

There are no costs associated with participating in this study.

Is there any compensation for participating in this study?

No.

Who will have access to the information collected during this study?

When I finish working on this study, I will write assignment about the information that I collected from you. However, I will not share your name in this assignment. I will use a pseudonym instead of your actual name across my study and within this assignment. Your confidentiality will be protected by the law. All information that I collected from you, including transcripts, recordings, and formal forms will be secured inside my own filing cabinet and locked. In addition, I will download the materials in an encrypted external hard drive. When I complete the study, I will keep all the transcripts, recordings, and formal forms in the office of my chair for three years and then all the data will be destroyed.

What if you want to stop participating in this study?

You can decide to stop participating in the study at any point or any time. You will not be subject to prejudice or penalty for not completing your participation for any reason. You will experience NO consequences either academically or personally if you choose to withdraw from this study. The investigator can also decide to stop your participation in the study without your consent.

Should you have any questions prior to or during the study, you can contact the primary investigator, Dr. Nancy Mansberger at (269-387-4307) or email her at nancy.mansberger@wmich.edu. You may also contact the Chair, Human Subjects Institutional Review Board at 269-387-8293 or the Vice President for Research at 269-387-8298 if questions arise during the course of the study.

This consent document has been approved for use for one year by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (HSIRB) as indicated by the stamped date and signature of the board chair in the upper right corner. Subjects should not sign this document if the corner does not show a stamped date and signature.

I have read this informed consent document. The risks and benefits have been explained to me. I agree to take part in this study.

Please Print Your Name

Appendix D

First Cross-Case Analysis

Theme1. The Needs	Theme 2. The current support	Theme 3. The support they want
<p>Sub-theme1.Preparation: <i>Element 1.</i>Teaching specific subjects in sign language. (with quotation) <i>Element 2.</i> Improving the induction program. (with quotation) <i>Element 3.</i> Improving in sign language. (with quotation)</p> <p>Sub-theme2. Curriculum designed for deaf students <i>Element1.</i> Hard time in teaching reading and writing. (with quotation) <i>Element2.</i> Knowledge in using Individual lesson plans with lesson plan. (with quotation)</p> <p>Sub-theme3. Supervisors. Improving teachers' support <i>Element1.</i> Improving in families' role. (with quotation) <i>Element2.</i>Stability in teaching a subject. (with quotation)</p> <p>Sub-theme4. Professional Development (Provide more courses meet their needs.) <i>Element1.</i> Courses in teaching method in specific subjects.(with quotation) <i>Element2.</i> Longer time and Accuracy in teaching a subject</p>	<p>Sub-theme1. Supervisors. Basic type of support <i>Element 1.</i> Limited support.(with quotation) <i>Element 2.</i>Basic diagnosing. (with quotation) <i>Element 3.</i> Lack of knowledge regarding family's roles . (with quotation)</p> <p>Sub-theme2. Curriculum designed for deaf students <i>Element 1.</i> General curriculum.(with quotation) <i>Element 2.</i> Education sources for teaching sign. (with quotation)</p> <p>Sub-theme3. Supervisors. Improving teachers' support <i>Element1.</i> Using websites to gain more sing language and teaching mothed. (with quotation) <i>Element2.</i> Relay on himself and experienced teachers in the school. (with quotation) <i>Element3.</i> Lack of families' support. (with quotation)</p> <p>Sub-theme4. Professional Development (Provide more courses meet <i>Element 1.</i> Few courses and ineffective.(with quotation) <i>Element 2.</i> No brochures and catalogs provide info. (with quotation)</p>	<p>Sub-theme1.Preparation: <i>Element 1.</i> An official teacher's indication program. (with quotation) <i>Element 2.</i> Handbook for teachers . (with quotation)</p> <p>Sub-theme2. Curriculum designed for deaf students <i>Element1.</i> Books for each specific subject. (with quotation) <i>Element2.</i> Sign language books for kids. (with quotation)</p> <p>Sub-theme3. Supervisors. Improving teachers' support <i>Element 1.</i> An official procedure of teachers' support. (with quotation) <i>Element 2.</i> - An official support transition of teachers. (with quotation) <i>Element 3.</i> Permanent support. (with quotation)</p> <p>Sub-theme4. Professional Development (Provide more courses meet <i>Element 1.</i> Professional Development.(with quotation) <i>Element 2.</i> No professional courses in sign language . (with quotation)</p>

Appendix E

First Cross-Case Analysis

Theme	Sub-Themes	Mentioned Frequency
1. Needs of support	1.Induction or Preparation program	10
	2.Curriculum and education aids for deaf Students /standards	10
	3.Supervisor/ Mentor/Coach Support System in the school (day-to-day)	10
	4.Professional Development/ Training from sources outside the school (meet special needs)	10
2. Current support	1.Induction or Preparation program	10
	2.Curriculum and education aids for deaf Students	10
	3.Supervisor/ Mentor/Coach Support System in the school (day-to-day)	10
	4.Professional Development/ Training from sources outside the school (meet special needs)	10
3. Wants of support	1.Induction or Preparation program	10
	2.Curriculum and education aids for deaf Students /standards	10
	3.Supervisor/ Mentor/Coach Support System in the school (day-to-day)	10
	4.Professional Development/ Training from sources outside the school (meet special needs)	10

Appendix F
Second Cross-Case Analysis

Themes	Sub-Themes	Elements
1. Induction or Preparation program	A. Need of preparation	<i>Element 1:</i> Preparation program (with a quotation) <i>Element 2:</i> Sign language in specific subjects (with a quotation)
	B. Current preparation	<i>Element 1:</i> Sent to classroom w/no checking qualification of teaching by sign language. (with a quotation) <i>Element 2:</i> Sent to classroom w/no preparation. (with a quotation)
	C. Wants of Educational services and Guidelines	<i>Element 1:</i> Handbook for teachers (with a quotation) <i>Element 2:</i> Handbook for parents (with a quotation)
2. Curriculum and education aids for deaf Students /standards	A. Needs of curriculum for deaf students	<i>Element 1:</i> design curriculum that meets students' needs.(with a quotation)
	B. Current: general education curriculum	<i>Element 1:</i> General ED curriculum (with a quotation) <i>Element 2:</i> lack of Education sources for teaching sign (with a quotation)
	C. Wants: design curriculum for each level	<i>Element 1:</i> Books for each specific subject. (with a quotation) <i>Element 2:</i> Sign language books for kids. (with a quotation)
3. Supervisor/ Mentor/Coach Support System in the school (day-to-day)	A. Needs: Supervisors with rich knowledge and skills in teaching	<i>Element 1:</i> Sign language knowledge and skills and communication. (with a quotation) <i>Element 2:</i> Assisting in using IPEs. (with a quotation)
	B. Current: experienced teachers and supervisor	<i>Element 1:</i> No classroom supports. (with a quotation) <i>Element 2:</i> Relies on self to improve sign language. (with a quotation)

4. Professional Development/ Training from sources outside the school (meet special needs)		<i>Element 3.</i> Relies on self to improve sign language. (with a quotation)
	C. Want: additional support	<i>Element 1:</i> Permanent support. (with a quotation)
	A. Needs: Courses meet the special education needs	<i>Element 1:</i> . Courses meet teachers teaching needs (with a quotation) <i>Element 2:</i> Courses in organizing the classroom and lesson plans. (with a quotation)
	B. Current: mostly self-improvement	<i>Element 1:</i> <i>No professional courses in sign language</i> (with a quotation) <i>Element 2:</i> Courses only for general education. (with a quotation)
	C. Wants Professional Development courses	<i>Element 1:</i> Courses from experienced teachers in teaching by sign language (with a quotation)

Appendix G

Interview Reminder

Reminder Email for Scheduled Interview

Greetings (participant's name),

I look forward to conducting an interview with you for my dissertation project on your experiences as challenges new special education teachers (hearing-impaired) face throughout their careers. The purpose of this email is to remind you about the interview we have scheduled.

Our interview will last from 60 to 90 minutes and is schedule on:

Date:

Time:

I would like to remind you that while our actual interview is expected to last more than last a maximum 90 minutes, but we might need to reserve three hours to allow a time for short breaks as needed.

Thank you again for your interest in participating in my dissertation project, and I am excited to learn about your experiences and listen to your thoughts. If you have any question, please feel free to contact me.

Kind regards,

Abdulhakeem Almoneef
Western Michigan University

Appendix H

Interview Protocol

What Kind of Support Do New Special Education Teachers in Saudi Arabia Need?

Pseudonym: _____ Date: _____

Location: _____ Time: _____

Introduction:

- (Including a statement to introduce myself) Hi, my name is Abdulhakeem Almoneef a PhD student in Interdisciplinary Studies Doctorate in Special education Leadership. I am conducting a study concerning the experiences of new special education (hearing-impaired) teachers across their careers. For this study I will ask the same questions of all my participants. I am going to ask you a broad set of questions around a specific topic to help you tell your stories. This initial interview should last approximately 60-90 minutes. Our conversation will be recorded so that I can refer to it later when I am analyzing all participant data. Would you be interested in participating in this study?
- (Make sure this is being recorded) So to get started, can you affirm that you understand that this interview is being recorded? Do I have your permission? Please, verbally express your consent so I can record it.
- Please take a time to review this consent form and if you have questions, please ask. Be sure to sign the consent form before we begin.
- Please select a pseudonym to be used instead of your real name during this study, and please make sure that this pseudonym is private so no one can easily identify you.
- At this point, if you do not have any questions, I would like to begin our interview.
- If you have any materials that were shared with you during orientation or follow-up workshop, please share them.

Overarching Research Question

Sub question 1: What knowledge, skills, and experiences do teachers believe they need in order to meet the challenges when working with deaf or hard of hearing students?

Sub question 2: What types of professional support and/or services would special education teachers in Saudi Arabia like to receive in order to better support students with special needs?

Sub question 3: What support have teachers been receiving that assists them in better meeting the needs of special needs students?

Sub question 4: If the perceived needs and wants of teachers better align with the support given by supervisors, school administrators and experienced colleagues, would more teachers of the deaf and hearing impaired feel they are better able to meet the needs of their students?

Appendix I

Analysis Format

Theme	Sub-Themes	Elements	Frequency
1- Preparation program	Basic Challenges and Needs	<i>Individual Education Program</i>	6
		<i>Sign Language - Communication Skills Needs</i>	8
		<i>Additional Preparation Needs</i>	3
	Preparation Program – Current Situation.	<i>Lack of University Preparation Courses</i>	3
		<i>Present Situation Regarding Internships</i>	3
		<i>Induction or Orientation for using Individual Education Programs IEPs</i>	3
	Preparation Program – Wants.	<i>Desire for Preparation in Instructional Skills and Strategies</i>	5
		<i>Desire for Additional Training in Assessing, Diagnosing and Rehabilitating Students.</i>	2
		<i>Desire for Additional Skills for Interacting with other Professionals and Families.</i>	1
2- Curriculum and education aids for deaf students	Curriculum and Hearing Aids for the Deaf and Hearing Impaired Students - Needs.	<i>Need for Preschool Education Materials.</i>	4
		<i>Need for a Curriculum That Meets Students' Methods of Communication</i>	5
		<i>Need for Sign Language Curriculum for Students and Teachers.</i>	2
		<i>Need for a Curriculum with Teaching and Learning Materials for Each Subject.</i>	3

	Current Curriculum and Teaching Materials for the Hearing Impaired	<i>Current Knowledge of the General Education Curriculum</i>	6
		<i>Current Ineffective Special Education Hearing Aids</i>	5
	Wants: Design curriculum and materials for each stage for the deaf and hearing impaired students. and educational aids are lacking	<i>Desire for Books and Curriculum for Each Specific Subject and Stages</i>	6
		<i>Desire for Hearing Aids and Equipment</i>	2
		<i>Desire for Standards for Teaching Each Subject and Instructional Materials</i>	2
		<i>Desire for Sign Language Books for Kids</i>	1
		<i>Desire for Visual Learning Sources for Each Subject.</i>	1
	3- Supervisors who know special ed. Curriculum for hearing impaired/deaf and teaching strategies	Supervision from Knowledgeable Educational Personnel – Needs.	
		<i>Need for Mentoring and Assistance in the Classroom.</i>	6
		<i>Need for Rich Knowledge and Skills in Teaching Deaf and Hearing Impaired Students</i>	4
		<i>Need for Support from Experienced Teachers</i>	4
		<i>Need for Official Support.</i>	2
		<i>Need for Support in Understanding the Students' Needs.</i>	1
		<i>Needs for Teamwork and Clear Tasks and Responsibilities for Teachers.</i>	2

	Supervision from Knowledgeable Educational Personnel – Current Situation.	<i>enabling teachers to share teaching content for each student every year</i>	1
		<i>Basic Support</i>	4
		<i>Current Leadership with Knowledge and Skills in Teaching Content.</i>	5
		<i>Current Support from Experienced Teachers.</i>	5
		<i>Current Support is Unsatisfactory.</i>	5
		<i>Current Support from a deaf Employees.</i>	1
	Wants: Supervision from Knowledgeable Educational Personnel – Wants.	<i>Desire for Ongoing Support.</i>	5
		<i>Desire for Supervisors to Provide a Special Education Team with a School Vision of Support.</i>	5
		<i>Desire for Supervisors to Provide Experienced Teachers Who Teach Similar Subjects.</i>	2
		<i>Desire for Supervisors to Provide Collaboration with Speech Specialist to Work with Teachers, Students and Parents.</i>	5
		<i>Desire for Encouragement to Interact with the Deaf Community.</i>	1
4- Additional professional development courses/workshops	The Need for Ongoing Professional Development.	<i>Need for Courses in Sign Language and Communication for Teachers and Students.</i>	4
		<i>Need for Courses That Meet the Special Needs of the Hearing Impaired.</i>	3
		<i>teaching method for specific subjects with sign language.</i>	3

		<i>Need for Courses and Activities with the Deaf Community.</i>	4
		<i>Need for Practical Courses in Using IEPs Effectively</i>	1
		<i>Need for courses in Characteristics of Hearing Impaired Students.</i>	1
		<i>Need for Offering Courses by Experienced Teachers in a Specific Subject.</i>	1
		<i>Need for Training in Using and Practicing Educational Aids.</i>	2
	Ongoing Professional Development – Current Situation.	<i>Current Courses Effectiveness</i>	5
		<i>Sign Language Course Frequency and Length Effectiveness.</i>	5
	Ongoing Professional Development - Wants	<i>Desire for Practical Courses for Teaching Strategies in Classroom Settings</i>	4
		<i>Desire for Professional Development Program.</i>	3
		<i>Desire for Permanent Professional Courses that Meet Teachers' Needs.</i>	3
		<i>Desire for Courses from Experienced Teachers in Teaching Using Sign Language</i>	1
		<i>Desire for Courses with Speech Therapy to Practice Communicating with Students</i>	1

HSIRB Approval Letter

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY



Institutional Review Board
FWA00007042
IRB00000254

Date: January 13, 2020

To: Nancy Mansberger, Principal Investigator
Sarah Summy, Co-Principal Investigator
Abdulhakeem Almoneef, Student Investigator for dissertation

From: Amy Naugle, Ph.D., Chair

Re: Approval not needed for IRB Project Number 20-01-06

This letter will serve as confirmation that your project titled "What Kind of Support Do New Hearing-Impaired Teachers in Saudi Arabia Need?" has been reviewed by the Western Michigan University Institutional Review Board (IRB). Based on that review, the IRB has determined that approval is not required for you to conduct this project because you are not collecting personal identifiable (private) information about individuals and your scope of work does not meet the Federal definition of human subject.

45 CFR 46.102 (f) Human Subject

(f) *Human subject* means a living individual **about whom** an investigator (whether professional or student) conducting research obtains:

- (1) Data through intervention or interaction with the individual, or
- (2) Identifiable private information.

Intervention includes both physical procedures by which data are gathered (for example, venipuncture) and manipulations of the subject or the subject's environment that are performed for research purposes. *Interaction* includes communication or interpersonal contact between investigator and subject. *Private information* includes information about behavior that occurs in a context in which an individual can reasonably expect that no observation or recording is taking place, and information which has been provided for specific purposes by an individual and which the individual can reasonably expect will not be made public (for example, a medical record). Private information must be individually identifiable (i.e., the identity of the subject is or may readily be ascertained by the investigator or associated with the information) in order for obtaining the information to constitute research involving human subjects.

"About whom" – a human subject research project requires the data received from the living individual to be about the person.

Thank you for your concerns about protecting the rights and welfare of human subjects.

A copy of your protocol and a copy of this letter will be maintained in the IRB files.

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