"An investigative study of the factors affecting the attitudes of female Emirati teachers toward the inclusion of students with intellectual disabilities in the government primary schools in Dubai, the United Arab Emirates"

"العوامل المؤثرة على اتجاهات المعلمات الإماراتيات نحو دمج الطلاب من ذوي الإعاقات الذهنية في المدارس الابتدائية الحكومية في دبي، دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة" دراسة استقصائية

by

AMNA ALOBEIDLI, M.Ed.

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

at

The British University in Dubai

Prof. Eman Gaad
July 2017

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Amna Alobeidli

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Education
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ABSTRACT IN ENGLISH

"An investigative study of the factors affecting the attitudes of female Emirati teachers toward the inclusion of students with intellectual disabilities in the government primary schools in Dubai in the United Arab Emirates"

This study investigates the factors affecting the attitudes of Emirati female teachers in the government primary schools in Dubai toward the inclusion of students with intellectual disabilities. The study has used a triangulation of methods including quantitative and qualitative methods. The study answered three research questions on identifying teachers' attitudes, identifying factors affecting attitudes and getting teachers' recommendations to improve the current inclusive practice. The findings of the study suggested that inclusive education in Dubai and the UAE in general needs improvement. Most teachers in the study showed negative attitudes toward inclusion in general. Many of them expressed clearly their disagreement to including children with intellectual disabilities in their regular classes. The findings showed that there are numbers of factors affecting these attitudes. One of the main factors was the lack of training as most of the participants did receive adequate training prior to the implementation of inclusion. Other factors also included the increasing teachers' workload, the low teachers' self-efficacy, the lack of school support and the insufficient resources and provisions. In addition, the type of disabilities and the social stigma also seemed to affect the teachers' attitudes.

The study concluded that to have a successful inclusion, teachers' attitudes need to be more positive. Hence, policy makers should pay attention to the factors associated with these attitudes. The study also provided a set of recommendations to improve inclusive practices based on the findings.

ABSTRACT IN ARABIC

" العوامل المؤثرة على اتجاهات المعلمات الإماراتيات نحو دمج الطلاب من ذوي الإعاقات الذهنية في المدارس الابتدائية الحكومية بدبي بدولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة" دراسة استقصائية

تبحث هذه الدراسة العوامل المؤثرة في اتجاهات المعلمات الإماراتيات في المدارس الابتدائية الحكومية في دبي نحو دمج الطلاب ذوي الإعاقة الذهنية في الصفوف العامة.

وقد استخدمت الدراسة عدداً من الأساليب البحثية الكمية والنوعية، كما أجابت الدراسة على ثلاثة أسئلة بحثية حول تحديد اتجاهات المعلمات، وتحديد العوامل المؤثرة على هذه الاتجاهات، ومن ثم الحصول على توصيات المعلمين لتحسين الممارسات الحالية في مجال الدمج في التعليم.

تشير نتائج الدراسة إلى أن الدمج التعليمي لذوي الإعاقة في دبي بشكل خاص، والإمارات العربية المتحدة بشكل عام يحتاج إلى تحسين؛ حيث أظهرت معظم المعلمات في الدراسة اتجاهات سلبية تجاه الدمج بشكل عام. وأعربت كثير من المعلمات بوضوح عن عدم موافقتهن على دمج الطلاب من ذوي الإعاقة الذهنية في الفصول العامة.

كما أظهرت النتائج أن هناك عدداً من العوامل التي تؤثر على هذه الاتجاهات، وأحد العوامل الرئيسية هو الافتقار إلى التدريب؛ حيث إن معظم المشاركات في الدراسة لم يتلقين تدريبا كافيا قبل تنفيذ الدمج في المدارس، ومن العوامل الأخرى أيضا زيادة عبء عمل المدرسين، وانخفاض كفاءة المعلمين الذاتية، ونقص الدعم المدرسي، وعدم توفر المصادر التعليمية الكافية، بالإضافة إلى نوع ودرجة الإعاقة والوصمة الاجتماعية.

وخلصت الدراسة إلى أنه من أجل تحقيق النجاح في الدمج التعليمي يجب أن تكون اتجاهات المعلمين والمعلمات أكثر إيجابية، لذلك ينبغي على واضعي السياسات التعليمية إيلاء الاهتمام للعوامل المرتبطة بهذه الاتجاهات، وقدمت الدراسة في النهاية مجموعة من التوصيات لتحسين الممارسات لعملية الدمج التربوي لذوي الإعاقة في المدارس.

DEDICATION

To Khalid, my cousin; a person with Down syndrome, a big heart and a sincere smile. You are and always will be the source of joy and happiness in our lives.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADEC	Abu Dhabi Educational Council
AED	United Arab Emirates Dirham
ALP	Advanced Learning Plan
BUiD	The British University in Dubai
CRPD	Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities
CWD	Child with disabilities
FNC	The Federal National Council
GCC	The Gulf Council Countries
HDI	Human Development Index
IEP	Individual Educational Programme
KHDA	The Knowledge and Human Development Authority
MCD	The Ministry of Community Development
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOSA	The Ministry of Social Affairs
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SpEd/SPED	Special Education teacher
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Science software
SWD	Students with disabilities
Tedad	The UAE National Census
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UN	The United Nations
UNDP	United Nations of Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNESCO-IBE	UNESCO - The International Beauru of Education
WHO	World Health Organization

Introduction

Inclusive education as a process where school systems welcome all learners despite their backgrounds, disabilities, or other personal characteristics. It is a global challenge that many school systems are trying to overcome (Malinen, et al., 2012). Nowadays, inclusive education is motivated by international conventions championing educational and human rights values and offering guidelines for implementing inclusive educational policies all over the world (UNESCO-IBE, 2011; United Nations 2006). Inclusion is the result of many international movements, such as human rights developments and constitutional and legislative developments, in addition to UN efforts to provide equal opportunities and access for all learners in the same school whenever possible (Forlin, et al., 2011; Fyssa, et al., 2014).

Furthermore, implementing inclusive education for students with disabilities, especially students with intellectual disabilities, increases the sociocultural benefits in general education and promotes disability equality and advocacy for social inclusion (Monsen, et al., 2014; Shah, et al., 2015). For these reasons, different initiatives and practices of inclusive education have been endorsed by governments around the world, and policies and legislative frameworks have been created to support these initiatives (Abu-Heran, et al., 2014; Donohue & Bornman, 2015; Fyssa, et al., 2014; Monsen, et al., 2014).

Inclusive education is based on the idea of creating equal learning opportunities for students with disabilities, providing them with access to mainstream education, and giving them the chance to socialise with their peers in a range of natural environments. It helps facilitate their participation in the community and enrich their overall development to participate fully in wider society, as children usually do better when they are educated together (Hodkinson, 2016; Monsen, et al., 2014). With this fundamental philosophy of inclusive education, students

with disabilities and special needs are placed in general classrooms with their peers, where they receive the instructions, resources, and support that are necessary for them to fully participate and interact within school settings (Fyssa, et al., 2014; Montgomery & Mirenda, 2014).

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has witnessed a noticeably big change in adopting the rights-based approach for students with disabilities, as implementing inclusion in regular classroom settings was one of the main objectives of the government, especially after the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2010 (Gaad, 2015). Laws promoting the legal rights of people with disabilities were issued in 2006 in the UAE, followed by several federal and local initiatives that have been proposed to support the inclusion trend in the UAE. In 2017, a new national policy for empowering people with disabilities was launched by the Vice President of the UAE announcing that people with disabilities and special needs will be officially called "the determined people" or "people of determination". The new policy assigns an official at every institution or government body to be responsible for facilitating and approving services for individuals with disabilities (UAE Cabinet, 2017; UAE MCD, 2017). The national policy includes six key goals: health and rehabilitation, education, employment, mobility, social protection and family empowerment, and public life and sports. The new policy aims at creating an inclusive society for these people as Dubai announced its goal to be one of the world's most disability-friendly cities by 2020 (The National, 2017). The new policy is intended to create a new understanding of the empowerment of people with disabilities. It will enable them to play an important role in the development of the country and will guarantee their rights to a dignified life. An advisory council will be established which will consist of members of the community who have expertise in the field, including those with disabilities, to provide advice and consultancy on how to achieve the goals of the national

policy (Achkhanian, 2017). Since the policy was launched, official signs and reference in the government reports referring to "disabled people" or "special needs" were changed to reflect the new official name "people of determination" as declared by the Vice President (The Official Portal of Dubai Government, 2017).

While the UAE strives to push for an inclusive society, changing the attitudes of people requires a lot of appropriate planning and active policies especially in education. Local educational authorities play an important role in training teachers, providing suitable provisions to create inclusive environments, and improving teachers' attitudes (Alghazo & Gaad, 2004). However, inclusion in education was implemented only recently, when the "School for All" initiative was launched by the Ministry of Education in 2010 (UAE MOE, 2010). "School for All" started with selected schools, then moved gradually to implement inclusion in all primary schools in the government sector during the following years (Gaad, 2015).

Hopefully with the new national empowerment policy, the society will be more aware of the rights of students with disabilities to get appropriate educational provisions and accommodations in supportive and inclusive environments. Inclusive education still needs improvement in the UAE school systems. As Saratawi (2009) indicated, UAE laws regarding inclusive education need to be specified and effectively implemented, so that students with disabilities are not misdiagnosed, misplaced, or deprived of proper educational provisions.

1. **Background of the study: A Brief History of the UAE**
To understand the history of special education and inclusion implementation in the UAE, it is useful to examine the country's efforts and the progress it has made in human development and education in general. The United Arab Emirates, situated in the Arabian Gulf, is comprised of seven emirates. Abu Dhabi is the capital and contains most of the gas and oil reserves. However,

Dubai is the most known for business, trade, and the economy (UNESCO-IBE, 2011). The religion of the country is Islam. The country has a long history of local tribal lifestyles and was later influenced by Europeans (Bradshaw, Tennant, & Lydiatt, 2004). While the new country was only founded in 1971, it has quickly emerged into modernism, with an economy driven by oil and gas (Bradshaw, Tennant, & Lydiatt, 2004). While the economy is based on oil and gas production, trade, and light manufacturing, the UAE is a free market that provides citizens and expatriates with high incomes and top-quality services (Dukmak, 2010).

The UAE does not have political parties. The country is ruled by appointed families established during the formation of the country (Bradshaw, Tennant, & Lydiatt, 2004). As the country is a federation of seven emirates, the Federal Supreme Council is the highest legislative and executive body per the 1971 constitution. The Council is comprised of the rulers of the seven emirates (Bradshaw, Tennant, & Lydiatt, 2004). The Council of Ministers headed by the prime minister, who is also the vice president, is the other executive authority for the federation. The prime minister proposes the cabinet, which requires the president's ratification. There is also the Federal National Council (FNC), which was established in 1972 with nominated numbers until the new council was launched in 2007 with new election system. FNC is the consultative body of the UAE, and its role is advisory. It has several functions, which include discussing constitutional amendments and draft laws, debating international treaties and conventions, and influencing the government's work through the channels of discussions, recommendations, and follow-ups on complaints. The rulers of the seven emirates appoint half of the members of FNC while the other half is elected by the people of each emirate (UAE Interact, 2016).

The Ministry of Education (MOE) is the responsible body of the general education system in the UAE except for Abu Dhabi, where the Abu Dhabi Educational Council (ADEC) has overseen education in Abu Dhabi since 2005. However, the ADEC coordinates with the MOE

in planning education strategies within the framework of the UAE's general education policy (UAE Interact, 2016; UNESCO-IBE, 2011). The Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA) of Dubai was established in 2006 to improve the quality and accessibility of education and human development in the country. One of its mandates is to supervise the educational services and institutions within the free zones of Dubai, including appraising and attesting private institutions. Yet, all government schools in Dubai are fully under the supervision and administration of the Ministry of Education (UNESCO-IBE, 2011). The Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research was responsible for tertiary education until 2016, when the two ministries were absorbed by the Ministry of Education (UAE Cabinet, 2017; UAE Interact, 2016). To implement UAE's government policies, the Ministry of Education introduces continuous improvements in the education system to enable students to develop innovative skills, promote smart learning, and equip teachers with appropriate methods, curricula and ethical roles (UAE Interact, 2016).

Federal Law No. 11 of 1972 and Article 17 of the Constitution of the UAE (1971) states that education is compulsory in the primary stage, which starts at age six, and is free at all stages for UAE nationals. They also indicate that the government's duty is to provide necessary buildings, textbooks, teachers, plans, and whatever else may be required for good performance (UNESCO-IBE, 2011). The educational system in the UAE is dual, as government-funded and private sector schools are spread across the country. Non-nationals can only attend private schools, whereas Arab expatriates can attend government schools with small fees (Bradshaw, Tennant, & Lydiatt, 2004; UNESCO-IBE, 2011; Barrell, 2009).

The education of students with special needs in the government schools is supervised by the Department of Special Education, which was established in 2008 under the Ministry of Education. This department promotes the rights of students with special needs and ensures their

access to the same educational opportunities as their peers. This department has taken significant measures to implement inclusion in 114 government schools across the country until 2016 (UAE Interact, 2016).

The special education centres and institutes, which are still part of the special education provisions in the country, fall under the responsibility of two ministries: The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Community Development (MCD), which was formerly called the Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA) (UAE Cabinet, 2017). The MCD authorises and accredits the special centres and observes the quality of services, therapies, and treatments, while the Ministry of Education observes the adequacy and quality of the educational provisions (UNESCO-IBE, 2011).

2. **UAE, Human Development and Education**

The UAE is classified by the World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) as a "developing country with a high income", referring to the personal income level of its citizens (UNDP, 2016). The issues facing the UAE government as a developing country, as Godwin (2006) states, may be considered unique, partially due to its oil wealth and benevolent government; most developing countries strive for funding and an adequate economy. However, as a developing country, the necessity for an education system that provides for all Emirati citizens is the most challenging issue (Godwin, 2006).

Since the establishment of the Federation of the UAE on 2 December 1971, significant efforts have been directed toward education, which is considered essential to reach the targets of economic and social development (Mograby, 1999). Article 17 of the UAE Constitution (p.6) states that "Education shall be a fundamental factor for the progress of society. It shall be compulsory in its primary stage and free of charge at all stages" (Helplinelaw.com, 2016; UAE Cabinet, 2017). While the educational infrastructure was being built, the Ministry of Education

worked on improving education in the country, raising the number of government schools and the number of students significantly while ensuring that the country's youth were ready to meet the challenges of the new age (UNESCO-IBE, 2011).

In 1952, there were only a few formal schools in the country (Bradshaw, Tennant, & Lydiatt, 2004). When oil production was started in Abu Dhabi in 1962, there were around 20 schools in the country with approximately 4,000 students. In 1971, when the UAE was established, schools were still confined to the towns, and there were still less than 28,000 students. In the 1970s, a school building programme was established, and the education system expanded with separate schools for boys and girls (Bradshaw, Tennant, & Lydiatt, 2004).

In 2007, the statistics published by the World Bank on the Knowledge Economy Index ranked the UAE 77th out of 132 countries in education (Lewis, 2008). In 2015-2016, as reported by (Khamis, 2016), the UAE was ranked 12th and 13th based on the parameters of equality of higher and primary education in the Global Competitiveness Report. The total number of students in schools and universities in the UAE was projected to grow from an estimated 1.1 million in 2015 to 1.4 million in 2020 as indicated by the GCC Education Industry Report published in 2016. The rapid increase in the total number of students in the UAE was due to the expansion of primary and tertiary education facilitated by the rise of private schools and the government focus on higher education (Khamis, 2016).

The UAE government places a priority for education in its overall expenditures. In 1992, the budget allocation for education placed the UAE at the front in the region of the Gulf Council Countries (GCC) and Iran in terms of educational expenditures (Mograby, 1999). The GCC Education Industry report showed that the UAE education sector received the highest allocation of the 2016 budget despite a budget cut because of falling oil prices (Khamis, 2016).

In 2009, the UAE was rated as the best place in the Arab world to live. This was published as part of the finding of an international study of wealth and well-being by the Legatum Institute in London. The study collated statistics from 104 countries, which represented 90% of the world's population. The UAE topped the Arab nations, coming in 47th place overall and breaking into the top 50. The UAE scored highly in health, safety, and security, earning praise for gender equality and the high number of primary teachers (Shaheen, 2009). In 2016, the UAE ranked first in the Arab region and the 28th happiest place to live in, according to the World Happiness Report. The report ranked 157 countries based on happiness levels using factors such as per capita gross domestic product (GDP) and healthy year of life expectancy. UAE was also among three countries in the world to appoint a minister of happiness to manage their national efforts in human development (Al Serkal, 2016).

The UAE continued progressing in the aspects of human development and education. In the 20th edition of the Human Development Report published by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for the year 2010, the UAE ranked first regionally and 32nd internationally amongst 169 countries (WAM, 2010). In 2015, UAE's Human Development Value (HDI) was 0.840 which put the country in the very high human development category positing it at 42 out of 188 countries (UNDP, 2016). The UNDP human devolopment report measures human development in terms of the distribution of achievement and opportunities within society, assessing relative progress in health, education and income. The high ranking of the UAE was attributed to gender equality in education, with 77 % of adult women and 64.5 % adult men attaining higher levels of education (UNDP, 2016; WAM, 2010). Between 1990 and 2015, the UAE's HDI value increased 15.7% as all indicators in health and education

have increased significantly. In 2015, The UAE was rated one of the three top countries in the Arab region (UNDP, 2016).

- **Government and private education: numbers and statistics**

According to the school statistics published by MOE, (UAE MOE, 2017, p. 2) , for the academic year 2015/2016, there was a total of 667 government schools across the UAE in which 77 schools were located in Dubai, (see appendix 12), including 23 primary schools where 12 were for boys, 9 for girls and 2 for mixed genders. The total number of students in 2015/2016 reached 227,201 Emirati students in government schools across the UAE. Around 23,024 students of them, representing about 10 % of the students, were in Dubai schools (UAE MOE, 2017, p. 6) as seen in appendix 13).

Distribution of Students in Government and Private Education in the UAE in 2016
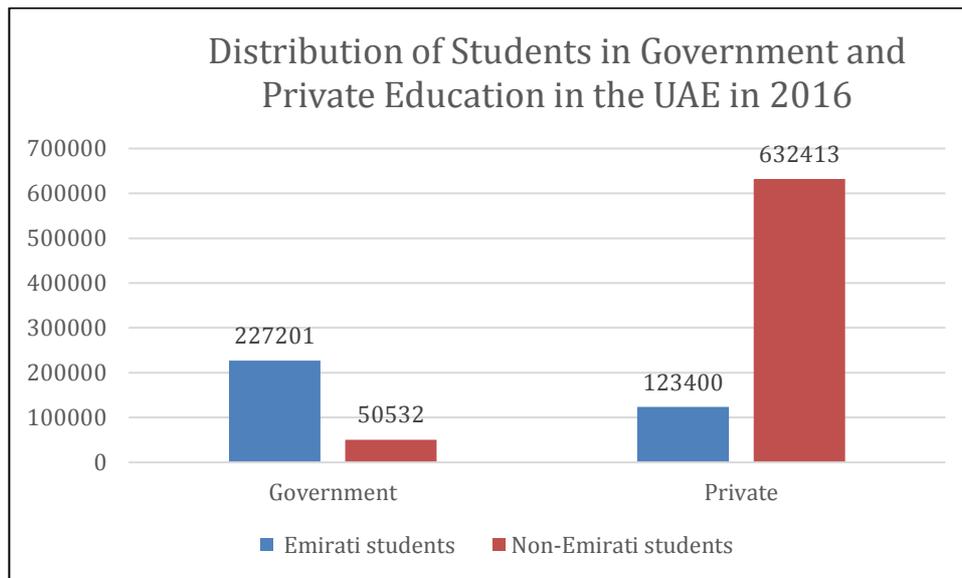
Figure 1

According to MOE's statistics, the total percentage of Emirati students in the government schools in 2016 reached 82 % (see figure 1 & 2). The remaining students in government schools were mostly from GCC and Arab countries (UAE MOE, 2017). In 2015/2016, there were around 8665 students in government primary schools in Dubai. About 53 % of them were female students and 47 % were male (see appendix 13) (UAE MOE, 2017, p. 6).

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As regarding to the private education in UAE, in 2016, there were 563 private schools with more than 123,400 Emirati students across the country comparing to 632,413 non Emirati students. As shown in figure (3), Emriati students represent about 16 % of the total students in private education in the UAE, see appendix 14 (UAE MOE, 2017, p. 28).

Distribution of students in government education in the UAE in 2016

18%

82%

- Emirati students   - Non-Emirati students

Figure 2

Distribution of students in private education in the UAE in 2016

16%

84%

- Emirati students   - Non-Emirati students
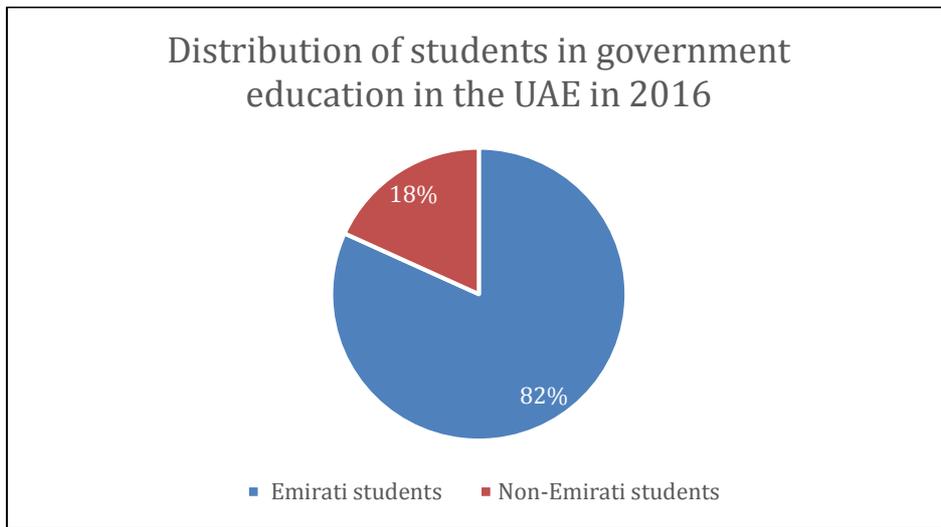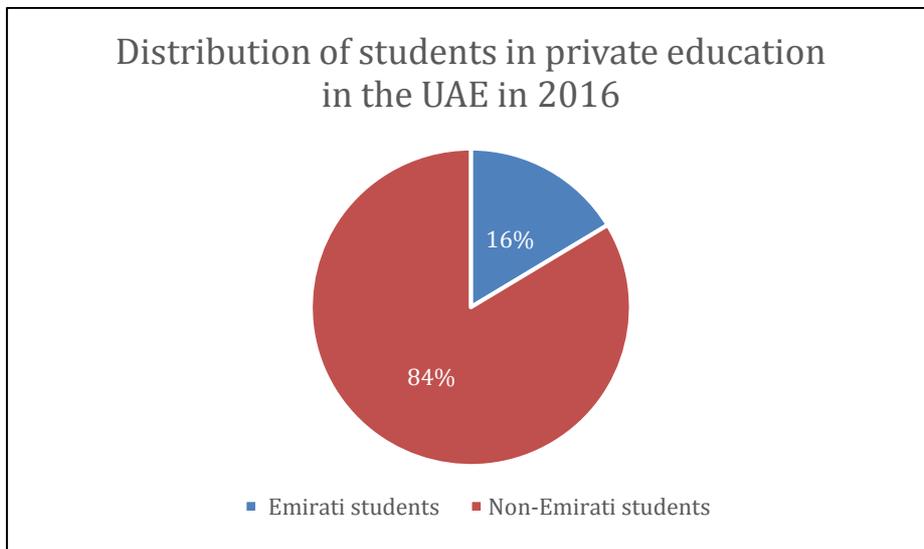
Figure 3

In Dubai, according to the statistics from KHDA (2017), there were 273,599 students in 185 private schools in 2016 with 16 different educational curricula including UK, Indian, US, IB (International Baccalaureate), UAE MOE, French, Pakistani, Iranian and others. Some of these

private schools included about 20-50 nationalities. The highest percentage of students' nationalities in private schools came from India (33.9%), Pakistan (8.3%, Egypt (5%) and the UK (4.8%) (KHDA, 2017). As published by KHDA, in 2017 the percentage of Emirati students in Dubai private school has reached about 58% (Aljamal, 2017).

As regarding to the number of students with disabilities in schools in the UAE, in 2015 the number of persons with disabilities in the UAE were around 21,965. Around 12,500 were students with disabilities who were included in regular schools (UAE Government.ae, 2017).

Distribution of SEN students in Dubai Schools 2014			
No. of Students	Male	Female	Total
KG	N/A	N/A	111
Cycle 1	274	255	529
Cycle 2	31	44	75
Secondary	90	46	136
Total	395	345	851

Table 1

Figure 4

11
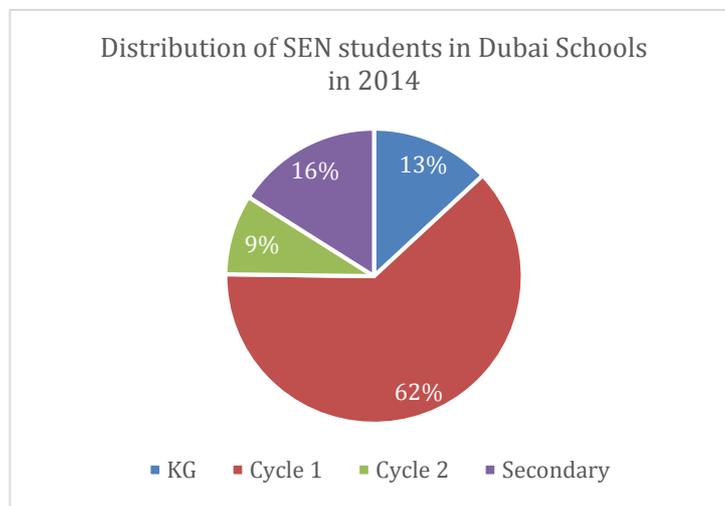
In 2014[1], there were an approximate of 851 students recorded as special needs in regular government schools in Dubai as shown in Table (1). About 52% of these students were female and 48 % are male. As shown in Figure (4) the majority of these students, around 62 %, were in Cycle 1 in primary schools.

- **Teachers in UAE**

According to MOE (2017), in 2016, there were a total of 11,167 Emirati teachers in the government schools across the UAE, in which 93 % of them were female, comparing to 11,910 non-Emirati teachers in government schools. There are around 1141 Emirati teachers in Dubai only, in which 97 % are female (see appendix xx and xx).

The salary spectrum of teachers in UAE varies largely between private and government schools as salaries depend on experience, qualifications and expertise (Kapur, 2012) .An expatriate primary school teacher can earn an average salary of USD 2300 per month in private schools (Payscale.com, 2017). A teacher in general can earn between USD 2500- 5500 per month depending on whether he or she works at a language school, vocational school/college, private international school, or public school (Stewart, 2013). The average monthly salary of Emirati teachers in government schools can range between USD 5000- 7000 per month depending on their scale, qualifications, and experience (Guide2Dubai.com, 2016). Teachers in international private schools may receive other benefits such as housing, flights, medical and school fees for their children while Emirati teachers do not necessarily receive similar benefits in public schools (Kapur, 2012).

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[1] Based on numbers obtained from Dubai Educational Zone while collecting data of this study.

3. **UAE and Special Education**

The inclusion of people with special needs has always been a priority for the UAE government (Gaad & Thabet, 2016). However, with all the human development progress the UAE has achieved recently in terms of the economy and education, it is still difficult to trace the progress of special education. As indicated in the limitation of this study, there is not a lot of literature written on special education in the UAE compared to other countries, due to its relatively short history (Alahbabi, 2009; Bradshaw, Tennant, & Lydiatt, 2004; Gaad, 2011). However, the government of the UAE has acknowledged the importance of special education for learners with special needs by having programmes offered to educate students with special needs, especially those with disabilities, since the establishment of the country in the 1970s. The UAE government continues to promote inclusive education in the public education system which has witnessed many reform attempts throughout the recent history of the UAE (Alahbabi, 2009; Gaad, 2015; Gaad & Thabet, 2016).

The government of the UAE looked after the welfare of special needs students since the early years of its history following the teachings of Islam on human rights. Those rights include equality, social welfare and the necessities of life. Also, the right to dignity and not to be abused, and the right to an education were few of many motivations that urged the country to continue its efforts with caring for individuals with disabilities and special needs (Bradshaw, Tennant, & Lydiatt, 2004). The UAE's report to UNESCO (2011) states that learners with special needs, especially with disabilities, are seen as important assets to their country. They are individuals who are capable of participating in its development according to their abilities (UNESCO-IBE, 2011).

Following Article 14 of the constitution recognizing the social equality of all citizens, the government addresses the needs of persons with disabilities through two ministries: The

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Ministry of Community Development (MCD), formerly Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA), and the Ministry of Education (Alahbabi, 2009). In addition, Cabinet Resolution No. 1 of 1977 granted individuals with disabilities social security funds to help them lead dignified lives and assist them in overcoming the barriers they face. These pensions are managed by MCD (Alahbabi, 2009; UNESCO-IBE, 2011).

In 1979, the UAE started special education programmes, introducing special classes in mainstream public schools. This was followed by the opening of the UAE University in 1976, where the first special education training courses were offered to prepare special education teachers (Alahbabi, 2009). The first special classes were started in four schools with only forty students, who were taught together in one classroom. With this effort, special education was started in the country (Alahbabi, 2009). Eventually, special institutes and centres for individuals with disabilities were founded to provide services for people with different types of disabilities, such as visual and hearing impairments, physical disabilities, autism, and severe intellectual impairment, including Down's Syndrome (Elhoweris, 2008; Gaad, 2010). These special centres provided different therapies and treatment programmes, along with educational programmes for mild to severe disabilities (Bradshaw, Tennant, & Lydiatt, 2004).

Later, in the 1980s and 1990s, most of the provisions offered for learners within the mainstream schools, in special classes, were offered for children who were not able to cope with the mainstream curriculum, as they used to receive extra support or attend remedial classes (Gaad, 2011). Eventually, special classes started to include students with learning disabilities, emotional and behavioural disorders, communication disorders, and mild intellectual disabilities, but with multiple age groups (Alahbabi, 2009; Elhoweris, 2008). However, children with certain types of intellectual and behavioural disabilities, such as autism or Down syndrome, were not easily accepted in mainstream schools (Gaad, 2011).

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Until recently, the UAE has practised some sort of integration when providing special education. However, this model of special education that is still used in most of the UAE's schools, in which separate classes with multiple age groups admitted only children with certain types of disabilities, was abandoned in some countries as increasing numbers of developed and developing countries are promoting social inclusion in education (Ajodhia-Andrews & Frankel, 2010; Alahbabi, 2009; Moss, 2003). Social inclusion, a philosophy based on the belief that all students, regardless of their abilities, are entitled to participate fully in their school community, emerged in literature and practice (Alahbabi, 2009).

In the mid-1990s, resource rooms were introduced. The Ministry of Education adopted this approach in some UAE schools to integrate students with special needs into general education. The resource rooms were open to all students with special needs who had been first assessed, then provided with remedial work to improve their understanding, learning, and comprehension skills according to their evaluations. These rooms accommodate students from special classes and general classes for an allocated time during school hours, and they return to their classes when they are done (UNESCO-IBE, 2011).

The terms inclusion, integration, and mainstreaming, as explained by Sautner (2008), are often used in a similar way and appear to have evolved to describe the progressive inclusion of students with disabilities into general education. 'Mainstreaming' was widely used in the early 1980s to refer to students with mild disabilities who fit into regular classrooms with little accommodation. The term 'integration' was more closely associated with terminating special schools for students with severe disabilities and relocating them to regular schools. The term 'inclusion' appeared in the 1990s and refers to including all children, even those with severe disabilities, in the educational and social life of their neighborhood schools (Sautner, 2008).

The three concepts have been, intentionally or not, noticed in the UAE when special education was progressing over the years (Alahbabi, 2009). Inclusion, in some form, in the UAE has gradually grown over the past decade (Elhoweris, 2008). This seems to be a result of the overall educational reform, which occurred over an extended period, while the different Ministers of Education were attempting to transform the education system over the four decades of the country's history (Godwin, 2006). While most of the reform was focused upon the general education system, a few attempts targeted special education (Elhoweris, 2008).

On the other hand, the UAE took a couple of decades to legislate laws related to special needs, even with some sort of special education provisions being offered in schools. The first law appeared when the UAE Disability Act was passed in 2006 and was called the Federal Law 29/2006 Regarding Rights of People with Special Needs; it was then amended in 2009 to be specifically for persons with disabilities. This law grants them rights in employment, housing, and education, among other rights (Gaad, 2011). The law explicitly stipulates the right of admission of these individuals to educational institutions, either public or private (UAE MOE, 2010). In 2017, the national empowerment policy was announced which included a focus on education among six other key factors aimed at empowering individuals with disabilities and grant them the right in a thriving active life (Achkhanian, 2017; The National, 2017).

However, laws and regulations governing special education in the UAE, along with the public's attitudes towards these individuals, needed further improvement (Sartawi, 2009). In 2010, the Ministry of Education launched a new initiative promoting inclusive education, called "School for All." The official documentation for the initiative contains the general rules for special education services. This initiative aimed at reinforcing Federal Law 29/2006, which stressed that schools should not refuse admission to children with learning difficulties or special needs. Schools were provided with guidelines, procedures, steps, and considerations regarding how

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to implement successful inclusion (UAE MOE, 2010). All schools were expected to provide for these children, from kindergarten to at least grade 9. The guidelines also included criteria for therapists, special education teachers, and shadow teachers in addition to standard school fees (Ahmed, 2010). These guidelines of general rules were the only available source for policies and regulations regarding special education in UAE when conducting the study. However, the implementation and the effectiveness of these policies are still undetermined since they are relatively new. The rest of the rules and regulations found in the literature are either untraceable or not activated. The implementation of inclusive education seems to be still in the hands of the main responsible authorities in the country as policies need to be precise and clear to be promoted.

4. **Teachers' attitudes and inclusion**

As stated by Schwab, et al. (2015), the most important factor in inclusive education is the teachers as they play a major role in creating appropriate inclusive environments in schools. Teachers are considered the key player in any inclusive educational system as they work most closely with individual students and are responsible for planning and implementing inclusive settings at the classroom level (Monsen, et al., 2014).

When implementing inclusion, the attitudes of teachers need to be considered when placing students with disabilities into regular classrooms as positive and negative attitudes of teachers can affect the learning process of these students (Davis, 2009). Therefore, it is significant that teachers who have misconceptions toward inclusion or towards people with disabilities are likely to have negative attitudes and most likely have difficulties providing educational support for students with disabilities (Abu-Heran, et al., 2014; Malinen, et al., 2012; Montgomery & Mirenda, 2014).

Therefore, as Leatherman (2007) and Monsen and Frederickson (2004) have reported, the attitudes of teachers in inclusive settings are becoming important aspects of the success of inclusion. Avramidis, Bayliss, and Burden (2000) and Forlin et al. (2011) have suggested that a better understanding of teacher attitudes toward inclusion could assist in improving the learning environment for all children in the classroom. Monsen and Frederickson (2004) state that when teachers have positive attitudes, they use more effective teaching strategies to accommodate individual differences which consequently help facilitate the implementation of inclusion. Yet, teachers with negative attitudes may represent barriers to the implementation process affecting the learning environments and the equity of educational opportunities for all students.

Furthermore, Leatherman (2007) states that teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of children with disabilities can be shaped by many factors such as policies, administration support, professional development, children's abilities and disabilities, and the support from various adults in the classroom. Paliokosta and Blandford (2010) identify more factors that may affect teachers' attitude and consequently be barriers to successful inclusion including the lack of flexibility in the system, limitations in teacher training, school resources and the lack of communication between schools and educational authorities in addition to the ideologies related to teachers' resistance to inclusive practice.

The implementation of a successful inclusion programme is largely dependent upon the attitudes and beliefs of teachers who carry out these inclusive practices, as they need to have a strong personal commitment towards inclusion and to take responsibility for creating effective learning environments for students with different needs. While positive attitudes towards inclusion may lead to a greater willingness to enroll and supervise children with special needs and disabilities in general education settings, unfortunately, not all teachers embrace

these positive attitudes (Abu-Heran, et al., 2014; Monsen, et al., 2014; Urton, et al., 2014). Thus, the impact of teacher attitudes on the implementation of inclusive education is widely recognised, but the factors affecting these attitudes need further investigation (Vaz, et al., 2015).

Purpose of the study

While many international studies have focused on teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education and the factors affecting these attitudes, little or limited research has been done regarding the attitudes of Emirati teachers towards inclusion and disabilities, and the factors affecting their attitudes (Gaad, 2011, 2015). One of the main aims of this study is to enhance the literature on inclusive education in the UAE, the Gulf, and the Arab region. In addition, the study aims at examining the factors that affect the attitudes of Emirati teachers towards inclusive education in general and the inclusion of students with intellectual disabilities, which will help build a better understanding of the challenges of improving the education system and inclusive education in the UAE.

Furthermore, understating the factors will help recognise the reasons for the teachers' attitudes, and consequently, an appropriate plan can be introduced to improve these attitudes, improve teachers' experiences, and implement more appropriate inclusive provisions in schools. Also, defining the factors affecting teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education and students with disabilities will also assist the educational authority and decision makers in the UAE to provide a foundation for relevant policies and programmeme development of inclusive education, which will contribute to a positive and more productive experience for teachers and students in the government schools. In fact, understanding the factors that affect teachers' attitude towards inclusion will help to address them to promote positive attitudes and create a positive and inclusive environment for all learners, not only students with disabilities or special needs.

Research Questions

For the purposes of the study, the following research questions are used to guide the research process:

1. What are the attitudes of female Emirati teachers toward children with intellectual disabilities in government primary schools that provide inclusive settings in the urban areas of Dubai?

2. What are the factors that affect teachers' attitudes in these schools?

3. What could be recommended to improve inclusive practice in the Dubai, the UAE?

Study Design

This study is an interpretive, exploratory mixed-method research with a focus on qualitative methods. A combination of qualitative and quantitative methodology was used to collect the data. The interpretive approach was used because it helps us understand the phenomenon, the settings, and the perceptions and attitudes of individuals (Cohen et al., 2000). The researcher investigated the attitudes of teachers towards disabilities and the factors affecting them from the view of an observer seeing human experiences as the main interest within the settings and the culture of the UAE as the context. The exploratory approach is used to explore areas that are little known to help understand and find answers to the research questions of the study (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). The mixed methodology strengthened the quality of the research, reinforced the findings, and was used as a tool of triangulations to validate the data (Flick, 2009; Maxwell, 2005). The mixed method of data collection and analysis helped produce richer information about the teachers' attitudes towards inclusive practices than only quantitative or qualitative research would have revealed (Mukhopadhyay, 2014). The methodology used in this study included a questionnaire with closed- and open-ended items,

focus groups, semi-structured interviews, anecdotal observation, document analysis, and literature review. More about methodology is discussed in detail in chapter three.

Significance of the study

Investigating the factors that affect attitudes toward the inclusion of children with disabilities in Dubai and the UAE is significant, especially the implementation of inclusion. This is still relatively new in the country; there is only limited literature written about inclusion and special needs in this region (Gaad, 2011, 2015; Sartawi, 2009). Although inclusive education has become a cornerstone of many government policies in many countries, teachers have been found to hold mixed attitudes towards its implementation (Monsen & Frederickson, 2004). It is significant that teachers are the key factors in the successful implementation of inclusive education as they play major roles in establishing supportive, inclusive learning environments and planning for provisions and accommodation for students with disabilities (Jovanovic et al., 2014; Monsen et al., 2014; Schwab et al., 2015). Thus, it is important to investigate the teachers' attitudes in the UAE after implementing inclusive education practices in primary schools in 2010. It is also important to investigate the factors that affect teachers' attitudes as this will help the education authorities understand them more adequately and improve the educational system in schools. This consequently will help improve teachers' attitudes and assist them in providing a more caring environment for their students, which will hopefully increase students' motivation, self-esteem, and learning outcomes so that students will feel more valued, respected, and cared about (Jovanovic et al., 2014; Rubie-Davies and Peterson, 2011; Walker, 2016).

In addition, investigating the factors affecting teachers' attitudes in primary schools towards children with disabilities is significant because it helps realize the influence of their roles in classrooms on children. As Monsen and Frederickson (2004) and Forlin and Chambers (2011)

have argued, two important factors are essential for the successful implementation of inclusion, especially in primary schools. Firstly, the positive attitudes of general teachers towards inclusion as the role of general teachers are now acknowledged as a key component in the success or failure of inclusive education practices. Second is the views of teachers about the nature of a disability and how they see their roles in supporting students with special education needs.

In addition, investigating the factors affecting teachers' attitudes toward inclusion will help find the means to increase the positivity in inclusive practices and identify solutions to help teachers improve their attitudes in order to assist learners with disabilities with achieving more and developing their abilities. This study helps demonstrate what factors are influencing teachers' attitudes in Dubai. The results might differ from those found in other studies, especially with factors such as culture, religion, and the status of economic development. Moreover, this study adds to the literature on the topic of inclusion and special needs practices in the UAE and the Arab region, which will support teachers and school authorities in overcoming barriers facing the practice of inclusive education.

To conclude, this study is significant because it aims to investigate the factors affecting teachers' attitudes toward students with intellectual disabilities in Dubai, on which topic little research is available and different factors may exist. Hence, the results of the study will be interesting. Identifying these factors is important as they affect the roles of teachers in classrooms with students with disabilities and, consequently, the type of services they deliver, which influences the students' academic achievements, social experiences, and personal development. Identifying these factors is important to help authorities improve educational environments, create inclusive practices, and overcome the challenges the teachers face.

Assumption and Limitations

The assumption of this study was that the data collected within the period of the research was valid, reliable and trustworthy. The researcher assumed that different individuals participating in this study responded to the best of their abilities and provided reliable data. The researcher believes she avoided biases when describing and analyzing data and did not influence their responses. The researcher collected the data over a period of two years, so the data described inclusive settings, provisions, and teacher experiences and attitudes in the participating schools. Therefore, the study analysis of education status, teachers' experiences, inclusion provisions, and school accommodations correspond to the period of the data collection. Furthermore, there are several limitations which applied to this study as follows:

- The study includes only government primary schools in Dubai, which implement any type of inclusion by accepting at least one child with mild to moderate intellectual disability in their general classrooms. It does not include schools from private sectors or from other educational stages or public primary schools that do not permit children with intellectual disability.

- Access to schools and participants can be granted from the MOE; however, the cooperation of schools may depend on the flexibility and the level of collaboration provided by different school administrations. Participating schools have varied in their cooperation when giving access to teachers and classes due to teachers' workload and school schedules.

- Participants of this study are only female Emirati teachers working in six schools located in the Emirate of Dubai. The attitudes of male teachers are not applicable within the scope of this study as no male teachers work in government primary schools in Dubai urban areas while schools are segregated for boys and girls. Primary government schools in the UAE

allow only female staff for both genders. Only few exceptions exist in rural areas of the UAE.

- The study was conducted in Dubai only. However, data about attitudes generated from the study can be presumably generalized for female Emirati teachers. Most female Emirati teachers share similar cultural, social, and economic backgrounds. However, minor variations may occur depending on different contexts such as urban or rural areas or the social and economic status of different emirates. However, all Emirati teachers under the MOE have the same salaries, benefits, and grades.

- The study discusses the attitudes towards types of intellectual disabilities including Down syndrome, autism, developmental delays, and other disabilities that may cause intellectual impairments and are accepted in the selected schools. The terminology was defined and introduced to the participants when conducting the data collection methods. The study does not include physical or other types of disabilities such as sight or hearing impairments unless they are accompanied by intellectual disabilities. However, in some responses, especially with interviews and open-ended questions, teachers referred to the inclusion of all students with special needs in general, not only of those with intellectual disabilities.

- The data of this study, which were generated from Dubai, can be applicable to most of other emirates in the UAE, especially the northern emirates where schools are under the Ministry of Education (MOE). The authority, regulations, and educational resources provided by the Emirati government and the Ministry of Education are applicable to all emirates except for the emirate of Abu Dhabi, which has a different body of education with higher provisions of financial resources.

- As the study used a questionnaire that needed validation, an authenticated questionnaire was used, adapted, and validated. However, to maintain validity, only a minimum adaptation of the original questionnaire was attempted, especially with closed items.

- Questionnaires, protocol pages, and consent forms were designed in English and then translated into Arabic. Caution was used when translating the closed-ended items so they matched the originals from the adapted questionnaire. However, some items needed to be rephrased and reworded to give reasonable meaning and appropriately relate them to the local context. A back-to-back translation was used for the validation of the translation. More elaboration on translation as a limitation challenge is provided in the methodology chapter.

- The study may have implications for post-primary education in the UAE, as settings are most likely to be similar in public schools. However, consideration must be taken of the differences in characteristics of older children with intellectual disabilities.

Organization of the chapters

The current study is organized into five chapters. The first chapter has a background of the study and a brief introduction to the UAE, human development, and special education. It also introduces the aims and purpose of the study, the research questions, the significance of the study, the research design, and the assumptions and limitations. The second chapter gives a review of the literature on inclusion and disability in the UAE's history of inclusion and inclusive education, in addition to a review of some previous studies on teachers' attitudes and factors affecting them. The third chapter describes the methodology, the research approach, and the research methods, including site and participation selection, as well as the role of researcher and methodology challenges and limitations. The fourth chapter presents the findings from the different methodologies and answers the research questions of the study. The

fifth and last chapter has the discussion on teachers' attitudes in Dubai, factors affecting these attitudes, and the conclusion, in addition to the recommendations for the improvement of teachers' attitudes and inclusive education in the UAE and further research.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Literature review makes a valuable contribution to almost every research step. It helps to establish the theoretical roots of the research, clarify ideas and develop methodology at the early stages of the research and then enhances and consolidates the knowledge base and compares findings to existing knowledge in literature (Kumar, 2005). This Study aims at investigating the factors that affect the attitudes of female Emirati teachers in general primary schools toward the inclusion of students with intellectual disabilities in Dubai, the UAE. To understand the setting and the context of the study, it is significant to review the literature that captures studies and research that is related to the study's content. This chapter of literature review includes the theoretical framework of the study, a brief discussion on the history of inclusion and inclusive education in the UAE and an overview of cultural background on disability in Islam. In addition, the chapter includes a review of a number of studies on teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education worldwide and a brief on the factors that are found in those studies to be associated with teachers' attitudes in general.

Theoretical Framework

There are many theories undertaking the concepts and practices of inclusion and educating learners with disabilities. Slee (1998, cited by Thomas and Loxley, 2007), summarises the different perspectives from which disability and special education have been viewed and critiqued into the essentialist perspectives, the social constructionist perspectives, the materialist perspectives and the postmodern perspectives. The essential perspectives locate children's differences and disabilities in their individual pathology. These perspectives have been called a deficit as in the medical approach. The social constructionist perspectives interpret and present disability as a socially imposed contrast installed against minorities

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enforcing social marginalisation as in the social approach. The materialist perspectives see disability as a form of exclusion created and maintained by the economic system. The postmodern perspectives reject the theoretical explanations offered by materialist accounts seeing that there is a distinct class of people who are disabled. Considering all these differences, Slee argues that the disability movement perspective does not give more attention to the production of a coherent theoretical clarification of disability in their quest for social justice.

However, the social theory highlights inclusion and educational matters more clearly. Dressman (2008) claims that social theory not only provides educators and educational researchers with a source of insights into social and educational problems, but it extends far beyond a critical and historical account of modernity and the consequences of rationalism as it is recently being applied within educational research. It is considered not one thing but rather, a loose collection of extremely diverse perspectives with multiple origins addressing the logic of modernity in a unique way, which makes it a powerful research tool within an educational context.

On the other hand, the educational theories appear to have the most impact on inclusion development. Marsh (2008) indicates that many educational theories and theorists have made significant contributions in the field of education resulting in building a strong educational foundation while moving toward inclusion as their ideas and philosophies became key theories in the field of education including Jean Piaget, Urie Bronfenbrenner, Abraham Maslow, Lev Vygotsky and Albert Bandura. Piaget's work, for instance, plays an important role in the field of child development. His studies of the development of children's understanding and cognitive construction have had a huge influence in educational theory. It encourages learners to build their knowledge through experiences in addition to explains how assimilation/accommodation and symmetry fit into cognitive development. He agrees that the activity of the child should be

supported by the learning environment and social interaction which is important in cognitive development. He also suggests that educators need to implement instructional strategies to bring awareness to children in their thinking. These principles, when applied to the general curriculum, can increase the success of students with disabilities and special needs (Marsh, 2008; Tilstone & Layton, 2004).

Bronfenbrenner also contributed greatly to education influencing the educational research on the level of young children with disabilities. Bronfenbrenner proposed a theoretical framework that introduces ecological systems model, which provides a basis for the research and implementation of inclusion by recognising how contextual factors affect human development and the education of students. He describes a child's development to occur within a series of nested systems, each of which is embedded in larger settings where each level affect factors in the other level in the bioecological model system (Marsh, 2008).

Vygotsky's theories and sociocultural and social constructivist perspectives have made a strong impact in the field of education as they focus on the interaction of individuals within their social and cultural context (Englert, Mariage, & Dunsmore, 2006). Englert, Mariage and Dunsmore (2006) point that socio-cultural theory seeks to understand how culturally, and historically situated meanings are constructed, reconstructed and transformed through social mediation. It is significant that within recent decades, the socio-cultural theory has become a major influence in many fields including educational psychology, developmental psychology and early childhood education in many parts of the world (Dixon & Verenikina, 2007).

For this study, the theories that are selected to be part of the theoretical framework includes the Social Model of disability; the socio-cultural theory of Vygotsky, and the Attributional Reformulation Theory by Cooper and Fazio (1984).

1. The Social Model of Disability

This study adopts the Social model's definition of inclusion when looking at teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education and the factors associated with these attitudes. The social constructivist perspectives which are often referred to as "the Social Model" of disability was found in many studies such as Slee (1989), Hughes and Paterson (1997), Barnes (1998) and Shakespeare and Watson (2001) among others. Moore (2002) explains that many advocates of inclusion have adopted the social model because it interprets and presents disability as the problem of the "society", not the "person" which challenges the medical model's definition. However, traditional teacher preparation, for special education in most countries, as indicated by Ashby (2012), has relied on the medical model of disability which considers disability as a deficit that can be addressed through identification and remediation and where disability is presented as a fixed and distinguishable construct. The challenge for teachers as Ashby explains is to identify key areas of difficulty and then provide appropriate strategies to improve these areas. However, the medical model still sees the problem resides within the person with the disability.

The social model debates that it is not the impairment which disables people but it is the failure of the society to make proper provisions for its full range citizens either physically, regarding accessibility or the social attitudes of people (Moore, 2002). The social model, as stated by Ashby (2012), sees disability as a construct that finds its meaning in social and cultural context not a set of characteristics that exists in the person. So, it is rather than viewing disability as something inherent to the person; the social model sees disability emerges through a complex interaction between the individual and the larger social world viewing disability from personal, social, cultural, historical and literary perspectives (Ashby, 2012). The social model became the drive behind the emerging disability equality movement and the means for developing a

collective disability consciousness armed with the idea that society needs to identify and remove the disabling barriers, change stigmatised images and become more accessible to people with disabilities (Beckett & Campbell, 2015; Oliver, 2013 ;Tregaskis, 2004).

The social model, as stressed by Blum et al. (2015), interprets the education of students with disabilities in general schools through the issue of civil rights and equitable education instead of viewing inclusion from the perspective of impairment and limitations. The social model provides a way to view every student as an individual. It challenges normalcy as part of teaching for social justice by reframing the disability as the liability of teachers to meet students' needs, and schools to create an inclusive environment that is accessible to all students (Ashby, 2012: Blum et al., 2015).

A major goal for inclusive special education, as explained by Blum et al. (2015), is to create an environment where all children are welcomed, appreciated and supported. This concept is often misinterpreted with mainstreaming which refers to providing students with disabilities a set of different opportunities to work and interact with their peers in general education. While the interpretations of inclusive education vary, most recent literature asserts that inclusive practices should be based on education reform within the context of social justice (Blum et al., 2015).

2. Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory

In addition to the social model, this study looks at the socio-cultural theory of Vygotsky to understand inclusion, disability and the influence of adults' behaviour on young learners with disabilities. Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934), a Russian theorist, was a charismatic thinker, speaker and mentor passionately interested in philosophy, literature and culture (Newman & Holzman, 1993). Vygotsky is thought by many educators, such as Cole and Wertsch (2010), Daniels (2009), Dixon and Verenikina (2007), to have a greater influence when it comes to inclusive

practices and disabilities. His social constructivist approach and social development theory of learning provided the basis for a theoretical background of inclusion (Dixon & Verenikina, 2007; Marsh, 2008). Vygotsky (1993) considers disability as a sociocultural developmental phenomenon that varies psychologically in many cultural and social environments. He stresses that the main objectives of special education should be creating a positive approach that helps develop a child with a disability into higher psychological functions and overall personality (Kuzlin et al., 2003). Also, his social constructivist view of teaching is seen as a way to grow and develop because the interactions with students shape how they see the classroom so seeing the classroom as a positive environment will build positive experiences of the children (Leatherman, 2007; Vygotsky, 1993). These concepts of Vygotsky's theory fit appropriately with the framework of this study.

Also, Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory explains teachers' attitudes and how they affect the children based on his views of learning within a community where individuals' interaction occurs, and knowledge practice is transferred through interaction where individuals use the tools available such as activities or actions (Perry, Turner, & Meyer, 2006). Vygotsky's view on social development is used to understand the child's development and how social interaction with adults may affect his social and cultural development. Vygotsky views the cultural development of a child happen either socially at the inter-psychological level or internally at intra-psychological level (Farrell, 2012; Marsh, 2008).

In addition to that, Vygotsky, as Daniels (2009) explains, called for a focus on strengths rather than weaknesses in a way that is familiar to modern educators. He was very critical of what he called the 'arithmetical concept of handicap' where children are viewed as the sum of their negative characteristics. Vygotsky stresses that disability will change during development and that disability is sensitive to the influence of remediation programmes and social influences. If

the path of development deviates from normal social development because of the disability, the child might be socially deprived which could lead to the appearance of delays and absences of skills (Dixon & Verenikina, 2007; Marsh, 2008). Vygotsky sees the development of the child as a creative physical and psychological process which involves compensation and adaptation. Through this process, the child's personality is shaped by restructuring adaptive functions and forming new processes brought about by the disability which creates new paths for development (Farrell, 2012).

It is significant that Vygotsky, as explained by Daniels (2009), calls for a focus on strength rather than weaknesses in a way that is familiar to modern educators as he was very critical that children were viewed as the sum of their negative characteristics. He terms this approach as 'positive differentiation' concerning for the 'secondary disability' in a social world which has influential negative effects on development. He states that the child with an impairment may suffer the effects of social deprivation because of the way in which the social world responds to his or her impairment (Daniels, 2009).

Hence, Vygotsky strongly believes in the strong relationship between learning and development and the sociocultural nature of both. He proposes that the development of a child depends on the interaction between the child's individual growth and a system of symbolic tools and activities that the child adopts from his or her sociocultural environment (Kuzlin et al., 2003). Vygotsky stresses that disability will change during development and that it is sensitive to the influence of remediation programmes and social influences (Dixon & Verenikina, 2007).

The main aspects of Vygotsky's theories applying to special education, as stated by Dixon and Verenikina (2007), are the theory of socio-cultural activity and the theory of distorted development. His understanding of the nature of the disability and the means to compensate

for it are the core of any system of special needs. Another concept related to this study is Vygotsky's views on the role of child-adult cooperation. As Farrell (2012) and Zuckerman (2003) explain,   the child has both the need and the opportunity to attempt new cultural practices. They believe that Vygotsky emphasises the importance to the intellectual development of a child interacting with more advanced thinkers. He argues that the function in the child's cultural development appears first on the social level then later on the individual level which means it first appears between people and then inside the child. Also, Vygotsky, as explained by Hollanders (2002), points to the importance of the relationship in the process of learning. If deep learning is to occur, full attention must be given to the environment that facilitates it. This means that the teacher should be primarily concerned not only with the content or method of learning but with the development of a facilitating relationship. Through the development of this relationship, the teacher should understand the child emotionally and how best to help him or her to engage in the process of learning (Hollanders, 2002). This theory emphasises the teacher's role in facilitating learning and the social nature of learning as Vygotsky stresses on the influence of progressive beliefs and values (Norwich, 2000).

In addition to that, as indicated by Dixon and Verenikina (2007), Vygotsky was a critic of segregation and his views on inclusion were crucial as he was an advocate for what is now called 'Full Inclusion Model'. Vygotsky calls for a different learning environment where all the school staff could concentrate on the individual needs of the child. He also calls for the school settings and the methods of teaching to be changed. He believes that the child must always be kept within the mainstream social and cultural environment (Dixon & Verenikina, 2007; Vygotsky, 1993). Vygotsky's sociocultural theory applies to this study as the study examines the teachers' attitudes toward the inclusion of students with intellectual disabilities in regular schools and how their interactions with these students may affect the facilitation of

the inclusive experience of these students in schools and what factors are associated with the teachers' attitudes within inclusive settings.

3. The Theory of Attributional Reformulation by Cooper and Fazio (1984)

This study also looks at the theory of Attributional Reformulation by Cooper and Fazio (1984) which was originated in cognitive dissonance theory developed by Festinger (1957). This theory is based on the premise that humans seek consistency in their beliefs, understandings and actions as attitudes are formed through learning and can change when exposed to new paradigms (Greene, 2017; Ross- Hill, 2009). This theory applies to this study as the study explores teachers' attitudes toward children with disabilities in inclusive schools and the factors that are associated with them. Cooper and Fazio suggest that individuals are more apt to change their attitudes after experimental treatment and this change in attitudes can be long lasting and stored for the duration of life. In their studies, Cooper and Fazio have found that the change of dissonance-induced attitudes is more when negative consequences follow from one's action (Ross-Hill, 2009). As indicated by Ross-Hill (2009), this theory relates to any studies researching attitudes. The theory examines the factors behind feelings and behaviour which are relevant to the success of students with disabilities in general classes (Ross-Hill, 2009). Hence, the theory helps better understand the teachers' attitudes toward the inclusion of children with disabilities and the factors which are associated with these attitudes.

To conclude, looking at these three theoretical perspectives within the theoretical framework of this study helps drawing an overall picture that assists in drawing a definition to inclusion ,disability and attitudes. The social model and Vygotsky's theoretical perspectives also help to understand inclusive education and the role of teachers' behaviours and attitudes in influencing children with disabilities regarding their educational achievements and personalities. These attitudes can be viewed within the Theory of Attributional Reformulation

which also can help in identifying the factors associated with them. These theoretical perspectives help understand and draw a comprehensive analysis to the findings and the discussion of the results.

Inclusion and Inclusive Education history in the UAE

Different perspectives contributed to the development and understanding of inclusive education worldwide in recent history (Alahbabi, 2009). These included different approaches such as the psycho-medical model, the traditional discourse of special education field, and the more recent and broader influence concept of a social inclusion approach which opts to modify curricula and strategies to improve schools and prepare them to be inclusive for all students (Moss, 2003).

The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education issued by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) was one of the most significant documents in the field of special education which advocated for inclusive education (Ainscow, 2005; Mittler, 2000; Moss, 2003). This document played an important role in emphasizing the provision of an education for everyone by framing a new global agenda for special education (Moss, 2003). The Salamanca Statement stated , (UNESCO, 1994; viii, section 2), that "every child has a fundamental right to education and must be given the opportunity to achieve and maintain an acceptable level of learning; every child has unique characteristics, interests, abilities and learning needs; educational systems should be designed and educational programmemes implemented to take account of the wide diversity of these characteristics and needs; those with special educational needs must have access to regular school which should accommodate them within a child-centreed pedagogy capable of meeting their needs. Regular schools with this inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive

society and achieving education for all; moreover, they provide effective education for most children and improve the efficiency and ultimately the effectiveness of the entire system" (UNESCO, 1994; viii, section 2).

Following the Salamanca Statement, developed and developing countries pushed their education systems forward in favor of inclusive education (Alahbabi, 2009; Ainscow, 2005; Moss, 2003). With the amount of research conducted on inclusive education worldwide, most of the recommendations encouraged further research to develop the knowledge and understanding of the principal of inclusion (Clough, 1998; Florian, 1998; Kamens, 2004; Sautner, 2008). Unfortunately, there is still no single agreed-upon definition of inclusive education, legal or theoretical. Using different terms by researchers and professionals led to confusion and division in the field and consequently, led to many interpretations of what it means in practice (Sautner, 2008).

Sautner (2008) states that inclusion is more than the simple placement of a child with special educational needs into regular classrooms as it is concerned with overcoming barriers to the full participation of all students in the culture, curricula and community. It is primarily based on values and beliefs that these students have a right to be part and participate fully in regular classrooms (Sautner, 2008). Many definitions of inclusion have been created. Some definitions focused on extending the scope of ordinary schools to include greater diversity of children while others were a set of principles to ensure that children with disabilities are valued in the community. Some other definitions concentrated on the way of dealing with differences and others focused on school improvement, but to date, none has agreed on one truly satisfactory definition (Florian, 1998).

What most agreed on is that inclusion in education can be described as the practice of establishing heterogeneous classrooms in neighborhood schools where every child attempts to

accomplish individual goals while fully participating in social and academic activities (Ajodhia-Andrews & Frankel, 2010). Alahbabi (2009) argued that although the UAE in recent years has shown interest in promoting inclusion and developing inclusive education that would allow students with special needs into general education classrooms, only a few attempts were successful. Those attempts were the results of considerable lobbying by parents. Including these children in mainstream classrooms could be considered the exception in the UAE rather than the norm (Alahbabi, 2009).

Education is seen by the government of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) as a public obligation to prepare today's youth to rise to tomorrow's opportunities. The vision of the UAE aims to make the country one of the best countries in the world by the year 2021when the nation celebrates the Golden Jubilee of its formation as a federation. The vision aims at creating a first-rate education system where all Emiratis have equal opportunity and access that allow them to enhance their educational attainment, and achieve their true potential (UAE Cabinet, 2017). Looking at the vision, mission and values of the Ministry of Education in the UAE (MoE), the vision aims at establishing an innovative education for a knoweldge, pioneering, and global society. The mission emphasises on "developing the educational system for a knoweldge and global competitive society, that includes all age groups to meet future labor market demand, by ensuring quality of eudation outputs, and provisions of best services". One major value is highlighted within the ministy's values in its Strategic Plan 2017-2021, which is the equality and justice of education. The MOE commits to community partnership and accoutnablity in the education process and ensures equal educational opportunities for all (UAE MOE Official website, 2017). Hence, providing a quality of equal education opportunities for all learners including those with disabilities is one of the mandates of the UAE's government.

Until recently, many children with disabilities have been excluded from mainstream education worldwide as most countries, including the UAE, provide education or training for these children through separate special schools, which usually target specific impairments (Alahbabi, 2009; WHO, 2011). The Salamanca Statement which was signed in 1994 made an influential impact on inclusive education as it had a strong focus on developing inclusive schools that accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, linguistic or other conditions, such as being street children or from cultural minorities (UNESCO, 1994). However, the differences in definitions, classifications and categories of inclusive education, disabilities and special education make it difficult for practitioners to provide appropriate provisions (WHO, 2011). The situation of inclusive education began to change positively when legislation was made to require including children with disabilities in an inclusive environment and making that a priority of all countries by signing the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) (WHO, 2011). Since then, the term "inclusive education" has taken on multiple meanings across the globe with different interpretations depending on contextual concerns or practices (Miles & Singal, 2010).

The UAE ratified the UN Convention (CRPD) in 2010 and is committed to acknowledging the rights of persons with disabilities (Gaad, 2010). A new educational development strategy was adopted in 2010 and was called 'Education 2020' (UAE MOE Official website, 2017). This strategy, which aims to achieve ten major student-centred objectives over ten years, identifies a suitable environment for students as a key pillar of focus and, emphasizes equal opportunities for all students (Mashni, 2010). Having this strategy is considered a very ambitious step toward inclusion and inclusive education, especially with the launch of the ministry's initiative "school for all" in 2010 and the publishing of the general rules for special education and services to promote inclusive practices in the country (Ahmed, 2010). Accordingly, several government

schools have been designated to be inclusive and to admit students with disabilities as a pilot phase of the initiative. Also, a new empowerment national policy for the people with disabilities has been recently announced in 2017 aiming at creating an inclusive and restriction-free society (UAE Cabinet, 2017). The new policy involves six key factors including education, health, rehabilitation and accessibility, social security and family empowerment, public life, culture and sports. An advisory council has also been announced where expertise can provide advice, monitor and support the implementation of this policy. Also, officials will be assigned in institutions and government bodies to help facilitate services for people with disabilities. (Achkhanian, 2017). Hopefully, this policy will push for more improvement for the people with disabilities in the country especially in promoting for more advocacy for inclusive education and creating more public awareness for the rights of individuals with disabilities.

The Philosophy of Inclusive Special Education in the UAE

The current philosophy of inclusive special education in the UAE is based on the Federal Law 29/2006 which states in Article (12), (UAE MOE, 2010, p. 93) that the government "shall guarantee persons with special needs equal opportunities to obtain education in all educational facilities and services including educational institutions, vocational training, adult education and continuing education whether as part of regular classes or in special classes if needed. It also states that the adapted curriculum, whether in sign language or in the form of "Braille" or through other appropriate methods, shall be provided".

The Ministry of Education identifies inclusive education as presented in the general rules for the provision of special education program and services official booklet of "School for All", (UAE MOE, 2010, p. 14), as "an educational philosophy" where all students have the right to be educated in the least restrictive environment, usually the general education classroom, with their peers who do not have disabilities and with the necessary programmes and support (UAE

MOE, 2010). The MOE in its philosophy believes that several benefits can be achieved by inclusive education, such as reducing discrimination, segregation and differences in the communities where people become more aware of the needs of people with disabilities and the teachers become more responsive to diversity. In addition, inclusive education provides opportunities for these children to learn from peers and develop the academic, social and vocational skills needed to maximize their potential (UAE MOE, 2010). However, laws and regulations governing special education in the UAE might be still in need of improvements along with public attitudes toward people with disabilities, as students with special needs are still being misdiagnosed or misplaced and, consequently, deprived of proper educational provisions (Sartawi, 2009).

Creating inclusive, safe and caring schools that cater to all must be accompanied with an agreement on how this kind of school is established, as the challenge is to create a clearer and achievable definition that the community can embrace, and stronger procedures on how to translate policy into practice (Sautner, 2008). Sautner (2008) points to a significant fact when explaining that changing schools to be inclusive does not mean making marginal alterations to existing arrangements. The change should be made to the basic organization within its vision and beliefs, as inclusive schools do not arise because of school improvement efforts only. Implementing inclusion is a complex process and requires sensitivity to each school staff and local conditions (Sautner, 2008). The UAE authorities need to consider this complexity and sensitivity when embracing new polices and applying new changes to the education system if they want to make it more inclusive to all learners.

Policy of Inclusive Education in the UAE "School for All"
Mograby (1999) raised the issue of the need for policy changes in education in the UAE a decade ago, and it has become a growing issue due to all the changes that are happening around

the world. Mograby also indicates that the role of the education system has become the focus of critical analysis for long enough, as there were some critical issues that need definite attention. He specified some issues, such as the unclear and conflicting mission and goals in different study programmes and curricula in the country, the inadequate use of technology in methods of teaching and the problems in the structure of schools' administrations and management (Mograby, 1999). As a matter of fact, The Ministry of Education in the UAE, as the responsible body of education in the country, attempted to improve the education system by continuously revisiting its educational strategies and policies during the short history of the country (UNESCO-IBE, 2011). It has, in line with a re-evaluation of the role of government, attempted to ensure that the programmes developed and introduced in schools comply with international standards while efforts are being made to improve the educational environment for all pupils (ESCWA, 2007; Godwin, 2006; UNESCO-IBE, 2011).

However, the UAE, as many other developing countries, encounters many challenges when trying to implement inclusion in education. As described by Ajodhia-Andrews and Frankel (2010), some of these issues faced by developing countries may include the facilities to accommodate children with special needs which might be inadequate or non-existing, the lack of basic educational materials and equipment to provide a sufficient education to these children, in addition to the need for trained and qualified special education teachers and professionals. n While colleges or universities within these countries may have provided some sort of training programmes in this area, the quality of these programmes is still in question (Ajodhia-Andrews & Frankel, 2010). Furthermore, most of these programmes lack the training in modifications to suit the needs of children with disabilities and they also lack programmes for professionals who can assist in the support of the overall quality of inclusive education, such as psychologists, speech and language therapists. (Ajodhia-Andrews & Frankel, 2010).

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Most of these same issues face the education system in the UAE when trying to improve special education and promote inclusive education. Lack of funding might not be a reason but the allocation of it is the issue (Alahbabi, 2009; Gaad, 2010). Most developing countries struggle to maintain suitable funding to support programmes for special needs or reforming the existing education system. As stated by Ajodhia-Andrews and Frankel (2010), providing educational services for children with special needs could cost more than providing education for children without special needs. As a result, usually special needs education is not a priority within the government's budget for many developing countries. In addition, there is often a lack of compulsory laws, policies and legislation within developing countries to ensure the provision of such services and programmes. (Ajodhia-Andrews & Frankel, 2010).

In the UAE, policies and regulations promoting inclusion and improving special education to develop an inclusive education were yet to be noticed until the "School for All" initiative was launched and the set of general rules and guidelines for the provision of special education programmes and services were published in 2010. While these rules were not published as a "policy", they can be considered as one with the absence of actual policies. According to Downey (1988), policy can be defined in a preliminary way as a standing guideline of a governing authority and/or as authoritative specifications which have a public value (Downey, 1988). Campbell (1998) also states that a policy can be a philosophy, a mission or a general objective that establishes a guideline, while Knoepfel et al. (2007) interpreted policies as simple instruments for the exercising of power by a certain authority or organization. Within these views of policy, these guidelines of "School for All" can be considered as a policy for developing special education and promoting inclusive education in the UAE.

The set of rules and guidelines were published in a book of about 200 pages in Arabic and English. The book has three chapters. The first chapter gives a brief history of special education

and the philosophy behind it, stating the vision and mission of special education in the UAE and the goals of the Ministry of Education. The second chapter includes the guidelines and the procedures that aim to regulate and implement the vision of special education. It defines the categories and special programmes and services. It also details the transitional services, the organizational structure and the duties and responsibilities for the administration of special education services in the UAE, along with the roles of parents and guardians of students with special needs. In addition, it describes the special education programmes in private schools and institutions. The last chapter has the glossary of terms and definitions adopted by the Ministry, additional information on the educational considerations, and advice and strategies regarding different categories of special needs, including gifted and talented. The last chapter has also an attachment of the Federal Law No. 29/2006 Regarding Rights of the People with Special Needs (UAE MOE, 2010).

The policy document is written in clear, precise and simple language, addressing all the related parties including teachers, professionals and parents which, according to Campbell (1998), is a sign of an appropriate policy. While the guidelines and procedures are organized under different headings and sections, neither the sections nor the procedures are systematically numbered. Having a numbering system is recommended in policies for easy referencing (Campbell, 1998). Different step-by-step procedures are provided for different rules and guidelines, which are helpful to assist practitioners to follow and implement these policies more adequately (Campbell, 1998).

However, it is notable that there is no actual definition of the problem pertaining to these policies. Defining the problem is considered essential in constructing any policy (Downey, 1988). The actual problem, as it appears from reviewing related documents, is the lack of previous rules, regulations and policies governing and organizing the practice of special

education and its programmes and services in the UAE. Nevertheless, the document indicates that these rules and policies were prepared "to serve as a common framework" that professionals and people related to special education must undertake to achieve inclusion (UAE MOE, 2010, p. 13).

On the other hand, there is a clear statement concerning the philosophy of special education and inclusive education in the beginning of the document. The philosophy indicates seeing each student as "unique in his (or her) own way and needs" who needs to be provided with "a safe, caring and stimulating environment to grow and mature emotionally, intellectually, physically and socially". In addition, it urges educators to demonstrate a commitment to teach all students and provide them with a safe and supportive environment to develop to their maximum potential based on their individual strengths and challenges. The philosophy statement also indicates that providing equal access for students with special needs in the educational programme in the UAE is a priority of the educational policy and that "all students should have the opportunity to be educated with their age-appropriate peers in their neighborhood school with the support provided when needed in a least restrictive environment" (UAE MOE (2010), p. 14). This philosophy significantly reflects the description of inclusive education as was urged by the Salamanca Statement (1994) and as indicated in most of the literature on inclusive education as in Ajodhia-Andrews & Frankel (2010); Clough (1998), Sautner (2008) and UNESCO (1994).

The vision and mission stated in these guidelines seem to be in line with the two philosophies of special education and inclusive education: defining the inclusive education and expressing the commitment of MOE to provide best practices in the field to both students with disabilities and those who are gifted and talented. The vision also states the scope and context for the desired services which are the private and public sectors in the UAE (UAE MOE, 2010). It is

also significant that the mission of the policy specified the commitment of providing two of the most important instruments available in the field to monitor and measure the progress of the two main categories in special education: the Individual Education Programme (IEP) which is considered the foundation of instruction used with individual with disabilities in order to enhance their learning (Kamens, 2004), and the Advanced Learning Plan (ALP) which is a written record utilized to serve the needs of gifted and talented students. Overall, the vision and mission in this policy seem to be clear and precise. It is important for the vision and mission in any policy to be clear as indicated by Sautner (2008), as all other definitions and expectations that will be derived from this policy need to be in line with the overall mission or vision. The vision should be clear enough for all professionals working in the field to act upon and become committed to (Sautner, 2008).

The policy document also specified ten goals for the Ministry (MOE) to achieve in special education. These goals are in line with the philosophy, vision and mission in providing students with special needs equal opportunities, appropriate services, appropriate assessment and identification methods, and appropriate learning environments. The goals seem to be comprehensive, clear and measurable. They also appear to be aligned to the most recent practices in special education.

As an implication on this policy, it is significant that the UAE is attempting to reform special education by regulating the programmes and services. As a developing country, the policy makers in the UAE face the same problem with allocated funds and available expertise to implement legislation related to inclusive education. New policies might face challenges from teachers and parents and sometimes from people with special needs themselves (Ajodhia-Andrews & Frankel, 2010). In addition, teachers' training and resources might not be available within the immediate period of implementing the policy. Parents or guardians of children with

special needs may not have the urge or the awareness to be involved within the schools. They may also have a problem with stigma, misconceptions and cultural issues. In addition, to examine inclusive practice, sustained socio-cultural and political beliefs and attitudes should be embraced and practiced (Ajodhia-Andrews & Frankel, 2010).

To overcome such complexities, the 2010 "School for All" policy specifies that the Ministry, as an authority, will provide professional development to the teachers and professionals in the field which is important to provide instructional improvement and increase the capacity of school staff in order to accommodate the diversity of all students (Alborno, 2013; Sautner, 2008). In addition to that, the Ministry aims, as indicated in the goals, to enhance collaboration with parents and educational organizations, and educate the community about the rights of persons with special needs to provide quality learning (UAE MOE, 2010).

Providing appropriate curriculum that can be modified to the needs of students is part of providing appropriate environments to all students as indicated by Ajodhia-Andrews and Frankel (2010), in order for inclusion to be implemented successfully and to ensure attainability of its goals. This was not clearly stated within the main goals of the UAE policy; however, they were mentioned within the tips and general considerations provided in the last chapter.

To achieve successful inclusive education, a systemic educational reform and restructuring of the school system is required (Ajodhia-Andrews & Frankel, 2010). Thus, the guidelines provide a new structural hierarchy for inclusive education programmes and learning environments from least to most restrictive to accommodate all learners. In addition, they provide detailed descriptions of the identification process and steps of making IEPs and ALPs to be followed in schools and monitored by parents, along with clear roles and responsibilities of all partners in this process.

The 2010 "School for All" guidelines appear to be an appropriate attempt to reform of special education. Florian (1998), Roaf (2002) and Ajodhia-Andrews & Frankel (2010) described a thriving, inclusive education process that includes features such as a shared framework, general education ownership, collaborative team work, family involvement, clear role relationships among professionals, and effective use of support staff, meaningful IEPs, and clear procedures for evaluating effectiveness. These all seem to be theoretically included in this initiative. Ajodhia-Andrews and Frankel (2010) added some additional elements to be considered when making a policy for special education including definition, identification process, accessibility, provision, curriculum, modification, professional development and training, monitoring, review and evaluation. Most elements were considered in the 2010 policy of "School for All" except for monitoring, review and evaluation.

Cultural background on Disability in Islam

The attitudes and conceptions of people toward inclusion and disability can be influenced by cultural and social beliefs (Forlin, et al., 2014; Hamid, et al., 2015). Hence, it is important to discuss the social and cultural beliefs of teachers in the UAE when it comes to disability and inclusion. Islam is the faith of more than one billion people who live all over the world and is one of the major spiritual systems in the world (Bazna & Hatab, 2005). UAE is a Muslim country and the education system is based upon and strongly influenced by Arabic and Islamic beliefs (Gaad, 2011).

It is significant to understand the perceptions and attitudes toward disabilities in the Islamic context as well as the influence of local culture in UAE as part of the Arab and Muslim world. Although a large majority in Islamic countries can be considered religious, there is a huge overlap between local cultural beliefs and religious values where religion plays a crucial role in Muslims' understanding and interpretation of disability and cultural beliefs (Al-Aoufi, Al-

Zyoud, & Shahminan (2012).

Islam has provided the term 'disadvantaged people' as a generic term that includes individuals with disabilities under its umbrella, reflecting a holistic notion based on values of equality and justice (Al-Aoufi, Al-Zyoud, & Shahminan (2012).

The Islamic philosophy and values regarding the care for people with disabilities are derived from the two main resources of Muslim faith which are the Qur'an as the Holy Book of Muslims that contains the guidance and principles of religion, and the "Sunnah" or "Hadith" as the teachings and sayings of Prophet Muhammad (Morad, Nasri, & Merrick, 2001). Bazna and Hatab (2005) discuss the Islamic understanding through the Qur'an and the Prophet's life examples and teachings where people are thought to be born pure and potentially perfect in the sense that the Creator has bestowed upon them the gift of life. Their duty is to make the best of themselves by honouring this gift of life, and helping fellow human beings to develop their spiritual, social and material endeavors as the Qur'an states clearly: "Verily, We create man in the best conformation" (The Holy Qur'an, 95:4). Accordingly, as argued by Bazna and Hatab, Islam believes that evil is never essential or even original in human nature, stressing that every human being can reach a full measure of perfection by developing the already existing positive traits. Thus, the idea of perfection and imperfection in the physical sense has little application in the Islamic view of human life, as do the concepts of normality and abnormality (Bazna & Hatab, 2005).

The Islamic attitude toward all human beings, as argued by Bazna and Hatab (2005), can be clearly presented by referring to different verses in the Qur'an which specify that there is an equality of biological origin of all mankind and that the equality of human dignity is common to all, where God's measures of a human being's worth does not rely on physical attributes or material achievements, but on spiritual maturity and ethical development. This was also

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communicated clearly by the Prophet's message in the Hadith stating that God does not look at bodies or appearances of people, but looks into their hearts and deeds (Bazna & Hatab, 2005; Morad, Nasri, & Merrick, 2001). Al-Aoufi, Al-Zyoud, & Shahminan (2012) explain how Islam provide Muslims with theoretical instructions (the Qur'an) and practical examples (the Prophet's actions) to demonstrate the importance of providing care and protection to people with disabilities and other disadvantaged people who used to be mistreated and abused before Islam. They emphasise that the Qur'an and the Hadith declare the existence of disabilities as a natural part of human nature. Qur'an and Hadith provide principles and practical suggestions for caring for people with disabilities by urging for a guardianship for their rights and a protection of their honour. Muslims were asked to treat each other with respect and to avoid generalising and underestimating others in addition to providing disadvantaged people with their essential needs such as food, safety, care and shelter (Al-Aoufi, Al-Zyoud, & Shahminan (2012).

The rights of people with disabilities as part of the human rights in Islam are incorporated in the Qur'an and are seen as eternal laws of humankind whereas every Muslim has to accept, recognise and enforce these rights in his life (Morad, Nasri, & Merrick, 2001). The Qur'an instructs that "Nor take life, which God has made sacred except for a just cause (The Holy Qur'an, 17:33). Islam believes that every person, regardless of his race, colour, religion, material means, mental ability or gender deserves regard and respect and urges its followers to be kind and just, as people who treat others with kindness are promised to be in Paradise (Morad, Nasri, & Merrick, 2001). It is also significant that social justice in Islam is represented by providing opportunities rather than equal incomes so people can realize their potential. The state's role is only to ensure that individuals are not deprived of the opportunity to make use of their potential to the fullest and to avoid the abuse of power by people (Yamani, 2002).

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Islam makes it a duty for Islamic authority, society and individuals to care for persons with disabilities, seeing that compassion, human rights protection and holistic care for persons with disabilities deserve a social and economic investment by the Islamic authority (Morad, Nasri, & Merrick, 2001). The Prophet also emphasised the responsibility of individuals to assist persons with disabilities, urging people to treat them with patience and courtesy. As stated by Sabiq (1993), the Prophet specified that Allah rewarded acts of charity and gave examples of good deeds such as guiding the blind, responding to the deaf and mute, helping one in sorrow, and supporting the weak (Bazna & Hatab, 2005; Sabiq, 1993). Hence, Muslims are encouraged to assist persons with disabilities either by charitable contributions or by human actions. They are reminded that their act should not be out of pity but as a gesture of seeking goodwill from God and to instill a sense of social responsibility in individuals (Al-Aoufi, Al-Zyoud, & Shahminan (2012).

When discussing Islamic duties and obligations of people with certain disabilities, Islam acknowledges their disabilities and limitations, and states that many religious duties can be waived or reduced on the ground of limited performances or the lack of mental maturity (Bazna & Hatab, 2005). Rispler-Chaim (2007) states that Islamic laws and regulations (Shari'aa) make certain considerations when it comes to people with disabilities performing religious duties such as praying, fasting, almsgiving (Zakat) or performing Hajj (pilgrimage) especially those involving physical movements or those that require consciousness and sanity or legal responsibility. Rispler-Chaim explains that for people with physical disabilities who may face difficulties in performing certain praying movements, it is permissible for them to use different methods. If standing and reclining are impossible or difficult, for instance, they can pray through nodding or in any alternative way he or she can perform to express the spiritual devotion and true intent that underline any prayer. Also, as sanity is a prerequisite for

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performing such duties, people with mental deficiencies are neither liable nor requested to perform any religious duty if their disability persists because full awareness and true intention are essential to fulfill religious obligations. Therefore, people with disabilities are not expected by society or state to perform in the same way as other non-disabled persons do. However, they are encouraged and urged to perform within their own capacities, and it is the responsibility of the state to ensure that their welfare is overseen and protected (Rispler-Chaim, 2007).

 Morad, Nasri, and Merrick (2001) present important evidence from the history of Islam showing how Muslim society provided care for persons with disabilities. The first Islamic hospital was established in AD 706 and medical profession was made official. Individuals with disabilities were assigned caregivers and provided with allowances from the state treasury. By the ninth century, Islamic medical practice had advanced significantly and hospital care was provided for the sick and disadvantaged including people with intellectual disabilities and mental illnesses. Hospitals attempted to treat those patients using innovative methods like walking in gardens and listening to music and equal medical care was provided to all types of social classes. Hospitals admitted and employed patients and staff of both sexes and mobile clinics were established to provide care for people in different areas (Morad, Nasri, & Merrick, 2001).

Furthermore, Morad, Nasri, and Merrick (2001) also indicated that some famous Muslim scholars and scientists dedicated part of their time and knowledge to disabilities. The famous Islamic physician Ibn Sinna (Avicenna), (AD 980- 1037), made significant advances and dedicated a great part of his knowledge to develop healthy lifestyles for people with disabilities. Also, an Islamic physician named Al Hafez wrote in 1500s an encyclopedic book that included details on different disabilities in a scientific classification.

In addition, rehabilitation of people with disabilities is also encouraged in Muslim society. Al-Aoufi, Al-Zyoud, & Shahminan (2012) examined rehabilitation from an Islamic perspective which consisted of both physical and spiritual medication, whether preventive or in the form of medical treatment. Muslims believe that they should put their trust in God, however, they are advised and encouraged by the Qur'an and Sunnah to take a course of treatment when they are sick. Many Muslim jurists' perspectives are built on the idea that disability is a condition that could be both prevented and treated, and it is the responsibility of individuals to use the necessary vaccinations and medical treatment when and if available, along with spiritual immunization via constant prayers and supplications (Al-Aoufi, Al-Zyoud, & Shahminan (2012).

The Islamic view on social justice, as indicated by Bazna and Hatab (2005), covers all physical, economic and social disadvantages in society including people with disabilities. It stresses that the focus needs to be on people's attitudes and actions toward the disadvantaged. It also promotes respect and regard for the disadvantaged expecting personal responsibility to support full inclusion and full provision as part of the responsibility and duty of the society. Also, the Qur'an encourages Muslims to change their attitudes toward people with disabilities by urging them to sit and eat with those who have physical impairments along with the blind and the sick. The Arab customs before Islam used to forbid such social interactions like sitting and eating with people with certain disabilities. Such teachings aimed to remove possible superstitious beliefs that were attached to people with disabilities which often led to their exclusion. Islam attempted to reverse many of the customary attitudes which existed even to this day toward people with disabilities (Bazna & Hatab, 2005).

As Yamani (2002) states, it is significant that in the Islamic view, people must be guided by the moral and spiritual values of peace, equity and kindness in order to establish social justice

in society. This is done by establishing legislative endorsements inspired by Islamic values of equity and justice and by Islam's dynamic efforts aimed at changing the minds and hearts of people so they can implement compassion, brotherhood, and the desire for righteous behavior.

As for persons with intellectual disabilities, Morad, Nasri, and Merrick (2001) argue that although Islamic law considers persons with intellectual disabilities and mental disorders to be legally and financially incompetent, Islam obliges society to assist and respect them, give them equal life opportunities and protect their legal and financial rights. For people with intellectual disabilities to be called so, they should only be diagnosed by experts. In addition, although they are considered not accountable for their speech and actions, they are eligible for marriage and heritage within the supervision of their guardians who are responsible for their legal rights and for their health and wellbeing.

When it comes to education, as indicated by Lovat (2012), Islam promotes educational values. It urges all individuals, to seek knowledge within their power and capabilities regardless of their disabilities seeing education as a moral quest that should address the full range of the individual's needs. It also emphasises the education's role by creating a positive and supportive learning environment to restore any inequity that might be found in society (Lovat, 2012). In addition, Islam urges its followers to become sincere seekers of God, even if they are weak and/or disabled, because Islamic views on evaluating mankind are mostly seen through the real merits of people and how they seek the truth, not in their physical appearances or material belongings (Bazna & Hatab, 2005).

The Qur'an always recognises and emphasises the right of people to have equal life opportunities regardless of sex, gender or disability since there is no permission for oppressing individuals whether they are women, children, elderly, sick or wounded, Muslims or not, enemies or friends. Islam recognises the right to the necessities of life of the needy and their

right for help and assistance (Morad, Nasri, & Merrick, 2001). As indicated by Al-Aoufi, Al-Zyoud, & Shahminan (2012), the Qur'an teaches Muslims several lessons from the incident when Allah rebuked His Prophet when he turned away from a blind man who was asking the Prophet to teach him about Islam while he was busy pursuing people of nobility to become Muslims. These lessons demonstrate how individuals have a right to be treated equally regardless of their disability or social status. They have a right not to be underestimated because of their disability, and a right to be included within society to have an effective, valuable role. Also, they have obligations to seek out proper resources for education regardless of their disabilities. This same 'blind' man was later appointed by the Prophet as a leader in the city of Madinah, then the capital city of Islam. These incidents in the Prophet's life are concrete evidence that people with disabilities have a right to be educated and their abilities should not be judged or underestimated (Al-Aoufi, Al-Zyoud, & Shahminan (2012).

As Muslims come from different races and ethnicities, local and cultural views on disability may influence their attitudes. Al-Aoufi, Al-Zyoud, & Shahminan (2012) argue that behaviours and attitudes of people might not necessarily reflect the exact meaning of their religious beliefs and spiritual values but might reflect their own understanding of their religion. Culture and other factors may contribute to forming their views and perceptions such as politics, economics, and level of conservatism, tribalism and western modernism. They also argue that perceptions toward disability in some Muslims countries are influenced by cultural views, as different cultures see disability in different ways, whether as a blessing, a curse or a test of one's faith. It is significant to note that these cultural perspectives which are sometimes mixed with religious values lead to different actions that are sometimes falsely attributed to religion. These actions can be feeling embarrassed by the disability or attempting to justify it by considering it a punishment for the parents or a God's will. These actions unfortunately may often lead to

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treating people with disabilities with rejection or leaving them without treatment. Although, from the Islamic perspective, there is no contradiction between God's will and seeking treatment (Al-Aoufi, Al-Zyoud, & Shahminan (2012).

Parents sometimes deal with disability within their own cultural contexts to avoid social stigma, seeking spiritual treatments or overprotecting their children by hiding them from society, especially those with intellectual disabilities. In addition, some cultures believe strongly that disabilities are caused by either the evil eye, black magic or possession by evil spirits or Jinn. Despite continuous efforts to distinguish between cultural values and Islam, many malpractices exist in Muslim communities around the world although Islam discourages. However, such practices are less likely to be found in communities with higher socio-economic statuses as individuals tend to practice more authentic Islamic treatment and avoid traditional or cultural methods (Al-Aoufi, Al-Zyoud, & Shahminan (2012).

Teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education

Inclusive societies are built when barriers in education and culture such as beliefs and attitudes are overcome by thoughtful, deliberate planning (Walker, 2016). While school culture, policy, and practice are key factors for inclusive education, the most important factor in inclusive education is the teacher (Schwab et al., 2015). Teachers play a major role in implementing inclusion in schools as they are the change agents in education who should take responsibility for establishing the most supportive environment for learning, work with individual students, and plan for provisions and accommodations in the educational setting (Jovanovic et al., 2014; Monsen et al., 2014; Montgomery & Mirenda, 2014). Therefore, meaningful reform in inclusive education is difficult to achieve without the ownership by teachers who will implement the changes (Jovanovic et al., 2014; Winzer & Mazurek, 2011). It is significant that despite the inclusion mandates enforced by law in most countries, inclusive education cannot

be implemented successfully without the appropriate attitudes of teachers. The teachers' attitude is an important variable affecting the education of the students with disabilities in general schools and the quality of their lives (Alghazo & Gaad, 2004). It is significant that the placement of students with disabilities in appropriate educational settings is a task that most teachers, whether special or general education teachers, cannot avoid where policies and legislation on inclusion are being currently enforced by law in most countries around the world (Jovanovic et al., 2014; Lee et al., 2015; Walker, 2016). However, as stated by Abu-Heran et al. (2014), indifferent or negative attitudes of the teachers in the inclusive settings can have a damaging impact on students with disabilities and lead to feelings of alienation, psychological distress, and sense of inferiority. Thus, it is important for teachers to foster positive attitudes toward inclusive education and be prepared for effective encouragement and motivation of students, continuously increasing their proactivity and accountability to work collaboratively with other school staff and administrational teams (Abu-Heran, et al., 2014).

When inclusion is implemented in schools, advocates and policymakers seem to assume that teachers would endorse the philosophy, welcome the students with disabilities into general classrooms, and willingly make the necessary changes to individualized instructions (Winzer & Mazurek, 2011). As many studies such as Forlin et al. (2014); Ross-Hill (2009); Schwab et al. (2015) and Winzer and Mazurek (2011) indicated, with the increasing numbers of schools attempting to implement inclusive education, especially of students with intellectual, emotional, and physical disabilities, most teachers have negative attitudes toward inclusive education. This is because most teachers feel unprepared to teach these students. Hence, it is crucial that teachers accept the philosophy of inclusion and become supportive of the inclusive approach. However, many teachers still express deep concerns and frustration because of different factors

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that affect their attitudes toward students with disabilities (Abdelhameed, 2015; Forlin et al., 2014).

Teachers' attitudes and expectations influence their student's educational outcomes, so there is a concern where teachers show less positive attitudes toward individuals with disabilities or educational policy of inclusion (Campbell, et al., 2003). Therefore, there is an extreme need for teachers to combine efforts to create adequate opportunities for students with special needs and disabilities so they can succeed and participate productively in class. This is becoming a heavy burden on teachers (Ross-Hill, 2009; Schwab, et al., 2015). On the other hand, policies of inclusive education are also often victim to long-standing attitudes and structures that delay the progress of implementation despite well-intentioned plans. Most policies are often left to the department/divisions of special education where the focus is mainly on educating students with disabilities in the mainstream schools without prior planning for appropriate provisions (Walker, 2016).

The attitudes of teachers toward the inclusion of students with disabilities can be influenced by different factors such as social backgrounds between different ethnicities around the world as well as knowledge and cultural background (Hamid, et al., 2015). It would be beneficial to examine few of the different international studies on teachers' attitudes and the factors affecting these attitudes toward inclusive education. Ross-Hill (2009) conducted a study on a sample of elementary and secondary regular teachers in the rural areas of the southeastern USA regarding the teachers' attitudes toward inclusion. Some participants responded that they opposed inclusion due to the concern of being unable to accommodate students' needs in their classrooms in general schools (Ross-Hill, 2009). Another study, conducted by Monsen et al. (2014) in the UK, explored the effect of teachers' attitudes toward inclusion on the classroom learning environment. The study revealed that there were differences in attitudes toward

inclusion among the participants. However, these variances in teachers' attitudes were not associated with individual differences, such as gender or years of experience, among teachers. Younger teachers seem to hold more positive attitudes toward inclusion due to the level of competency, while older teachers prefer not to face additional challenges with children who might present difficulties.

The study also revealed that teachers with highly positive attitudes toward inclusion make a greater effort to adapt their learning, social skills, and classroom environments to reflect an atmosphere suitable for all students, those with disabilities in particular. The study also suggested that the teachers' positive or negative attitudes toward inclusion have an impact on their classroom management and the development of inclusive practices. The study also revealed that teachers' positive attitudes increased according to perceived adequacy of support, whereas the lack of support available to teachers led to a non-inclusive environment and negative attitudes toward students with disabilities. In another study by Winzer and Mazurek (2011) conducted in Canada regarding the factors that were affecting teachers' attitudes toward inclusion, it was found that inadequate levels of learning resources were a source of stress for 85 percent of teachers. The study also found that the lack of classroom support for special needs was one of the top factors contributing to teacher stress, causing negative attitudes and prompting new teachers to leave the profession. As Winzer and Mazurek (2011) stated, some teachers believed that inclusion was a valuable policy that had been carried to an extreme and failed to serve both typically developing and special students. Over 90 percent of respondents in their study stated that they did not support full-time inclusion and that it was not the best or only response to the needs of challenged students (Winzer & Mazurek, 2011).

Many studies linked teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education and teachers' self-efficacy. In line with Bandura's social-cognitive theory (1997), people's subjective expectation about how they manage to attain a goal based on individual abilities emerges from self-efficacy. Moreover, according to Bandura's 1986 social cognitive theory, as cited in Pajares (2017), self-efficacy can be explained when people possess a self-system that enables them to exercise a measure of control over their thoughts, feelings, motivation, and action. This self-system provides a reference mechanism and a set of subfunctions for observing, regulating, and evaluating behaviour. It serves by providing individuals with the capability to influence their own cognitive processes and actions and hence change their environment. Self-efficacy is important for teachers as their beliefs in their personal efficacy to motivate and promote learning affect the type of learning environments they create and the level of academic development their students attain (Bandura, 1993).

Therefore, many studies examined the link between teachers' self-efficacy and their attitudes toward inclusive education and the factors associated with these attitudes. In a study by Malinen et al. (2012), the researchers examined the teachers' self-efficacy and the relationship between the attitudes toward inclusive education and self-efficacy of 451 in-service teachers in Beijing, China. As stated by the researchers, the results of the study replicated many of other studies' findings conducted in other countries where two dimensions, efficacy in inclusive education and efficacy in managing behaviour, did not have a significant relationship with attitudes when all self-efficacy factors and participants' level of experience in teaching with disabilities were controlled. The level of experience in teaching students with disabilities was the only demographic background variable that had a relatively small but significant effect on attitudes toward inclusive education. Malinen et al. (2012) state that efficacy beliefs seem to remain quite stable when the teachers are exposed to new training especially for experienced

teachers. Urton et al. (2014) indicate that people with a higher sense of self-efficacy take on greater challenges, exert more effort, and carry on longer in coping with tasks and working toward goals. Therefore, basic attitudes and feelings of efficacy play a significant role for the individual teachers and the entire teaching staff. Individual teachers' attitudes toward inclusion can be positively influenced by positive attitudes of the entire teaching staff in a supportive school environment (Urton, et al., 2014).

In another study, Forlin et al. (2014) examined the change in teachers' attitudes, efficacy, and concerns about inclusive education in Hong Kong. The results indicated that professional learning for the sample of teachers had a small but positive impact on the teachers' attitudes, concerns, and perceptions of teaching efficacy for inclusion. The study also showed that teachers in Hong Kong were less enthusiastic about inclusion due to social and cultural beliefs and conceptions about students with disabilities. As training had a significant impact on teaching efficacy, teachers felt more competent when trained in areas such as making accommodations, differentiating the curriculum, assessing, and delivering in the classroom for all students. Hence, the study suggested that teachers' perceptions of and attitudes toward inclusion may be additionally associated with the way in which they conceptualised the practice of inclusive teaching.

The teachers' attitudes toward including students with disabilities in general education schools appear to be influenced by the type and severity of disabilities. Fyssa et al. (2014) conducted a study on general and special education preschool teachers in Greece regarding their understanding of the inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream settings. The findings showed that teachers held conflicting and restrictive beliefs about inclusive education. Both general and special education teachers argued that the success of inclusion was largely dependent on the children's type of disability, level of functionality, and ability to adjust to the

school environment. Also, both groups of teachers felt that pull-out programmes delivered in integration classes were the most appropriate and effective form of inclusion. It was also found that limited opportunities were being offered to children with disabilities for active engagement in class, which indicated ineffective teaching strategies employed by participant teachers and low teacher expectations regarding students' capabilities and achievements. The study also showed little collaboration between general and special education teachers, where general education teachers assumed that the main responsibility of teaching these children should belong to special education teachers.

In another study conducted in Serbia, Jovanovic et al. (2014) explored teachers' perceptions of teachers toward the inclusive education of marginal students, including students with disabilities. The study indicated that teachers continue to have negative attitudes toward the inclusion of children with special educational needs in regular schools regardless of age, gender, and level of education. Some teachers' perceptions toward students with disability appeared to be selective depending on the type and level of disability. Teachers pointed to the low intellectual capacities, poor academic achievement, and class disruption of these students as reasons for them to be educated in special schools. The main reason for teachers' negative attitudes as indicated by the study is the teachers' feeling of incompetency in dealing with different students' needs, the lack of professional support, a large class size, and the lack of teaching assistants in schools.

The teachers' workload and the additional teaching duties also influence teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education. In a study conducted in Botswana, Mukhopadhyay (2014) found that teachers had an overall negative attitude toward the inclusion of students with disabilities and special needs in regular classrooms. Attitudinal barriers were highly visible in teachers' responses where teachers referred to students with disabilities included in their general

classrooms as a burden and an increased workload. Teachers expressed their frustration and displeasure of including these students in general classes requesting that these students be sent to special school. The social and cultural background have a significant influence on the teachers' attitudes.

In Botswana, as explained by Mukhopadhyay (2014), the attitudes of teachers toward including students with disability in general schools appeared to be linked to many cultural and social variables, where individuals with disabilities were viewed as being weak, difficult, awkward, burdensome, powerless, having no strength, with deficits in learning and progress and unable to cope with their peers. Most people, therefore, believe that children with disabilities should be educated in special schools and taught by special educators. These attitudes are rooted in their cultural beliefs, traditional value systems and social practices (Mukhopadhyay, 2014). While in a different study conducted by (Donohue & Bornman, 2015) on the attitudes of teachers in South Africa toward the inclusion of students with different abilities in general classrooms, most teachers believed that inclusion would benefit the students' social development more than their intellectual development. Teachers also believed that children with more challenging types of disabilities do not benefit from inclusion. The findings also suggested that providing teachers with sufficient resources and ongoing training that include hands-on experiences with students with disabilities could positively influence their attitudes toward inclusion.

In a study conducted in Austria, Schwab, et al., (2015) found out that although Austria is moving toward full inclusive schooling system, teachers in general have more negative attitudes toward including students with behavioural disorders. Also, the study found that most general teachers are not prepared for teaching students with special needs in general. It also indicated that teacher training is highly needed to help teachers deal with challenging behaviour

and provide them with knowledge about special educational needs and disabilities. In another study conducted by Vaz, et al., (2015) in Australia, the results showed that male teachers had more negative attitudes toward inclusion than female teachers.

Also, similar to previous studies, the findings showed that teachers with low levels of self-efficacy in teaching were more likely to uphold negative attitudes toward inclusion. In addition, teachers who reported having training in teaching students with disability upheld positive attitudes toward inclusion as the study found that knowledge appears to be a key factor that influence teachers' ability to change teaching practices and that training was associated with positive attitudes toward inclusion. In Singapore, disability is again linked to social and cultural beliefs as it is considered as a personal tragedy and a private burden to bear by families or through institutionalization. Although efforts were made to implement inclusion and provide teacher training and accommodations in mainstream schools, social stigma still exists; cultural beliefs and attitudes toward individuals with disabilities are the most troublesome barriers to inclusion, despite the rich diversity of the society (Walker, 2016).

As for studies conducted in the Arab and Middle Eastern countries, it is noteworthy that only few studies were found regarding teachers' attitudes and perceptions of inclusive education. Many studies (e.g. Abdelhameed, 2015; Abu-Heran et al., 2014; Alquraini, 2011; Gaad, 2001, 2011; Gaad & Khan, 2007; Hamid et al., 2015) indicated that only little is found in literature when it comes to inclusion, teachers' attitudes, and factors associated with these attitudes. Alquraini (2011) stated that due to the small number of studies exploring teachers' attitudes in Saudi Arabia, it is difficult to determine whether the findings regarding teachers' perspectives would be similar to those of international studies. This is significant due to the religious and cultural differences between Middle Eastern and Western contexts. Saudi cultural values deal with disabilities according to the Islamic teachings in terms of social justice.

However, due to other social and cultural beliefs, most people would perceive disability as a punishment or a test that requires patience to get to heaven. In Saudi Arabia, society sometimes discriminates against individuals with disabilities by ignoring them in public or denying them their equal rights which lead to negative attitudes. Alquraini (2011) also states that the few previous studies that explored teachers' perceptions in Saudi Arabia suggested that teachers might have mixed attitudes, where some general teachers have negative attitudes toward students with disabilities in their schools, as influenced by such factors as the type of disability, teaching experience, and exposure to people with disabilities, while others, such as the majority of the school community, including administrators and special teachers, had positive attitudes toward educating students with disabilities in general settings. Alquraini (2011) also suggested the improvement of inclusive practices in general by providing teacher training, disability advocacy, and collaborative teaching courses by learning how to work within a team in a co-teaching model, sharing the responsibility in providing academic and communicative activities for diverse students in general schools.

In another study in Egypt, Abdelhameed (2015) conducted a survey on attitudes toward inclusion among general teachers and special teachers. The overall findings showed that both special and general teachers generally held negative attitudes toward the inclusion of students with intellectual disabilities in general schools. Both general and special teachers did not believe in the general concept of inclusion and did not support the idea of including students with intellectual disabilities in general classrooms. Their comments reinforced the concept that inclusion was imposed as a top-down decision from policy makers and that it had a negative impact on the academic level of regular students along with behaviour problems and challenges that may occur with students with disabilities. Also, participants raised their concerns about

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their capabilities to teach these students and recommended special education settings to better accommodate students with disabilities and special needs.

Another study was conducted in Palestine by Abu-Heran et al. (2014) on teachers' opinions toward inclusive education. The study showed that Palestinian teachers are aware of the reality and difficulties of the challenges of inclusive education as it needs more improvement. Nevertheless, there was a strong criticism about inclusion and its implementation in schools. The finding showed a mix of positive beliefs combined with concerns and perceived inadequacies as teachers required better training. The participants also agreed that inclusion helped the personal and social development of students with disabilities, yet there were still concerns that the students with disabilities were not welcomed by their peers and that the teachers do not feel comfortable dealing with the challenges accompanying the process of implementing it. The study also showed that there was a strong need to establish atmospheres of inclusive learning and more awareness of diversity to implement a successful inclusion. The study also listed a few of the challenges faced in Palestine when it comes to implementing inclusion, such as institutional commitment, education management, ongoing teacher training, curriculum modification, and cultural changes in schools.

About the literature on inclusive education, teachers' attitudes and the factors associated with them, only a few were found to be relevant to this study in the case of the UAE. However, the attitudes of teachers in the UAE are worth investigating because of their effect on the success of inclusion (Gaad, 2011). Alghazo and Gaad (2004) indicate that general teachers in mainstream schools are generally not supportive of including students with disabilities in their classrooms. Many teachers in general education have negative attitudes toward learners with disabilities, as most teachers are found to believe that those individuals should be educated

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separately in an isolated environment, especially those with intellectual, emotional, and behavioral disabilities (Alghazo & Gaad, 2004).

As stated by Abdelhameed (2015) and Vaz et al. (2015), most teachers' attitudes toward inclusion are often based on practical concerns about the way inclusion is implemented rather than being based on specific ideologies. As pointed out by Ross-Hill (2009), teaching students with disability with their non-disabled peers can become a concern for regular teachers, especially when they realize that they are not appropriately prepared to teach students with severe academic problems and social issues. Teachers need to be aware of the available services and be capable of planning for their participation in class. However, the lack of sufficient in-service education, hands-on training, and practice models has resulted in tension, stress, and strain for teachers and students in inclusive education (Abdelhameed, 2015; Forlin, et al., 2014; Rodrigues, 2016; Ross-Hill, 2009; Schwab, et al., 2015).

Moreover, Gaad (2001) stated that cultural views and values are believed to be the reasons behind the assumptions of some teachers in the UAE that students with disabilities should be placed in special centres for rehabilitation instead of being included in regular schools. Alghazo & Gaad (2004) conducted a study on a random sample of male and female regular classroom teachers from government schools in Abu Dhabi, UAE. The study showed that general teachers in the UAE at large tend to have negative attitudes toward including students with disabilities. The study also showed that those teachers were more accepting of physical disabilities, learning disabilities, and visual and hearing impairment whilst intellectual disabilities ranked as the lowest accepted disability. Results also showed that teachers in the UAE were less accepting of student with severe disabilities or severe behavioural difficulties.

Although the study was done on teachers in government schools, the sample was not only Emirati as Arab expats also teach in government schools so there was no description of only

Emirati teachers' attitudes in the study. In addition, the study showed significant differences in attitudes with different types of disabilities based on gender as female teachers were found to show more positive attitudes and used relatively more sensitive, positive, and culturally appropriated terms when referring to disabilities, which might be due to different reasons. Although, as indicated by Alghazo and Gaad (2004), the UAE society is a caring society that is driven strongly by the social construction of individuals in general and individuals with disabilities in particular, the study revealed that most teachers had less than encouraging attitudes toward the inclusion of students with disabilities in their classrooms.

Another study by Gaad and Khan (2007), which examined the perceptions of teachers in the UAE toward inclusion, found a preference for traditional special education services over full inclusion practices. Teachers believed that the heaviest part of delivering the inclusion services to the students are placed on them. Therefore, the teachers were not fully willing to accept inclusive education. However, this study did not identify the attitudes of Emirati teachers specifically as it was done in private schools where teachers are mostly expatriates. As far as the way in which students with disabilities are perceived in general schools in the UAE in general, Gaad (2011) indicated that many students with disabilities who are assumingly included in regular classes are implicitly excluded from class activities for different reasons, such as large class size and lack of incentives, support, or training for the teachers on how to effectively include them in class activities.

Factors associated with teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education

While inclusive education has gained increasing advocacy and enforcement around the world, the attitudes of teachers still vary depending on different factors (Donohue & Bornman, 2015; Lee et al., 2015; Ross-Hill, 2009; Urton et al., 2014). Donohue and Bornman (2015) suggest that teachers' attitudes toward inclusion can vary depending on factors at different

environmental levels, which includes teacher-level factors such as teachers' level of education and training, student-level factors such as the nature and severity of the students' disabilities, school-level factors such as the resources and level of support in schools, and broader cultural and societal factors. Other factors as listed by Ross-Hill (2009) include curriculum deficiencies, legal implications, social implications, and standardized testing mandates, amongst others.

Teachers' workload and time constraints, as indicated by many studies such as those by Abdelhameed (2015); Forlin et al. (2014) and Winzer and Mazurek (2011) have a critical influence on teachers' well-being and level of stress as they are closely linked to negative attitudes of teachers. As the teachers' job in inclusive classrooms changed to bear increased responsibilities, this added more complexity and stress to their daily tasks such as curriculum modifications, large-scale assessments, and the application of inclusive practice and innovative pedagogical approaches. Montgomery and Mirenda (2014) indicate that most teachers have concerns about having enough time to plan, adapt, and modify existing material or even create new materials for students with disabilities in their classrooms. With many other tasks teachers are responsible for undertaking during the school day, which include teaching, conducting assessments, providing remedial support, and preparing instructional materials, teachers feel apprehensive when they are asked to have more responsibilities when students with disabilities are included in their classes (Montgomery & Mirenda, 2014).

Self-efficacy has been considered a significant factor associated with teachers' attitudes toward inclusion. Teachers' self-efficacy has been increasingly used to measure teachers' attitudes toward inclusion, where their beliefs in their capability of teaching can influence how well all students learn to include those who are disadvantaged, unmotivated, or demanding, such as students with disabilities (Jovanovic, et al., 2014; Vaz, et al., 2015). As discussed earlier, many studies showed a positive relationship between teacher self-efficacy and social acceptability

for inclusive education (Malinen, et al., 2012; Montgomery & Mirenda, 2014; Rheams & Bain, 2005; Vaz, et al., 2015). Teacher self-efficacy, as defined by Malinen et al. (2012), refers to the teachers' beliefs that have an influence on how well students learn, especially those who may be considered difficult or unmotivated. The higher efficacy beliefs that teachers have leads to greater efforts and better performances, which again contribute to forming higher efficacy beliefs.

Teachers' efficacy, as indicated by Rheams and Bain (2005), consists of two factors; general teaching efficacy, which reflects teachers' beliefs that teaching can influence students' learning, and personal teaching efficacy, which relates to the teachers' beliefs in his or her own ability to influence student learning. Silverman (2007) explains that there are three main factors that are essential for teachers to hold positive attitudes toward inclusion. The teachers' set of beliefs in their students' capability to achieve; the teachers' strong sense of self-efficacy about teaching students with disabilities; and the meaningful collaborative partnership between general and special educators to work together to overcome challenges. Usually, teachers with higher self-efficacy express confidence in their ability to teach difficult students and show more appropriate coping with several types of students with behavioural problems (Jovanovic et al., 2014; Malinen et al., 2012; Silverman, 2007).

Teachers with higher self-efficacy usually have more positive attitudes and are more confident when it comes to supporting students in inclusive settings. They are more patient and flexible when providing extra help and can effectively adapt classroom materials and instructions to accommodate their needs (Campbell et al., 2003; Silverman, 2007). Strong sense of self-efficacy is important for teachers who teach students with disabilities in inclusive settings, as teachers need to feel confident about their skills to do this effectively. On the other hand, teachers with low self-efficacy tend to give up on students who are not able to learn as quick

as their peers in class and hold pessimistic views of students' motivation in addition to having a less flexible classroom management style (Cameron & Cook, 2013; Silverman, 2007).

Teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy regarding their ability to teach in inclusive settings are important, as teachers often reported the lack of training to contributing to their lack of self-confidence and low self-efficacy (Montgomery & Mirenda, 2014). Training and teacher education is vital to develop the affirmative attitudes and skills required for successful implementation of inclusion since training is identified as one of the main factors promoting positive attitudes toward inclusion. Formal teacher training that includes hands-on experience with people with disabilities has been shown to improve preparedness and positive attitudes toward inclusion of teachers' self-efficacy. It has been increasingly used to measure teachers' attitudes toward inclusion where their beliefs in their capability of teaching can influence how well all students learn including those who are disadvantaged, unmotivated or demanding, such as the students with disabilities (Montgomery & Mirenda, 2014; Vaz et al., 2015). Donohue and Bornman (2015) suggest that when teachers are provided with appropriate training, experience, and exposure to students with disabilities, they can become more self-confident about their abilities to include students with disabilities in their classrooms.

As suggested by Malinen et al. (2012), negative attitudes of teachers toward inclusion are more related to practical concerns than the ideological opposition. The most critical practical concern, in addition to the teacher's sense of efficacy, is the amount of collaboration with other teachers, professionals, and parents as the lack of support and collaboration between different professionals in a school can distress the teachers and affect their attitudes.

Other main concerns of teachers when it comes to inclusion include the amount of individual time students with disabilities and special needs might require compared to other students and without disadvantaging their peers. Teachers are also apprehensive about the quality and

quantity of work produced by students with disabilities, the lack of adequate support services, and the lack of sufficient teachers' training and preparation in the skills required to support inclusive education (Campbell et al., 2003; Vaz et al., 2015).

Training is a major requirement for the improvement of teachers' attitudes toward inclusion. The lack of professional development and special training available for teachers has become a central concern for most teachers. Many teachers felt that they were professionally unprepared to teach diverse children, which has become a concern since poor preparation for inclusive classrooms and the lack of confidence in their skills affect both teachers and students (Jovanovic et al., 2014; Montgomery & Mirenda, 2014; Winzer & Mazurek, 2011). Teachers' attitudes regarding inclusive practices can be influenced by these teachers' level of knowledge of disabilities and related information as a change in knowledge may lead to acceptance and deeper understanding, which will result in more positive views (Campbell et al., 2003).

Appropriate training in inclusive education is a critical prerequisite for teachers to function effectively and to be able to implement inclusion successfully (Mukhopadhyay, 2014). General schools need to be strengthened so they can support students' and teachers' inclusive perspective. Through training and raising awareness, teachers can become more eager to take the responsibility of social change. Teachers can become more willing and open to work cooperatively and receive in-service training on special educational needs (Jovanovic et al., 2014; Rodrigues, 2016).

Teachers should receive the necessary awareness to understand inclusion and its impact on students with disabilities. The success and failure of the implementation of inclusion in regular schools may depend greatly on the knowledge and attitudes teachers portray in the inclusive classroom and the provisions they make to students (Monsen et al., 2014; Ross-Hill, 2009).

Schwab et al. (2015) state that to promote inclusion in general schools, both general and special educational teachers in inclusive education need to be trained on important issues. These issues include teamwork, cooperative and open teaching methods, pedagogical diagnostic competencies, performance assessment, dealing with challenging behaviour, and knowledge about special needs and intervention.

Schwab et al. (2015) include the school environment and the type of management leadership as factors to be associated with teachers' attitudes toward inclusion. A positive and respectful school environment, democratic leadership by management, and teamwork by teachers can greatly influence inclusive practices in schools. As Malinen et al. (2012) also indicate, teachers' collaboration can be considered an effective tool for improving school systems. It should give more emphasis on school management, as well as pre- and in-service teacher education, which might make attitudes toward inclusion more favourable (Malinen et al., 2012). Winzer and Mazurek (2011) indicate that teacher support in inclusive settings is significant to a successful implementation of inclusion. The lack of support and resources is one of the factors that negatively affect teachers' attitudes. Such support includes special and support staff, teaching materials, curriculum adaptations, and teachers' assistants, in addition to planning time and class size reduction, whereas special staff support includes psychologists, social workers, and therapists (Walker, 2016; Winzer & Mazurek, 2011).

Cameron and Cook (2013) reported that the teachers' biggest concerns about students with mild disabilities centred on behavioural and classroom management. Teaching students with disabilities are often perceived to be a burden since it demands more from the teachers who are not prepared; most teachers prefer students who do not demand additional attention, preparation, and time outside the regular scope of the teachers' work (Mukhopadhyay, 2014). Most general education teachers do not feel fully responsible for students with disabilities as

they believe that these students should be under the responsibility of special education teachers. However, in inclusive settings, general education teachers should work with special education teachers to value and support the diversity of all students and foster collaboration and teamwork in class (Schwab et al., 2015). Silverman (2007) indicates that there should be a collaborative relationship between general education teachers and other educators and partners in inclusive settings to facilitate constructive and reflective discussions, mutual learning, and completing each other's area of expertise.

The type and severity of disability are considered among the factors that affect teachers' attitudes in inclusive settings. In general, teachers were found to be more supportive of including children with physical and sensory disabilities than of those with intellectual, learning, or behavioural disabilities. Most teachers seem to prefer a selective inclusive practice rather than the fully inclusive model. Teachers may be more willing to include students with visible signs of disability, such as physical disability, than those with less obvious indicators, particularly those with emotional and behavioural challenges (Monsen et al., 2014; Montgomery & Mirenda, 2014; Mukhopadhyay, 2014; Vaz et al., 2015).

The severity of the disability of the student who needs to be accommodated in regular classes also influences teachers' attitudes toward inclusion. As Vaz et al. (2015) state, the severity of the disability is inversely associated with the teachers' attitudes toward inclusion. The more severe the case is, the less positive the teachers' attitudes are toward inclusion. Therefore, as Campbell et al. (2003) emphasise, most teachers will express willingness to include students with mild physical disabilities rather than having students with more severe disabilities.

Social stigma, stereotyping, and prejudice can become an obstacle to the development and learning of students at risk, including students with a disability, where academic failure is no longer seen as a result of factors within the student but as a phenomenon caused by a restrictive

environment (Jovanovic et al., 2014). According to many studies (e.g. Cameron & Cook, 2013; Montgomery & Mirenda, 2014; Mukhopadhyay, 2014), teachers put more emphasis on the social benefits of inclusion as students will be able to socialise and develop relationships with peers. Some general education teachers are open to the ideas and values of inclusion, only as an opportunity for students with disabilities to associate and socialise with peers in general activities. Many teachers prove to recognise the educational, social, and emotional benefits of inclusive settings.

However, as considered by Cameron and Cook (2013) and Jovanovic et al. (2014), not many teachers feel that a regular primary class with children of the same age is appropriate to include students with disabilities. Teachers' goals and expectations for students with disabilities narrowly focus on social development which can reduce their learning opportunities in other important areas. Low expectations may attribute to a student's failure. Thus, teachers should reflect on the different goals and expectations they hold for included students, as these beliefs may affect student achievement and development. Moreover, many general education teachers lack the experience and knowledge of psychology, social pedagogy, and special pedagogy, and lack understanding the difficulties that children may encounter with learning. As a result, many of these teachers believe that students with disabilities are better off in some segregated settings or special schools (Schwab et al., 2015).

In conclusion, it is significant to say that in inclusive settings, teachers are the major key to successfully implementing inclusive education because they are the ones who are responsible for creating an appropriate environment and providing the services to students. Teachers' attitudes negatively or positively impact the success of the students with disabilities in inclusive settings. Many factors are found to be associated with teachers' attitudes within

these settings, which consequently affect the social and academic success of these students and the implementation of inclusion in general.

Teachers' self-efficacy significantly affects teachers' attitudes toward inclusion. The higher their self-efficacy, the more successful teachers are in applying different teaching strategies, instructions, and methods and in creating a more appropriate environment for all students. Other influencing factors include personal factors such as low self-efficacy, poor time management, and lack of knowledge, skills, and experience. There are also school-related factors such as the lack of training provisions, the lack of support and resources, the absence of effective policies, and the inadequacy of team collaboration.

The type and severity of disability can also affect teachers' attitudes; teachers would favour mild and less challenging disabilities as most teachers lack the knowledge and training on how to appropriately accommodate more challenging disabilities. Social stigma and social prejudice can also be associated with teachers' attitudes as religious, social, and cultural beliefs influence the teachers' acceptance of students with disabilities in schools. Identifying these factors may help change the teachers' attitudes and, hopefully, as indicated by Rheams and Bain (2005), lead to accepting the inclusion of all students.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

Introduction

There are always many options and alternatives when it comes to research in education and social sciences. Researchers need to -make decisions on research methods and design, make judgments on appropriate findings and analysis and use possible directions to complete a study or a research project (Denscombe, 2014). Special education research is thought to be influenced by many factors that are political, social and contextual, and are affected by the different political and legislative changes, reform and inclusion movements which have implications for methodology at different stages of the research process (Mertens & McLaughlin, 1995)**.** In this study, an interpretive, exploratory, mixed method research approach will be used. Mixed method approaches usually involve a combination of qualitative and quantitative components, and have significantly increased in popularity in social science in recent years (Bergman, 2008; Denscombe; 2014, Terrell, 2012).

The research approach that is used in this study is an interpretive, exploratory, mixed method approach with more focus on the qualitative methods. This research approach is selected for several reasons. For instance, a study by Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007) explains that an interpretive approach is essentially concerned with the understanding of a phenomenon. It attempts to realize and interpret the world in terms of its factors where meanings and interpretations are leading the research but with the emphasis on the settings, the individual perceptions and the attitudes. Understanding this, an interpretive approach is selected for this study because it helps to understand a phenomenon involving individuals as it will study and interpret the attitudes of general teachers in government schools with social inclusion of children with intellectual disabilities in Dubai. This study will also endeavour to identify the

factors that affect the attitudes of those teachers within the given culture and system of the UAE.

In addition to that as the focus of the study, the topic which is being investigated has not been researched significantly in the local and international literature. The interpretive approach helps identify the factors behind the research topic and develop in-depth information about it using the data generated by the different types of methods that are used. A study by Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007), argues that the interpretive approach has a specific interest in the individual as it strongly attempts to understand the subjective world of human experience while maintaining the integrity of the phenomena being investigated and making efforts to get inside the person to understand from within, while reflecting the viewpoint of the observer.

Thus, as a study by Vann and Cole (2004) also indicates, the key feature of the interpretive method is the interest of the researcher in human meaning in social life. This study investigates the attitudes of teachers toward disabilities and the factors affecting them from the view of an observer seeing human experiences as the main interest within the settings and the culture of the UAE as the context. This was also reflected in what Yanow & Schwarts-Shea (2006) indicated, that the interpretive approach usually beings with an identification of feelings and problems, while the understanding and the concepts are expected to develop from the data as the research progresses.

As for using the exploratory approach, it is also significant since it is used to explore an area where little is known, or to investigate the possibilities of undertaking a certain research study or to develop tools or refine measurements (Kumar 2005). As, again, little exists in the literature on the attitudes of Emirati teachers and factors affecting them, using an exploratory approach will help understand the phenomenon, find answers to the research questions and develop recommendations to improve the practice of inclusion in the UAE. This is supported

by studies like Johnson and Christensen (2012) which indicates that exploratory research is used when the researcher needs to focus on describing the nature of something that previously was somehow unknown, or when the researcher tries to understand the specifics of a phenomenon or some situation to develop a hypothesis or generalizations about it.   In the case of this thesis, limited knowledge exists on the phenomenon of the attitudes of Emirati teachers toward intellectual disabilities and the factors affecting them.

Furthermore, this interpretive exploratory approach was carried out using a mixed method approach which was mainly selected to have more possibilities of methods to explore and gather data using a variety of quantitative and qualitative methods. Mixed methods are defined by some researchers (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2003) as the type of research design which uses both qualitative and quantitative approaches through the research aspects, such as in types of questions, research methods, data collection and analysis processing of findings. Several major events for mixed methodology occurred during the 1970-1990 period (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2003).

However, most influential mixed methods work appeared during the 1990s including Creswell (1994), Greene and Caracelli (1997) and others. This research design is appropriate for this thesis as it strengthens the quality of the research. Maxwell (2005) emphasises that using a mixture of quantitative and qualitative methods reinforces the quality of the research because it combines the different strengths and logics of both, and addresses the different kinds of questions and goals of the research. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were utilised, as attitudes of Emirati teachers in primary schools toward intellectual disabilities were being investigated by quantitative methods (i.e. a survey/questionnaire) and then data were being validated by a triangulation of other qualitative methods such as observation and interview to strengthen the findings and support the results.

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Mixed methods as a research strategy are often used to evaluate a new policy and measure its impact, compare alternative perspectives on a phenomenon or combine aspects of other strategies and methods (Denscombe, 2014). Using mixed methods design in social research is thought to have many advantages which include increasing the validity of the findings where combining quantitative and qualitative methods adds strength to the results and brings a more comprehensive account of the research inquiry by enhancing the integrity of the findings and providing contextual understanding to the data (Bergman, 2008).

It is significant that mixed methods are important when it comes to special education research as using these methods has a specific value when trying to solve a problem that is present in an educational or social context. It attempts to combine techniques from both quantitative and qualitative designs to enrich the ability to draw conclusions about a certain problem to obtain a complete picture and broaden the scope of the study (McLaughlin & Mertens, 2004). Thus, in this study, a combination of mixed methods is used to validate the data, enhance the findings and strengthen the credibility of the research.

In this chapter, the research design is discussed, the site and sample selections are detailed, and the methods of collection are introduced, along with the validity of the research, the ethical considerations and the limitations of the study.

Research Approach

The mixed methods research design is based on a pragmatist research paradigm, which is derived from the work of researchers like Mead, Dewy and others (Creswell, 2003; Mertens & McLaughlin, 1995). A study by Creswell (2003) indicates that knowledge claims arise out of actions, situations, and consequences rather than antecedent conditions. Instead of the methods being important, the problem is most important, and researchers use all approaches to understanding it. Thus, to understand the problem in this study, which is the attitudes of the

Emirati teachers toward intellectual disabilities in primary schools and the factors behind them, different methods, both qualitative and quantitative, will be used to understand and analyse it.

Pragmatism, as indicated by Creswell (2003), is not committed to a one system of philosophy and reality which is why it best applies to mixed methods research. Inquiries can be drawn freely from both quantitative and qualitative methodology and the researchers have the freedom to choose methods, techniques, and procedures of research that best meet their needs and purposes. Also, researchers have the freedom to look at many approaches to collecting data either simultaneously or sequentially to understand the main topic of the study best. Creswell argues that pragmatism in the mixed method study opens the door to the use of multiple methods and different assumptions as well as different forms of data collection and analysis, which consequently is the best fit for this study.

Although the mixed method is used, the focus of the research in the study is on qualitative methods by using observation, interview and literature review which are used to validate the data collected from the quantitative method which is the survey. Also, the analysis of the data used in this study is more interpretive than descriptive. This is influenced by Maxwell (2005) who listed features explaining why qualitative methods strengthen the research data including the inductive approach, the focus on specific situations or people and the emphasis on words rather than numbers.

Figure (5) shows the research design used for this study which was adapted from the Interactive Qualitative Model of Maxwell (1985) found in Maxwell (2005).

Goals

- Investigating attitudes of female Emirati teachers in primary schools towards the inclusion of students with intellectual disabilities.
- Identify the factors that are affecting these attitudes.
- Recommendations on changing these attitudes and implement inclusion successfully.

Theoretical Framework

- The Social Model of Disability
- Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory
- The theory of Attributional reformulation by Cooper and Fazio (1984)

Research Questions

1. What are the attitudes of female Emirati teachers towards intellectual disabilities in UAE inclusive primary schools?
2. What are the factors that affecting teachers' attitudes and perceptions?
3. What could be recommended to improve inclusive practice in the UAE?

Methods

Mixed-methods, Survey, Semi-structured interviews, Anecdotal observation, Document analysis, Literature review

Validity

Triangulation of methods

Literature review

Figure 5: Thesis Research Design

Research Methods

Different types of both quantitative and qualitative methods are used in this study, including questionnaires, focus groups, semi-structured interviews, anecdotal observations, document analysis and literature review. Using mixed methods for data collection requires that multiple methods be used in a single study where the mixing of quantitative and qualitative methods can result in a highly accurate and complete representation of the phenomenon under

investigation (Burke & Turner, 2003; Denscombe, 2014). Combining different types of methods is thought to be significant as Burke and Turner (2003) believe it can help recognise the limitations of each method as well as their strengths, in addition to obtaining a combination of findings, eliminating or minimising possible alternative explanations for conclusions and clarifying the different aspects of a phenomenon.

Site and Participant Selection

Site and participants were selected from within the schools of the Emirate of Dubai in the UAE. As the study aims to investigate the factors behind female Emirati teachers' attitudes toward inclusion in government primary schools, the number of government primary schools in Dubai was obtained from the respective authority. The initial agreement was to choose four schools, but upon realising that the number of Emirati teachers in these schools was limited, two more schools were added. All selected schools were in the urban areas of Dubai to eliminate other factors that might affect the nature of the results. Participants were selected using the 'handpicked sampling' technique as described by (Oleary, 2004, p. 110). This technique involves a sample with a specific purpose in mind that meets certain criteria. Since all teachers in primary schools are female, all participants in the study were female. However, the participants had to meet two criteria for inclusion in the study: the nationality, as the study is only of Emirati teachers, and the years of experience, as the participants should have at least a minimum of two years of teaching experience in inclusive schools. Within these criteria, pool was selected using handpicked sampling. Then participants were selected using simple random sampling by assigning numbers to teachers and then selecting them to avoid bias (Goddard & Melville, 2007; Kumar, 2005).

Table (2) shows the distribution of participants and their numbers for each method. A group of eight to ten teachers were randomly selected from the six schools for the focus group. 100

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copies of the surveys were sent to each school within the selection. Approval from the Ministry of Education was obtained (see Appendix 1), and consents from the school managements were also obtained to conduct the study, distribute the surveys, interview teachers and observe lessons. All participants who were asked to complete the survey, to be interviewed or observed were randomly selected from the six schools and then asked to sign a consent form (see Appendix 2 & 3). The aim and procedures of the study were explained briefly to them as well. Only 79 questionnaires were returned complete, although follow-up visits were conducted to obtain more responses.

Method	Description of participants	Number of participants
Focus group	General teachers + school officials	5
Questionnaire	General + SEN teachers	79
Semi-structured Interviews	General teachers	6
	School administrators	1
	Special Education teachers	2
Observation	General teachers	2

Table 2

Some teachers refused to sign the consent form, for personal reasons, and expressed their agreement to do the questionnaire verbally. Participants who refused to sign the consent form for the interviews were not interviewed. All teachers who participated in the interviews and observation refused to be videotaped or audiotaped so note taking was used to assure confidentiality and respect privacy.

Nine participants from the pool of schools who had already answered the questionnaires were selected for the interviews. The school administration staff selected interviewees in their respective schools upon availability. Finally, two teachers from the pool of schools were selected upon availability to be observed in a class which included at least one student with an intellectual disability.

The selected sites and participants were thought to be appropriate for the current study for several reasons. First, as the study is concerned with attitudes of Emirati teachers in primary schools, most teachers in primary schools in Dubai are Emirati teachers unlike higher levels (cycle two and secondary schools) where there are more Arab expatriate teachers in schools. Also, primary schools have been given the priority when implementing inclusion in the country after the Ministry of Education (MOE) first introduced the initiative of inclusion in 2010. At that time, the Ministry announced that schools were expected to provide for all children from kindergarten to at least grade nine starting with the primary stage first (Ahmed, 2010). Even before this initiative, all primary schools under the MOE in the UAE in general, including Dubai, were known to have some provisions for children with special needs either in the form of special classes, resources rooms or special modifications (Gaad, 2011). Therefore, teachers in the selected schools are considered to have some experience in dealing with children with disabilities in general. This means that they can be investigated for attitudes as (Dewey, 1998, p. 27) believes that "*every experience enacted and undergone modifies the one who acts and undergoes*", including the formation of attitudes, especially emotional and intellectual attitudes.

Data Collection Methods

The data collection methods used in the study were as follows: focus group, questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, anecdotal observation, document analysis, and literature review. Details of each method, participants and design are discussed below.

1. Focus Group

Focus groups are particularly useful for exploratory research, such as this study. Such method is often considered the first step when little is known about the topic, especially in education and psychology. They can be used to collect descriptive information or pilot knowledge to explain and understand constructs and can also be used to test initial ideas, research issues and

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research designs (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Vaughan, Schumm, & Sinagub, 1996). The use of focus groups in this thesis, as indicated by Morgan (1996), is to give an emphasis on research design as the group discussion serves as a source of preliminary data to generate survey questionnaires and as a follow-up technique where data is used to assist other methods. The focus groups are also used to pursue poorly understood questionnaire results and evaluate the outcome of observation or individual interviews.

Accordingly, the aim of the focus group in this study was to guide the construction of other instruments including the generating of the open-ended questions of the survey, highlighting the status of inclusion in Dubai and identifying teachers' attitudes about including students with intellectual disabilities in the classroom. The focus group also helped to generate a list of the factors associated with the attitudes of teachers toward disability in addition to suggestions and recommendations on what should be done to improve teachers' attitudes in general. The focus group design and discussion analysis were based on the work of Morgan (1996) where two focus groups of were conducted. A set of pre-designed open-ended questions for focus group and semi-structured interview (see Appendix 4) was used as a guide for the discussion. The role of the researcher in the focus groups was to introduce each topic, guide and facilitate the discussion focusing on the aims of the method.

2. Questionnaire

For this study, a questionnaire with a mixture of closed items with a five-points Likert Scale and a number of open-ended questions were used to investigate Emirati teachers' attitudes toward intellectual disabilities and inclusion and identify factors affecting these attitudes. Questionnaires, as indicated by Johnson & Christensen (2012), are considered an important component of mixed methods research and are typically used in exploratory research to know how participants think or feel or experience a phenomenon. Questionnaires are also utilised

when wanting to know why participants believe something happened as the questionnaire allows participants to express their opinions more fully and consequently provide valuable information to the research studies. Using questionnaires has several benefits as, in addition to being significant to measure attitudes and elicit other content from research participants, they are inexpensive and can be administered in groups (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007; Johnson & Christensen, 2012). Well-constructed and well-tested questionnaires are adequately high in measurement for validity (Burke & Turner, 2003). Using questionnaires in social research helps in producing data based on real-world observation as surveys are associated with getting information from their original sources and can collect both quantitative and qualitative data which helps effectively with time and efforts especially when it comes to data collection (Denscombe, 2014)

Therefore, to ensure the validity of the questionnaire used in this study, an initial selection of two questionnaires from Davis (2009) and Wrushen (2009) were used for the closed-ended items where a number of items were selected from both questionnaires and combined in one (see Appendix 5). The two authors were contacted for permission to use their work and to adapt the two questionnaires to be appropriate for the local context. One of the two respected authors (Dr Tracie Davis) responded and gave a written approval (see Appendix 6) while the second (Barbara Rivers Wrushen) could not be traced although several emails were sent to the address shown on the thesis and to the university as well. No responses were received; however, acknowledgement of her work was ensured throughout the study.

The questionnaire was adapted from the two original questionnaires using selected items from both, and then it was translated into Arabic. Some modifications were applied to the Arabic version in term of wording to make them more comprehensible to the Arabic readers. The first part of the questionnaire which is related to demographic information was added by the

researcher and was written in English first and then translated into Arabic and adapted accordingly. The main 22 questionnaire items were originally translated into Arabic by the researcher, who is fluent in both Arabic and English, has knowledge in disability and inclusive education, and appropriate experience in teaching in Emirati government schools. Then, the draft of the Arabic version was given to four experts in disability, special needs and research methodology to review and validate. All of them were fluent in Arabic and English. Two of these experts have expertise in special education and have worked in government schools. The third one holds a PhD degree in a special education and has worked extensively with teachers and individuals with disabilities and the fourth expert also holds a PhD and is an expert in research methodology and questionnaire designing.

The experts' feedback was pursued to ensure that the questionnaire items were compatible with Arabic literature in the special education field, particularly with terminology and usage of language, and could be appropriately comprehensible by the participants. Appropriate modifications were made based on the feedback before carrying out the pilot study. The pilot study consisted of 10 female Emirati teachers in primary government schools who were chosen anonymously to take the survey. A careful review of their responses was conducted, and more amendments were made particularly in the demographic part. Also, a number of open-ended questions were added to the questionnaire based on their recommendations to have a wider view of teachers' perceptions on the subject matter and get more responses in term of factors associated with teachers' attitudes and recommendations to improve inclusive education. Also, some modifications were made to few terminology used in the original draft without changing the content of the original survey. The final draft was submitted and approved by the study supervisor (see Appendix 7 & 8).

For the findings, close-ended questions were coded directly into SPSS software programme for analysis while open-ended questions were coded by thematically using the coding model as described Kumar (2005, p. 240) and Miles and Huberman (1994) which identifies similar phrases, patterns and themes. These themes are coded then grouped to find generalisations. For analysis, Microsoft Excel software was used to present the thematic findings and generate related graphs and tables accordingly.

3. Interviews

As part of the qualitative methodology used in this study, semi-structured interviews were selected as a method to collect further information on teachers' attitudes, factors affecting their perceptions, and recommendations for a better practice. Interviews as a technique are considered one of the most effective ways of collecting data in the social sciences (Crowther & Lancaster, 2008). Denscombe (2003) believes that semi-structured interviews can provide in-depth information and insight into the study as they assist in gaining valuable data. For this study, the interview design was based on the work of Maxwell (2005), like face-to-face, semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions were conducted with six teachers and two school administrators. Each interview lasted approximately 30 to 45 minutes. All participants were given ID numbers for analysis purposes after selections were made. A draft of open-ended questions was prepared beforehand. The questions were derived from relevant literature and were grouped into seven themes including experience with disabilities, knowledge on inclusion, training on inclusion, beliefs on teachers' attitudes, factors associated with teachers' attitudes, suggestions to improve attitudes, and recommendations to improve the inclusive experience of teachers (see Appendix 4).

Interviews and focus groups' protocol

After taking possible ethical considerations and approval from concerned authorities, as explained in the trustworthiness and ethics section p. 89, appropriate interviews protocol had been followed for conducting the interviews and focus group discussions. The researcher started the interviews by introducing herself to the participants, giving them a brief background about her work and study. The researcher ensured the participants a total confidentiality about their comments, reassuring them that their views and opinions would be used solely for research purposes and no real names would be used in the study. The researcher then briefed them about the study, its purposes, scope and use of the results. Before starting the interview, the researcher read the participants the statements of confidentiality, obtain their consent by signing the consent form. The researcher also explained the option to withdraw from the interview and the possibility to use the audio recording. Since many of the participants had reservations on audio recording, only notetaking was used. During interviews, the researcher used a set of pre-designed open-ended questions (see Appendix 4) to lead the discussion. The role of the researcher was to introduce a topic, guide and facilitate the discussion focusing on the aims of the method. The pre-designed questions were used as a guide and a reference throughout the discussion. Not all questions were used for the interviews. After ending the interviews, the researcher thanked the participants for their time and contribution. They were given information on how to contact the researcher if needed and again were briefed on how this information would be used. Participants were also given the opportunities to review the researcher's notes to check on their responses and give their agreement as part of the data validation process.

During the interviews, appropriate questions were selected and amended accordingly based on the time of the interview, the availability of the teachers, and the willingness of responding and the teachers' level of awareness on the subject matter. Participants' consent and their

understanding of the aim of the study and procedures were ensured before all the interviews. Interviews were summarised and then analysed by using the coding model introduced by Kumar (2005) and Miles and Huberman (1994) by identifying similar phrases, patterns and themes and coding them, and then grouping these codes to find generalisations.

4. Participant Observation

Participant observations with anecdotal records were used as a data method collection for the current study. Denscombe (2003) argues that observation is a legitimate way of collecting data as it relies on direct evidence that offers broad explanations. Also, using participant observations can provide a clear picture of teachers' attitudes in real action (Robson, 2002). Three teachers who completed the questionnaire were selected for participant observation in class for the following reasons. First to examine their attitudes toward students with intellectual disabilities and to see if these attitudes affect the type of provisions in class. Second to examine if any factor is associated with teachers' attitudes in class toward students with certain disabilities.

Data from observations was used to validate the findings from other instruments such as questionnaires and interviews. Anecdotal records method was used, as described by Armstrong, Denton, & Savage (1978) and Szarkowicz (2006), to write a summary of events and actions during observation focusing on specific classroom incidents documented after having observed the lessons. Recording participant observations, as suggested by Robson (2002), is done by using a pre-designed instrument ready and available before the event.

Using anecdotal records is thought to offer a flexible plan during observation because the observer has the time to record important moments without the need to document all the details (Szarkowicz, 2006). Anecdotal records are considered by Gall & Acheson (2011) and Manzo and Manzo (1995) to be the most appropriate subjective unbiased tool to capture patterns of

behaviour which are particularly useful for recording evidence of interactions and experiences. A pre-designed anecdotal instrument was used in this study which was designed and piloted by the researcher during a study to observe a teacher's attitudes toward a child with intellectual disability. The instrument was adapted and modified according to the purpose and use of this current study. It was then piloted and evaluated before the actual use (see Appendix 9). Examples of teachers' behaviour toward children with intellectual disabilities used in the instrument are partially adapted from the Flanders Interaction Analysis (IA) system (Flanders, 1970, p. 34). The coding scheme was thematic relevant to the aim of research as described by Robson (2002, p. 332) where analysis is "focused, objective, non-context-dependent, explicitly defined, mutually exclusive, and easy to record". The instrument was used in the participant observation, and the data was entered using a notebook computer to record notes while in class directly. Notes were reviewed later and analysed accordingly.

5. Document Analysis

Document analysis was used in this study as part of the methodology for data collection and analysis. Document analysis is frequently used in research for the collection, review, examination and analysis of various forms of text as primary sources of research data (Oleary, 2004). The document analysis for this study included the analysis of various documents and reports relevant to the study such as lesson plans used in lesson observations to see if the teachers included objectives or modifications for students with disabilities in their classes or if the teacher follows a well-defined plan for developing the students with disabilities in the class. It also included documents such as school official records for setting contexts of methods, samples of students' Individual Educational Programme plans (IEPs) to see if they are utilised and followed by teachers and to identify patterns of attitudes. Documents also included samples of diagnosis reports to indicate intellectual disabilities when identifying children in classrooms

and relevant official documents issued by the Ministry of Education on special education and inclusion policies necessary for literature review and the validation of data. In addition to that, a broad review of relevant literature on teachers' attitudes, factors affecting their attitudes, intellectual disabilities, and the history of inclusion and inclusive practices in the UAE was conducted in order to relate to the findings and discussions.

Trustworthiness and Ethics

For the trustworthiness and ethics of this study, definite measures were taken to ensure the validity of the research and to observe the ethical considerations.

Validity of the Research

For the validity of this study, a triangulation of mixed methods is used to give a stronger verification to the findings as suggested by Eisenhardt (2002), and to authenticate and strengthen the research outcomes and produce a study that is reasonable, trustworthy and defensible where the findings are of high quality and worth of readers' attention (Bergman, 2008; Burke and Turner, 2003; Flick, 2009; Richards, 2015). In addition to triangulation, other types of validity were used which includes member checking where data is checked by participants to assess intentionality, correct factual errors and offer the participants to add further information. Also, other methods were used when applicable as well such as extended fieldwork; peer review and thick description to give the reader in-depth description of the situation (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007; Oleary, 2004; Richards, 2015).

Ethical Considerations

Ethical consideration was observed when using different research methods and instruments in this study. An ethics form was submitted to be approved by the Ethics Committee at the British University in Dubai (BUiD) before commencing the study (see Appendix 10). An official letter was issued by the university and was sent to the Ministry of Education to request permission

for gaining access to schools and the teaching staff (see Appendix 11). Approval was granted from the Dubai Educational Zone on behalf of the Ministry of Education to conduct the study on Dubai's primary schools, and a list of nominated schools was offered by the Educational Zone (see again Appendix 1). School principals signed consent forms to allow access to their schools and to understand the confidentiality of the study. Other participants were advised to sign consent forms before conducting interviews and observations in addition to explaining the protocol form for the questionnaires. Consent forms were designed to give a brief description of the study, its purpose, a description of the procedures, and participant rights (see Appendix 2). Schools agreed of overseeing the obtaining the consent of the families of children who were involved in lesson observations. No children were interviewed, audiotaped, videotaped or photographed during the data collection of this study.

In addition, all participants were fully briefed on the study, its aims, its procedures and the ethics involved. Participants were ensured of total confidentiality and anonymity and were advised to withdraw at any time if they did not feel comfortable with any of the procedures. All names that were used in the study were pseudo names. Audiotaping was sought upon participants' approval, and in most cases, note taking was used as participants did not feel comfortable being audio recorded. Videotaping and photography did not take place. Notes taken from interviews were used by members checking to validate the data in addition to the observations' field notes. All returned questionnaires, interviews' notes, observation field notes and related confidential papers will be kept in a locked cabinet to ensure confidentiality. Also data were kept on a computer protected by a password, which can only be accessed by the researcher.

Methodology Challenges and Limitations

There are some challenges and limitations which applied to this study as follows:

- The study included only public primary schools in Dubai, which are mandated by the MOE to implement inclusion and admit cases of students with disabilities or special needs. It did not include schools from private sectors or from other educational stages or primary schools that do not implement inclusion according to the Ministry's records and standards.

- Access to schools and participants was granted by the MOE and the Dubai Educational Zone; however, the cooperation of schools depended on the flexibility of school administrators. The level of collaboration and flexibility in assisting in the data collection by school administrations varied in this case.

- Participants in this study were only female Emirati teachers who work in the selected government primary schools in Dubai. The attitudes of male teachers, both Emirati or non-Emirati, were not observed or examined within the scope of this study as government primary schools consist of only female staff in Dubai and across the UAE.

- Although this study was conducted in a number of schools in Dubai, the data and results on teachers' attitudes and factors affecting these attitudes generated from this study can be presumably generalised for female Emirati teachers across the UAE as they share similar characteristics, social and economic backgrounds. However, minor variations may occur depending on different factors or social contexts such as the level of education, social class, and location of the school (whether in the city or a remote area) among others.

- The study discusses the attitudes toward intellectual disabilities including Down syndrome, autism, developmental delay and other disabilities that may cause intellectual impairment (Harris, 2006; Schalock, Luckasson & Shogren, 2007). The study did not discuss attitudes toward physical disabilities, such as sight or hearing impairment. However, some generalisation might occur in responses where participants discussed their perceptions toward the inclusion of students with disabilities in general.

- Data generated from Dubai may apply to other emirates in the UAE as all schools in the UAE fall under the authority, regulations and resources provided by the Emirati government and the Ministry of Education except for the emirate of Abu Dhabi, which has a different body of education and higher sets of resources. However, education in Abu Dhabi still fall under the UAE laws and regulations, and teachers share similar demographics and backgrounds (UAE Interact, 2016).

- An already existing and validated questionnaire was adapted and used for data collection to add validity to the instrument. However, the adapted version also needed validation. Therefore, other means of validation were carried out including piloting drafts and experts checking.

- The Questionnaires, the protocol page and the consent form, were designed in English, then translated into Arabic. Care and caution were used for translating the closed-ended items so that they would match the originals from the adapted questionnaire. However, as the literal translation was sometimes misleading or ambiguous, some items were rephrased to become more comprehensible in Arabic or to be more relating to the local Arabic context. Some translated terminologies were replaced by an equivalent that is more familiar to Emirati teachers (i.e. regular classes, inclusive classes, special classes). In addition, back to back translation was used for more validation.

- All possible efforts were made to obtain a high response rate in returned questionnaires. However, it was extremely difficult due to different reasons including the small numbers of female Emirati teachers in primary schools in general, the busy schedule of teachers in schools and the intensive workload of teachers during the school day. Also, there was some sensitivity to the topic of the questionnaire which made many of the teachers hesitate to respond to the questionnaires. Some teachers have reservations about voicing their

opinion due to personal reasons. Denscombe (2014) indicates that it is a basic fact when conducting surveys that only a portion of the originally invited participants is achieved and that might be considered as a challenge for the researchers.

- While the researcher made all necessary efforts to avoid bias when conducting interviews, the researcher's opinions toward disability, perceptions on inclusion, and experiences with people living with disabilities might have had some influence on the interviewees as some indications, phrases or gestures might have contributed in leading or suggesting unintentional responses.

Translation as Methodology Challenge

The translation of data from Arabic to English and vice versa was found by the researcher to be one of the main challenges while conducting this study. Instruments including the questionnaire and the interview questions used in this study were originally designed in English and then translated into Arabic. The Arabic version of the questionnaire was used to collect responses from participants as well as to conduct the interviews. The open-ended responses were made in Arabic while interview notes were made in both Arabic and English. In addition, some excerpts and quotes from responses were translated into English to be used for the discussion and analysis in this study. Hence, the researcher acknowledges finding a translation from both languages as a major challenge during data collection.

While looking in the literature, translation quality and evaluation of content have significantly received attention in recent years as research in the field of translation has been flourishing with new theories while more literature is being published continuously. However, there is still no agreement found on central concepts in translation studies or on developing a standardised concept (Bassnett, 2011; Boase-Beier, 2014; Hu, 2003). Moreover, the role of the translators has become significantly important as they have played an important part in

spreading literary works and ideas placing more emphasis on their role in actively restructuring works between languages (Bassnett, 2011).

In a study by Hu (2003), it asserts that what makes translation challenging is trying to find equivalent meanings to texts. It also explains that there are three factors behind the difficulties of trying to find equivalent meanings in translation. These factors are as follows: firstly, the complexities which result when the unit of translating expands beyond the sentence where it needs the context and settings to explain. Secondly, indulging in descriptiveness of the text while avoiding the value of judgements. Thirdly, having inconsistencies in textual interpretations by individual readers which often may lead to eluding systematic treatment of texts (Hu, 2003).

Translation is viewed by researchers like Ghanooni (2012) as an interpretation which essentially reconstructs and transforms the foreign text. It is also a creative force in which specific translation strategies serve a variety of cultural and social functions. Thus, meaning should be systematically explored concerning the text and context, and since human interpretations vary, the relationship between the source text and the target text is constantly subject to further inspection considering the differences in cultural settings (Hu, 2003).

Benjamin (1968), as cited in Ghanooni (2012), emphasises the importance of transparency in translation as it should not cover the original text but reinforce it by a literal rendering of the syntax where words rather than sentences become the primary elements of the translator. Hu (2003) also stresses the importance of the translator, as a producer of the target-language text, to be situated in the very same cognitive context intended by the author of the source-language text. This can be difficult as the intention of the author can only be resurrected through reference to the text itself and the text is the only resource which the reader must gain access to the author's mind. Hu argues that instead of wondering what intentions the author might

have embraced, one should recognise that the text embodies that intention by its indirect author where the translator or the reader does not ignore textual intentions but works on deducing and extracting them.

Also, the translation should also be made adequately relevant to the audience by offering suitable contextual effects and should be expressed in a manner that it produces the intended interpretation without putting the audience to unnecessary processing efforts (Ghanooni, 2012). Understanding that for this study, interpreting texts from the field notes might have been challenging without knowing the appropriate settings. Therefore, the context and settings of the participants in the study were already identified by the researcher and explained within the methodology. In addition, the researcher herself shares almost the same background as the participants coming from Emirati origins and working in the education field and the field of special education and disability for years.

Moreover, there is a social effect of translation and an ethical outcome where the translator needs to take a text and transfer it into another culture where careful ideological implications need to be considered.   Translators must constantly make decisions about the cultural meanings which language carries and evaluate the degree to which the different cultures are similar (Ghanooni, 2012). In this study, the translation from and into English was done within the context of the Emirati culture of which the researcher is part of it and sharing the same experience and background of the participants. However, careful considerations were also made when interpreting different quotes and opinions of participants from the field notes.

Peter Newmark 1988 as cited in Lu & Fang (2012) considers literal translation as word-to-word, the first step in translation that can only be overlooked if a literal version is plainly inaccurate, the text is badly written, or no satisfactory one-to-one equivalent text is found. However, Lu and Fang (2012) argue that it can be significantly difficult applying literal

translations in some languages where further considerations should be made. In addition, literal translation when used may lead to mechanical or dead translation that follows closely only the text to the detriment of its intended meaning. Although literal translation is the basic translation procedure and the starting point for all translation, no translation is completely literal, nor should that be a goal when interpreting texts (Lu & Fang, 2012).

Accordingly, when interpreting a text, the translator needs to pay attention to implicit meanings that may create an impact on the author's way of thinking and feeling (Boase-Beier, 2014). A translator should refrain from literal translation in some situations. These situations include when the gap between two cultures is so large at some points that literal translation may cause confusion or misunderstanding. Also, when the two texts are too different in some expressions, or when the translator thinks the reader will not appreciate a literal version or when the free translation version is more readable and comprehensible than the literal version (Lu & Fang, 2012).

In addition, translation from a pragmatic view (Boase-Beier, 2014) insists that the translator is not only a reader but also a communicator as the translation may go beyond the mental expansion and cognitive pleasure of the translator when trying to make choices to impose some structure on experiences. Different alternative versions can mean roughly the same thing bearing in mind that translators are subject to all manner of constraints and influences of which they may hardly be aware. Boase-Beier also indicates that when the translators attempt to reconstruct the style of a text, they are trying to reconstruct states of mind and thought processes of individuals that are affected by social and cultural influences.

Having all that in mind, the researcher of this study found the translation to be a big challenge even though she is an experienced translator and has been working in the field of education and disability for more than 17 years, and is also an Emirati who shares the same culture and

background of the participants. A literal translation was attempted but within the view of contexts and cultural considerations to achieve what the translator thought that the individual meant by his or her words. However, as indicated by Boase-Beier (2014), the researcher's personal views and perceptions may have influenced the interpretations of texts. Nevertheless, the researcher was aware of that and made all efforts to avoid the bias when interpreting participants' responses from interview notes and open-ended questions.

Therefore, the researcher conducted three different exercises to ensure that the interpretation she did throughout the study was culturally and contextually correct. The first exercise was done as follows: an original quote was taken from one of the participants' responses to one of the open-ended questions in the questionnaire. The original quote, which was in Arabic was sent to six different individuals who share the same background as the researcher. The six contributors were all female, aged between 25 and 45 years old, all with college degrees (BA and Masters) and all Emirati but with different professions. Three of the contributors work or have worked in education, two worked in HR and business, and one works in disability and social affairs. The six contributors were asked to translate the exact text from Arabic into English to check the similarity in interpretation. The researcher then did her translation and compared it with the six versions done by the contributors.

Below is the original text in Arabic taken from one of the participants' responses to the open-ended question number 23 which says: "In your opinion, what are the factors that affect negatively on the implementation of inclusion of students with intellectual disability in government schools?"

"لا شك أن للطالب من ذوي الاحتياجات حق للتعليم كغيرهم ولكن في صفوف مهيئة لهم لأن وجودهم في الصفوف العادية يشكل عبء على المعلم والمعلم لا يزاد عبئاً فوق أعبائه "

Participant code: C47- Q23

The response is written in simple, classic Arabic which makes it more applicable to translate as it does not contain any colloquial words. The researcher first did a literal translation considering the usage of the words, the tenses used and the grammar as well. The translated text was as follows:

> *"No doubt that the student with the needs has the right to education same as others but in classes that are made ready for them because being in normal classes form a burden on the teacher, and the teacher must not have increased burden above his burdens."*

Then the researcher made an interpretation of the translated text to make it more comprehensible to English readers. The interpretation was as follows:

> *"There is no doubt that students with special needs have the right to be educated like any other students but in special classes that are made particularly for them because having them in regular classes can be considered a burden on the teacher who does not need more burdens on top of what they already have."*

For the next step, the researcher checked the interpretations done by the six contributors which are as follows:

Contributor 1:

> *"There is no doubt that students with special needs have the right to education (being educated) like anyone else but in suitable classrooms, as their existence in regular classrooms adds additional load on teachers as he has enough tasks and responsibilities."*

Contributor 2:

> *"People with special needs have a right to equal education. On the other hand, it is important to separate classrooms to ensure teachers' well deliverance of knowledge as people with special needs require additional attention and efforts."*

Contributor 3:

> *"A student with disabilities have every right to a good education like any other child but not in a normal classroom because having them in a normal classroom adds a burden to the teacher more than the burden that he already has.*

Contributor 4:

> *"Students with special needs have the right to education just like their ordinary peers. However, they should be educated in separate equipped classes with their needs instead of the normal classes. By doing this, it will remove a burden from the teachers' shoulders".*

Contributor 5:

> *"Special needs students are entitled to their right to education, like any other normal student. Those special students require a well-equipped classroom that can serve their right for education, in an easier approach. From there, teachers will not feel*

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> *encumbrance, as they normally do when they have a special need student in the class with normal students."*

Contributor 6:

> *"PWD have the right for decent education that caters to their needs in an accessible environment and classrooms as the regular classroom are not accessible for PWD, and it creates a burden for teachers if they are not equipped with the appropriate tools and training."*

Looking at the six different texts, it is significant that all the contributors used their understanding of the text to interpret the meaning without necessarily using literal equivalents. To list few examples, while the Arabic word was clearly indicating "a student with special needs", two of the contributors used the word "people with disabilities" which is a completely different term in Arabic with a different word usage and meanings. One of these two contributors is a mother of a child with a disability and a passionate advocate in the field of disability rights. Three out of the six contributors used the word "burden", which is used by the researcher, as the equivalent of the Arabic word "عبء" which is a literal translation according to some of the instant translation applications on the web (google translate, Babylon, imtranslator.net). Meanwhile, one of the other contributors used the word "load" which can mean burden in Arabic but has a different literal equivalent "حمل" which suggests carrying heavy weights as well.

As a summary, while the six contributors used different syntax and wording in general to interpret the original text, they agreed on the general message or the meaning it carried. This general meaning is consistent with the researcher's interpretation This meaning can be interpreted as follows:

> *"a student with special needs has a right to education but in a separate classroom, which should be well prepared to them as having him or her in a regular class can be a burden to the teacher".*

The second exercise to validate the researcher's interpretation was done using the most recent technology of the instant translation application available on the World Wide Web. The same

Arabic text from the questionnaire was used in two popular applications, **imtranslator.net** and **Google Translate** with back translation to check how equivalent the interpretations is the researcher's work and the contributors' work as well. While acknowledging that these two translations are machine translations and the possibility of accuracy is not high especially with Arabic, it was significant to see how the literal translation might look like without the human factors involved.

The English translation on the imtranlator.net which offers back translation as well was as follows:

> *"There is no doubt that the student needs the right to education as other but among*
> *initialized them because they are in regular classes burden on the teacher and the teacher*
> *is not increased above maintenance burden"*

The back translation into Arabic was as follows:

"**لا شك في** أن **الطالب بحاجة إلى الحق في التعليم** كغيرها ولكن بين **تهيئة** لهم لأنهم في **الصفوف العادية** على كاهل المعلم وليس **زيادة** المعلم أعلاه **عبء** صيانة"

It is worthy to note that the Arabic interpretation was not fully comprehensible using few odd words in the context which does not match the overall meaning. For instance, using the word "maintenance" which does not fit within the context in Arabic. However, the key words in the sentences are similar to the ones used in the original Arabic text such as لا شك – الطالب – بحاجة – الحق في التعليم – تهيئة – الصفوف العادية – عبء

It was almost the same in google translate application where the English text was not fully comprehensible again. Still, the equivalent words used for the translation, in general, were very similar to the ones used by the researchers and the contributors.

> *"There is no doubt that for students with special needs, like the right to education, but in*
> *the ranks of suited them because they are in regular classrooms is a burden on the teacher*
> *and the teacher does not burden increased over the burdens"*

The back translation into Arabic in the same application – Google Translate was as follows:

In the above text, there is more similarity with the original Arabic text and the back translation from Imtranslator.net application regardless of the slight grammatical errors. For instance, most keywords which give the general meaning matched such as no doubt, student with special needs, the right of education, regular classes, and burden. This Arabic text is, however, more comprehensible than the back-translation text produced by Imstranslator.net

The third exercise was done by the researcher to ensure that her interpretation and the contributors' interpretations are comprehensible by English native speakers to make sure they receive the key messages of the interpreted texts. The list of interpretations by the researcher and the contributors were sent to four individuals who were English native speakers from different backgrounds and three different nationalities; the US, UK and Ireland. They were asked to read the different interpretations and write what they have understood from the different texts. Their interpretations of the different texts were as follows:

Native speaker 1 (Ireland):

> *"Students with special needs have a right to an education but this should be in special classrooms so as not to add extra load on teachers."*

Native speaker 2 (UK):

> *"Students with special needs have the right of education just like their ordinary peers. They should be placed in special separate classrooms equipped for them and that this will remove a burden from the teachers' shoulders."*

Native speaker 3 (UK):

> *"All students, including students with special needs have a right to be educated in an environment that is suitably equipped for their special needs. Special students should be separated from the mainstream class to avoid placing extra responsibilities and encumbrance on the regular class teacher"*

Native speaker 4 (US):

> *"Students with special needs have the legal and moral right to be educated like their age group peers. However, their education should entail being in specialised classrooms when necessary. If they were placed in a traditional classroom the teacher would not likely be able to handle the extra educational demands to address their special needs."*

In general, all the four native speakers agreed on the key message of the text, although they were more careful in selecting the terminology. It was obvious the original text intends to express a more of the negative perception of separating children with special needs than their regular peers in mainstream classrooms which are not what this thesis is necessary for, nor the contributors or the native speakers who were sought for help. However, they were successful to identify the tone and the general meaning of the response intended from the translation which matches the researcher's interpretation and use of words.

In a summary, to overcome the challenge of translation the data, these three exercises were attempted to validate the capability of the researcher in successfully interpreting the data of the study which required to be translated from Arabic to English or the opposite including questionnaire's open-ended responses, interview notes, and other field notes. Interpretations of one text made by the researcher was found similar to interpretations made by different Arab contributors and comprehensible by different native speakers. Interpretation by the researcher was also compared to translations made by some well-known instant translation applications and the interpretation was also found similar.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Introduction

This study aims to investigate the factors that affect the attitudes of Emirati female teachers working in government primary schools in Dubai, the UAE, toward the inclusion of students with intellectual disabilities and students with disabilities in general. The study aims first to evaluate the attitudes of Emirati teachers toward inclusion and then investigate the factors that are affecting these attitudes to create a set of recommendations to improve and enhance the implementation of inclusive education in Dubai in particular and in the UAE in general.

This chapter is organised into three sections. Each section presents the findings of one of the three research questions in this study. Each section is divided into different themes related to the research questions, which are as follows:

1. What are the attitudes of female Emirati teachers toward children with intellectual disabilities in government primary schools that provide inclusive settings in the urban areas of Dubai?
2. What are the factors that affect teachers' attitudes in these schools?
3. What could be recommended to improve inclusive practice in the Dubai, the UAE?

Findings of Research Question 1:

This section presents the findings of the first research question:

1. What are the attitudes of female Emirati teachers toward children with intellectual disabilities in government primary schools that provide inclusive settings in the urban areas of Dubai?

In order to identify the attitudes of female Emirati teachers toward the inclusion of children with intellectual disabilities in government primary schools in Dubai, a number of methodologies were implemented as discussed in the methodology chapter, including a questionnaire, focus group, semi-structured interviews, and participant observation. In this

section, findings from each method are presented separately. The findings from the focus groups, the semi-structured interviews, and the lesson observations were aimed to strengthen the data from the questionnaire through triangulation. Using multiple sources as a method of triangulation to answer the research question helps validate the data generated from one instrument, compares results from multiple methods, and gives more depth and clarity to the findings (Richards, 2015).

1. Findings from questionnaire

As previously discussed in the methodology chapter, a validated questionnaire was used, which included the following: five items on demographic and background information and 22 closed-item statements, with a five-point Likert scale, to investigate teachers' attitudes toward the inclusion of students with disabilities. In addition, there were three open-ended questions aimed at identifying the factors that the teachers believed were affecting their attitudes toward inclusion and disability and the recommendations that the teachers believed would help improve the current status of inclusive education and, consequently, improve the attitudes of teachers toward inclusion.

The aim of the questionnaire was to get 20 responses from at least four schools in the urban areas of Dubai in order to get a total of 100 responses. However, due to the lower numbers of Emirati teachers in primary schools, often fewer than 10 or 15 teachers were found in each school. Therefore, two more schools were added to get an appropriate number of responses. One hundred copies of the questionnaire were delivered to five schools, as the researcher was aiming to retrieve at least 85 % of the questionnaires. However, only 79% were returned, even though many efforts were made to obtain the desired rate, including personal visits to schools, frequent reminder calls, and individual meetings with school principals. This was indicated as one of the limitations and challenges in chapter three.

Closed-ended questions were coded directly into the SPSS software programme for analysis and used to generate the necessary tables and graphs. The three open-ended questions were coded thematically using the coding model as described by Kumar (2005) and Miles and Huberman (1994) by identifying similar phrases, patterns, and themes and coding them, then grouping these codes to find generalisations. Then, Microsoft Excel software was used to present the thematic findings and generate related graphs and tables.

How many years have you been teaching?	%
0-5 years	13.2
6-10 years	15.8
11-15 years	23.7
16-20 years	30.3
21-25 years	10.5
more than 25	6.6

Table 3

- **Demographic and background information**

To set the context and the background of the participants, a set of demographic information was required. Participants were asked to indicate their years of experience. Table (3) shows that more than 70% of the sample have more than ten years of experience. Around 54 % of the participants have been teaching for 11-20 years, and only 13.2 % of the participants have less than five years of experience. This implies that the majority of the participants in the study can be considered experienced teachers. The data also showed that the average age of the participants was between 35-45 years old.

As per the Table (4), around 90 % of the participants were general teachers. This means they were either Arabic/Islamic teachers or math/science as Emirati teachers only teach these two areas. That included the school administrators who were former teachers. Less than 10 % were or had been special teachers who would more likely be familiar with inclusion and disability matters. Most special teachers were moved to different roles when inclusion was implemented

in schools, and they were responsible for planning accommodations, managing resource rooms, and helping general teachers with included cases in their classes.

Are you a special education teacher?	%
I am/was a Special Educational teacher	9.5
I am a general teacher	90.5

Table 4

How many years of teaching experience do you have working with students with intellectual disability?	%
2-3 years	36.1
4-5 years	9.7
5-10 years	6.9
More than 10 years	8.3
other	2.8
none	32
missing	4.2

Table 5

Inclusion in government schools in the UAE has only been implemented in 2010 where some of the primary schools used to have special classes or different forms of individual cases of inclusion prior to the national implementation. It was significant to identify how much the participants were familiar with dealing with students with disabilities. Table (5) shows that nearly third of the participant (around 32%) had no experience at all in teaching students with disabilities.

Around 36% of the participants had at least two to three years of experience, which might have been gained since the implementation of the inclusion initiative in 2010. Only 8% of participants had more experience (10 years or more) in dealing with students with special needs, disabilities, special classes, or inclusion.

Looking at Table (6), most participants (over 64%) had at least one student with disabilities in their classes. This is significant when it comes to identifying participants' attitudes. It was

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necessary for them to have some ongoing experience of dealing with or teaching a student with disabilities.

Do you presently have any students in your classroom that have disabilities?	%
yes	64.2
No	35.8

Table 6

Have you received any of the following training in the area of special education?	%
During college	12.0
During service	46.7
Special readings	4.0
Training on curriculum modification	1.3
Other	4.0
None	32.0

Table 7

Participants were asked to indicate which kind of training in special education they had received. As shown in Table (7), almost a third of the participants (around 32%) had never received any special education training. However, around 47% had received some in-service training. The participants were asked during interviews to identify the types of training they had received during services. They indicated that training was mostly one-to-three-day workshops and conferences conducted by the Ministry of Education. Some participants also considered receiving workshops offered by fellow teachers or special educational teachers about topics relevant to inclusion in their schools as received training although it was not arranged by the MOE. Only 12% of participants indicated that they had received some training during college.

▪ **Identifying teachers attitudes toward the inclusion**

The second part of the questionnaire contains 22 closed statements with a five-point Likert Scale. Participants were asked to choose a response to each item that best corresponded to their level of agreement with the statement. The scale was set as strongly agree, agree, undecided,

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disagree, and strongly disagree. The aim of each statement is to identify participants' attitudes toward the inclusion of students with disabilities by identifying the level of agreement with each perception of the statement.

When participants were asked if it would be an advantage if students with disabilities were taught with their nondisabled peers in regular education classrooms, as all students would learn to work together toward achieving goals, as seen in Figure (6), more than half of the participants (around 56%)
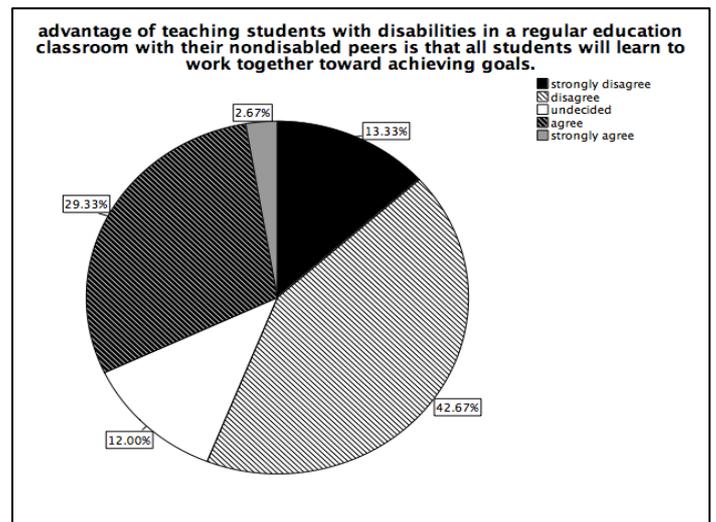
Figure 6

either disagreed or strongly disagreed. Around 29 % of the teachers agreed, while only 2.67 % of them strongly agreed.

Seeing Figure (7), around 45% of the teachers did not agree that teaching students with disabilities in the regular education classroom would encourage them to work harder academically. However, around one-third of the teachers (34%) did agree that those students would be encouraged to work harder if included in the regular classroom. Having around 20% of the participants respond with undecided would raise a question of whether they were not sure or did not have enough experience to decide
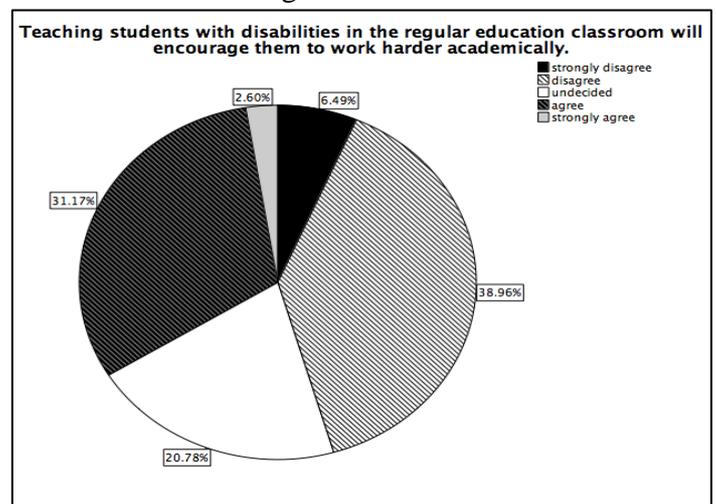
Figure 7

Figure (8) also shows that more than 67% of the teachers did not agree that students with disabilities would learn more quickly in regular education. Only 1.32% strongly agreed, and around 12% agreed on that.

Although Figure (9) most of the participant teachers did not agree that students with disabilities would be able to work with other peers to achieve goals or even learn more quickly in a regular classroom, around 47% agreed that students with disabilities would develop a better self-concept when included in regular classrooms. The rest of the sample did not agree or appear not sure of this statement that would indicate a negative attitude toward inclusion.

When participants were asked if they believed that students with disabilities included in regular education would be accepted by their nondisabled peers, Figure (10) shows that around 58% of them agreed or strongly agreed on that. However, the ones who did not agree and those who were not
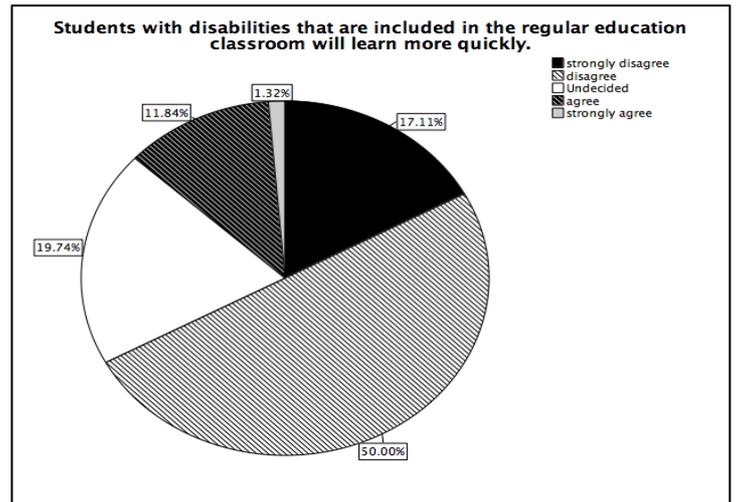
Figure 8

Figure 9

Figure 10

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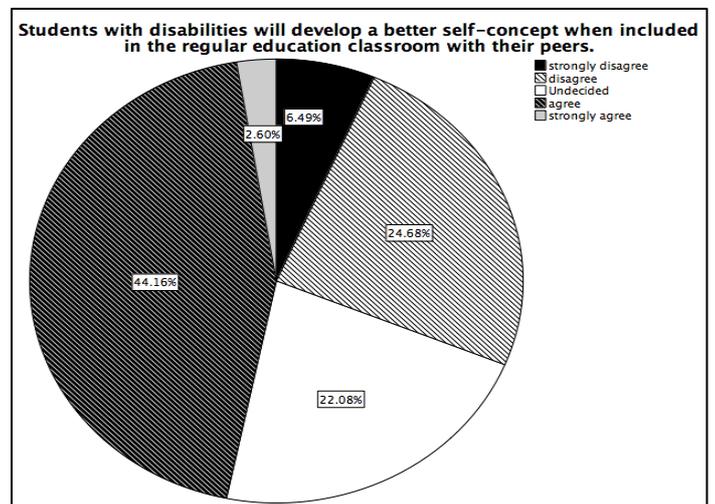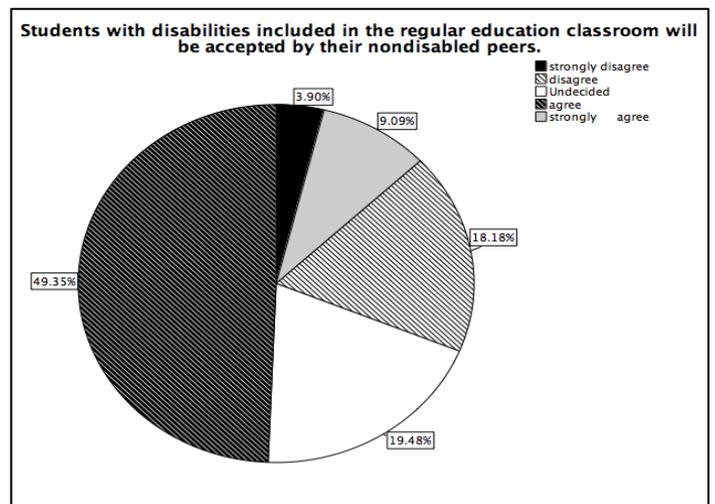
decided on the statement were almost equivalent (around 19%), while still 9% of the participants strongly disagreed.

More negative attitudes toward the inclusion of students with disabilities could be noticed from the findings. Figure (11), shows that more than 61% of the participants believed that having a student with intellectual disabilities would disrupt the class if included with nondisabled peers. This indicates that the majority of the teachers show some negative attitudes toward having those students in their classrooms seeing them as a source of disruption to the class.

Figure (12) shows how teachers perceived inclusive teaching of students with disabilities in their classrooms, as more than 88% of them believed that inclusion placed an unreasonable burden on the teachers. Moreover, Figure (13) shows that approximately 93% of the participants believed that having students with disabilities in their classes meant more work for them.
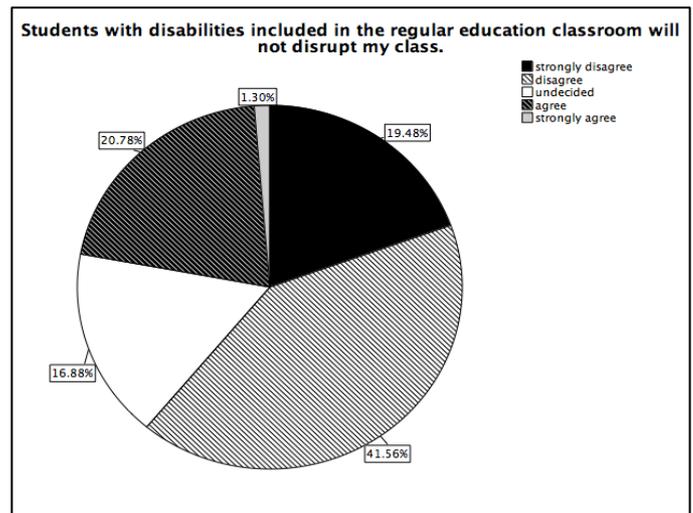
Figure 11
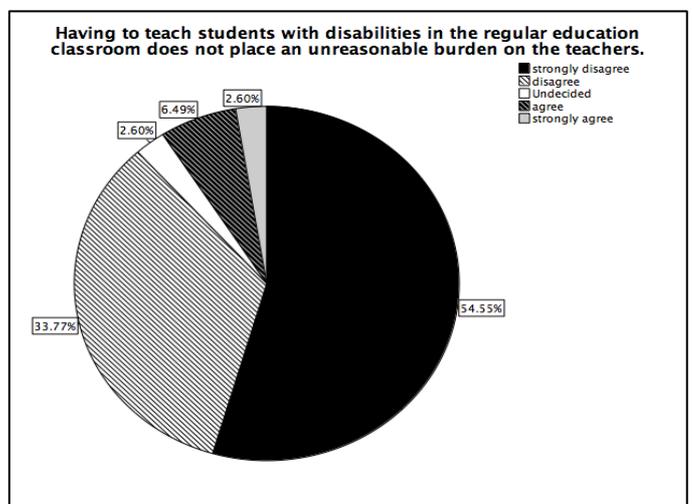
Figure 12

Figure 13

114
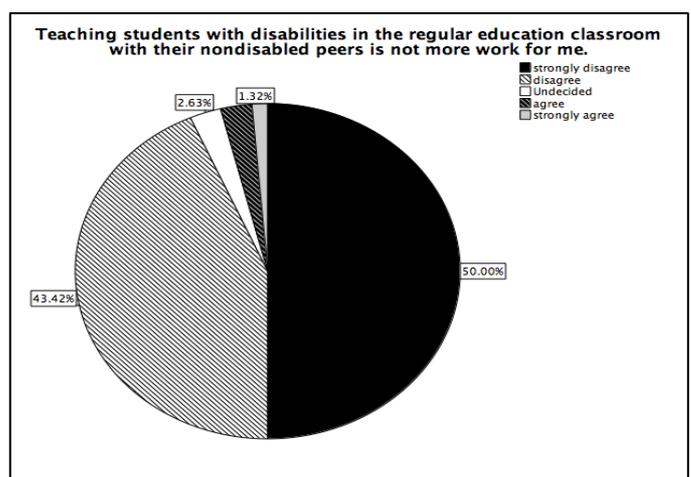
These two Figures, (12) and (13), show that only less than 10% of the teachers did not consider inclusion as a burden, and less than 4% of the teachers did not consider inclusion as more work for them.

Figure (14) indicates similar attitudes, as more than 90% of the participants believed that students with disabilities included in their classes take too much of their time.

In addition to that, Figure (15) shows that only about 30% of the participant teachers believed in the inclusion of students with disabilities in regular education while more than 51% of the teachers did not agree that students with disabilities should be taught in regular classrooms. On the other hand, as Figure (16) shows, more than 85% of the teachers believed that only teachers with extensive special education experience should be teaching students with intellectual disabilities if included in regular school settings.
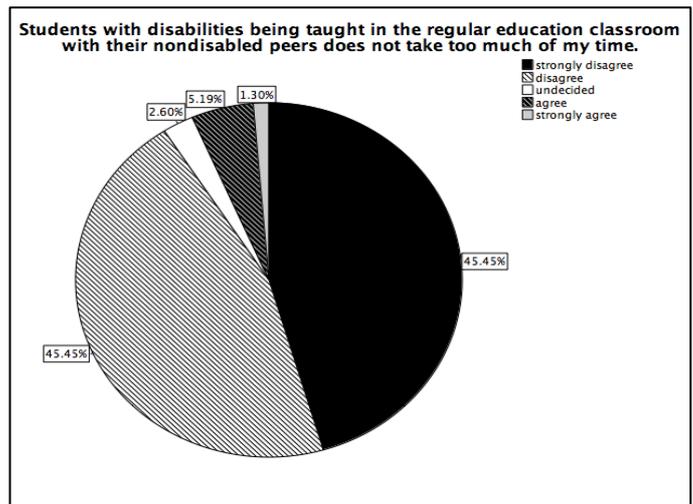
Figure 14

Figure 16

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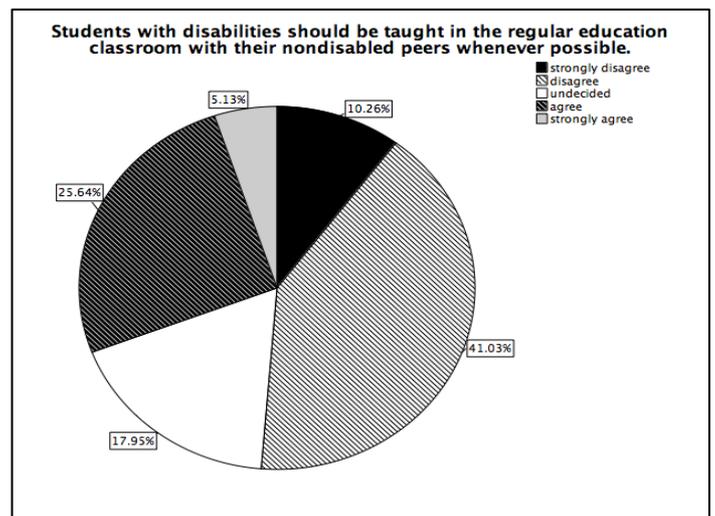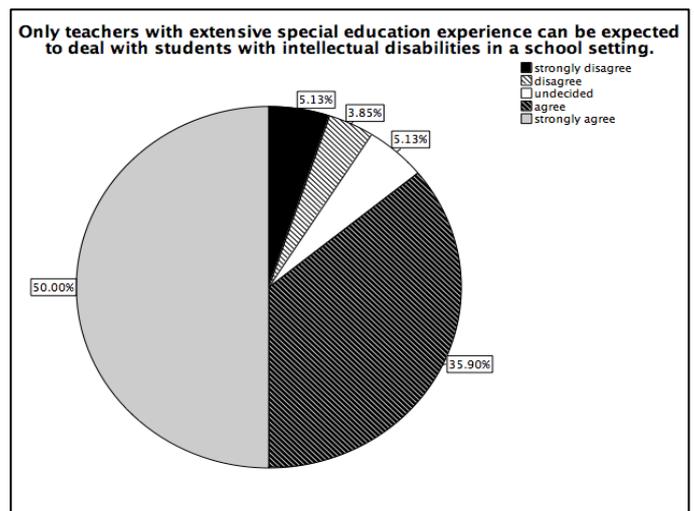
Figure 15

It is significant that most of the participants did not believe students with disabilities in general and students with intellectual disabilities, in particular, should be included in general classes, as Figure (17) shows. However, at least 40% of them agreed that having students with intellectual disabilities within regular school settings would enhance their learning experience.
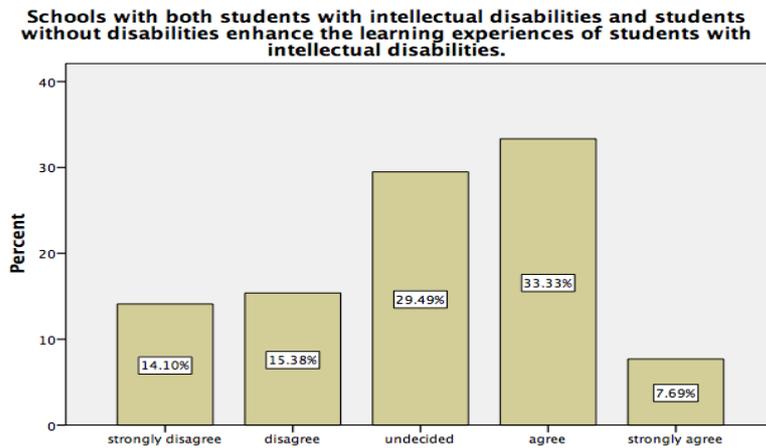
Figure 17

The rest of the participants either disagreed or were undecided. Also, more than 48% of the participants as seen in Figure (18) believed that students with intellectual disabilities were too impaired to be included in regular schools.

Figure 18

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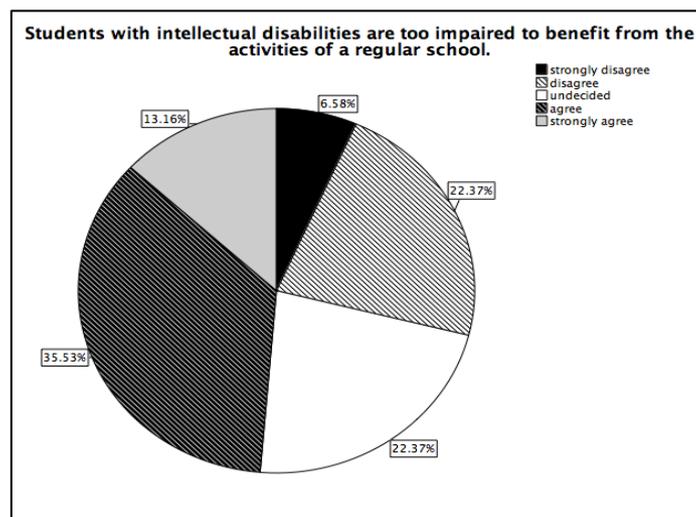
Furthermore, Figure (19) indicates that around 59% of the participants believed that nondisabled students would benefit from having students with intellectual disabilities with

them in regular schools. It is significant to see such a result where the previous findings showed that most participants saw students with disabilities as too impaired to fit in regular settings, a burden on the teacher, and too much work in the class.
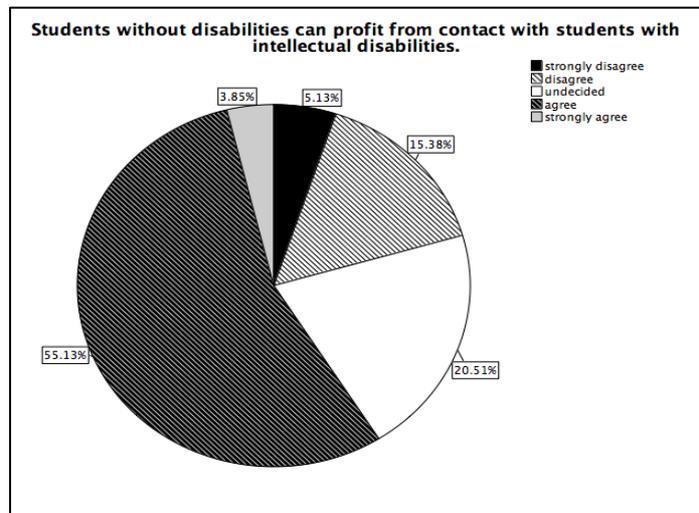
Figure (20) shows another aspect of teachers' attitudes toward including students with disabilities in regular classes, as more than 84% of the participants believed that it was unfair to ask or expect regular teachers to accept students with intellectual disabilities in their classes. Only 6% of participants disagreed with the statement. This attitude adds to what has been presented previously in Figure (16) that around 85% of the participants believed that only special educational teachers should teach students with disabilities.

Figure 20

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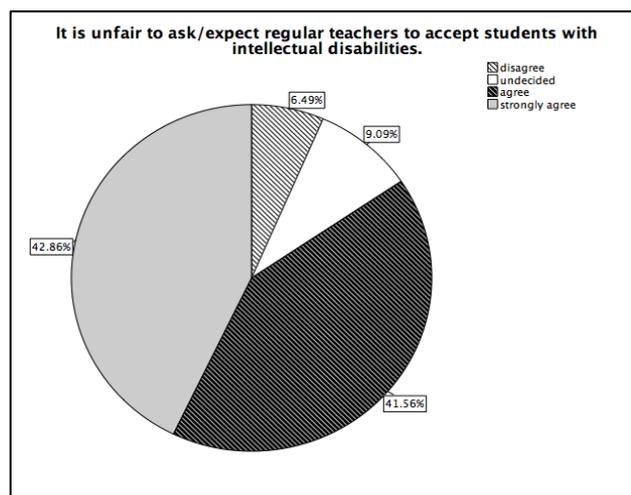
Furthermore, as shown in Figure (21), when participants were asked if they believed that a "good" regular teacher could do a lot to help a student with intellectual disabilities, almost 54.6% of the participants either disagreed

A good regular educator can do a lot to help a student with intellectual disability.
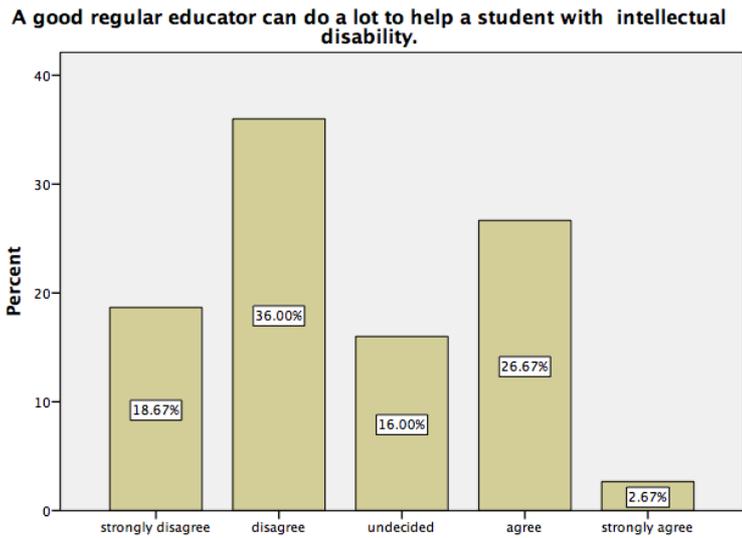
Figure 21

or strongly disagreed. It is evident from these findings that most regular teachers do not see themselves to be fit or expected to teach students with intellectual disabilities.

More evidence of participants' perceptions of teaching students with intellectual disabilities in regular classrooms is seen in Figure (22). It shows that almost 78% of the participants believed that those students should be placed in special classes or special schools. Only 13.8% of participants either disagreed or strongly disagreed. These percentages suggest that participants who believed in inclusive education for students with intellectual disabilities were only about 14% of the pooled sample.

In general, students with intellectual disabilities should be placed in special classes/schools specifically designed for them.

Figure 22

118
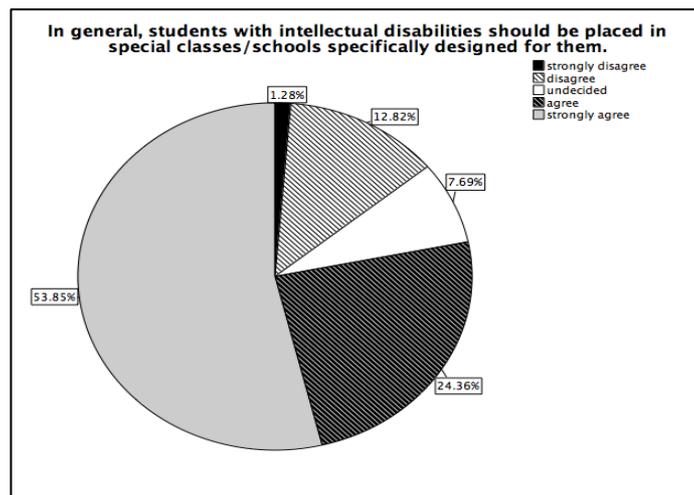
On the other hand, as shown in Figure (23), most teachers (approximately 87%) still believed that if these students with intellectual disabilities were to be included in regular classrooms, then the education system should be modified to meet the needs of all students, including those with intellectual disabilities.
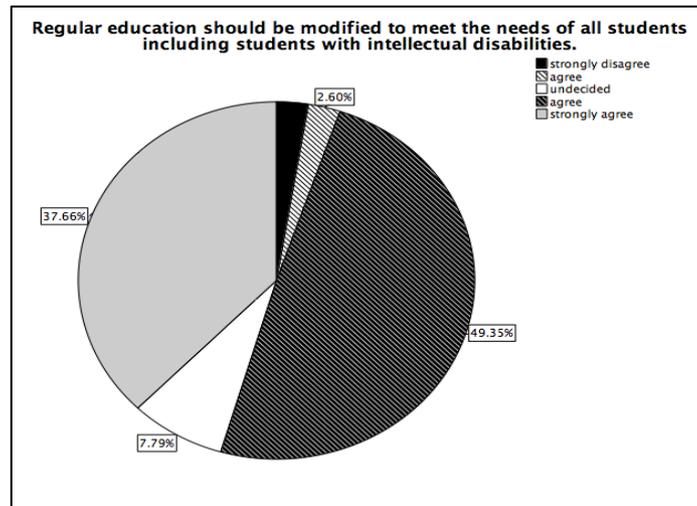
Figure 23

Hence, evidently from the above findings so far, most of the participating teachers did not show positive attitudes toward the inclusion of students with intellectual disabilities. Most participants believed that having them in their classes meant extra work for the teachers and more time consumed by the class work. Most of the participants viewed inclusion as an unreasonable burden and unfair for general teachers. Also, most of the participants did not think that they should be expected to accept these students in their classes while most of them believed that those students should be taught by special teachers who have extensive experience or put in special classes or even sent to special schools. Most participants also believed that these students would not be able to learn quickly or work with their nondisabled peers and might be a disruption to the class. In addition, if these students are to be included, the education system should be modified for them.

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2. Findings from interviews and focus group

To validate the data from the questionnaire, several semi-structured interviews and focus groups were conducted in the participating schools. A total of nine participants were interviewed (see Table 8) on different subjects relevant to the implementation of inclusion in their schools in general, the education of students with disabilities, the rights of people with disabilities, and their experience in teaching students with intellectual disabilities in particular and students with disabilities in general.

Interviewees (including focus group)	No.
General teachers	6
Special educational teachers	2
School administration staff	1

Table 8

All interviewees did not approve of being voice-recorded or video-recorded due to different reasons including cultural or personal reservations and the sensitivity of the subjects. Only written notes were taken during the interviews. Pseudo names were used in the study when needed for confidentiality. Six of the interviewees were general teachers; five of them were math and science teachers, and one was an Arabic and Islamic teacher, two were special educational teachers, and one was a school administration staff who was a school principal and a former general teacher as well. Most of the interviewees were from the age group of 31-40 years old and had an average of 16-20 years of experience in teaching (see Table 9 and 10). Most of the interviewees had an experience of at least of two to three years in teaching students with disabilities including students with intellectual disabilities.

Interviewees' Age group	No.
26-30	1
31-40	7
41-50	1

Table 9

Interviewees' Years of experience in teaching	No.
6-10	1
16-20	7
25 +	1

<div align="center">Table 10</div>

The two special educational teachers were believed to have more experience and have been teaching students with disabilities in special classes before inclusion was implemented into their schools. The two of them worked as special needs coordinators and advisors for general teachers on inclusion, designing IEPs and individual curriculum modifications. They also provided workshops and training in their schools, coordinated with the Educational Zone and MOE when new policies and directives were implemented and observed the progress of students with disabilities in their schools. Interviews were conducted in four different schools in which two were boys' schools, and two were girls' schools. Interviews were conducted on different dates and at different times during the data collection period.

The section presents the findings from the participant interviews. Similar to the findings from the closed options in the questionnaire, most of the interviewees agreed that students with disabilities needed a lot of work, time, and effort. Some of them specified that they needed a lot of attention in class and a lot of preparation when it came to lesson plans, IEPs, and teaching aids." Teacher 1, a math and science teacher of more than 16 years who had several students with disabilities in her classes, including one with intellectual disabilities, believed that these students had abilities and had the right to be taught according to their needs. However, she thought it was better for those students to be taught in "special schools," not in regular schools where they could have the required education. She indicated that although inclusion was a source of stress to her, having these students in her classes with nondisabled students helped in changing the perceptions of other students, who, after a while, started to help the students with disabilities instead of mocking or bullying them, as she stated below:

> *"...inclusion is OK, but it's pressure on the teacher as not all students can accept them, sometimes they [Students with disabilities] are harmed by others, they are making fun of them. However, the students I have; they love them, help them, assist them ... inclusion changed the perceptions of other peers who used to harm them."*

She also believed that those students with intellectual disabilities might be able to benefit from being in a regular classroom if the teacher could manage to focus on them, modify the lesson for their needs, and learn how to create an IEP correctly. She thought the student with intellectual disabilities in her class had progressed satisfactorily. He started to get along with the other students in the class, and his behaviour noticeably changed. Even so, she still believed that students with intellectual disabilities, in particular, should not be included in regular classes as she thought they were *"difficult to manage"*. She thought the ones who should be included were the ones with physical disabilities as *"they have no issues with their mind and can learn normally"*.

<u>Teacher 2</u>, who was also math and science teacher, expressed clearly that she was against inclusion in regular schools as she indicated how she was having a difficult time teaching students with disabilities in her classes:

> "I demand to stop inclusion. *We [teachers] try not to yell at those students [with disabilities] while in class but sometimes they make us angry – we want to treat them well; they don't give us a chance because they are sometimes careless, restless and are always late to class or to finish tasks."*

She too commented on how teaching a student with disability took a lot of time and efforts of teachers:

> *"Inclusion is very difficult for me as a teacher – it takes much of my time. It needs for me to dedicate more time inside the classroom for them [students with disabilities] and outside the classroom. If the task takes five minutes, he [the student with disabilities] will need 15 minutes, and it must be one-to-one teaching. This way, most of the class time will be spent on the two cases I have. They need a lot of supervision and repetition."*

<u>Teacher 3</u>, another math and science teacher, had a sister with intellectual disability who was put in a special centre from a young age. She thought that was *"better for her... there was no inclusion at that time anyway"*. She also thought inclusion was a lot of work as it was taking a

lot of her time to prepare materials and to plan for lessons. She also explained why it was even more difficult to teach students with disabilities in regular classes where teachers do not have teachers' assistants in her school. She had to hire an assistant and pay her from her money so she can help her in the class with the students with disabilities. She indicated that there was not enough support provided by MOE. Teachers rarely received instructions, guidelines or even evaluation for their work with the included cases. There were also no incentives for teachers to compensate for the "hard work" they put every day to help those students as she commented. She stated that she was not completely against inclusion "*if it was done the right way"*, adding that more efforts need to be put in the process to help the teacher if it should be done appropriately.

Teacher 4, was another general teacher who stated that she was completely against inclusion. She explained why as follows:

> *"...I don't get any advantages from inclusion; that's why I don't like it. I'm truly against it. I have a lot of load as a teacher. The majority of students [in the class] are already low achievers, and I'm supposed to focus on weak students and put extra efforts for them. Most cases [of students with disabilities] come without having been in early intervention centres or even been diagnosed. How am I supposed to teach them if I don't know what's wrong with them?"*

Teacher 5, another general teacher, said she had only one student with physical disabilities in her class. Then she mentioned that she had a student with autism in another class. The researcher explained to her that a student with autism was considered a disability case when she felt a little surprised. When asked if she was with or against inclusion, she said she was against it.

> *"I'm against inclusion because this student [with disabilities] needs a special setting and a trained teacher. The classmates make fun of a child with a disability. He will be rejected and mocked, and this will impact negatively on him."*

She believed only students with physical disabilities or hearing impairments should be included as they might be able to cope more adequately in general classrooms.

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Teacher 6 was a general teacher who was teaching Arabic and Islamic and had four cases of intellectual disabilities in her classes including Down syndrome, learning difficulties and some non-defined intellectual disabilities. She also had a sister who had a hearing impairment which was resulted from a severe fever when she was an infant. When she was asked if her sister was considered a person with a disability, she said no because she was living her life "*normally*" since she does not have any intellectual disability and she looks "*normal*".

> "*...she [my sister] doesn't have intellectual disability. She is successfully married with children and doesn't require much help. You feel she is normal when you see her*".

When **Teacher 6** was asked to define who people with disabilities were, she stated that those who had a "*defect*" or "*congenital deficiency*" were considered persons with disabilities. When she was asked about inclusion in education for students with disabilities she said:

> "*The best thing for them [students with intellectual disabilities] is – so not to mistreat them or burden the teachers – is to put them in a special place where the teachers are capable of dealing with them. They know how to teach them but inclusion as what is happening now ... I don't think it's the best – because they [MOE] did not enable us [the teachers], did not train us – we weren't offered any specialised workshops in this particularly – they surprised us with this move. Thus, sometimes in class – we may neglect them [students with disabilities] – as we need to finish the lesson in a specific time with specific goals. So I don't get to have time to deal with the child [with a disability] directly or have more time with her, I just give simple instructions, and I try to finish with her – but mostly I can't finish with her in one class. Sometimes I need to postpone the objectives for her for the next class. I feel it is not fair for this student. It will be different if she is in a special place with a private or a special teacher to sit one- to- one with her. There would be more provided for her there.*"

Teacher 6 explained that the "special place" could be within a school setting so these students can socialise with another student during break times and they would be able to attend some classes with their peers and accordingly *"[the student with disabilities] can see that there are no differences between her and others"*. When **Teacher 6** was asked which one she would prefer more for students with disabilities; a special centre or being included in a regular school, she chose a regular school with inclusion but with certain conditions if they have a "*special place*" where they would receive more attention from experts. When she was asked about what

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types of disabilities she thought would be coping better within the inclusive practices, she indicated students with physical disabilities and visual disabilities:

> *"... Physical disabilities like those who cannot walk. I can see it is fine to have them in the school, but we need to make it accessible for them like the toilet, access to classroom and having lifts/elevators. Even student who cannot see [can be included]. Because they can understand, they are socially fine and can deal with people well. But if we have a child with autism, you know, he's hyperactive, moves a lot, might distract the teacher or the students. A normal student can move a lot and distract other students, let alone a child with this 'illness'. It will be difficult for the teacher to control him [or her]. I don't think such cases should be included. He [or she] can disrupt the lesson for all students. For some cases, the teacher needs to spend more time with the student if he [or she] has any disability. With our schedules as teachers, it is difficult to do so even if you want to."*

Comparable to the previously found in the findings of the questionnaire, **Teacher 6** also believed that a child with intellectual disabilities could be a disruption to the class and having him or her in the class would take considerable effort and time from the teachers to manage. It was also noticeable that **Teacher 6** and the other interviewees found managing students with disabilities in general classrooms difficult. Most of them expressed their frustration and were struggling with their school workload:

> *"It [inclusion] felt so hard at the beginning. I didn't know how to deal with individual cases. I was kind of lost with her [the student with intellectual disabilities]. I tried different ways. With one of these cases I even feel nothing I do is helping. I don't see any progress so far. To be truthful. I don't have enough time for her. I haven't given her as much as I should."*

Teacher 7 and **Teacher 8** were two other interviewees, in a focus group, who also believed that it was difficult to include children with intellectual disabilities in regular classes. Although **Teacher 7** was a former special educational teacher, she believed that only children with mild learning difficulties could be included in regular classes and even considered them requiring a lot of teachers' efforts.

> *"Children with autism and Down syndrome should be taught in special classes as only special educational teachers would know how to deal with them appropriately. It is very difficult to teach them as they require having different teaching goals, different worksheets, different tests... It is all a waste of time for the teachers as they might not even learn well."*

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Both teachers agreed that having students with intellectual disability in the class would interrupt the class and distract other students. One of them commented:

> *"...they [nondisabled students] will be distracted, she [the student with intellectual disabilities] will disturb class order – sometimes they get scared of her, and her behaviour takes their attention off the class. It is all a waste of teacher's time".*

<u>Teacher 9</u>, a general teacher, believed that having a child with intellectual disabilities in the class might 'scare' other children. She also believed that it would be hard for these students to fit in with other nondisabled students. Thus, she believed that it would be best for them to be taught in special classes. However, she stressed that she would have them in regular classes if the school created *"a special environment"* for these students and the teachers as well with "special" settings and appropriate provisions. When she was asked if she would consider having a student with disabilities in her class if she had the choice, she refused and explained as follows:

> *"It is actually very hard to decide. It is like "a blade with two sides [or a two-edged sword]. I [would be for] inclusion if provisions were made available. I'm against it in its current form. I frankly think those children will only benefit socially if included but not academically."*

To conclude the notes from the interviews, all participants believed that students with intellectual disabilities should not be included in regular classes with the current settings when the interviews took place. Most of them strongly believed that these students should be either put in special schools or special classes within regular school settings but not in regular classes. Most of them considered students with disabilities, especially those with intellectual disabilities, to be disruptions to the class. They believed these children did not fit appropriately with other non-disabled peers as they might be too vulnerable or get bullied by other children, which would affect them socially.

Most of the interviewees also believed that having children with intellectual disabilities in regular classes was time-consuming. Teachers would need to set time to plan lessons for them

and would need to set different goals, prepare differentiated worksheets, and make modifications to the curriculum. In addition, teachers would need to dedicate more time to them during classes — time that would be taken from general class time and delay the completion of tasks. This might make teachers neglect their other students who also might need help. This would affect other students' achievements and, consequently, affect negatively on teachers' performances. Overall, the attitudes of teachers were negative toward inclusion and its current practice in their schools.

3. Findings from Observation

This section presents the findings from the observation. In order to strengthen the validity of the data gathered from the questionnaire and the interviews, participant observation was carried out within the participating schools. As previously detailed in the methodology chapter, the instrument used for the observation was designed by the researcher and was adapted from Flanders' interaction analysis (IA) system (Flanders, 1970, p. 34). Due to time constraints and teachers' overloading schedules in the participating schools, only two lesson observations were carried out. Participant observation was used as a method in this study because it is considered a powerful tool to gather rich information by being part of the scene while observing the activities of people and the physical characteristics of the social situation to reach out to the findings (Spreadley, 2016).

The first observation was of a math lesson at a fifth-grade class in a boys' school. There were 19 students in the class, 2 of them were with intellectual disabilities. Both students, as described by the teacher, had intellectual delays, learning difficulties, and emotional disorders. The teacher was in her thirties and had more than ten years of experience. The special educational teacher attended the class, as well, to offer additional help with the two students since there were no teacher assistants in the school. As special classes no longer existed in this school after

inclusion was introduced in 2010, the SpEd teacher usually aided general teachers in regular classes to help them with the inclusive strategies and goals.

The students in the class were seated in groups, and the two students with intellectual disabilities were seated together with three other students in one group in front of the class near the teacher's desk. The teacher explained later that they were seated near her so it would be easier for her to attend to them if they had any problem such "misbehaving" or "distracting other students." The teachers used different teaching aids, differentiated teaching strategies, and attempted to her best ability to attend to the two cases whenever possible as she frequently visited their table and helped them with their tasks. One of the two students appeared to be more hyperactive and seemed impatient and restless, so the teacher had to settle him down several times. The first few times, she was composing herself. However, after few times, she just "grabbed" the toys away from him silently if he was making noise with them, looked at him with a strict gesture, or simply "shushed" him to keep him quiet. These signs were interpreted by the researcher as signs of frustration, especially since she had tried several strategies to quiet him down.

The teacher used multiple inclusive teaching strategies with the two students with intellectual disabilities. She gave them longer times to answer questions and complete tasks. She used differentiated tasks, including writing on the board, using flash cards, drawing tasks, colouring pictures, using toys to count numbers, and using coloured exercise sheets with pictures. However, she sometimes appeared agitated, especially when having to repeat instructions more often or when they did not respond correctly to her questions after several attempts of trying to get the correct answers. She also asked the SpEd teacher to finish most of the tasks with the two students after some trials so she could work with other students. During one of the tasks, the students assembled around one of the two students with disabilities to help him complete

the worksheet since he was taking too long to finish. The teacher asked them to go back to their seats and leave him to complete the task on his own. This was when the rest of students started to wander around in class, making some noise and seeming to be bored, so they were given more tasks to keep them busy.

From observation, the teacher appeared to be trying hard to cope with the two students. She tried several times to give instructions slowly in a low tone of voice, repeating them over and over. However, she eventually got impatient at the end of the class. As an example, one of the two students picked a toy car from a box on the teacher's desk and started playing with it during a task. The other students were smiling and giggling while watching him when the teacher noticed him. She took the toy away and asked him to pay attention. However, he picked up another toy and started to play with it. The teacher then gave him some Lego cubes and asked him to sort out the colours. The second student with a disability, who was working on a worksheet at the time, stopped what he was doing and demanded to play with Legos, as well. The teacher started to become tense but tried to manage both. She gave the worksheet back to the other student to finish and waited patiently for the first one and even praised him once he had finished sorting out the coloured Legos even though he had gotten the wrong order. It was also noticeable that the teacher was firm with the two boys. She was determined when it came to finishing tasks and disciplinary behaviours such as when insisting on finishing tasks even if they took too long or taking away toys or candies if the students were not disciplined.

The teacher seemed to be trained appropriately and used differentiated methods and strategies to accommodate the two students. However, when she and the special educational teacher were asked about the two students and their progress after the class, they described that the two boys were "lost in class" and that they "did not seem to advance much or learn new skills." The teacher tried to be "positive" by trying to be patient, giving instructions repeatedly and in

different ways, providing differentiated materials, and assigning different tasks to these students. However, she often appeared to be frustrated by the students' behaviours, their delays in completing tasks, or when they did not get the correct answers. She often tried to hush them, ask them to behave, take toys from them, and use some physical gestures such as sighing, giving "strict" looks, and sometimes just raising her voice. The teacher tried different possible ways to assist them in class. However, other methods were needed in class such as one-on-one tutoring and curriculum modifications so that goals and tasks would be more suitable to their level and needs. The teachers' attitudes in this class were positive when it came to implementing teaching strategies and assisting students in class. However, the way the teacher and special educational teacher spoke about the two students' progress and development in the regular class did not reflect that positivity.

The second lesson observation took place in an Islamic lesson of a third-grade class at a girls' school. The teacher was in her forties and had more than ten years of experience in teaching. However, this was her first year teaching a student with disabilities in general. The teacher had received training related to inclusion a year back and for two days a week over three months. She did not have any students with disabilities at that year so, as she commented, she did not have any practice aside from the theoretical lectures at the training course.

The lesson was in the school prayer room since it was about how to perform prayers. The prayer room was a regular classroom but furnished with a carpet and had mattresses and cushions so students can sit on the floor. There were about 20 students in the class all seated on the floor, wearing their prayer gowns. The class has one student with Down syndrome, "Meera" (a pseudonym). She was also wearing a prayer gown and seemed energetic, chattering and giggling with other students. According to the teacher, Meera was not received well by other students at the beginning of the year as they "feared her" and was asking "why she looked

different." The teacher and Meera's mother worked together to help her get along with other students. The teacher had to talk to the students when she was not in class, explaining to them that "she might look different but God made her this way." The mother, who was very active in school, invited all the classmate to a party at Meera's house and brought gifts and presents to class. Eventually, students started to include Meera in their groups and made friends with her. It was noticeable that the other students felt comfortable with Meera as they gathered around her before class started, helped her with getting her shoes off before getting into the prayer room and helped her to put her head scarf and prayer gown on, and even during class by opening her book on the page of the lesson they were reading.

The teacher was gentle with Meera before the class as she asked her several times if she was fine and comfortable, as she was seated in the front near the teacher. During the class, the teacher asked Meera to do different tasks in front of the class, like performing ablution, "Wudu," and prayer movements. She gave her instructions slowly and repeatedly until she finished the task. She then praised and "hugged" her when she was done. The students were getting bored while Meera was trying to get each task done, so the teacher asked them to be patient and wait for Meera to finish the task correctly.

The teacher gave small tasks to Meera and spent more time with her. Explaining the tasks and supervising her performance as she had made differentiated materials for her, such as worksheets with pictures and colours. The teacher showed patience and tolerance with Meera, as she allowed her more time to accomplish tasks, repeated instructions often praised her often, and asked other students to be patient and assist her with the tasks. However, when the class was over, the teacher commented that she could not finish all the planned tasks because she had to spend more time with Meera. The teacher was one of the interviewees and later stated that it would have been different for the class if she had a teacher assistant. Having a teacher

assistant would have helped her with Meera while she finished other tasks with the rest of the students. The teacher thought it was "nice" having a student with a disability in the class as it would teach students to be tolerant and accept differences, but it was a difficult job for the teacher as disabled students need more attention and patience. She also commented that she spent a few hours at home every day to look up additional materials on the internet just for Meera and that she even spent money to buy teaching aids suitable for her. Although the teacher was loving and caring for Meera in general, when asked if she thought inclusion was helping Meera, she said she was not sure. She thought Meera had significantly progressed since she started in her class but would personally prefer if Meera was put in a special class within the regular school and was included only in recreational and social activities. She said that Meera was always behind in her learning objectives and that this was "frustrating" for the teachers.

To conclude the findings from observation, it was noticeable that the teachers were making efforts to utilise the available resources to assist with the included students in their classes. However, the teachers' impatience and frustration were noticeable occasionally while they were delivering the lessons. It was mostly apparent when these students were too slow to respond with answers or finish tasks and when they were demanding more attention or getting hyperactive in class. Also, the teachers became uncomfortable and irritated when students failed to follow instructions after frequent repetitions and when misbehaving or disrupting the class. Both teachers, along with the special education teacher who was assisting with the math lesson, expressed their disapproval of the inclusion of these students in their classes. They stated that they did not believe that inclusion, in its current state, was helping these students. The three teachers made it clear that they would rather have special classes back in schools where students with intellectual disabilities could receive their lessons and possibly socialise with other students during breaks and recreational activities. It was also noticeable that the two

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teachers were trying to attend to other students' needs but expressed clearly that having disability cases in class was preventing them from giving the appropriate care and assistance to other students.

Summary of findings on the research questions 1: Teachers' attitudes

To summarise the findings on the first research questions of this study on teachers' attitudes, the data from the closed questions in the questionnaire, the interviews, and the observation show that most of the participants hold negative attitudes toward the current practice of inclusion in their schools. Notably, 56% of participants did not think inclusion would help students with intellectual disabilities learn and achieve goals when working with other peers, 65% of participants did not agree that students with intellectual disabilities will learn more quickly in regular classes, 61% participants believed that a student with an intellectual disability would disrupt the class, 88% of participants believed that inclusion placed an unreasonable burden on the teachers, and 93% of participants believed that having a student with a disability in their classes meant more work. Meanwhile, 90% of participants believed that students with disabilities were taking too much of their time, 78% of participants believed that students with disabilities should be placed in special classes, and 85% of participants believed that special educational teachers should teach these students. Only 30% believed that students with disabilities should be included in regular classes.

Furthermore, only 40% of participants believed that inclusion would enhance these students' learning experience, and 48% of participants believed that students with intellectual disabilities were too impaired to be included in regular schools. The majority (84%) of the participants believed that it was unfair for them to be expected to accept students with intellectual disabilities in their classes, and 54% of them did not believe that, as regular teachers, they could help these students by including them in regular classes. The data from interviews and

observation supported these findings as most teachers showed negative attitudes when referring to students with intellectual disabilities in their classes as being difficult to manage, being a disruption to the class, not being able to learn, taking long to respond to tasks, and taking much of their time in class. Some teachers expressed their disapproval of inclusion clearly by stating that they were against inclusion and by requesting to put these students in special classes to be taught by special educational teachers. Most teachers showed signs of impatience, frustration, and disapproval whether in observation or interviews.

Findings of Research Question 2

This section presents the data findings of the second research question:

2.   What are the factors that affect teachers' attitudes in these schools toward inclusion?

The findings of the first research question showed that most participant teachers in this study had negative attitudes toward the inclusion of the students with disabilities in general and students with intellectual disabilities in particular. Most of the participants believed that these students were a burden to the teachers, a disruption to the class, and a waste of time and effort as they were not evidently progressing academically. In addition, most of the teachers believed that it would be better for the students to be placed in special classes and taught by special education teachers.

The findings in this section originated from the various data collection methods, including the questionnaire. Three open-ended questions were added to the questionnaire, as follows:

1.   In your opinion, what are the factors that would affect negatively on the inclusion of students with intellectual disabilities?
2.   In your opinion, what are the factors that would make the inclusion of students with intellectual disabilities successful?
3.   In your opinion, what are the factors that the teacher needs to have to be able to successfully deal with students with intellectual disabilities included in regular education?

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No.	Factors that may negatively affect the inclusion of students with intellectual disabilities in regular classes as listed by the participants	%
1	Increased load/duties on the teacher	25.5
2	Non-acceptance by peers	25.5
3	Large numbers of students per class	21.8
4	Inappropriately equipped educational environment in schools	20.0
5	Distraction/disruption of class because of students with disabilities	20.0
6	Lack of appropriate training for teachers	18.2
7	longer time needed to prepare for students with disabilities	18.2
8	Lack of modification of curriculum for students with disabilities /no special curriculum	14.5
9	Teaching aids not provided for students with disabilities	14.5
10	Teacher cannot focus enough on students with disabilities	14.5
11	Students with disabilities usually need more time to do tasks than peers in class	14.5
12	Social stigma toward disabilities in general	12.7
13	Students with disabilities usually cannot cope with class	12.7
14	Students with disabilities need to be put in special classes	12.7
15	Most teachers have no background knowledge on disabilities or inclusion	9.1
16	Increased class quota or number of classes per teacher	7.3
17	Type of disability	7.3
18	Students with disabilities need different education system or special schools	7.3
19	Having regular teachers to teach students with disabilities instead of special educational teachers.	7.3
20	No teacher assistants in schools	5.5
21	Students with disabilities refuse help from peers	3.6
22	Lack or insufficient budget to support inclusion	1.8
23	Non-acceptance by teacher	1.8
24	Negative influence on nondisabled peers because of behaviour	1.8
25	Negative impact on weak students because of efforts dedicated mostly for students with disabilities	1.8

Table 11

Participants' responses to these questions were thematically grouped and analysed as explained in the methodology chapter. The results, as seen in Table (11), will be referred to when discussing factors associated with inclusion.

The findings from the questionnaires, interviews and observations and literature review are combined accordingly whenever possible as factors are listed. The main factors are listed in this section with no specific order.

Factors associated with teachers' attitudes toward inclusion

1. Lack of teacher training on inclusion

Inadequate training can be a major factor why teachers might feel disapproving of inclusion as they might feel frustrated or disappointed finding teaching these students challenging or even problematic (Forlin et al., 2014; Vaz et al., 2015).

The findings showed that most teachers
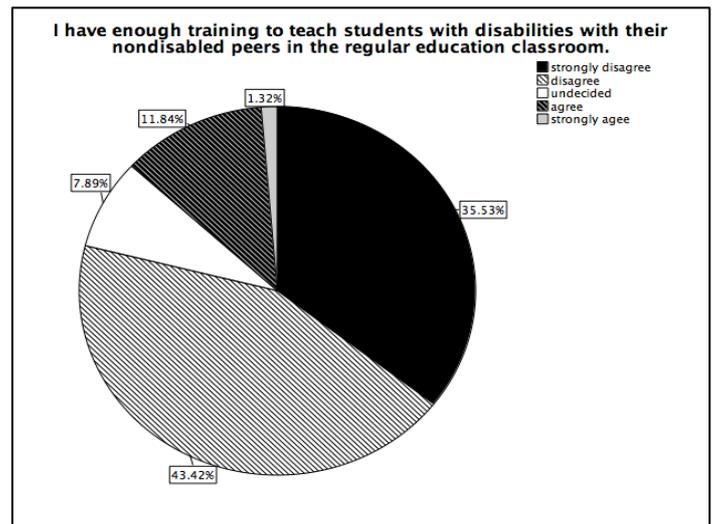
Figure 24

lacked the professional training in inclusion. As shown in Figure (24) about 79% of the participants did not feel they had enough training to teach students with disabilities in regular classroom settings. Figure (25) shows that about 78% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement of not needing more professional development training. This shows that most participants did not feel comfortable teaching students with disabilities in regular settings because they felt they were not professionally trained.

Figure 25

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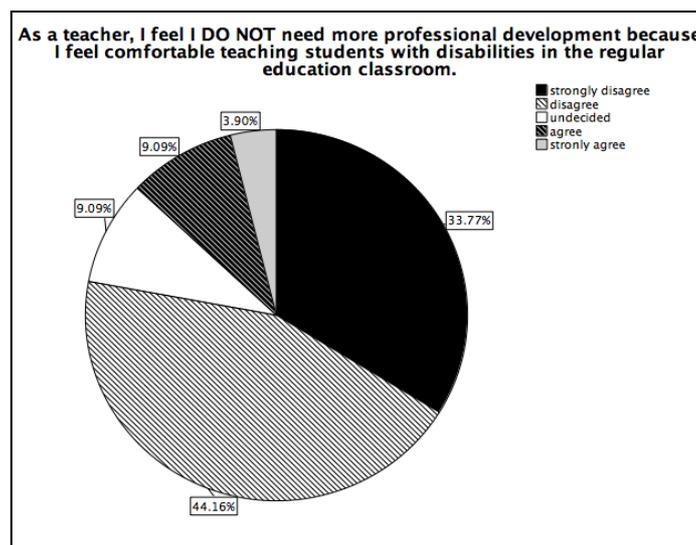
To clarify more on training, participants were asked in the demographic section if they have received any training on inclusion (Question 6, see Appendix 7 & 8). Table 7 and Figure (26) show the responses to the same question. Responses show that 32% of the participants did not receive any training on inclusion or teaching students with disabilities. Approximately 46% of the participants received some in-service training, while only 1% of participants received training during college. Most of the participants who received in-service training explained that it was a one-time training which lasted only for a day or two. When the participants were asked to be more specific, some teachers indicated that they took a course when the initiative was announced, where they received training for one week every month for three months. It was mostly theoretical, with little practice involved.
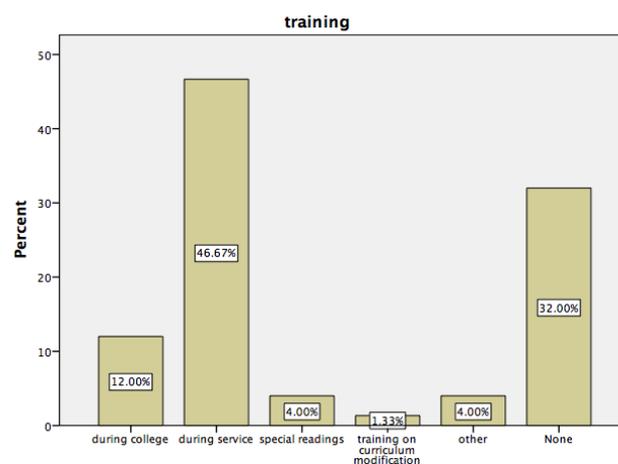
Figure 26

One of the interviewees indicated that she had the training a year back when she had no included cases in her classes. She stated the following when asked about training:

> *I had the training course[s] a year back. I didn't have cases to apply what I [had] learned*
> *back then. This year, I feel I forgot a lot of what I had been taught. And even that*
> *"training" was not enough. It was done in haste. People came to talk [to us] once a week.*
> *It was quick; you feel you didn't get much of what they said. I also had other duties to do*
> *at that time. That year, I didn't have any cases so I couldn't apply what I had learned.*
> *I am now grateful to my special teacher for helping me with these cases.*

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Another interviewee commented that she would have been more open to inclusion if she had

the appropriate skills and practical knowledge in inclusive education:

> *If I have proper training, I will be more open to teaching them even if it involves visiting*
> *the special needs centre every week to observe how the experts teach. I would, at least,*
> *be prepared and would know how to deal with this child. It is unfair to put her in my class*
> *IF I don't know the best methods of teaching.*

One of the interviewees who was openly against inclusion, demanded MOE to provide

comprehensive and intensive training of teachers if they wanted inclusion to be implemented

successfully and to make teachers more positive about it stating that: *"having comprehensive*

training will help the teachers to accept inclusion and feel more positive toward it".

Looking again at Figure (26), we see that only 12% of the participants of the questionnaire had

college training that was related to special education as part of their college degree. The

responses to this question include those from special education teachers, as well. The findings

show that around 47% of the participants had training during service. When asked to specify,

participants listed sessions and workshops done by other teachers or special education teachers

in their schools and training on specific topics such as developing IEP. They also included

receiving training kits, training materials, and templates to be used for teaching students with

special needs and reading materials as training.

Table (11) shows the participants' responses to what factors they believe affect inclusion and

teachers' attitudes; the lack of adequate training came as the sixth top factor with 18% of

participants listing training as a factor affecting inclusion and teachers' attitudes.

2. Modification of Curriculum for students with special needs

Participants were asked in the questionnaire if they would agree that regular education should

be modified to meet the needs of all students, including students with intellectual disabilities.

As shown in Figure (23) (see page 118), approximately 87% agreed or strongly agreed with

that statement. Correspondingly, during the interviews, most of the teachers expressed their concerns about the current education system with the one-for-all curriculum. They believed that the current system needed to be changed for inclusion to be implemented successfully. The absence of a modified curriculum was also considered by 14.5% of the participants as one of the factors affecting the successful implementation of inclusion, which also has a negative effect on teachers' attitudes, as shown in Table (11).

Most of the teachers within the current system spend a large amount of time trying to modify lessons and materials to be suitable for the students with a wide range of disabilities and learning difficulties in their classes. This, in addition to the other duties they as teachers are required to carry out every day, has made them frustrated and disapproving. The modification of lessons consume most of the time they allocate for the general preparation of the lessons, in addition to the modifications required in the worksheets, homework assignments, tests, and examination sheets. This is considered a stressful situation for teachers, as one of the participants commented during interviews:

> *"I know it is their [students with disabilities] right to be educated, that's why we teachers need to understand. However, if he [or she] is included in a regular class, I have to give him [or her] time and dedicate more effort – I usually make time to sit with [them] individually, even during the break. Teachers have to be patient, I know, but if we are provided at least with a modified curriculum, lesson plans, worksheets, etc., it will help us a lot. It will make our life a lot easier."*

Another interviewee commented on the modifications and provisions for students with disabilities in schools:

> *"It is all usually done based on the individual motivation of the teacher, as resources are not available and there is no time to prepare additional materials for students with disabilities. You have to make the time, or you will just neglect the child in class."*

A third interviewee commented on the part of modification as well:

> *"Students with disabilities take more time than others. Preparing a lesson for them takes a lot of time, as you also have to prepare worksheets and differentiated tests. Most teachers will do that if they can. They try, and they are willing to do so, but they don't have [the] time or resources."*

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3. Lack of financial Resources and provisions to support inclusion in schools

Most of the participants in the interviews and in the questionnaire listed the lack of financial support as one of the factors that affect teachers' attitudes toward accepting the inclusion of students with disabilities in their classes. As Figure (27) shows, approximately 90% of the participants in the questionnaire believed that discretionary financial resources should be allocated for the integration of students with
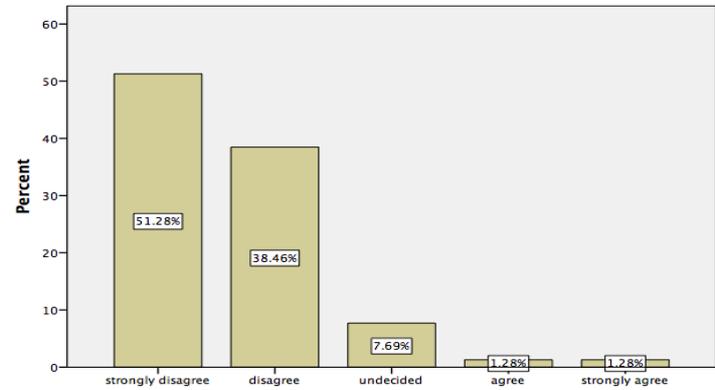
Figure 27

intellectual disabilities in particular. In addition to that, around 20% of teachers (see Table 11) listed poor resources and poorly equipped schools as a factor that affects implementing inclusion negatively. These poorly equipped environments, as detailed by teachers, include the classrooms and school buildings, the financial provisions allocated for schools, and the educational materials that are provided to teachers as teaching aids and extra resources. Furthermore, approximately 14.5% of the teachers, as shown in Table (11), listed the insufficient provisions of teaching aids in schools, stressing that this issue affects the implementation of inclusion negatively. Many teachers spent their money to provide appropriate teaching aids for the students in their classes. This was considered by the participants as a financial burden. In addition, some participants listed, specifically, the lack or insufficiency of the financial budget for activities to support students with disabilities in their schools, whether recreational or educational activities.

Many participants of this study found it difficult to carry out extra co-curricular activities, provide teaching aids and other educational resources with little or no allocated budgets.

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During the interviews, the participants stressed the fact that not all teachers could afford to spend their money to provide such materials. If the teachers could not afford to provide the extra resources, they would depend solely on textbooks which had not been modified to support students with intellectual disabilities.

One of the interviewees commented on the issue of how much time and efforts teachers put into inclusive classes with students with intellectual disabilities:

> *"Inclusion is very difficult for me as a teacher. It takes time. I need to dedicate more time inside the classroom and outside the classroom for students with disabilities. If a task takes five minutes in the class, he [a student with disabilities] might need 15 minutes, and it has to be [a] one-on-one lesson. [In] the end, most of the class time would be spent on only two students. It is difficult to teach them with 25 other kids in the class. They would need a lot of supervision and repetitions. It is time-consuming and not fair, not for them nor the rest of the class. The class gets distracted and bored, and I get tired."*

Another participant has paid to hire a teacher assistant from to help her with students with intellectual disabilities in her classes. She commented on this issue as follows:

> *"Inclusion is not fair for these students. There are not actual provisions for them in the schools. It [inclusion] needs a lot of efforts from the teachers but without having help from the ministry [MOE]. It's becoming more difficult for teachers to teach these students. I pay from my own money for an assistant to help me with the cases in my classes. I shouldn't do that. The Ministry of Education should do that for me. I do that only to have "peace of mind" and to reduce the load on me. I wonder about other teachers who cannot afford to do that."*

As for the findings from observation, it was noted that the teachers in both lessons provided teaching aids which included toys, Lego cubes, flash cards, colours and paints, laminated pictures, and video and audio materials. They also brought small awards and treats as incentives for students. When asked if the school provided these materials, they said no materials were provided either by the school or the MOE. They indicated that they paid to provide or create materials for their classes. They spent an average of 1000 – 2000 AED monthly on materials like teaching aids, educational resources, gifts and treats, in addition to classroom decoration. They stated that they had to do that to motivate students and create a more attractive educational environment. This expenditure by teachers suggests that financial and physical burdens are put

on teachers as they had to provide for their classes because they did not have these provisions and resources available in schools.

Furthermore, inappropriate or poorly equipped environments were listed fourth by participant teachers in the open-ended questions about state factors that may affect negatively the inclusion process and teachers' attitudes (see Table 11). Around 20% of the participants listed poorly equipped classrooms and school buildings that are not disability friendly as one of the factors that affect inclusion negatively. Also, 14% of the participant teachers included the lack of teaching aids and appropriate provisions for students with special needs as factors that affect inclusion. Another 18% of the participant teachers listed the amount of time spent on preparing teaching aids and educational provisions as a factor that affects inclusion negatively (see Table 11).

4. **Lack of specific law or policy regarding the inclusion of students with disabilities in government schools**

The lack of specific laws or policies regarding the inclusion of students with disabilities in government mainstream schools at the time of the data collection was one of the main concerns of the teachers participating in the questionnaires and the interviews. Among the participants, 85% agreed or strongly agreed that it should exist a policy or law regarding the integration of students with intellectual disabilities into regular education as seen in Figure (28).

Figure 28

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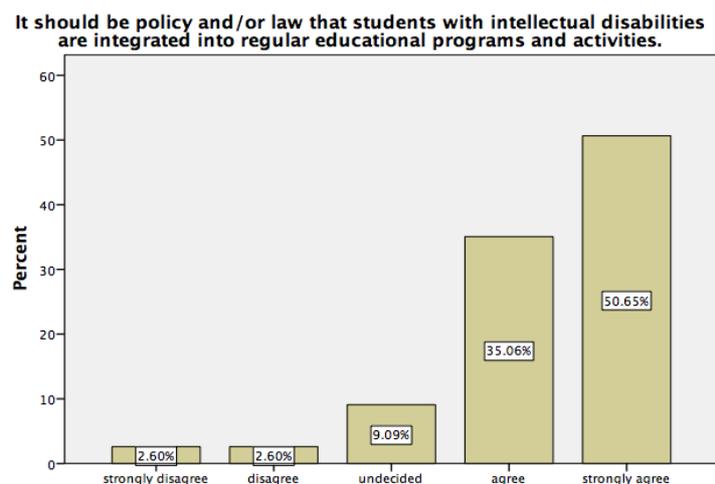
The literature review in chapter two suggests that at the time of the study, no specific law or policy was found related to inclusive education, apart from the Federal Law 29/2006 regarding the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the guidelines of the initiative "School for All".

The "School for All" guidelines on inclusion were issued by the Ministry of Education to guide the inclusion process in government schools in 2010.

As discussed in chapter two, the guidelines contain definitions, explanations, and general information and were based on the UAE Disability Act, which was passed in 2006 and was called the Federal Law 29/2006 Regarding the Rights of People with Special Needs.

Most participants were not aware of the existence of any law regarding disability or inclusion. One of the participants, a teacher with more than ten years' experience, stated clearly during the interviews that she was not aware of any law regarding inclusion, but she was certain that there should be a law to organise the process of inclusion and identify which types of disabilities should be admitted into government schools. She believed only students with physical disabilities with certain conditions should be included in schools. She also believed that those who should be included in regular schools should be "able" intellectually and academically to perform. A second participant commented on what she thought of inclusion in schools:

> *"We [teachers] requested from the ministry to stop inclusion in government schools. I myself demand to stop inclusion. Those students [with intellectual disabilities] don't belong here. They don't learn quickly. If MOE wants to allow inclusion, then there should be some law to regulate their admission into schools."*

Two of the participants, one of them a special education teacher, agreed that the students with intellectual disabilities who were in their classes were progressing more noticeably academically than before the inclusion. Nonetheless, both teachers believed that those students should be in special classes to receive better and more professional care. They also believed

the ministry should reconsider the decision of inclusion in schools and have more applicable laws and regulations for these students, especially for intellectual disabilities.

5. Factors related to teachers' roles and responsibilities in school

As seen in Table 11, there are a number of factors related to teachers' roles and responsibilities in schools that were listed by the participants to be affecting the implementation of inclusion and the attitudes of teachers toward inclusive education. These factors are as follows:

- **Teachers' workload:**

In the open-ended question, around 25% of the participants listed the extra workload undertaken by teachers in schools as the biggest factor affecting teachers' attitudes negatively toward inclusion (see Table 11). Another 7% of participants (see Table 11) specified particularly the increased class quota per teacher or number of classes as one of the factors that do not enable teachers to focus on inclusion and students with disabilities due to workload. Further elaboration on teachers' workload was given through the interviews. It includes the number of lessons/classes taken by the teacher per week and the extra activities that a teacher usually carries out or participates in per semester, in addition to the different administration duties in schools like invigilating exams, supervising students during breaks, and managing students' records. Few teachers commented on this factor as follows:

> *"A teacher should teach fewer classes and have a fewer number of hours per week so she can give more support after class for students with disabilities, especially those with intellectual disabilities. They need more time that a teacher cannot offer during class only."*

> *"Teachers should have fewer teaching hours and duties in schools; 24 classes per week is too much. How would a math teacher, for instance, manage to set more time to any students with intellectual disability in her class or after class if she [the teacher] has to observe students during school breaks and take substitute classes to cover for other teachers? Would she have enough time to prepare for these students? I don't think so.".*

- **The number of students in class:**

Around 21% of participants (see Table 11) listed the increased number of students in class as another major factor affecting teachers' performance and teachers' focus on students with

disabilities in regular classes. Also, around 14% of participants (see Table 11) stated that teachers complain of lack of focus and consideration of students with disabilities in class most likely because of the large number of students and lack of assistance in class. During observation, it was notable that the two classes had around 25-35 students in class. As an average, as stated by the participants, a regular class can have 30 or more students in most primary schools. The following are some of the teachers' comments during interviews regarding this factor

> *"I definitely wouldn't take her (or him) [a student with an intellectual disability] in my class if I were given a choice. Not with the high number of students in each class. I wouldn't be able to focus on this [particular] student or the rest of the class. It would be difficult to give attention to her (or him) with this high number of students in the class."*
>
> *"If I have like 30 students in one class, and I have no idea on how to deal with a child with intellectual disability, then I might not be fair to this child. I might only give her little of my time in class, this is unfair."*
>
> *"If I have fewer students in the class, not more than 20, for example. I'll accept a student with intellectual disabilities in my class, and I will do my best to accommodate her/him. But, if the number is high, it will be difficult for me to accept her/him. If I were given a choice, I wouldn't do it."*

- **Lack of Teacher Assistants in class:**

The results of the open-ended question on the factors that the participants think affect the inclusion process and teachers' attitudes reveal that, at least, 5% of the participants believe that the lack of extra assistance in class affects the inclusion process and the teachers' attitudes negatively. Participants complained in the interview that not all schools have teacher assistants assigned to classes that have students with disabilities. One of the interviewees reported that their school benefited from some projects run by the Ministry of Education and that non-government organisations and institutions supporting inclusion trained teacher assistants and employed them in schools. However, due to the small number of teacher assistants available, most schools did not have any on board.

In some other schools, as some participants reported, the administration allows personal nannies or shadow teachers employed by the families of included students with disabilities to be present in class. However, they only assist the teachers with the students' behaviours and personal hygiene. As participants stated, not all families can afford to pay for a shadow teacher or a nanny for their children so most students would be left with no assistance in class apart from the teacher. Some participants stated that they pay to hire assistants or nannies in class to help them cope with students with intellectual disabilities as they need much work. Participants specified that students with intellectual disabilities need much individual attention to accomplish goals and tasks during class time. Due to class size and various duties, it is hard for teachers to dedicate more time to these students. This results in a constant delay in reaching the objectives of the lessons and improving students' performance.

6. Social Stigma:

The social stigma against students with intellectual disabilities was considered by 12.7% of the participants, as presented in Table (11), to be one of the factors affecting the successful implementation of inclusion and teachers' attitudes. The responses to the open-ended questions associated with social stigma, as displayed in Table (11), were grouped again to reflect teachers' attitudes, represented in Figure (29). Participants listed different aspects that describe some types of social stigma, represented either by the prejudices exhibited by teachers or what teachers assume that students hold against their peers with intellectual disabilities. These perceptions were based on teachers' observations and daily contact with students in class.

Responses related to social stigma toward the inclusion of students with intellectual disabilities in regular classes

Category	Value
Negative infulence on peers	1.8
Non-acceptance by teacher	1.8
Refuse help	3.6
Need different education system or special schools	7.3
Not coping in class	12.7
Social stigma in general	12.7
Need to be put in special classes	12.7
Need more time to do tasks	14.5
A distraction/disruption of the class	20
Non-acceptance by peers	25.5

Figure 29

As seen in Figure (29), more than 25% of teachers believed that there was an issue with the acceptance of students with intellectual disabilities by their peers in the class. Also, participants in the interviews commented that some of these students got bullied or mocked at by peers. However, some participants stated that this behaviour was improved eventually as many students accepted their disabled peers over time.

Around 20 % of participants believed that students with intellectual disabilities were a source of disruption in the class as they distracted other students with their behaviour by making noises or moving around in class. Also, 14.5% of teachers considered needing more time to accomplish tasks as something affecting them negatively in particular. Other participants also believed that those students had a negative influence on other

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peers as they had behavioural issues. Some participants commented in interviews on these issues as follows:

> *"If you have a student with an intellectual disability the whole class will be distracted. They do disrupt the class. In some classes, other students might get scared of her/him. They also waste teacher's time as they don't learn quickly and need more attention."*

> *".. they [students with intellectual disabilities] don't learn quickly. Their academic results are so low. I know when they are in schools, they are able to socialise with peers but most of their peers make fun of them. Only few try to help out."*

It is also significant that another 20 % of teachers believed that students with intellectual disabilities did not belong in regular classes and needed to be put in either special classes within regular schools or attend special centres. Most participants justified that as these students needing tailor-made services and best expertise in a special environment which are not available in regular schools. However, some of the participants simply believed it was just unfair to put these students with other students who have higher abilities which could affect both groups academically. Some participants considered it as against their right of having a proper education. One of the participants stated the following:

> *"If a student with intellectual disabilities is included in the regular class, he [or she] is the one who will be affected, being treated unfair, being deprived of proper education and of his right to have more time than the rest. I might need to tell the student that he is different and he needs more attention. They need to know he is different from them. They need to understand to help make the process work. However, sometimes they understand, and sometimes they make fun of him."*

Furthermore, as seen from the participants' comments, around 12.7% of participants stated that there was a social stigma toward students with intellectual disabilities in schools and that affected negatively on their education and learning process. Another 12.7% of participants believed that those students were incapable of coping with their peers, which again led to the perception of having to put them in special classes where it was more appropriate for them to learn at their pace and capabilities. The following, in addition to the previous comments,

another example of interviewees' attitudes toward students with intellectual disabilities included in their classes.

> *"God helps their families – it's very hard to have children with disabilities. People always give them stranges looks. Family struggles with them. In the past, they kept them at home, now at least they get some education."*

The types of disabilities that should be included are also considered as one of the aspects related to social stigma in which teachers believed that students with certain disabilities could be included while others should not. Most of the teachers believed that students with physical abilities or visual and hearing impairments had better chances to succeed in an inclusive environment than students with emotional or intellectual disabilities. Some teachers believed that students with intellectual disabilities, especially students with Down Syndrome and autism, had certain behaviours that would impact the class and consume teachers' time.

> *"Only children with appropriate behaviour should be included in regular classes. Children with intellectual disabilities can be included only in activities. Otherwise, it is better for them to be educated in special classes. They can be a source of disruption within regular classes."*
>
> *"I don't think students with intellectual disabilities should be included. Only students with mild learning difficulties can be included. They are only academically delayed not mentally unlike students with intellectual disabilities. They are also disciplined in behaviour not like students with intellectual disabilities who have behavioural issues."*
>
> *"Students with Down syndrome and autism should not be included. They are very difficult to manage in class. They always cause disruption and distract other students. They should be taught only in special classes."*

Findings of Research Question 3

The section presents the data of this research question:

3. What could be recommended to improve inclusive practice in Dubai, the UAE?

To collect data for this research question, open-ended questions in the questionnaire were used to get participants' recommendations for successful inclusion. Data were also obtained from participants' interviews. Data from both are presented below, while the researcher's collective recommendations are presented in the final chapter of this study.

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Participants' Recommendations to Improve Inclusive Education in Dubai, UAE

The chart shows the following values:
- Intensive teachers' training: 16.2
- Less number of students per class: 11.6
- Teaching aids/tools/kit s: 11.1
- Curriculum modifications: 8.6
- Special teachers: 8.1
- Less teachers' load & duties: 7.1
- Teacher assistant in class: 6.6
- Appropriate school invironment & buildings: 6.6
- Special classes within schools: 5.6
- More awareness on inclusion and disability: 5.6
- Teachers' incentives: 3.0
- Cooperation of parents: 2.0
- Financial support & budget increase: 1.5
- Number of included students per class: 1.5
- Social support & consultation: 1.5
- No inclusion - special schools or center: 1.5
- Inclusion of mild disabilities only: 1.5
- Shadow teachers when necessery: 0.5

Participants' recommendations to improve inclusive education

Based on the thematic analysis of responses to the items in the questionnaire, participants gave several recommendations that they believed would improve the current inclusion practice in Dubai. Referring to Figure (30), participants' recommendations were as follows:

1. Intensive and thorough training

Around 16% of the participants requested intensive and thorough training to provide theoretical and practical knowledge about disabilities, inclusion, and other related areas. The participants also stressed offering practical sessions, class coaching, and lesson observations

during training to provide teachers with effective teaching strategies and class management techniques in inclusive classes.

2. Less number of students

Most participants listed the large number of students per class as an obstacle to teaching students with intellectual disabilities in inclusive settings. Thus, around 11% of the participants suggested minimising the number of students per class to be around 15 to 20 students to give appropriate care and focus on included cases.

3. Provision of teaching aids, tools and inclusion kits

Participants found it difficult to prepare materials, work on IEPs, and find appropriate teaching materials for students with different types of disabilities each time they have a class. Many participants suggested that provisions of such materials and tools be made available at schools by MOE. Hence, teachers will not feel discouraged and frustrated when trying to find the appropriate provisions and will not have to put more time and money into preparing for their lessons.

4. Curriculum modifications

Participants suggested that teachers should be provided with a modified curriculum that would be easy to implement and use for different types of disabilities in their classes. In addition, they also suggested getting an appropriate training on curriculum modifications so they do not struggle when it comes to planning for lessons in inclusive classes.

5. Special Education teachers

Most participants believed that it was difficult for general teachers to teach students with intellectual disabilities in regular classes. Therefore, they recommended to either increase the number of special teachers in schools to help regular teachers in classes with issues like

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curriculum modifications, IEPs, and other provisions. Some participants even recommended that all classes in primary schools be taught by special teachers if inclusion is implemented as they would be more prepared to teach inclusive classes than general teachers.

6. Teachers' workload

Most participants conveyed their concerns about the intense workload of teachers in schools. Thus, they suggested reducing teachers' schedule to have fewer classes per week. In addition, they recommended less administrative duties for general teachers so they could focus on other activities aimed at improving students' learning or having extra classes and spending more time on one-to-one lessons for students with intellectual disabilities

7. Teacher assistants in class

Many participants expressed their need for teaching assistance in class. Teachers should not hire teacher assistants out of desperation or request families to hire nannies or shadow teachers to accompany their children with intellectual disabilities in class. Teacher's assistants should be employed by schools or the MOE so teachers would have appropriate help and would be able to focus in class

8. Appropriate School environment

Some participants stressed the importance of the appropriate physical environment in schools. Buildings, classes, and facilities should be suitable for the use of people with different types of disabilities. Inclusive schools should accommodate the needs of all students.

9. Special Classes

As most of the participants appear to have negative perceptions toward inclusion, many of them demanded the return of special classes in schools. Many participants believed that students with intellectual disabilities would benefit the most if they were taught in special classes where

they could receive the appropriate education and care from experts. They recommended social integration during activity classes, recreational events, and school breaks. Some of them even suggested having special schools or to put these students back in special needs centres, believing that this was the most appropriate option for students' well-being.

10. Awareness of disabilities and inclusion

Many participants complained of the social stigma, students' bullying, and the lack of consideration of some teachers and parents of students with intellectual disabilities. Therefore, many participants suggested that spreading awareness of disabilities and inclusion among the media and in schools will help overcome social stigma. Teachers, students, and parents need to be more aware of disability issues and the importance of inclusion to have more acceptance and tolerance in schools.

11. Teachers' incentives

Many teachers spend money and time as personal efforts to accommodate students with disabilities in their classes, without receiving any appropriate help or financial support from schools or the Ministry of Education. Accordingly, participants stressed the importance of having financial incentives, extra allowances, and recognition. Participants believed that this would motivate teachers to be more positive and put more effort into successful inclusion.

12. Parents' support

Some participants commented on the role of parents and their contributions to a successful inclusive education for their children with disabilities and children in general. Having parents as the main stakeholders in inclusion implementation will mean educating them about their rights and responsibilities and the ways they could support their children and the teachers in schools.

13. Other recommendations

More recommendations were given in other areas and issues related to inclusion and disabilities such as allocating a budget for each school as it there was the lack of financial support and resources available in schools. In addition, minimising the number of students with disabilities in every class was thought to appropriate so teachers could use their efforts within the available resources and status of schools. Teachers also recommended having social and psychological counselling in schools so students and teachers could get the appropriate support and advice on how to deal with behavioural issues. Other teachers suggested admitting only students with physical disabilities, hearing and visual impairment only as they would need minimal support. Also, they suggested that only children with mild intellectual disabilities to be included while the rest could be educated in special classes or special needs institutions.

In conclusion, this chapter presented the data findings to the three research questions of the study. The data showed that most participants have negative opinions about the inclusion of students with intellectual disabilities for various reasons whether not having the appropriate awareness and knowledge about disabilities and inclusive practice or not receiving the appropriate training and support. The data showed the different factors behind these attitudes which includes insufficient training, lack of support and resources, lack of financial allocations, the ambiguity of law and policies in addition to the pressure of increasing teachers' workload that hampers their efforts to support students with disabilities in general. The findings also presented the participants' recommendations that they believed would enhance the inclusive practice and the welfare of students with disabilities in general, such as receiving appropriate training, improving the school environment and learning circumstances by limiting the number of students in class and reducing the teachers' workload, and getting financial support and moral recognition for their work, among other recommendations. The findings also showed

that many participants were demanding to end inclusion, have special classes in schools, and send students with intellectual disabilities to special schools. Also, the findings showed that there was a social stigma toward students with intellectual disabilities among teachers and students, which impacted inclusion in regular schools.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The aim of this study is to investigate the factors that affect the attitudes of Emirati female teachers toward the inclusion of students with intellectual disabilities in government primary schools in Dubai, UAE. The study aims to investigate the attitudes and behaviour toward inclusion and then explores the possible factors that affect these attitudes and accordingly suggests the appropriate recommendations for improving teachers' attitudes and helping in the implementation of a successful inclusive practice in UAE.

The study adopted a mixed methodology approach wherein several qualitative and quantitative methods were used to answer the three research questions which address the attitudes of the Emirati female teachers, the factors affecting these attitudes and the possible recommendations to improve teachers' attitudes and implement a successful inclusion.

The chapter is organised in four parts; a summary of the findings based on research questions, discussion of the findings, conclusion, and recommendations based on the findings. Also, recommendations for further study will also be explored.

1. Summary of the findings

Research Question 1: What are the attitudes of female Emirati teachers toward children with intellectual disabilities in government primary schools that provide inclusive settings in the urban areas of Dubai?

Findings from the different methods as discussed in the previous chapter showed that most teachers who participated in the study have negative attitudes toward the inclusion of students with intellectual disability and students with disabilities in general. Most of the participant teachers did not believe that teaching these students with their peers in an inclusive

environment would improve their academic performance or help them gain intellectual knowledge or advanced skills. In addition to that, most of the participants did not agree that including these students would promote their acceptance among their non-disabled peers. Moreover, most of the teachers also believed that having a child with an intellectual disability would disrupt the class, become a burden on the teachers, and consume their time and efforts to prepare for appropriate accommodations, teaching materials, curriculum adaptations, and teaching aids. Also, most of these teachers thought it would be unfair to expect general teachers to accept students with intellectual disabilities in their class as they did not get enough training in special education. Most of these teachers believe that it would better for these students to be taught in special classes or sent to special schools or at least be taught by experts or special education teachers. Furthermore, most of these teachers believed that students with intellectual disabilities were too impaired to benefit from activities in regular schools, might get bullied by other students, and would only benefit from socialising with their disabled peers at school.

Research Question 2: What are the factors that affect teachers' attitudes in these schools?

The study revealed that there are several factors affecting the participants' attitudes. The most important factors were the lack of training and lack of support, as teachers have low self-efficacy because they do not feel confident in their abilities to teach these students owing to the lack of knowledge, practical skills, and experience. Furthermore, the lack of support in schools leaves teachers unprepared, concerned of failing the students, or not making appropriate accommodations. Other factors affecting the teachers' attitudes also include the lack of adapted materials, the availability of teaching aids, equipment, and assistive devices, as well as the ambiguity when it comes to policies and regulations of inclusion, the burden of teachers' workload and administration duties, the class size and number of students, the type of disabilities, and the social stigma in the community in general.

Research Question 3: What could be recommended to improve inclusive practice in Dubai, the UAE?

Several recommendations were provided by the participants based on their experience which included providing intensive training in schools, employing teachers' assistants, providing teaching tools and educational materials, reduce teachers' workload and class size, providing teachers with financial and moral incentives, having more awareness programmes in schools and community, providing teachers with appropriate advising and consultation support in schools and of course sending students with intellectual disabilities and students with disabilities in general to special classes or special schools.

2. Discussion

The results and findings of this study agree with most of the international studies where the majority of general teachers in mainstream schools had negative attitudes toward including students with disabilities, in general, and students with intellectual disabilities, in particular. These negative attitudes are attributed to a number of factors. Results from this study contribute to the accumulation of literature that identifies the common factors that are considered to be affecting teachers' attitudes toward inclusion. Addressing these factors through policymakers, practitioners, and educational authorities can tremendously improve teachers' attitudes and, accordingly, promote the implementation of inclusive practices in Dubai, UAE.

Teachers are considered the most important factor in inclusive education as teachers in regular schools have a responsibility to accommodate the needs of all learners, including those with disabilities (Abu-Heran et al., 2014; Schwab et al., 2015). A significant body of studies (Abu-Heran et al., 2014; Donohue and Bornman 2015; Forlin et al., 2014; Fyssa et al., 2014; Jovanovic et al., 2014; Monsen et al., 2014; Montgomery and Mirenda 2014;) indicates that teachers' attitudes toward the inclusion of students with disabilities is an essential key to the

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successful implementation of inclusion in regular schools. Forlin et al. (2014) and Lee et al. (2015) state that although the inclusion of children with special needs in regular classrooms has gained increasing advocacy, the attitudes of teachers still vary. Most of these teachers view inclusion negatively although inclusive practices have been increasingly implemented as it has become more difficult for those teachers to meet the wide range of individual needs, especially with students with intellectual disabilities placed in their classrooms (Monsen et al., 2014). Thus, teachers' responsibilities have subsequently changed since they are required to implement inclusive strategies and techniques to attend to students' various needs. This usually requires acquiring more technical skills, sometimes without having adequate resources available (Monsen et al., 2014; Schwab et al., 2015). This eventually leads to teachers' being more negative toward inclusive education and becoming more resistant when implementing it within their schools (Jovanovic et al., 2014).

It is important for teachers to have positive attitudes when it comes to implementing inclusion as there is a significant difference in classroom learning environments created by teachers with positive and negative attitudes toward inclusion (Monsen et al., 2014). Negative attitudes shown by teachers in inclusive practices toward students with disabilities can have damaging consequences on those students that might lead to feelings isolated, having psycho-social distress, and being demeaned because of a disability (Abu-Heran et al., 2014).

Although inclusion has been implemented in most schools for years in Dubai, most teachers who participated in this study had negative attitudes toward the inclusion of students with disabilities, in general, and those with intellectual disabilities, in particular. These findings are consistent with those of other recent studies, such as Abdelhameed (2015), Forlin et al. (2014), Fyssa et al. (2014), Jovanovic et al. (2014), Lee et al. (2015), and Mukhopadhyay (2014), among others, which showed that most general teachers in inclusive schools do not

believe in the general concept of inclusion. Thus, most of them do not support the inclusion of students with intellectual disabilities in general classrooms. However, the findings of this study imply that special education teachers seem to show more positive attitudes toward inclusion than general teachers. These findings are consistent with other studies, such as Forlin and Chambers (2011), Mukhopadhyay (2014), and Abdelhameed (2015), among others. Mukhopadhyay (2014) and Abdelhameed (2015) indicate that the skills and knowledge these teachers usually receive during their formal training might be influencing their attitudes.

Most of the teachers in the study have negative attitudes toward including students with intellectual disabilities in their schools. While most of these teachers are general teachers, they are not efficiently trained in inclusion. These teachers are required, as explained by Monsen et al. (2014), to adapt their lessons for students with intellectual disabilities based on their individual strengths and weaknesses and to involve them in the learning process, as well as in the social and emotional flow of the classroom, in addition to making the necessary changes to the physical environment and using additional resources to help these students to participate in class activities (Donohue & Bornman, 2015; Forlin et al., 2015).

These responsibilities have become more of a liability on the teachers and have negatively affected their attitudes toward inclusion. Most of the teachers in this study see a child with an intellectual disability in their class as a burden. Montgomery and Mirenda (2014) explain that most teachers believe that having a child with an intellectual disability in the class would consume their time and efforts while they are required to also plan for their lessons, meet their teaching goals, accomplish their tasks, and prepare for the teaching aids. Adding to that, most teachers would likely pay with their money to create teaching aids, and educational materials for these included students as there are not many resources available. These increasing challenges affect teachers' attitudes and make them more negative toward

inclusion, which makes them more of a barrier to students' advancement and learning experiences (Monsen et al., 2014).

Most teachers in the study claim to work hard to facilitate the learning of students with intellectual disabilities in their classes although they do not support inclusion or are in favour of it. However, Fyssa et al. (2014) state that despite the teachers' claims of providing differentiated instruction and curriculum modification, evidence in this study showed limited opportunities afforded to students with disabilities for active engagement, most likely due to ineffective strategies employed by these teachers and the low expectations they had for these students. Most of the participating teachers believe that including students with intellectual disabilities should only be in social activities, not in general classes. Donohue and Bornman (2015) indicate that most teachers believe that inclusion would facilitate students' social development more than their intellectual development. Thus, many students with intellectual disabilities are not advancing academically because teachers are not effectively attending to their needs in class.

Also, the findings of this study show that most teachers believe having a child with intellectual disabilities will disrupt the class and affect the learning experience of their peers. Mukhopadhyay (2014) states that teachers who hold negative attitudes toward inclusion tend to believe that inclusive education disadvantages students who do not have disabilities and consumes teaching time in addition to affecting the pass rate in teachers' evaluations. Montgomery and Mirenda (2014) and Schwab et al. (2015) indicate that most general teachers believe that the special needs students are the responsibility of special education teachers and that general teacher are only responsible for the remaining students. Most teachers in this study complained about students with intellectual disabilities as low achievers and causes of disruption to the class who affected their peers' achievements. However, the poor academic

progress of students with disabilities can be a result of teachers' insufficient instruction and their low expectations and goals for the students (Donohue & Bornman, 2015; Jovanovic et al., 2014).

Many studies, such as Schwab et al. (2015), Mukhopadhyay (2014), Fyssa et al. (2014), Jovanovic et al. (2014), and Monsen et al. (2014), agree with the results of this study that many teachers with negative attitudes in general schools believe that students with disabilities, especially those with intellectual or emotional disabilities, are generally better to be educated in segregated settings. Many teachers in this study believe that these students should be sent to special schools and placed in special classes or at least in pull-out programmes if they should be included in integrated settings. Most of these teachers also believe that these students need to be educated by specialists or experts who can provide an adequate support than what is typically available in regular schools.

Factors affecting teachers' attitudes in government primary schools in Dubai

Depending on the findings of this study, there are a number of factors affecting the teachers' attitudes toward the inclusion of students with disabilities in general schools in Dubai. These factors include the lack of training and appropriate knowledge about inclusion, the lack of teachers' knolwedge on curriculum modification for students' individual needs, the lack of appropriate school support, the absence of clear policies and laws on inclusion in schools and social stigma. There are also other factors that lead to low teachers' self-efficacy and cause teachers' concerns and frustration which consequently reflects on teachers' behavior and attitudes toward inclusion. These factors include the lack of available resources and provisions in schools, the teachers' increasing workload and administrative duties, the class size, the lack of teacher assistants and the type of disability of students included in regular classes. It is

significant that these results of this study are parallel to those found by many other studies done worldwide, such as Abdelhameed (2015); Abu-Heran et al. (2014); Donohue & Bornman (2015); Hamid et al. (2015); Jovanovic et al. (2014); Malinen et al. (2012); Mukhopadhyay (2014),), and Lee et al. (2015).

It is worth noting that the current study did not explore the relationship between the attitude of teachers and demographic variables. Mukhopadhyay (2014) and Monsen et al. (2014) has found no significant relationship between the teachers' attitudes and their demographic variables, such as gender, age, grade taught, and years of experience. However, future studies may be executed to explore such relationships with demographic variables.

As found in the literature similar to the findings of this study, there are many factors found to contribute to the development of the teachers' attitudes. Montgomery & Mirenda (2014) indicated at least four factors that affect the inclusion of students with disabilities, in general, and with intellectual disabilities, in particular. These factors include system issues, disability-specific issues, support factors, and teacher factors. Monsen et al. (2014) and Donohue & Bornman (2015) listed the teachers' top main concerns about inclusion, which includes insufficient support staff, poor resources, inadequate policies, and limited equipment in schools.

Jovanovic et al. (2014), in highlighting the main reasons for the negative attitudes of teachers about inclusion, indicates the low self-efficacy of teachers as teachers feel incompetent in dealing with children with disabilities in class, the lack of professional support, the large number of students in a class, and the lack of teaching aids in schools. Monsen et al. (2014) and Donohue and Bornman (2015) also list the lack of support as the main factor which may lead to non-inclusive classroom environments and negative attitudes toward inclusion. Monsen et al. (2014) state the importance of providing adequate internal and external support to teachers

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in general classes to help them develop more positive attitudes, particularly toward students with intellectual or behavioural disabilities. In this section, the main factors found in this study will be discussed with no specific order.

1. Lack of teachers' training and Knowledge on inclusion

Training and teacher education is considered one of the main key factors that promote teachers' positive attitudes and develop the skills required for the successful implementation of inclusion (Forlin & Chambers, 2011; Hollins, 2011; Vaz et al., 2015). The findings of this study show that most participating teachers have negative attitudes toward inclusion. Most of these attitudes are a result of the lack of knowledge, training and required skills to teach in inclusive settings. This agrees with what has been found in other studies where teachers often report the lack of training in special education and disabilities, whether in pre-service or in-service, to be contributing to their low self-efficacy, lack of self-confidence, and lack of motivation to work with students with disabilities. Accordingly, this leads to negative attitudes toward inclusion, as teachers feel incompetent to teach these students (Donohue & Bornman, 2015; Forlin et al., 2014; Jovanovic et al., 2014; Monsen et al., 2014; Montgomery & Mirenda, 2014).

Hamid et al. (2015) and Vaz et al. (2015) state that not only in-service teachers benefit from training; teacher-trainees, pre-service teachers, and college students are also influenced positively when compulsory modules and practicum classes on diversity, inclusion, and disability are introduced to them. They usually show improvement in their readiness and more positive attitudes toward inclusion.

Similar to the findings of this study, many other studies showed that most general teachers within current inclusive practices are not prepared to teach students with special needs due to the lack of appropriate knowledge, necessary training, and adequate practical skills ((Alborno, 2013; Donohue & Bornman, 2015; Forlin et al., 2014; Schwab et al., 2015; Urton et al., 2014).

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As Donohue and Bornman (2015) indicate, there is a relationship between teachers' practical experience and their beliefs about inclusive education. Practical experience enhances teachers' self-efficacy and improves their competence by helping them gain skills in managing different situations related to inclusion. The more skills they gain, the more competent they feel and the more positive their attitudes become toward inclusion. Thus, teachers who have been provided with appropriate training and have been exposed to individuals with disabilities tend to be more positive and self-confident and can respond better to students with disabilities in inclusive settings (Abdelhameed, 2015; Donohue & Bornman, 2015).

In addition to appropriate training, experience, and knowledge about the philosophy of inclusion, special education and related practices of inclusive education are connected positively to teachers' attitudes (Montgomery & Mirenda, 2014). The lack of knowledge in these areas can be considered a real concern for teachers, which can lead to misconceptions about inclusion. Teachers may feel that teaching students with disabilities with all its responsibilities is a burden and that these students are difficult to manage and cannot achieve or be accommodated in regular classes (Alborno, 2013; Mukhopadhyay, 2014).

When introducing inclusion, teachers, as described by Schwab et al. (2015), need intensive training in areas such as teamwork, cooperative and open teaching methods, pedagogical diagnostic competencies, and performance assessment. They also need to learn how to deal with challenging behaviour and how to manage individual intervention for children with learning difficulties, in addition to general knowledge about special education needs.

2. Teachers' self-efficacy

Self-efficacy, as stated by Urton et al. (2014), may be the sole demonstrable influence on attitudes toward inclusion and on the willingness of teachers to provide efficient accommodation of students with disabilities in general schools. Studies such as those by Forlin

et al. (2014), Jovanovic et al. (2014), Montgomery and Mirenda (2014), and Vaz et al. (2015) indicate that teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy regarding their ability to teach in inclusive education settings have been identified as an important influence on teachers' attitudes about inclusion. They explain further that teachers with a high level of efficacy show more positive attitudes toward inclusion as they express confidence in their ability to teach difficult students and can take responsibility for students' development. On the other hand, teachers with low self-efficacy were found to feel more negatively toward inclusion. Teachers with low self-efficacy are more likely to find difficulties when teaching and are less willing to adapt their instructional methods to suit the needs of students with learning difficulties. Hence, teachers who feel more competent are more comfortable in accepting the responsibility for students' difficulties as they attribute these difficulties to external factors rather than to their own incompetency; consequently, they work harder to overcome these difficulties.

Malinen et al. (2012) state that providing support to teachers to increase their self-efficacy in teaching inclusive classes may result in the improvement of their attitudes and may help the teachers become more dedicated. Efficacy beliefs can be changed mainly by improving the mastery experience of teachers, which cannot be achieved by barely exposing teachers to inclusive classrooms. That does not automatically produce positive mastery experiences or a higher level of self-efficacy, which is needed to change attitudes positively. Vaz et al. (2015) insist on knowledge being a key factor that influences teachers' ability to change teaching practices and increase self-efficacy. A focus on teachers' knowledge when training teachers for inclusive practices are necessary. This focus should be on the pedagogical content knowledge of disabilities, including the knowledge about specific disabilities or conditions and the relevant teaching strategies to address them in an inclusive setting (Vaz et al., 2015).

Mukhopadhyay (2014) and Montgomery & Mirenda (2014) explain that the teachers' views of their responsibilities toward their students can be one of the factors that affect inclusion. Implementing a successful and effective inclusion lie in the teachers' beliefs in who is primarily responsible for the students with disabilities. Many general teachers do not actually see themselves as primarily responsible for educating students, with disabilities, in their classrooms.

The study also indicates that most of these general education teachers, if given a choice, would prefer to send students with disabilities to special education classrooms or cluster them in separate settings. The real inclusive education, as demonstrated by Schwab et al. (2015), requires a strong and continuous collaborative teaching that includes equal responsibilities for both general teachers and special education teachers, especially in areas like lesson planning, IEPs, and classroom routines.

3. Teachers' workload

Increasing the workload of teachers is found to be one of the factors that affect their attitudes. Teachers' workload may can contribute to teachers' increasing stress and frustration especially with other factors such as increasing class size, lack of teacher assistant and lack of appropriate resources and provisions. Abdelhameed (2015) and Forlin et al. (2014) indicate that teachers show more negative attitudes toward inclusion when they are concerned with the workload required to provide for students with disabilities in general and with intellectual disabilities in particular. In general, teachers have different responsibilities throughout the school day, including teaching classes, students' assessments, and remedial support, in addition to preparing educational materials and teaching. Requesting teachers to teach a student with a disability means they are required to spend extra time adapting and modifying the curriculum

or creating new activities and educational materials for these students in addition to other school administration tasks (Montgomery & Mirenda, 2014).

Other common concerns raised by teachers, as explained by Forlin et al. (2014), Schwab et al. (2015), and Vaz et al. (2015), include managing class time and accommodations for students with disabilities without disadvantaging other students in the class. Also, the quality of work produced by students with disabilities always affects the teachers' performance. Such concerns make teachers resist the inclusion of such beliefs and expectations, which can be significant barriers to the implementation of inclusion. Furthermore, having to put extra time and efforts to accommodate students with disabilities without having the appropriate support and resources means more concerns and struggle to teachers. Teachers feel more stressful if they have a student with a disability; this would mean having additional time to plan and prepare adaptive material, accommodate different teaching techniques or even learn to use assistive technology (Montgomery & Mirenda, 2014).

Vaz et al. (2015) state that teachers' attitudes can be related to the amount of struggle that teachers face in identifying solutions to problems encountered daily in schools, such as the lack of human, physical and environmental support, the incapability to accommodate students with severe disabilities, and the lack of required skills to deal with students with disabilities. The results of this study on the workload of teachers are also similar to the results of other international studies, such as those of Jovanovic et al. (2014) and Mukhopadhyay (2014). Many studies also find that teachers, in inclusive settings, usually express frustration about the increasing workload, the large number of students, and the amount of time that they to need in preparing for the lessons for students with disabilities.

It should be noted that teachers, who have positive attitudes in handling students with disabilities, are more confident about their performances when it comes to inclusive practices,

even if it means more work for them. Teachers, with fewer concerns about inclusions and the lack of support and resources, tend to be more confident in using inclusive instructional practices and managing students' behaviours with available support (Montgomery & Mirenda, 2014).

To change teachers' attitudes toward inclusion within their increasing workload and accumulative tasks, teachers need appropriate support. As stated by Monsen et al. (2014), teachers can become more willing to implement inclusion when they are provided with additional and adequate support. Such support can come in different ways. Schwab et al. (2015) indicated that general education teachers need the support of special education teachers mainly in lesson planning and small group instruction, as well as one-on-one student assistance. However, other means of teaching such as co-teaching appear to be also beneficial for students with disabilities. It can be considered an important step toward inclusive education when both general education teachers and special education teachers work together to teach a diverse group of students including those with disabilities (Schwab et al., 2015).

It is, thus, necessary to create a support system to help general education teachers overcome the stresses of an increasing workload and the challenges of inclusive teaching. Jovanovic et al. (2014) indicate that having a support system that includes experts and consultants in special education, behaviour modification, and related inclusion matters in schools is a necessity for both improving teachers' attitudes and implementing successful inclusion. Monsen et al. (2014) found that teachers' positive attitudes toward inclusion increase per perceived adequacy of support. This supports the findings that a collaborative team work in schools is required for successful implementation of inclusion.

Thus, it is important for the educational authorities to support teachers with their efforts when striving to implement inclusion. Urton et al., (2014) explained that as part of the overall process

of inclusive practice in schools, principals and school heads play an important role in building a school culture when they show empathy and collaborate with their teachers to promote inclusion. Urton et al., (2014) explained that the individual attitudes of teachers toward inclusion might be positively influenced by positive attitudes of the staff in general and by a supportive school atmosphere, in particular. This is because when there is a positive school environment where support and appreciation are provided to teachers, it makes it easier for the teachers to deal with anxieties and concerns and helps them increase their self-confidence regarding teaching students with disabilities.

4. Lack of School and Administration Support

The findings of the study show that teachers are stressed because of the lack of support when it comes to teaching inclusive classes that include children with intellectual disabilities. Most of the teachers in this study believed that there was no appropriate support, recognition or appreciation to their efforts in schools. They specified this lack of support as not being aware of clear policies and instructions from higher authorities on implementing inclusion, not having teaching assistants in class, lack of provisions of ready-made materials and teaching aids, not receiving support or professional guidance with lesson modifications,IEPs or students' behavioural issues, and not receiving incentives or recognition for their efforts. Montgomery and Mirenda (2014) state that the lack of a supportive team in schools that includes at least some experts in special education and counselling might add to the pressure on the teachers with their overloaded teaching schedules and school responsibilities. Hence, teachers need to actively collaborate within a team where they can get professional support, consultations and leadership to gain knowledge, motivation, and skills. A successful inclusion requires an effective collaboration between general education teachers and the wider school community,

including parents, support staff, and specialists, especially special education teachers (Monsen et al., 2014; Montgomery & Mirenda, 2014).

As Donohue and Bornman (2015) explain, school support can come in various forms and should be focused on the students' needs. These types of support can include teacher's assistants, smaller class sizes, special equipment, test accommodations, flexible teaching schedules, and extra non-instructional time to help teachers adjust their workload. Providing such support can improve teachers' attitudes toward inclusion.

The teachers in this study had emphasised the need for teacher assistants in the class. Although the Ministry of Education had an initiative of piloting a programme for providing teachers assistants in primary schools, as noticed from the findings, not all primary schools with inclusive settings were provided with such support. Some teachers, as found in this study, had to pay for an assistant from their own pockets. Gaad (2015) explains that the idea of hiring teacher assistants or learning support aide was not incorporated in each inclusive class when inclusion was implemented by the MOE in 2010 as part of the inclusion initiative "School for All". Special education teachers were trained to be coordinators in each school to advise and support the general education teachers rather than having an allocated teacher assistant in every classroom. However, as Gaad (2015) also states, there is a professional need for assistant teachers as qualified personnel in the class for the inclusion process to be implemented effectively. Investing in well-trained teacher assistants to support teachers and the school is very important, especially for learners with intellectual disabilities, who are more vulnerable and need the most obtainable support in class.

5. Types of Disabilities

This study reveals that the teachers' attitudes toward inclusion rely strongly on the type of disabilities of their students. Most teachers would prefer students with physical or sensory

disabilities but without emotional or behavioural issues. Teachers find that students with intellectual or emotional disabilities are the most difficult to handle in regular classrooms. They also believe that these students do not advance academically and are a source of disruption in the class. These findings are similar to the findings of many related studies, such as those of Donohue & Bornman (2015); Fyssa et al. (2014); Jovanovic et al. (2014); Schwab et al. (2015), and Vaz et al. (2015). These studies state that the type of disability influences the teachers' attitudes; teachers have different perceptions of the types of disabilities, which explains that the nature of the student's disability and the various educational needs would affect the attitudes of teachers toward inclusion because students with disabilities have different strengths and weaknesses that require diverse academic and behavioural support. Most teachers have negative attitudes toward students with behavioural and intellectual disabilities compared to those with other disabilities. Most teachers are found to be more supportive of children with minor disabilities and physical and sensory disabilities than those with intellectual, learning or behavioural disabilities (Montgomery & Mirenda, 2014).

It is significant that the nature and severity of disability can influence teachers' attitudes as the more severe the student's disability, the less positive the teachers' attitude is toward inclusion (Vaz et al., 2015). Most teachers argue that successful inclusion depends on the children's type of disability, their functionality, the appropriateness of their behaviour, and their ability to adapt to the demands of the regular class. Therefore, if children with disabilities in regular classrooms do not meet these expectations, then teachers act negatively toward inclusion (Fyssa et al., 2014). This is potential because the level of disability can challenge teachers' self-efficacy and self-confidence to meet their needs and overcome students' academic challenges (Donohue & Bornman, 2015). Changing such attitudes of teachers can be done by enhancing

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teachers' self-efficacy and empowering them with knowledge and training (Monsen et al., 2014; Vaz et al., 2015).

It is noteworthy that although many participating teachers recognise the social benefits of inclusive education for students with intellectual disabilities, only a small percentage feel that they should be educated within regular settings with their peers. These findings agree with studies like those of Donohue and Bornman (2015), Montgomery and Mirenda (2014), and Mukhopadhyay (2014) as they find that most teachers believe that children with Down Syndrome, severe intellectual disabilities, autism, and some sensory impairments are the most challenging to include in a mainstream classroom. This is usually because these students have more complex learning needs, which require more curriculum adaptations and one-on-one instructional time.

6. Social stigma

The findings show that most of the teachers in this study express some sort of social stigma toward people with disabilities in general. Most of these teachers do not find inclusion in schools appropriate for students with intellectual disabilities in particular and would rather have them educated in special schools or by special education teachers in special classes within regular schools. This is found to be one of the main factors affecting teachers' attitudes toward inclusion. In most cultures, as indicated by Campbell and Uren (2011), people believe that the best place for individuals with disabilities is at home. Thus, having a child with a disability can place further strain on families, such as the sense of shame, the financial and social burdens, along with the different beliefs that may consider the child as bad luck or a bad omen, or link him or her to wrongdoings in the past. While religious teachings denounce these beliefs in Islam, they still commonly exist among less educated groups. Jovanovic et al. (2014) indicate

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that stereotypes and prejudices existing in society have been recognised as obstacles for the development and achievement of education for students, especially those with disabilities, from marginalised groups.

Teachers also show concern for other children bullying or stigmatising students with disabilities if included in regular classes. However, while few participants commented on their peers mistreating or bullying children with intellectual disabilities, many of them also commented on the increased tolerance and change of behaviour of peers when they have students with disabilities in their classes. A relevant study in Serbia (Jovanovic et al., 2014) reported similar results, where although most teachers have negative attitudes, some teachers expressed some positive advantages of inclusion such as peers' acceptance and cooperation with students with disabilities in general. On the other hand, many teachers felt there were still cases of bullying, rejection, and intimidation by peers, which affect students with disabilities' experiences.

As Shah et al. (2015) explain, children, grow up with a set of cultural opinions about disabilities and special needs, which shape their ideas about these groups of individuals. Most of these opinions represent people with disabilities with negative stereotypes. Because of this social stigma, children's understanding of disability is built on negative social and cultural beliefs or political barriers in society, which, in return, created some challenges on the promotion of disability equality.

Thus, it is the responsibility of the education system to teach children in schools about the social justice and the skills necessary to engage them with diverse communities and subsequently demolish attitudinal barriers to support justice and equality (Shah et al., 2015). Education is an important means of overcoming the prejudices shown by society toward people with disabilities. The education system should be developed to make all schooling inclusive

in order to create a major change in the provisions for children with disabilities and special needs. Schools need to be accessible for all children. The curriculum approaches need to fit all needs in order to overcome stereotyping and the discriminating attitudes that society holds about disability (Hodkinson, 2016).

It is significant that many teachers in this study preferred that students with disabilities be sent to special schools or at least taught in special classes within regular schools where they can be integrated only in activities and common times. These findings are consistent with similar international studies such as those of Abdelhameed (2015), Abu-Heran et al. (2014), Mukhopadhyay (2014) and Schwab et al. (2015), While teachers believe that sending students with intellectual disabilities to special schools or special classes is a better way of educating them, they seem to miss the human rights perspective within the inclusion, where children should not be discriminated against by being excluded or sent away because of their disability or learning difficulty. Hence, awareness programmes should form part of teachers' training to help them understand that there are no legitimate reasons to separate children for their education because they belong together with advantages and benefits for everyone. Children do not need to be protected from each other, so teachers need to be aware that only inclusion has the potential to reduce fear and build friendship, respect, and understanding among them (Hodkinson, 2016; Monsen et al., 2014; Vaz et al., 2015).

Many teachers in the study show concerns about students with disabilities being a negative influence, causing disruption to the class, and possibly affecting the achievements of peers without disabilities. This was also reported by other similar studies where teachers see students with intellectual disabilities as a source of disruption and bad influence. Schwab et al. (2015) assure that inclusion has a positive impact on the school achievement and social skills of students with and without special needs, including students with intellectual disabilities, where

students without disabilities in inclusive classes show equal or better school performances than their peers in regular classes.

The findings show that most teachers in the study are confused when it comes to the definition of students with special needs in general and students with disabilities in particular. Most teachers, as Hodkinson (2016) indicates, usually have negative perceptions about disabilities and special needs due to the medical conception of disability. This misconception results in student labelling, low expectations of achievement, and inadequate support planning. Therefore, teachers need to be educated that inclusion is based on the concept of social justice, and not on medical conditions, and all students are entitled to equal access to all educational opportunities regardless of disabilities or any form of disadvantage. This issue needs to be emphasised more during teachers' training and through the media and community programmes as well (Monsen et al., 2014; Vaz et al., 2015).

One of the main teachers' concerns regarding inclusion was that students with intellectual disabilities are low achievers and academically poor. Hodkinson (2016) explains that such students with learning difficulties learn at a slower pace because they have difficulties in acquiring basic literacy and numeracy skills and in understanding concepts. They may also have other delays such as speech and language impediments, in addition to low self-esteem, low levels of concentration, and underdeveloped social skills. These require additional support from the schools and the education system. Teachers need to understand that any difficulty a student may have with learning does not necessarily come from a personal deficit or differences but from barriers created by the educational system itself. Such barriers can be the teachers themselves if they are not supportive or trained adequately. Other barriers include inaccessible school buildings, inflexible programmes, and inappropriate teaching approaches in addition to incompetent school policies (Hodkinson, 2016).

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According to Mitchell (2014), teachers need to know that students' needs are diverse and wide-ranging even within certain categories of disabilities, and that the most effective programmes are those that incorporate a variety of best practices which combine theoretical knowledge, reflective practice, professional wisdom, and awareness of the characteristics and needs of students, along with the knowledge of local circumstances.

Some teachers in the study frequently referred to teaching students with intellectual disabilities in inclusive settings as being unfair to these students. Teachers, as shown in the findings, commented that these students were fragile and vulnerable and that they would fare better in special education facilities as it is not fair for them or for other students to have them in regular classes. Those teachers believed that these students did not benefit from the inclusive experience and that they affected the learning of their peers. In regard to fairness when it comes to educating students with disabilities, Gallagher (1994), as cited in Crockett and Kauffman (p. 126, 1999), suggests that fairness should be defined more appropriately as it does not consist of educating all children in the same place at the same time or within the same curriculum. Being fair to all students ensures that all their basic needs are met and that they are prepared for appropriate careers and fulfilling lifestyles. Crockett & Kauffman (1999) also advise that the main goal of the educational environment should be set to the goals of the student, which involves the use of effective methods, the appropriate instructional materials and equipment, the clarity of instructions, and the tasks that the students are asked to perform.

It is significant that the teachers in this study are sometimes found to be justifying certain attitudes and misconceptions about the inclusion of people with disabilities due to cultural or religious beliefs. Some beliefs/perceptions include people with disabilities as legally and socially incompetent and prone to feelings of pettiness, sympathy or vulnerability. This also includes the belief that society should take care of them and that the school system should not

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make them suffer by forcing them to be educated, with other children, in regular schools. Thus, as suggested by Al-Aoufi, Al-Zyoud, & Shahminan (2012), more research is needed to enrich the literature about the Islamic perspective toward disabilities and to provide the educators and the society with practical techniques in inclusive practices that emerge from people's understanding. Teachers need to understand the right-based approach when it comes to the inclusion of students with disabilities. Thus, to cope with the challenges of inclusive practices, especially in the Arab and Muslim cultures, future research needs to consider cultural backgrounds as they are critical in deciding the ways individuals respond to disabilities and inclusion. Cultural and religious misconceptions about disability need to be addressed to improve the teachers' attitudes and to promote successful inclusion.

7. Parents support

Results from the findings showed that participants' commented on the role of parents of students with disabilities and how their role contributes to the successful implementation of the educational inclusion of their children. Results indicated that few parents showed appropriate support to their children's educational needs in inclusive classes as teacher commented in interviews and indicated in open-ended responses. Parents need to be more aware of their role in supporting teachers and schools in inclusion. They need to be aware of their children's rights and needs to decide on which is the most appropriate option for them whether it is inclusive settings or special needs accommodations. As Ajodhia-Andrews & Frankel (2010) indicate, parents need to be more aware of the philosophy of inclusion and the rights of their children to get appropriate educational support in the most suitable means. Parents need to collaborate with teachers regarding students' educational needs, students' assessment, behavioural issues, bullying incidents, social stigma and other related issues. A successful inclusion is more effective when there is an ongoing collaboration between all related parties that are involved

in students' educational development including school staff, teachers, parents and other expertise (Monsen, et al., 2014; Montgomery & Mirenda, 2014)

3. Conclusion

This study aims to investigate the factors affecting the attitudes of Emirati teachers in the government primary schools in Dubai toward the inclusion of students with intellectual disabilities. The study seeks to fill a gap in the literature on special education and inclusive settings since it is one of the few research studies conducted in Dubai and the UAE. The study has investigated the attitudes of teachers toward the inclusion of students with intellectual disabilities and the factors affecting these attitudes. The study has used a triangulation of methods, including quantitative and qualitative methods, such as a questionnaire, semi-structured interviews, observation, and literature review. The study has intended to answer three research questions; the first one aimed at identifying teachers' attitudes, the second one aimed at identifying factors affecting teachers' attitudes, and the last one aimed at getting teachers' recommendations to improve the current experience of inclusions in their schools.

The findings of the study suggest that inclusive education in Dubai and the UAE, in general, needs more development to be implemented successfully. The teachers' attitudes toward inclusive practices need to be enhanced to be more positive toward inclusion. More adequate provisions, resources, and support need to be made available in these government primary schools.

Although inclusion has already been implemented in Dubai and the UAE for a few years when the study has been conducted, the study has shown that most of the participating teachers have negative attitudes toward inclusion in general. Most of the participating teachers have shown even more opposing attitudes toward including children with intellectual disabilities in their classrooms. The negative attitudes of teachers, as explained by Jovanovic et al. (2014), can be

due to different reasons, including the challenges associated with teaching these students, the negative impact on the academic achievement of the remaining students, and the behavioural problems that might disrupt the class. Many of the teachers in this study believe that these students would not benefit academically when they are in regular classes. They prefer that these children be sent to special schools or be placed in special classes to get more appropriate care and be educated by experts. Many of these teachers also believe that students with intellectual disabilities can be a source of disruption in class and may affect their peers negatively. However, some teachers still agree that these students can benefit from inclusion by developing social and life skills.

The findings of the study, which answer the second question about the factors affecting the attitudes of teachers toward inclusion, identified many factors that agree with the findings of most international studies. The lack of training appears to be one of the main factors behind the teachers' negative attitudes. The teachers in this study expressed their frustration related to not being adequately knowledgeable or professionally trained on the implementation of inclusion. Most of these teachers complained about the lack of knowledge of disabilities, inclusion, and special education. The findings also show that the teachers' efficacy seems to be affected by this lack of knowledge and training as the teachers do not seem to be confident in their educational competencies or the methods and techniques they use to educate these students in regular classes. This reflects negatively on their attitudes toward inclusion.

The findings also stress the lack of adequate provisions, resources, and support that affect teachers' attitudes in Dubai's government schools within the current educational system. While support and resources vary in different schools, teachers still think a lot is needed to be done to improve inclusive practices. Teachers complain of increasing workload and administration duties, large classes, and inadequate curriculum and teaching materials. They also complain of

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the time and effort they need to accommodate each student with disabilities placed in their classes because of the shortage of resources and support. They specifically highlight the lack of teaching assistants in schools and the production of teaching aids and materials, which consume most of the teachers' personal time and limit their efforts with these students. Having such concerns impact teachers' attitudes who have to deal with these challenges as part of their daily jobs.

The lack of school and administration support is another challenge faced by teachers where no clear policies or regulations nor collaborative school systems are available to individual teachers. With the increasing workload and administration duties required from teachers, little support is shown by school administrations. Most regular teachers in this study seek help from the special educational teachers to assist with the modification of lesson plans, IEPs, and appropriate teaching strategies. However, some schools do not have the capacity to have special education teachers, so teachers rely on their own efforts. Schools need to provide more support by providing professional training, teaching assistants, and ready-made teaching materials. Schools also need to acknowledge teachers' effort with appropriate recognition and incentives to improve their attitudes toward inclusion.

The type of disabilities is another main factor affecting teachers' attitudes in schools. Most teachers in this study seem to have certain perception when it comes to intellectual disabilities. The findings show that the severity of the disability affects negatively on teachers' attitudes. Most of the teachers in this study prefer mild learning difficulties and physical or sensory disabilities when it comes to inclusion. Teachers find students with intellectual disabilities the most challenging to include in their classes as teachers believe these students require certain skills and competencies to teach. Teachers are also concerned with dealing with emotional and behavioural issues with students with intellectual disabilities with which they are not trained

to deal. Teachers were found to have a preference for including certain disabilities over others. They would consider inclusion in regular schools with certain disabilities such as physical, visual, or hearing impairments but will find it more difficult for cases like autism, Down syndrome, or any intellectual disabilities with behavioural or emotional difficulties. This might be explained by the anticipated increase in disruption to the classroom by these groups of children. Most teachers would prefer to send them to special classes or even special schools where experts and special teachers can take care of these students (Jovanovic et al., 2014; Monsen et al., 2014; Montgomery & Mirenda, 2014).

Social stigma is also considered one of the factors affecting teachers' attitudes. Many teachers in this study have certain prejudices and cultural misconceptions about people with intellectual disabilities and their capability to learn. Most teachers think it is not fair to place these children in regular classes with their peers and demand to send them to special schools or classes. This is because they think that these students are either too fragile or vulnerable to survive in regular classes or are a disruption to the class and a bad influence on their peers. For both cases, teachers need more social awareness on the right-based approach, social justice, and equality in addition to the importance of inclusion, its philosophy, and ways of implementing it. Hodkinson (2016) states that most adults with disabilities who describe themselves as 'special school survivors' demand an end to segregation as there is no specific teaching or care in a segregated school that cannot take place in a regular school.

Teachers also need to be trained on inclusive strategies and teaching techniques in addition to ways of adapting and modifying lessons and learning materials to overcome challenges. This can help change teachers' perception of the capabilities of people with different intellectual abilities and assist them in developing academically and socially. Teachers' background

and knowledge of inclusion help educators to gain the capability to address different teaching needs in inclusive settings (Hamid et al., 2015).

Furthermore, as Mitchell (2014) indicates, teachers need to establish a positive classroom climate with mutual respect and positive expectations for achievement. They also need to be sensitive to the needs and interests of their students and provide a variety of resources to suit the individual needs of the latter. Teachers also need awareness sessions on how to handle bullying and promoting a more tolerant environment in their classrooms. Hodkinson (2016) indicates that teachers who set high expectations for all individuals have a greater obligation toward students who have had low levels of achievement. Hodkinson, hence, believes that teachers should take into account the wide range of students who have disabilities and special needs and to ensure that there are no barriers to any student in class.

The study finds that it is significant, as indicated by Forlin et al. (2015), that a collaborative approach is executed to improve the current inclusive practice in Dubai, where teachers are trained in both regular and special education settings as well as pre-service teachers as part of their educational certificate. Mitchell (2014) also stresses highly on the sustainability of inclusive programmes implementation by securing long-term resourcing and ensuring the school culture accepts the new programmes that require training and social awareness. The study also finds that it is important to have an effective collaboration and commitment of the parents of students with disabilities in inclusive education. Their involvement should be more noticeable when it comes to their children's educational needs and their ongoing development.

In conclusion, the study showed that teachers need to adopt more positive attitudes toward inclusion and the education of people with intellectual disabilities. As many factors attributing to the current attitudes, a collaborative effort needs to be considered to promote teachers' attitudes and make inclusive schools a barrier-free environment for people with disabilities.

There is a huge need for more appropriate preparation of teachers due to the very low understanding of inclusion and a lack of skills, knowledge, and experience of teachers in inclusive settings. Well-defined policies and regulations need to be executed with a clear commitment from decision makers and education authorities. School management needs to be more responsive to teachers' needs and more supportive of their efforts when it comes to providing inclusive settings. Adequate training, an efficient collaborative approach in teaching, the teamwork of experts and specialists, curriculum modification, and cultural changes in the school and the community are needed to have a better influence on teachers' attitudes and inclusive education.

4. Recommendations

Implementing successful inclusive education practices in schools for students with intellectual disabilities is the responsibility of not only the Ministry of Education and Higher Education and the school administrations but also the other government entities, the media, the teachers themselves, and the community. As teachers' attitudes influence the implementation of inclusive education, there should be a certain national plan to address these attitudes. Part of the findings of this study is to provide recommendations to change teachers' attitudes toward the inclusion of students with disabilities, in general, to support implementing a successful inclusive education in Dubai and the UAE. Some of these recommendations are suggested by the participating teachers in this study as shown in the findings chapter, in addition to appropriate recommendations and practices found in the literature.

1. **Teacher training, awareness and professional development**

The most important recommendation to improve teachers' attitudes is to provide appropriate teacher training, more social awareness and the opportunity for ongoing professional development. Intensive and comprehensive teacher training is greatly demanded by the

participating teachers, as well as in the international literature. Ross-Hill (2009) indicates that inclusion will be successfully implemented if proper training for all implementers is provided. This training should be intensive, focused, and sustained and involve different relevant parties. Such training should use appropriate and effective learning strategies, proper coaching, and follow-up sessions. In addition, certain measures should be used to determine whether the trainees have achieved the needed proficiency level. Furthermore, the need for teacher training must be addressed by policy-makers, universities, colleges, and other educational institutions.

Teacher training opportunities for pre-service teachers and in-service teachers need to be developed to include fundamental knowledge about disabilities, special needs, and inclusion, in addition to the practical skills required to teach students with special needs. These training opportunities should comprise practical courses, teacher shadowing, and more exposure to different types of disabilities. These training opportunities should be provided to all teachers, not only special education ones (Fyssa et al., 2014; Mukhopadhyay, 2014). Fyssa et al. (2014) state that both general and special education teachers need to be given the opportunities to continue their professional development through careful and well-planned training courses. Hence, their beliefs will be changed, and improvements in their practices will be noticed.

Furthermore, teachers should be introduced to other types of training, such as structured workshop activities on using inclusive instructional techniques. Also, more contact and communication with people with different types of disabilities is highly needed for teachers to cultivate an inclusive attitude regarding these individuals. This will raise teachers' awareness of disabilities and inclusion, help change teachers' misconceptions towards individuals with disabilities and make them more receptive and accepting to inclusive education (Abdelhameed, 2015).

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2. **Promoting teachers' self-efficacy**

To empower teachers for taking the role of social change in inclusive education, reforms should not be implemented top-down, but policy makers should start from the needs of teachers and students during the process of creating the changes (Jovanovic et al., 2014). Policy makers and educators should put more efforts and resources to promote a positive sense of efficacy within teachers and incorporate this concept into the teacher education curriculum to equip more pre- and in-service teachers for a better command of the teaching strategies that would help students with disabilities (Lee et al., 2014). When appropriate ongoing training is provided to teachers, teachers become more confident in the methods and strategies they use in inclusive classes. Their capabilities to cater to the different needs of the students in the class are also enhanced. With appropriate training, teachers become more skilful in dealing with students with disabilities and adapt to their needs. Accordingly, teachers' self-efficacy and attitudes are improved as they feel more competent, knowledgeable and more responsive to change (Donohue & Bornman, 2015; Jovanovic et al., 2014). Self-efficacy beliefs are powerful in influencing one's attitudes and behaviour. When teachers' self-efficacy changes, their attitudes and behaviour are changed, as well (Lee et al., 2014).

3. **Reducing teachers' workload**

School administration should also consider the teachers' workload, class sizes, schedules, availability of teachers' assistants, and provision of teaching aids, along with other concerns teachers usually raise when they are required to teach inclusive classes. In addition, as indicated by Abdelhameed (2015), to improve teachers' attitudes toward inclusion, teachers need to feel supported by their peers, school administration, and other staff for the increased workload that will be required once they teach in inclusive settings. There are many ways to decrease this workload that can be done through collaborative teamwork, quality educational services, and appropriate incentives.

Teachers need more flexible schedules and more adaptable workloads. As Schwab et al. (2015) suggest, it is better for inclusive education to have an open learning environment that includes working with a weekly schedule for individual students, different learning stations, differentiated instruction and discussion groups, teamwork, communication about teaching methods, and diagnosis among different experts and team members, as well as a stable team that is available to provide help and support. Shah et al. (2015) recommend provisions of curriculum materials and promoting cooperative learning in order to have a more flexible workload for teachers, which can affect positively on their attitudes.

4. **School support and team collaboration**

The findings of this study show that negative attitudes of teachers toward inclusion and students with disabilities are influenced by the lack of school support, the poor provisions in classrooms, and the inadequate school environment. School administrations need time and effort to provide the necessary support, advice, and professional help to the general education teachers as part of successful team collaboration (Montgomery & Mirenda, 2014). Having an effective teachers' collaboration in the school is considered one of the key components of a successful inclusion. This collaborative team should include school administration, general education teachers, and special education teachers, along with a variety of educational personnel with the necessary expertise. This team should have a team leader and establish common goals with regular meeting schedules. (Montgomery & Mirenda, 2014; Mukhopadhyay, 2014).

It is necessary for teams working within inclusive settings and with students with intellectual disabilities to work together effectively. General education teachers may struggle to implement collaborative practices. Both general and special education teachers often have specific sets of skills and areas of knowledge but need to understand each other's roles in the classroom. They need to be trained in collaborative skills in order to work together to develop goals and

strategies for the students' academic needs (Montgomery & Mirenda, 2014). In addition, as Montgomery and Mirenda (2014) stress that schools need to consider seeking professional help from specialists such as behaviour specialists, speech-language pathologists, and other consulting professionals in order to identify important accommodations and provisions as part of the student's Individualized Education Programme. These experts are often able to provide extra information that might be useful to the school team. Collaborative teamwork will also mean the inclusion of decision makers, politicians, media corporations, and the general population to work together to establish successful inclusive settings (Schwab et al., 2015). Teachers' collaboration and teamwork comprise an important approach to improve teachers' practices and attitudes. As indicated by Schwab et al. (2015), once teachers are trained to work together, elaborate teaching programmes can be initiated, their competencies can be recognised, and their beliefs, attitudes, and practices can be changed.

5. **Social Awareness of disability and inclusion**

Social stigma and the lack of awareness about disability in general including the types of disabilities and how to deal with them are considered main factors affecting both teachers' and students' attitudes when it comes to the inclusion of students with intellectual disabilities. There is crucial need for means to promote awareness, tolerance and acceptance in schools and the community. As suggested by Shah et al. (2015), it is important to embed disability concepts into the school curriculum so education can promote an awareness of the ordinary lives of people with disabilities and encourage their inclusive participation in mainstream society. People need to recognise from early ages that disability is a normal part of life and that people with disabilities are more present in their daily life than they realise (Ellis & Goggin, 2015).

Montgomery and Mirenda (2014) insist on the important role that school administrations play in providing an inclusive school community that recognises and supports diversity and

individual differences. Such inclusive community will create a school environment that facilitates belonging for all. This inclusive environment can promote the philosophy of inclusion, provide the support for inclusive initiatives and programmes, and encourage and motivate staff to support inclusion. A positive school culture is a significant factor that usually contributes to the success of inclusion (Lee et al., 2014). As the new national empowerment policy was announced in 2017, the government of the UAE has made a huge impact by changing the name of "disabled people" in their official channels and local media to "people of determination" as a directive from the Vice President of the country (The National, 2017). This will hopefully help to remove the social stigma about people with disabilities and create more awareness about their rights and capabilities. With such a supportive and inclusive community, students with intellectual disabilities as well as other individuals with disabilities and special needs will hopefully not be bullied, discriminated against, or underestimated.

Also, the advocacy for the inclusion of people with disabilities should be promoted through media and social media so that the community's cultural and social views can be changed as well (Shah et al., 2015). As explained by Ellis and Goggin (2015), media in all its forms is an important means through which people communicate, participate in society, exercise their political rights, and create meaning and culture. Media provides the channels, networks, and formats through which much of life takes place and finds meaning. Thus, media has an influential role in shaping people's beliefs and attitudes toward disabilities and inclusion. Media can remove the barriers and the stigma that society has created. Media can display successful stories of inclusive cases so people would understand that there are no obstacles to success in life and that positive attitudes are essential to achieving individual and collective projects (Ellis & Goggin, 2015). Social media also plays an almost equally important role in people's lives nowadays. Many social media platforms are used by social organisations and civic associations

to direct, change, and influence people's opinions, concepts, and attitudes (Chalmers & Shotton, 2016). Social media channels need to be used more effectively by the advocates of disabilities and inclusion to spread awareness and influence attitudes in the society.

6. **Parents Support**

Parents' attitudes can significantly affect the success of inclusion. Schools need to work collaboratively with parents and involve them actively in the learning experience of their children. Thus, students' parents need to play an effective role within a collaborative teamwork. While more awareness sessions need to be available on parents' roles and responsibilities in schools especially for the parents of students with intellectual disabilities, parents also need to understand that they have positive attitudes when they provide inputs into the decision-making process in schools about their children's education and progress. Parents have different opinions regarding the placement of their children with disabilities as some would prefer separate settings while others believe in inclusive settings. Parents need more awareness to recognise the social, emotional, and educational advantages of inclusive education that cater to the needs of all children (Abdelhameed, 2015). Schools need to offer more effective workshops and training to parents to help them learn more about disabilities, inclusion, teaching strategies, IEPs, and ways to deal with behavioural issues.

7. **Other recommendations**

In addition to the recommendations which are based on the main factors found by the results of the study. Other relevant recommendations are found in literature and participants' feedback during data collection. These recommendations are as follows:

- **Appropriate provisions and resources in schools**

As the findings of this study show how teachers struggle with resources and provisions in schools to implement inclusion in their classes, policymakers and legislators of inclusive

practices need to take into consideration the attitudes of these teachers and their needs when they plan for support. This support should be comprehensive and include providing appropriate resources, access to specialist staff, backup staff, and training. Failure to provide such support, as indicated by Monsen et al. (2014), could result in a situation where regular schools become more restrictive for already vulnerable children. In addition, there is a need for an appropriate school policy regarding inclusive education, more flexible curricula, and sufficient teacher education at the university, which all require the support of policymakers and legislators (Schwab et al., 2015).

Urton et al. (2014) also suggest enabling individual teachers, principals, and other school administration staff to cope with difficult situations by enhancing their efficacy and highlighting positive experiences in inclusive education. Therefore, it is important to introduce proper means of counselling and training in the field of social inclusion, remedial education, and classroom management. In addition to that, Donohue and Bornman (2015) suggest that teachers' support should also include assistive devices and instructional materials, use computers and technology, provide teachers' aides, and provide additional skills training. Teachers' training and education should be ongoing to keep them up-to-date with the current trends and evidence-based practices in inclusive education. Donohue and Bornman (2015) also stress providing teacher assistants in inclusive classes. Having teacher assistants in inclusive classes in Dubai and the UAE is very important and should be considered by relevant entities such as the MOE, state authorities, and decision makers. As Gaad (2015) states, a comprehensive teacher assistant programme in the UAE is no longer a luxury or an option as it is important to support the inclusive approach in education.

- **Flexible Curriculum**

The findings also show that teachers consider the curriculum as one of the factors affecting their attitudes. Mitchell (2014) indicates that it is important for teachers to be aware that students with disabilities require significantly different teaching strategies in regular classes, especially those with intellectual disabilities. These might be a different adaptation to the curriculum, which requires breaking down tasks into smaller steps or even teaching practical skills such as self-care. Thus, teachers need to adapt a systematic and intensive application of a wide range of effective teaching strategies that all learners can benefit from, as well. Teachers need to be trained on curriculum adaptations and lesson modifications. Offering more flexible curriculum that can be adapted to students' different need is very important to students' success in general not only for students with intellectual disabilities.

- **Inclusion framework**

Inclusion is not an extra challenge for the traditional schools but it demands new forms of school organisations which include curriculum, objectives, strategies, and evaluation (Rodrigues, 2016). To implement a successful inclusive education, Mitchell (2014) recommend an implementation framework which consists of four stages. The first stage starts with exploring and adopting the appropriate programmes of inclusive practices followed by installing a training system for practitioners to help implement the new programmes with confidence. Then, addressing all challenges that may occur during initial implementation whether to individual staff or schools and finally monitoring the programmes trustworthiness and outcomes in a full operation mode and amend accordingly. The government and educational authorities should plan carefully for each stage in order to have a successful implementation. Having the support of government authority with a carefully and well-planned

initiative has a great influence on the implementation of inclusive education and teachers' attitudes (Lee et al., 2014).

Mitchell (2014) stressed that a successful inclusion should be based on a successful implementation of a range of evidence-based strategies and methods that have been proved by controlled research to effectively produce the desired outcomes. These methods should be carefully planned and well-resourced. It should also be based on actual changes at different levels such as the practitioner, supervisory, and administrative support levels, as well as the system level. More studies are needed to place inclusion on the international policy agenda. This, as Fyssa et al. (2014) state, is important to understand the complexities of inclusion and assist policy makers and practitioners in their efforts to improve the well-being of people with disabilities in education. Moreover, further research is needed to follow up on the factors influencing these attitudes in Dubai and the UAE, as there is a lack of research in this area. More studies will help educators better understand the attitudes of teachers, students, parents, and people with disabilities themselves so that they can plan for improvement in inclusive practices and special education.

Personal gains:

While working on this study, the researcher was fortunate to obtain some gains on a personal and professional level. As more knowledge, awareness and understanding have been increased gradually on a professional level, more passion and compassion have been grown inside on a personal level. Realising how vulnerable individuals with intellectual disabilities can be was worth becoming an advocate for their rights in having a proper education and care. Also, realising how most teachers were unaware of the importance of inclusion gave the researcher courage to present papers in different conferences to promote and educate people on social inclusion. The researcher became aware that she might have become more bias to individuals

with disabilities while working more closely with them. However, she made all possible efforts to avoid that while completing this study. The researcher is grateful that she has chosen this path as to educate oneself and others in a very noble and right-based cause.

Implications for further research

Given the limitations of the current study, which was discussed in previous chapters, further research is needed to collect inductive and longitudinal data on the development and change of teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education in the UAE, especially given that continuous efforts are being made to improve education in the country. As indicated by Vaz et al. (2015), longitudinal data would enable analysis using cross-lagged prediction models and measurability of concepts, such as teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education and factors affecting teachers' attitudes over time.

This study investigated only general and special education teachers in some primary schools in Dubai to collect the data. Future studies may need to use more methods of data collection from multiple stakeholders, including administrators, parents, and students with and without disabilities, to get a more holistic picture of the status of inclusion, the attitudes of participants, and the factors associated with them. As indicated by similar studies (e.g. Berhanu, 2011; Greene, 2017), future researchers may also wish to explore differences in the attitudes of teachers toward inclusive education practices at different levels of the education system such as in cycle 2 (grade 6-9) and secondary level (grade 10-12) in the UAE. Further research may need to explore the status of inclusive education and the attitudes of teachers and students at a tertiary level in the higher education institutions in the UAE. More comparative studies can be carried out to observe changes in attitudes throughout the education system. Studies can also be performed depending on the types and levels of severity of disabilities, the attitudes of teachers and peers in the education system, the way they are related to social stigma, and

the way in which they affect the implementation of inclusive education. Studies can also be done to explore and compare attitudes of teachers towards inclusion and disabilities across the GCC countries and find whether factors associated with these attitudes are similar or not. In conclusion, more studies related to inclusion, disabilities, attitudes, and social stigma in the UAE are needed to enrich the literature and knowledge of the country, the GCC, and the Arab region.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Approval letter from the Ministry of Education

Ministry of Education

Dubai Educational Zone

Ref. : ....

Date : ....

<div dir="rtl">

وزارة الـتربـــيــة والـتـعـلــيــم

منطقــة دبـــي التعليميـة

المرجع : ٦ ٧ ٦

التاريخ : ٦١٦/١١١/١١١ ٢

السيدات / مديرات المدارس التالية :-

المحترمات

تحية طيبة وبعد ...

الموضوع/ تسهيل مهمة المتدربة / امنة العبيدلي

بداية يطيب لنا أن نهديكم أطيب التحيات وخالص التمنيات بدوام التقدم والازدهار .

برجاء السماح للدارسة أمنة العبيدلي من الجامعة البريطانية بدبي بزيارة مدارسكم الموقرة

للالتقاء معلمات التربية الخاصة وإدارة المدرسة وحضور حصص المشاهدة لطلبة الدمج .

وتفضلوا بقبول وافر الشكر والاحترام ...

د. أحمد عبيد المنصوري

مدير منطقة دبي التعليمية

المرفق (نسخة من رسالة الجامعة)

نسخة لـ

وحدة التربية الخاصة

العمليات التربوية

</div>

<div dir="rtl">

هاتف: 2062222 4 971+ :Tel. – فاكس: 2062420 4 971+ :Fax – دبي، الإمارات العربية المتحدة – ص.ب: P.O.Box: 8353 - Dubai, U.A.E.

البريد الألكتروني: E-mail: dez@moe.gov.ae

</div>

Appendix 2: Participant's consent form – Arabic

<div dir="rtl">

الباحثة: آمنة العبيدلي

هاتف: ▮▮▮▮▮

بريد الكتروني: 100093@student.buid.ac.ae

اقرار الموافقة على المشاركة في دراسة بحثية

تقوم الباحثة آمنة العبيدلي من الجامعة البريطانية في دبي، بعمل دراسة بحثية **تهدف** الى التعرف على العوامل التي تؤثر على سلوك واتجاهات المعلمين في المدارس الحكومية الابتدائية تجاه عملية دمج الطلاب من ذوي الاعاقات الذهنية، وذلك **كجزء من الدراسة الخاصة بدرجة الدكتوراه**، جميع المعلومات التي يتم جمعها سواء من المقابلات الشخصية، حصص المشاهدة المدرسية، أو الوثائق المتعلقة بالمدرسة **سيتعامل بها بسرية تامة، ولن يتم الافصاح عنها لجهات أخرى وستستخدم من قبل الباحثة لأغراض اكاديمية فقط**

إن إدارة الجامعة البريطانية في دبي والأشخاص القائمين على هذه الدراسة البحثية ملتزمين بالقوانين الخاصة و المحكمة للسلوك الأخلاقي المعتمد عند إجراء البحوث وذلك لحماية حقوق و خصوصية الأشخاص و الهيئات المشاركة في هذه الدراسة في جميع الأوقات، التوقيع على هذه الاستمارة والمعلومات التي تتضمنها تؤمن لكم الحفاظ على الخصوصية و سرية المعلومات التي سوف تستخدم لأغراض بحثية فقط ،توقيعك على هذا النموذج هو دلالة على قبولكم للمشاركة و تفهمكم للإجراءات والمخاطر المحتملة ، والفوائد المترتبة على هذا المشروع البحثي.

سيتم الحفاظ على كافة المعلومات التي يتم الحصول عليها خلال هذه الدراسة بسرية الى أقصى حد يسمح به القانون، لا يشترط معرفة هويتك وذلك لن تكون هناك حاجة لكتابة اسمك أو أي معلومات أخرى لا يتطلبها البحث ويتم التعامل مع هذه المعلومات بسرية تامة و سوف تستخدم لأغراض بحثية بحتة، ولن يتم الكشف عن أي أسماء، و سيتم الاحتفاظ بالمادة البحثية في مكان آمن ، وسيتم إتلافها بعد استخدامها.

أتفهم ما طرحته الأستاذة آمنة العبيدلي، وهي طالبة في برنامج الدكتوراه في الجامعة البريطانية في دبي وما يتطلب مني للمشاركة في مشروع بحثي، وأتفهم ما يلي:

☐ أتفهم إجراءات البحث، والهدف منه، وما قد يحتوي من معلومات شخصية لن يتم الكشف عنها

☐ أتفهم انه سيتم التعامل مع المعلومات بسرية تامة ولأغراض بحثية فقط دون الكشف عن الخصوصية

☐ أتفهم ان البحث قد يتضمن مشاهدة حصص مدرسية، تتضمن وجود الطلاب من الاطفال و سيتم حماية حقوقهم و التعامل مع المعلومات بشكل سري.

☐ أتفهم أنه بإمكاني الانسحاب من هذه الدراسة في أيوقت.

☐ أتفهم أيضا بأنني بإمكاني التقدم بشكوى حيال أي إخلال بالقوانين والسلوك الاخلاقي المتعلق بالبحث مع الباحثة المذكورة أعلاه أو مع الدكتورة إيمان جاد عميد كلية التربية في الجامعة البريطانية في دبي المشرفة على رسالة الدكتوراه.

☐ لذا ،،
أوافق على المشاركة في هذه الدراسة البحثية سواء عن طريق السماح للباحثة بحضور حصص دراسية في الفصول المدرسية، أو الحصول على معلومات أو وثائق معينة أو إجراء مقابلة حول موضوع البحث في المدرسة أو أي موضوع اخر يتصل بالدراسة البحثية خلال الفترة من 15 يناير 2014 إلى 31 ديسمبر 2015.

الاسم : ------------------------------

المهنة: ------------------------------

المدرسة:------------------------------

التوقيع:------------------------------

التاريخ: ------------------------------

الجامعة البريطانية بدبي
Tel. +971 4 369 3789
Fax: +971 4 366 4698
www.buid.ac.ae

</div>

Appendix 3: Participant consent form – English translation

Consent form

INFORMED CONSENT BY SUBJECTS TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH
PROJECT

Researcher: Amna Alobeidli
Mobile No. 0502888202
Email: 100093@student.buid.ac.ae

The British University in Dubai (BUiD) and those conducting this project subscribe to the ethical conduct of research and to the protection at all times of the interests, comfort, and safety of subjects. This form and the information it contains are given to you for your own protection and full understanding of the procedures. Your signature on this form will signify that you have received a document, which describes the procedures, possible risks, and benefits of this research project, that you have received an adequate opportunity to consider the information in the document, and that you voluntarily agree to participate in the project.

Any information that is obtained during this study will be kept confidential to the full extent permitted by law. Knowledge of your identity is not required. You will not be required to write your name or any other identifying information on the research materials. Materials will be held in a secure location and will be destroyed after the completion of the study.

Having been asked by Amna Al Obaidli, a student in the Doctorate Program at the British University in Dubai to participate in a research project,

- I have read the procedures specified in the document.
- I understand the procedures to be used in this project and the personal risks to me in taking part.
- I understand that I may withdraw my participation in this experiment at any time.

The British University in Dubai
Tel. +971 4 369 3789
Fax: +971 4 366 4698
www.buid.ac.ae

- I also understand that I may register any complaint I might have about the research project with the researcher named above or with Dr. Eman Gaad the Dean of the Faculty of Education of The British University in Dubai

- I may obtain copies of the results of this study if I wish, upon its completion, by contacting: Amna Alobeidli at the contact details specified in the instruction sheet.

- I have been informed that the research material will be held confidential by the researcher.

- I understand that my supervisor or employer may require me to obtain his or her permission prior to my participation in a study such as this.

I agree to participate by giving access to the researcher to conduct an observation of my lesson, have access to class materials or conduct an interview on the topic of attitudes toward learners with disabilities, inclusive education and provisions for students with special needs in my school or any related topic to the specified ones as described in the document referred to above, during the time period from January 2014 to December 2015.

Name: ---

Profession: ---

Signature: --

Date: ---

Appendix 4: Focus groups and semi-structured interview guide

Focus groups and semi-structured interview guide

Note taking will be made by using a computer.

The following questions will be used to guide the discussion with focus group and semi-structured interviews. For the interviews, questions might be added or changed depending on the data collected by focus group and questionnaires.

Protocol and procedures will be introduced first. Consent forms will be signed beforehand.

A paper with demographic information on participants will be handed out to collect information on:

Age group, school, years of experience, Type of teaching (general/special), teaching grade, Experience with intellectual disabilities, experience with inclusion

All participants will be given unique ID numbers for analysis purposes after selection.

For Focus Group/Interview Use

Date: --------------------
School: ------------------
Teacher ID (for interviews): -------------
Topic: "An investigative study of factors affecting the attitudes of Emirati primary teachers towards intellectual disabilities in government inclusive schools in Dubai, the United Arab Emirates".

Part I: DEMOGRAPHICS

Before we begin, please answer a few short questions about your teaching experience.

1. What is your group age:

   ☐ 21-25

☐ 26-30

☐ 31-40

☐ 41- 50

☐ above 51

2. How many years have you been teaching?

☐ 0-5 years

☐ 6-10 years

☐ 11-15 years

☐ 16-20 years

☐ 21-25 years

☐ 25+ years.

1. What grade levels do you presently teach?

☐ 1

☐ 2

☐ 3

☐ 4

☐ 5

2. Are you a special education teacher?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ If not, specify ---------------

3. How many years of teaching experience do you have working with students with intellectual disability?

☐ 2-3 years

☐ 4-5 years

☐ 5-10

☐ 10 +

☐ none

4. Do you presently have any students in your classroom that have disabilities?

☐ Yes

☐ No

5. Please check the type of trainings you have had in Special Education:

☐ Pre-service

☐ In-Service (District)

☐ Conferences

☐ Books/Journals

☐ Training on Modifications

☐ None

☐ Others, please specify --

Part II: Questions/Discussion Themes

1. Experience on disability

   a. Do you have anybody who has disability in your family or friends? What types?

   b. Do you teach a class with a child with disability? If yes, what types?

   c. What do you think of people with disability in general?

   d. How should children with intellectual disability be educated in society?

   e. Do you think children with intellectual disability can learn effectively in general schools? Explain please.

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2. Knowledge on Inclusion

    a. What is social inclusion in schools?

    b. Is your school an inclusive school? Why?

    c. What types of disabilities you think should be included in schools?

    d. What types of disabilities should not be included? Why?

    e. Which is better special classes as used to be before or inclusion? Why?

    f. If you do not have a child with intellectual disability in your class, will you agree to have one? Why?

    g. Did you have a previous knowledge on inclusion before you start practicing it?

    h. How did you gain knowledge on providing for a child with disability in your class?

    i. How many hours do you spend to prepare for a provision for a child with intellectual disability comparing to a child with no disability? Explain.

    j. What other efforts you make to provide for a child with intellectual disability in your class?

3. Teachers' attitudes towards intellectual disability?

    a. Are you with or against inclusion of children with intellectual disability? Why?

    b. Do you think a child with intellectual disability will require more attention than other types of disabilities? Why?

    c. In what way do you think having a child with intellectual disability will affect other children in the class?

d. Why do you think some teachers refuse to take a child with intellectual disability in their classes?

e. Do you think teachers of inclusive classes treat a child with intellectual disability as the same as other children? Why?

f. Do you think as a teacher of inclusive class you receive the appreciation you deserve?

g. Do you think school administration support teachers who teach inclusive classes? How?

h. Do you think it is fair for other non-disabled children to have a CWD in the class? Why?

i. If you are given the choice will you accept a child with intellectual disability in your class? Explain why?

j. What do you know about Laws and regulations on PWD in the UAE?

k. What do you know about the policy on inclusion in education

l. Do you think teachers in general treat a child with intellectual disability fairly in class? Why?

m. Do teachers' pay more attention to a child with intellectual disability in class? Why?

n. What things teachers do to motivate a child with intellectual disability in class?

o. Do you think teaching a child with intellectual disability is a burden? Why?

4. Training on inclusion

a. What do you think of the requirements needed to cater for a child with disabilities (in general) in regular classroom?

b. Do you think you have appropriate resources in school to teach CWD?

c. What resources do you think are needed for teaching CWD in regular classrooms?

d. What types of training do you think are needed to prepare a teacher to teach inclusive classes?

e. Do you spend more time to prepare lesson material for a CWD'? How? Can you give estimated time for each?

f. Do you think you have enough knowledge on how to teach a child with intellectual disability?

g. What types of training do you have that prepared you to teach an inclusive class?

h. Do you think you received enough training on how to teach CWD? How?

5. Suggestions to improve attitudes towards disability and inclusion

a. What do you suggest to improve teachers attitudes towards children with intellectual disabilities in inclusive schools?

6. Factors affecting attitudes

a. What make teachers refuse to teach inclusive classes?

b. What make teachers neglect or pay attention to a child with disability in class?

c. What make teachers not provide appropriately for a child with disability in class?

d. What makes a teacher provide appropriately for a child with intellectual disability?

e. What are the possible factors that you think make teachers think/act negatively or positively of inclusion?

7. Recommendation to improve inclusive experience of teachers

a. What do you suggest to improve the practice of inclusion in general?

b. What do you think is required from school administrations in order to improve teaching in inclusive classes?

c. What do you recommend to improve the experience of inclusion for children with intellectual disability?

d. What do you think required from decision makers in order to improve inclusive practices in Dubai?

Attitudes Questionnaire

Part I: DEMOGRAPHICS

Before we begin, please answer a few short questions about your teaching experience.

1. How many years have you been teaching?

       ☐ 0-5 years

       ☐ 6-10 years

       ☐ 11-15 years

       ☐ 16-20 years

       ☐ 21-25 years

       ☐ 25+ years.

2. What grade levels do you presently teach?

       ☐ 1

       ☐ 2

       ☐ 3

       ☐ 4

       ☐ 5

3. Are you a special education teacher?

       ☐ Yes

       ☐ No

4. How many years of teaching experience do you have working with students with intellectual disability?

       ☐ 2-3 years

☐ 4-5 years

☐ 5-10

☐ 10 +

5. Do you presently have any students in your classroom that have disabilities?

☐ Yes

☐ No

6. Please check the type of trainings you have had in Special Education:

☐ Pre-service

☐ In-Service (District)

☐ Conferences

☐ Books/Journals

☐ Training on Modifications

☐ None

☐ Others, please specify ---

General Directions:

The following survey contains a series of statements that express feelings about teaching students with disabilities in the regular education classroom. There are no right or wrong answers. Your identity will not be known. All responses will be kept confidential. Select the response that best describes your feelings for each statement.

Here is an overview of Intellectual disabilities that you will be asked about. This description will help you in answering the questions:

Intellectual Disability which also is referred to as "Mental Disability" and "Developmental Delay" is characterized by significant limitations both in intellectual functioning and in adaptive behavior as expressed in conceptual, social, and practical adaptive skills. Intellectual disability is the current preferred term used instead of "mental retardation" as it aligns better with current professional practices focusing on functional behaviours and contextual factors

and is more consistent with international terminology. It covers the same population of individuals who were diagnosed previously with mental retardation in number, kind, level, type, and duration of the disability and the need for individualized services and support. When we refer to intellectual disability in this questionnaire, we includes children with Down Syndrome, children with Autism, children with mental impairment, children with specific learning disabilities, some children with developmental disabilities such as cerebral palsy or epilepsy might develop intellectual disabilities, children with genetic disorders that affect their intellectual functioning and adaptive behaviour.[2]

Part II: QUESTIONNAIRE 1[3]

Please check one response for each disability that best corresponds with your level of agreement to the statement:

1. One advantage of teaching students with disabilities in a regular education classroom with their nondisabled peers is that all students will learn to work together toward achieving goals.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

2. Teaching students with disabilities in the regular education classroom will encourage them to work harder academically.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

3. Students with disabilities that are included in the regular education classroom will learn more quickly.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

---

[2] Sources: (Harris, 2006). (Schalock, et al., 2007)

[3] Adapted from (**Davis, 2009**) originally developed from the 'Physical Educators' Attitude Toward Teaching Individuals with Disabilities-III (Rizzo, 1993)'

4. Students with disabilities will develop a better self-concept when included in the regular education classroom with their peers.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

5. Students with disabilities included in the regular education classroom will be accepted by their nondisabled peers.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

6. Students with disabilities included in the regular education classroom will not disrupt my class.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

7. Having to teach students with disabilities in the regular education classroom does not place an unreasonable burden on the teachers.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

8. I have enough training to teach students with disabilities with their nondisabled peers in the regular education classroom.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

9. Teaching students with disabilities in the regular education classroom with their nondisabled peers is not more work for me.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

10. Students with disabilities being taught in the regular education classroom with their nondisabled peers does not take too much of my time.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

11. As a teacher, I feel I DO NOT need more professional development because I feel comfortable teaching students with disabilities in the regular education classroom.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

12. Students with disabilities should be taught in the regular education classroom with their nondisabled peers whenever possible.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

Part III: QUESTIONNAIRE 2[4]

Attitudes Toward Inclusion of Students with Special Needs

1. Only teachers with extensive special education experience can be expected to deal with students with intellectual disabilities in a school setting.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

2. Schools with both students with intellectual disabilities and students without disabilities enhance the learning experiences of students with intellectual disabilities.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

3. Students with intellectual disabilities are too impaired to benefit from the activities of a regular school.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

---

[4] Adapted from **(Wrushen, 2009)** part of 'Principal and Inclusion Survey (PIS)' originally developed from 'Attitudes of elementary school principals toward the inclusion of students with disabilities Survey' by: Praisner, C. L. (2003). Attitudes of elementary school principals toward the inclusion of students with disabilities. Exceptional Children, Vol.69 (2), pp.135-145.

4. A good regular educator can do a lot to help a student with intellectual disability.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

5. In general, students with intellectual disabilities should be placed in special classes/schools specifically designed for them.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

6. Students without disabilities can profit from contact with students with intellectual disabilities.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

7. Regular education should be modified to meet the needs of all students including students with intellectual disabilities.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

8. It is unfair to ask/expect regular teachers to accept students with intellectual disabilities.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

9. No discretionary financial resources should be allocated for the integration of students with intellectual disabilities.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

10. It should be policy and/or law that students with intellectual disabilities are integrated into

    regular educational programs and activities.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

Appendix 6: Questionnaire's Author approval – Dr. Tracie Davis

M Gmail   Amna Al Obeidli <amna.alobeidli@gmail.com>

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inquiry on Tracie Davis
3 messages

Amna Al Obaidli <amna.alobeidli@gmail.com>   Mon, Sep 16, 2013 at 6:34 PM
To: edkinsn@lake-lehman.k12.pa.us

[text illegible — rendered in unreadable symbol font]

From: Amna Al Obaidli <amna.alobeidli@gmail.com>
Date: Monday, September 16, 2013 5:33 PM
To: <tracie.davis@waldenu.edu>
Subject: Seeking permission to use Questionnaire from your PhD thesis 2009

Dear Dr. Davis,
Hope this gets you well.

I'm a doctorate student at the British University in Dubai which has an affiliation program with the University of Birmingham in the UK. I'm doing my doctorate in Education and my thesis will be on attitudes of teachers towards children with intellectual disabilities. I've read your thesis and found it very beneficial. I would like to seek your permission to use the questionnaire (found in appendix C) used in your thesis for the use of measuring teacher's attitudes for my coming thesis. I'll be using it to measure attitudes towards intellectual disability (in general) without specifying types of intellectual disabilities and with minimum adaptation (just contextual and cultural terminology). This will be part A of my Questionnaire which will be combined with another set of closed and open ended questions. The questionnaire will be translated into Arabic for the use of teachers making sure translation matches the original. I'm attaching a copy of the modified version for your review and approval.

If you require to see the full proposal of my thesis or require more information please let me know.

Awaiting your kind response.

Thank you in advance.

Regards,
Amna Al Obeidli
The British University in Dubai
www.buid.ac.ae
ID: 100093

📄 **ATTITUDE SURVEY_English.docx**
79K

Tracie Davis <DavisT@lake-lehman.k12.pa.us>   Thu, Sep 19, 2013 at 9:43 PM
To: Amna Al Obaidli <amna.alobeidli@gmail.com>

Sorry you had trouble finding me. I did receive your email from my principal today. I have reviewed your ideas and I am very excited to see your results. You can definitely have my permission to use my survey that I adapted from Mr. Rizzo. I would appreciate a summary of results when you are done if possible for my own curiosity. I hope you enjoy the results as much as I did. Good luck! Look forward to hearing from you.

Dr, Davis

>>> Amna Al Obaidli <amna.alobeidli@gmail.com> 9/16/2013 10:34 AM >>>
[Quoted text hidden]

Amna Al Obeidli <amna.alobeidli@gmail.com>   Mon, Sep 23, 2013 at 2:43 PM
To: edkinsn@lake-lehman.k12.pa.us

Dear Dr. Davis,
Thank you very much for replying to my email and for agreeing to give permission to use the questionnaire. I really appreciate your help. Sure I'll send you a summary of the results when done.

Thank you again.

best regards,

Amna
[Quoted text hidden]

Appendix 7: Final Questionnaire – amended and finalised by the researcher – Arabic

المسح الخاص بالسلوك والاتجاهات لمعلمات المرحلة الابتدائية حول دمج الطلاب من ذوي الإعاقات الذهنية في الصفوف العامة في المدارس الحكومية في دبي

توجيهات عامة :

تتضمن الاستبانة الحالية سلسلة من العبارات التي تعبر عن مشاعر المعلمين حول تدريس الطلاب ذوي الإعاقة الذهنية في الفصول الدراسية ضمن التعليم العام الحكومي ، لا توجد إجابات صحيحة أو خاطئة، و لن يتم الكشف عن هويتك مطلقاً حيث ستبقى جميع الإجابات سرية،
قم اختيار الإجابة التي تصف مشاعرك عند كل عبارة
سيتم استخدام هذا المسح لأغراض البحث العلمي، وكجزء من متطلبات الحصول على درجة الدكتوراه.

قبل البدء في الإجابة، إليك لمحة عامة عن الإعاقة الذهنية التي سوف تسألين عنها و التي قد تساعدك في الإجابة على الأسئلة.

يقصد بالإعاقة الذهنية والتي و يشار إليها ب " الإعاقة العقلية " أو " تأخر النمو " وجود محدودية في الأداء العقلي الفكري و السلوك التكيفي الذي يعبر عنه عن طريق المهارات الفكرية والاجتماعية و المهارات العملية التكيفية .

الإعاقة الذهنية [1] هو المصطلح الأكثر تفضيلا والمستخدم كبديل عن   مصطلح "التخلف العقلي " الشائع سابقاً، يستخدم حاليا علـي نطاق واسع لانسجامه مع أفضل الممارسات المهنية الحالية، ويركز علـى السلوكيات الوظيفية و العوامل البيئية، ويعد أكثر توافقاً مع المصطلحات الدولية.
ويشمل مصطلح الإعاقة الذهنية جميع الأفراد الذين تم تشخيصهم فيما يسمى سابقا "بالتخلف العقلي" من حيث العدد، والنوع، والمستوى، وطبيعة الإعاقة ومدة استمرارها، ومدى الحاجة إلى الخدمات الفردية والدعم.
عند الاشارة الى الإعاقة الذهنية في هذا الاستبيان فإننا نشمل جميع الطلاب من ذوي متلازمة داون، والتوحد، والإعاقات العقلية، وصعوبات التعلم المحددة، والإعاقات الجسدية مثل الشلل الدماغي أو المشاكل الصحية مثل الصرع والتي قد ينتج عنها إعاقات ذهنية، وكذلك من لديهم بعض إعاقات النمو التي تسبب خللا في النمو الذهني، والطلاب ممن لديهم اضطرابات وراثية جينية قد تؤثر على قدرات التفكير ومهارات السلوك التكيفي.

يقصد بالصفوف النظامية: صفوف التعليم العام أو الصفوف الاعتيادية التي يدمج فيها جميع الطلاب من فئة عمرية واحدة بغض النظر عن قدراتهم العقلية أو الجسدية وذلك حسب السنة الدراسية المحددة.

يقصد بالمعلم العام: المعلم غير المتخصص في مجال الاحتياجات الخاصة.

يقصد بمعلم التربية الخاصة: المعلم الذي لديه شهادة في التربية الخاصة والمتخصص بتدريس ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة (والتي من ضمنها الطلاب ذوي الإعاقات الذهنية) سواء في صفوف منفصلة أو صفوف الدمج.

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[1] المصدر مترجم من (Schalock, et al., 2007) .(Harris, 2006)

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1

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التعليم العام: هو التعليم النظامي الاعتيادي الذي تقدمه الدولة مجانا لجميع الطلاب الذين يحملون جنسيتها والذي يكون تحت إدارة وإشراف الجهة المسؤولة والسيادية في الدولة (وزارة التربية والتعليم).

القسم الأول - معلومات ديموغرافية:

<u>قبل البدء، يرجى اختيار الإجابة المناسبة :</u>

1. سنوات الخبرة في التدريس:

☐ 0 - 5 سنوات
☐ 6 - 10 سنوات
☐ 11 - 15 سنة
☐ 16 – 20 سنة
☐ 21 - 25 سنة
☐ أكثر من 25 سنة

2. الصف الدراسي الذي تدرسينه حاليا:

☐ 1
☐ 2
☐ 3
☐ 4
☐ 5

3. هل أنت (أو قد كنت سابقا) معلمة تربية خاصة ؟

☐ نعم
☐ لا

4. كم عدد سنوات الخبرة في تدريس الطلاب من ذوي الإعاقات الذهنية

☐ 2 - 3 سنوات
☐ 4 - 5 سنوات
☐ 5 – 10 سنوات
☐ أكثر من 10 سنوات
☐ أخرى ----------
☐ لا يوجد

5. هل لديك حاليا في أي صف من صفوفك طفل من ذوي الإعاقات الذهنية؟

☐ نعم
☐ لا

6. هل تلقيت أياً من التدريبات التالية في التربية الخاصة؟ (اختاري كل ما ترينه مناسباً)

☐ تدريب أثناء الدراسة الجامعية
☐ التدريب أثناء الخدمة
☐ مؤتمر

☐ قراءات متخصصة (كتب – مجلات)
☐ تدريب حول تعديل المنهج
☐ أخرى ، يرجى التحديد   -------------------------------
☐ لم أتلق أي تدريب

القسم الثاني –اتجاهات و سلوك المعلمين تجاه دمج الطلاب من ذوي الاعاقات الذهنية في المدارس العامة الحكومية [2]

يرجى قراءة العبارات بدقة و تحديد مستوى الموافقة المناسب لكل عبارة من العبارات التالية :

1.   أحد ايجابيات تدريس الطلاب ذوي الإعاقات الذهنية في الصفوف النظامية مع أقرانهم ممن ليس لديهم إعاقات أن الطلاب جميعهم سيعملون بصورة جماعية لتحقيق الأهداف الخاصة بالدرس.

غير موافق بشدة	غير موافق	غير محدد	موافق	موافق بشدة

2.   تعليم الطلاب من ذوي الإعاقة الذهنية في الصفوف النظامية سيشجعهم على بذل جهد أكبر أكاديميا.

غير موافق بشدة	غير موافق	غير محدد	موافق	موافق بشدة

3.   الطلاب من ذوي الإعاقات الذهنية المدمجين في الصفوف النظامية سيتعلمون بصورة اسرع .

غير موافق بشدة	غير موافق	غير محدد	موافق	موافق بشدة

4.   الطلاب من ذوي الإعاقات الذهنية المدمجين في الصفوف النظامية سيطورون مفهوم ذات أفضل عن أنفسهم.

غير موافق بشدة	غير موافق	غير محدد	موافق	موافق بشدة

5.   الطلاب من ذوي الإعاقات الذهنية المدمجين في الصفوف النظامية سيتم تقبلهم من قبل أقرانهم ممن ليست لديهم إعاقات

غير موافق بشدة	غير موافق	غير محدد	موافق	موافق بشدة

6.   الطلاب من ذوي الإعاقات الذهنية المدمجين في الصفوف النظامية لن يتسببوا في أي إزعاج في الحصة الدراسية

غير موافق بشدة	غير موافق	غير محدد	موافق	موافق بشدة

---

[2] المسح مقتبس من المصادر التالية: (Wrushen, 2009) (David, 2009)

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14. المدارس التي تحتوي على طلاب من ذوي الإعاقات الذهنية مع طلاب ممن ليس لديهم إعاقات تعمل على تحسين التجربة التعليمية للطلاب من ذوي الإعاقات الذهنية.

غير موافق بشدة	غير موافق	غير محدد	موافق	موافق بشدة

15. الطلاب من ذوي الإعاقات الذهنية عاجزون كثيراً عن الاستفادة من الأنشطة عند دمجهم في مدرسة ذات تعليم عام.

غير موافق بشدة	غير موافق	غير محدد	موافق	موافق بشدة

16. المعلم العام يستطيع فعل الكثير لمساعدة الطالب من ذوي الإعاقة الذهنية إذا كان معلماً جيداً.

غير موافق بشدة	غير موافق	غير محدد	موافق	موافق بشدة

17. بشكل عام، الطلاب من ذوي الإعاقات الذهنية يجب وضعهم في صفوف أو مدارس خاصة تصمم خصيصا لهم.

غير موافق بشدة	غير موافق	غير محدد	موافق	موافق بشدة

18. من الممكن أن ينتفع الطلاب الذين ليست لديهم إعاقات من اتصالهم بالطلاب من ذوي الإعاقات الذهنية.

غير موافق بشدة	غير موافق	غير محدد	موافق	موافق بشدة

19. يجب تعديل التعليم العام بشكل يتيح اشباع احتياجات جميع الطلاب بمن فيهم الطلاب ذوي الإعاقات الذهنية.

غير موافق بشدة	غير موافق	غير محدد	موافق	موافق بشدة

20. ليس من العدل أن نطالب أو نتوقع من المعلم العام أن يتقبل الطلاب من ذوي الإعاقات الذهنية (في الصف).

غير موافق بشدة	غير موافق	غير محدد	موافق	موافق بشدة

21. لا يجب تخصيص موارد مالية اضافية لدمج الطلاب من ذوي الإعاقات الذهنية.

غير موافق بشدة	غير موافق	غير محدد	موافق	موافق بشدة

22. يجب أن يكون هناك قانون أو سياسة لدمج الطلاب ذوي الإعاقات الذهنية في البرامج و الأنشطة التعليمية النظامية.

موافق بشدة	موافق	غير محدد	غير موافق	غير موافق بشدة

23. في رأيك، ما هي **العوامل** التي تؤثر **سلبياً** على دمج الطلاب من ذوي الإعاقات الذهنية في التعليم العام؟

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

24. في رأيك، ما هي **العوامل** التي تؤدي إلى **نجاح** عملية دمج الطلاب ذوي الإعاقات الذهنية في التعليم العام ؟

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

25. في رأيك، ما هي **العوامل** التي يحتاجها **المعلم** لكي يستطيع التعامل بنجاح مع الطلاب من ذوي الإعاقات الذهنية المدمجين في التعليم العام؟

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

نشكر لكم تعاونكم

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Appendix 8: Final Questionnaire – English translation

School Code: ------   Teacher Code: -----

Questionnaire on the attitudes of teachers in primary schools about the inclusion of students with intellectual disabilities in regular classes in government schools in Dubai, UAE

General Directions:

The following survey contains a series of statements that express feelings about teaching students with disabilities in the regular education classroom. There are no right or wrong answers. Your identity will not be known. All responses will be kept confidential. Select the response that best describes your feelings for each statement.

Here is an overview of Intellectual disabilities that you will be asked about. This description will help you in answering the questions:

Intellectual Disability which also is referred to as "Mental Disability" and "Developmental Delay" is characterized by significant limitations both in intellectual functioning and in adaptive behavior as expressed in conceptual, social, and practical adaptive skills. Intellectual disability is the current preferred term used instead of "mental retardation" as it aligns better with current professional practices focusing on functional behaviours and contextual factors and is more consistent with international terminology. It covers the same population of individuals who were diagnosed previously with mental retardation in number, kind, level, type, and duration of the disability and the need for individualized services and support. When we refer to intellectual disability in this questionnaire, we include children with Down Syndrome, children with Autism, children with mental impairment, children with specific learning disabilities, some children with developmental disabilities such as cerebral palsy or epilepsy might develop intellectual disabilities, children with genetic disorders that affect their intellectual functioning and adaptive behaviour.[1]

Please refer to the following definitions when you respond to the questionnaires' items:

Regular classes: General classes in which all students of one age group are integrated, regardless of their intellectual or physical abilities, according to the specific academic year.

General teacher: the teacher who is not specialized in the field of special needs.

Special education teacher: The teacher who has a certificate in special education and specialized in teaching special needs (including students with intellectual disabilities) in separate classes or classes of integration (special classes).

---

[1] Sources: (Harris, 2006). (Schalock, et al., 2007)

General education: It is the regular educational school system provided by the State free of charge to all students who have its nationality, which is under the administration and supervision of the State educational authority (in this case -the Ministry of Education).

Part I: DEMOGRAPHICS

<u>Before we begin, please answer a few short questions about your teaching experience.</u>

1. How many years have you been teaching?
   - ☐ 0-5 years
   - ☐ 6-10 years
   - ☐ 11-15 years
   - ☐ 16-20 years
   - ☐ 21-25 years
   - ☐ 25+ years.
2. What grade levels do you presently teach?
   - ☐ 1
   - ☐ 2
   - ☐ 3
   - ☐ 4
   - ☐ 5
3. Are you a special education teacher?
   - ☐ Yes
   - ☐ No
4. How many years of teaching experience do you have working with students with intellectual disability?
   - ☐ 2-3 years
   - ☐ 4-5 years
   - ☐ 5-10
   - ☐ 10 +
5. Do you presently have any students in your classroom that have disabilities?
   - ☐ Yes
   - ☐ No
6. Please check the type of trainings you have had in Special Education:
   - ☐ Pre-service
   - ☐ In-Service (District)
   - ☐ Conferences
   - ☐ Books/Journals
   - ☐ Training on Modifications
   - ☐ None
   - ☐ Others, please specify ---

Part II: Questionnaire on teachers attitudes toward the inclusion of students with intellectual disabilities in regular classes in government schools[2]

Please check one response for each that best corresponds with your level of agreement to the statement:

1. One advantage of teaching students with disabilities in a regular education classroom with their nondisabled peers is that all students will learn to work together toward achieving goals.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

2. Teaching students with disabilities in the regular education classroom will encourage them to work harder academically.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

3. Students with disabilities that are included in the regular education classroom will learn more quickly.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

4. Students with disabilities will develop a better self-concept when included in the regular education classroom with their peers.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

5. Students with disabilities included in the regular education classroom will be accepted by their nondisabled peers.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

---

[2] closed-items adapted from (Davis, 2009) and (Wrushen, 2009)
For inquires please contact the researcher: Amna Al Obeidli amna.alobeidli@gmail.com \ mob: ▮▮▮▮   3

6. Students with disabilities included in the regular education classroom will not disrupt my class.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

7. Having to teach students with disabilities in the regular education classroom does not place an unreasonable burden on the teachers.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

8. I have enough training to teach students with disabilities with their nondisabled peers in the regular education classroom.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

9. Teaching students with disabilities in the regular education classroom with their nondisabled peers is not more work for me.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

10. Students with disabilities being taught in the regular education classroom with their nondisabled peers does not take too much of my time.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

11. As a teacher, I feel I DO NOT need more professional development because I feel comfortable teaching students with disabilities in the regular education classroom.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

12. Students with disabilities should be taught in the regular education classroom with their nondisabled peers whenever possible.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

13. Only teachers with extensive special education experience can be expected to deal with students with intellectual disabilities in a school setting.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

14. Schools with both students with intellectual disabilities and students without disabilities enhance the learning experiences of students with intellectual disabilities.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

15. Students with intellectual disabilities are too impaired to benefit from the activities of a regular school.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

16. A good regular educator can do a lot to help a student with intellectual disability.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

17. In general, students with intellectual disabilities should be placed in special classes/schools specifically designed for them.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

18. Students without disabilities can profit from contact with students with intellectual disabilities.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

19. Regular education should be modified to meet the needs of all students including students with intellectual disabilities.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

20. It is unfair to ask/expect regular teachers to accept students with intellectual disabilities.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

21. No discretionary financial resources should be allocated for the integration of students with intellectual disabilities.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

22. 10. It should be policy and/or law that students with intellectual disabilities are integrated into regular educational programs and activities.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

23. In your opinion, what are the factors that would affect negatively on the inclusion of students with intellectual disabilities?

----

24. In your opinion, what are the factors that would make the inclusion of students with intellectual disabilities successful.

----

25. In your opinion, what are the factors that the teacher needs to have to be able to successfully deal with students with intellectual disabilities included in regular education?

Thank you for your cooperation

Appendix 9: Participant observation anecdotal instrument designed by the researcher

A draft of Anecdotal Observation Instrument

Teacher: Date: Class: Period: No. of students: duration:

No. of children with disability: subject:

Focus of observation: teacher's attitudes with children with intellectual disabilities

Background of teacher:
Years of experience with inclusion:
Information on Children with disability CWD:
Classroom Setting:

*Observation notes will be taken using computer so space can be adjusted while typing.

Event/Attitudes of teachers	Interpretation Attitude: Positive/negative	Comments
Examples of teachers' behaviour[1] to look for Teacher accepts student feelings Teacher praises student Teacher gives directions to student Teacher respond to student question Teacher gets impatient with student behaviour Teacher is patient when giving direction Teacher repeats instructions Teacher assist student Teacher ask other student to assist		

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[1] Adapted from Flanders interaction analysis (IA) system (Flanders, 1970)

Appendix 10: Ethics Committee approval by the British University in Dubai

Research Ethics Form (Low Risk Research)

To be completed by the researcher and submitted to the Vice Chancellor

i.   Applicants/Researcher's information:

Name of Researcher /student	Amna Al Obeidli / student ID: 100093
Contact telephone No.	0502888202/0552888202
Email address	100093@student.buid.ac.ae/amna.alobeidli@gmail.com
Date	2/1/2014

ii.   Summary of Proposed Research:

BRIEF OUTLINE OF PROJECT (100-250 words; this may be attached separately. You may prefer to use the abstract from the original bid):	This project is a thesis on the progress, which is intended for the degree of Doctorate in Education that will be submitted in 2015. The thesis will investigate the factors that affect the attitudes of Emirati teachers towards students with intellectual disabilities in public inclusive primary schools in UAE. The main focus is to answer the following research questions:
	1. What are the attitudes of female Emirati teachers towards children with intellectual disabilities in government primary schools that provide inclusive settings in the urban areas of Dubai?
	2. What are the factors that affect teachers' attitudes in these schools?
	3. What could be recommended to improve inclusive practice in the Dubai, the UAE?
	The thesis will hopefully add to the literature on the UAE and inclusive education and will help provide recommendations on how to improve the educational system, the inclusive practice and the teachers attitudes towards disability in general which will result in improving the life experience of young learners with disabilities. The methods that will need ethical approval and will be used for the thesis are: focus group, questionnaire, observation, interviews and document analysis.

MAIN ETHICAL CONSIDERATION(S) OF THE PROJECT (e.g. working with vulnerable adults; children with disabilities; photographs of participants; material that could give offence etc…):	The researcher will mainly interview teachers who teach in inclusive schools, observe their classes; deal primarily with the teachers and school administrative staff. No interviews will be conducted with children. Approval of conducting the research in the school will be obtained from the Ministry of Education and the educational zone in addition to the schools where the observation will take place. A brief on the purpose of the research and methodology will be sent to school beforehand. An agreement of the participants will be obtained before conducting any method (i.e. questionnaire, interview, observation) by signing a consent form . Voice recording will not be used unless approved by participants. No videotaping or photography will be used. As for Class observation, children and children with disabilities will be present in the class so consent forms will be sought from the school and parents (via school's authority) in advance. All participants will be assured total privacy and anonymity as the content will be used for the thesis/research purposes only
DURATION OF PROPOSED PROJECT (please provide dates as month/year):	January 2014 – September 2015
Date you wish to start Data Collection:	15 Jan 2014
Date for issue of consent forms:	15 Jan 2014

iii.   **Declaration by the Researcher:**

I have read the University's Code of Conduct for Research and the information contained herein is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, accurate.

I am satisfied that I have attempted to identify all risks related to the research that may arise in conducting this research and acknowledge my obligations as researcher and the rights of participants. I am satisfied that members of staff (including myself) working on the project have the appropriate qualifications, experience and facilities to conduct the research set out in the attached document and that I, as researcher take full responsibility for the ethical conduct of the research in accordance with the Faculty of Education Ethical Guidelines, and any other condition laid down by the BUiD Ethics Committee. I am fully aware of the timelines and content for participant's information and consent.

Print name: Amna Al Obeidli
Signature:
Date: 2/1/2014
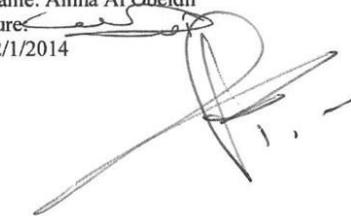
iv.   Endorsed by the Faculty's Research Ethics Sub Committee member (following discussion and clarification of any issues or concerns)*

v.   Approval by the Vice Chancellor or his nominee on behalf of the Research Ethics Sub Committee of the Research Committee.

I confirm that this project fits within the University's Code of Conduct for Research and I approve the proposal on behalf of BUiD's Ethics Committee.

Print name: Abdullah Alshamsi

Signature:

Date: 7/1/2014

*Note: If it is considered by the Faculty or University Research mentor that there may be medium or high risk, the forms and procedure for that level of risk must be followed.

7 January 2014

Dr. Ahmad Eid Al Mansouri,
Director General of Dubai Education Zone
Dubai, United Arab Emirates

This is to certify that **Ms. Amna Al Obeidli** student ID No.**100093** is a registered student on the **Doctor of Education -Special Education** programme in **The British University in Dubai**, from January 2011.

Ms. Obeidli is currently working on her thesis which investigates the factors that affect the attitudes of Emirati teachers towards students with intellectual disabilities in public inclusive primary schools in Dubai.

The main focus is to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the attitudes of female Emirati teachers towards children with intellectual disabilities in government primary schools that provide inclusive settings in the urban areas of Dubai?
2. What are the factors that affect teachers' attitudes in these schools?
3. What could be recommended to improve inclusive practice in the Dubai, the UAE?

We kindly request you to assist her with

- Identifying inclusive schools in Dubai
- Contacting schools for data collection purposes to conduct the following:
- Conducting survey for teachers/administrators
- Focus group
- Interviewing teacher/administration staff
- Observing class lessons

This letter is issued on Ms. Obeidli's request.

Yours sincerely,

Nandini Uchil
Head of Student Administration

Appendix 12: Distribution of Government Schools in the UAE 2015/2016

2015 / 2016 توزيع المدارس (تعليم حكومي) على المناطق التعليمية للعام الدراسي

Distribution of Schools (G.E) by Educational Zones for the Academic year 2015 / 2016

zone	المنطقة	النوع	kindergarten رياض الأطفال	Cycle 1 الحلقة 1	Cycle 2 الحلقة 2	Secondary الثانوي	Religious ديني	Total المجموع
Abu Dhabi Edu. Zone	منطقة أبوظبي التعليمية	بنين	0	13	14	13	0	40
		بنات	0	14	12	13	0	39
		مشترك	29	9	1	1	0	40
		المجموع	29	36	27	27	0	119
Al Ain Edu. Zone	منطقة العين التعليمية	بنين	0	6	6	22	0	34
		بنات	0	6	11	11	0	28
		مشترك	20	14	0	8	0	42
		المجموع	20	26	17	41	0	104
Al Garbia Edu. Zone	المنطقة الغربية التعليمية	بنين	0	2	3	7	0	12
		بنات	0	3	0	5	0	8
		مشترك	6	3	0	3	0	12
		المجموع	6	8	3	15	0	32
Total	**المجموع**		**55**	**70**	**47**	**83**	**0**	**255**
Dubai Edu. Zone	منطقة دبي التعليمية	بنين	0	12	7	10	1	30
		بنات	0	9	12	12	0	33
		مشترك	12	2	0	0	0	14
		المجموع	12	23	19	22	1	77
Sharjah Edu. Zone	منطقة الشارقة التعليمية	بنين	0	21	13	17	0	51
		بنات	0	15	13	16	0	44
		مشترك	23	4	0	4	0	31
		المجموع	23	40	26	37	0	126
Ajman Edu. Zone	منطقة عجمان التعليمية	بنين	0	7	3	5	1	16
		بنات	0	5	5	7	0	17
		مشترك	7	0	0	0	0	7
		المجموع	7	12	8	12	1	40
Umm Al Quwain Edu. Zone	منطقة أم القيوين التعليمية	بنين	0	4	1	3	0	8
		بنات	0	2	3	3	0	8
		مشترك	4	0	0	1	0	5
		المجموع	4	6	4	7	0	21
Al Fujairah Edu. Zone	منطقة الفجيرة التعليمية	بنين	0	8	7	11	0	26
		بنات	0	10	5	0	0	15
		مشترك	11	3	0	7	0	21
		المجموع	11	21	12	18	0	62
Ras-Al-Khaimah Edu. Zone	منطقة رأس الخيمة التعليمية	بنين	0	11	14	14	0	39
		بنات	0	6	12	11	0	29
		مشترك	14	1	0	3	0	18
		المجموع	14	18	26	28	0	86
Total	**المجموع**		**71**	**120**	**95**	**124**	**2**	**412**
Grand Total	**الإجمالي العام**		**126**	**190**	**142**	**207**	**2**	**667**

المدارس متعددة المراحل يتم حسابها على المراحل العليا الحالية

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Appendix 13: Distribution of Emirati students in government schools in the UAE 2015/2016

توزيع الطلبة المواطنين الملتحقين بالتعليم الحكومي (تعليم عام) على المناطق التعليمية للعام الدراسي 2015 / 2016

Distribution of Local Students (G.E) by Educational Zones for the Academic year 2015 / 2016

Zone		kg1	kg2	KG مجموع	1	2	3	4	5	Cycle1 مجموع	6	7	8	9	Cycle2 مجموع	10	11	12	Secondary مجموع	الإجمالي
Abu Dhabi Edu Zone (المنطقة التعليمية بأبوظبي)	M ذ	2,087	1,819	3,906	1,798	1,947	1,903	1,890	2,009	9,547	1,950	1,843	1,927	1,759	7,479	1,533	1,381	1,428	4,342	25,274
	F ث	2,150	1,897	4,047	2,123	2,076	2,167	2,025	2,120	10,511	2,134	1,969	2,097	2,011	8,211	1,670	1,633	1,542	4,845	27,614
	T مج	4,237	3,716	7,953	3,921	4,023	4,070	3,915	4,129	20,058	4,084	3,812	4,024	3,770	15,690	3,203	3,014	2,970	9,187	52,888
Al Ain Edu Zone (منطقة العين التعليمية)	M ذ	1,724	1,414	3,138	1,575	1,611	1,564	1,525	1,602	7,877	1,560	1,486	1,500	1,433	5,979	1,306	1,188	1,222	3,716	20,710
	F ث	1,813	1,503	3,316	1,760	1,791	1,764	1,758	1,802	8,875	1,978	1,817	1,785	1,596	7,176	1,443	1,448	1,434	4,325	23,692
	T مج	3,537	2,917	6,454	3,335	3,402	3,328	3,283	3,404	16,752	3,538	3,303	3,285	3,029	13,155	2,749	2,636	2,656	8,041	44,402
Al Garbia Edu Zone (المنطقة الغربية التعليمية)	M ذ	200	171	371	144	152	148	151	171	766	146	172	167	170	655	152	151	164	467	2,259
	F ث	225	167	392	193	186	201	179	194	953	213	170	217	207	807	162	173	203	538	2,690
	T مج	425	338	763	337	338	349	330	365	1,719	359	342	384	377	1,462	314	324	367	1,005	4,949
Total (المجموع)	M ذ	4,011	3,404	7,415	3,517	3,710	3,615	3,566	3,782	18,190	3,656	3,501	3,594	3,362	14,113	2,991	2,720	2,814	8,525	48,243
	F ث	4,188	3,567	7,755	4,076	4,053	4,132	3,962	4,116	20,339	4,325	3,956	4,099	3,814	16,194	3,275	3,254	3,179	9,708	53,996
	T مج	8,199	6,971	15,170	7,593	7,763	7,747	7,528	7,898	38,529	7,981	7,457	7,693	7,176	30,307	6,266	5,974	5,993	18,233	102,239
Dubai Edu Zone (منطقة دبي التعليمية)	M ذ	620	564	1,184	795	817	792	776	888	4,068	910	853	731	683	3,177	688	605	591	1,884	10,313
	F ث	652	700	1,352	888	901	958	924	926	4,597	1,063	990	1,009	949	4,011	882	904	965	2,751	12,711
	T مج	1,272	1,264	2,536	1,683	1,718	1,750	1,700	1,814	8,665	1,973	1,843	1,740	1,632	7,188	1,570	1,509	1,556	4,635	23,024
Sharjah Edu Zone (منطقة الشارقة التعليمية)	M ذ	1,152	898	2,050	1,281	1,241	1,322	1,208	1,341	6,393	1,498	1,270	1,243	1,086	5,097	1,089	969	938	2,996	16,536
	F ث	1,223	1,186	2,409	1,283	1,335	1,349	1,473	1,431	6,871	1,525	1,450	1,397	1,336	5,708	1,243	1,232	1,381	3,856	18,844
	T مج	2,375	2,084	4,459	2,564	2,576	2,671	2,681	2,772	13,264	3,023	2,720	2,640	2,422	10,805	2,332	2,201	2,319	6,852	35,380
Ajman Edu Zone (منطقة عجمان التعليمية)	M ذ	454	394	848	405	401	425	427	462	2,120	527	416	367	360	1,670	355	253	236	844	5,482
	F ث	429	381	810	430	503	494	476	454	2,357	526	472	457	438	1,893	387	370	359	1,116	6,176
	T مج	883	775	1,658	835	904	919	903	916	4,477	1,053	888	824	798	3,563	742	623	595	1,960	11,658
Umm Al Quwain Edu Zone (منطقة أم القيوين التعليمية)	M ذ	193	124	317	157	142	141	154	151	745	137	142	138	123	540	113	98	75	286	1,888
	F ث	177	168	345	173	189	184	172	177	895	215	168	169	138	690	129	104	123	356	2,286
	T مج	370	292	662	330	331	325	326	328	1,640	352	310	307	261	1,230	242	202	198	642	4,174
Al Fujairah Edu Zone (منطقة الفجيرة التعليمية)	M ذ	847	742	1,589	714	747	745	699	726	3,631	731	687	607	597	2,622	600	532	561	1,693	9,535
	F ث	892	794	1,686	894	900	900	855	887	4,436	869	821	801	760	3,251	770	707	785	2,262	11,635
	T مج	1,739	1,536	3,275	1,608	1,647	1,645	1,554	1,613	8,067	1,600	1,508	1,408	1,357	5,873	1,370	1,239	1,346	3,955	21,170
Ras-Al-Khaimah Edu Zone (منطقة رأس الخيمة التعليمية)	M ذ	1,025	810	1,835	1,132	1,151	1,212	1,108	1,178	5,781	1,348	1,187	1,075	978	4,588	875	779	909	2,563	14,767
	F ث	1,001	866	1,867	1,107	1,069	1,111	1,109	1,148	5,544	1,158	1,128	1,110	1,007	4,403	998	948	1,029	2,975	14,789
	T مج	2,026	1,676	3,702	2,239	2,220	2,323	2,217	2,326	11,325	2,506	2,315	2,185	1,985	8,991	1,873	1,727	1,938	5,538	29,556
Total (المجموع)	M ذ	4,291	3,532	7,823	4,484	4,499	4,637	4,372	4,746	22,738	5,151	4,555	4,161	3,827	17,694	3,720	3,236	3,310	10,266	58,521
	F ث	4,374	4,095	8,469	4,775	4,897	4,996	5,009	5,023	24,700	5,356	5,029	4,943	4,628	19,956	4,409	4,265	4,642	13,316	66,441
	T مج	8,665	7,627	16,292	9,259	9,396	9,633	9,381	9,769	47,438	10,507	9,584	9,104	8,455	37,650	8,129	7,501	7,952	23,582	124,962
Grand Total (الإجمالي الدولة)	M ذ	8,302	6,936	15,238	8,001	8,209	8,252	7,938	8,528	40,928	8,807	8,056	7,755	7,189	31,807	6,711	5,956	6,124	18,791	106,764
	F ث	8,562	7,662	16,224	8,851	8,950	9,128	8,971	9,139	45,039	9,681	8,985	9,042	8,442	36,150	7,684	7,519	7,821	23,024	120,437
	T مج	16,864	14,598	31,462	16,852	17,159	17,380	16,909	17,667	85,967	18,488	17,041	16,797	15,631	67,957	14,395	13,475	13,945	41,815	227,201

المناطق — kindergarten رياض الأطفال — الطلاب Students — Cycle 1 حلقة أولى — Cycle 2 حلقة ثانية — Secondary الثانوي

Appendix 14: Distribution of Emirati students in private schools in the UAE 2015/2016

توزيع الطلبة المواطنين (تعليم خاص) على المناطق التعليمية للعام الدراسي 2015 / 2016

Distribution of Local Students (PE) by Educational Zones for the Academic year 2015 / 2016

Zone	G	kg1	kg2	Kindergarten المجموع	1	2	3	4	5	Cycle 1 المجموع	6	7	8	9	Cycle 2 المجموع	10	11	12	Secondary المجموع	الإجمالي
Abu Dhabi Edu. Zone	M	1,910	1,791	3,701	2,042	1,825	1,824	1,649	1,575	8,915	1,594	1,244	1,070	936	4,844	724	668	616	2,008	19,468
	F	1,752	1,539	3,291	1,606	1,642	1,489	1,361	1,286	7,384	1,148	1,043	876	733	3,800	652	629	525	1,806	16,281
	T	3,662	3,330	6,992	3,648	3,467	3,313	3,010	2,861	16,299	2,742	2,287	1,946	1,669	8,644	1,376	1,297	1,141	3,814	35,749
Al Ain Edu Zone	M	1,080	1,009	2,089	1,208	1,146	1,068	1,028	860	5,310	873	639	504	466	2,482	407	378	383	1,168	11,049
	F	973	812	1,785	913	915	826	654	540	3,848	555	503	368	305	1,731	262	205	199	666	8,030
	T	2,053	1,821	3,874	2,121	2,061	1,894	1,682	1,400	9,158	1,428	1,142	872	771	4,213	669	583	582	1,834	19,079
Al Garbia Edu Zone	M	126	179	305	210	196	208	140	168	922	130	70	52	44	296	12	1	1	14	1,537
	F	108	120	228	145	148	152	121	103	669	63	45	42	30	180	3	1	0	4	1,081
	T	234	299	533	355	344	360	261	271	1,591	193	115	94	74	476	15	2	1	18	2,618
Total	M	3,116	2,979	6,095	3,460	3,167	3,100	2,817	2,603	15,147	2,597	1,953	1,626	1,446	7,622	1,143	1,047	1,000	3,190	32,054
	F	2,833	2,471	5,304	2,664	2,705	2,467	2,136	1,929	11,901	1,766	1,591	1,286	1,068	5,711	917	835	724	2,476	25,392
	T	5,949	5,450	11,399	6,124	5,872	5,567	4,953	4,532	27,048	4,363	3,544	2,912	2,514	13,333	2,060	1,882	1,724	5,666	57,446
Dubai Edu Zone	M	1,432	1,439	2,871	1,560	1,453	1,352	1,345	1,235	6,945	1,266	1,102	1,171	1,029	4,568	1,013	916	901	2,830	17,214
	F	1,351	1,225	2,576	1,308	1,244	1,114	1,052	1,045	5,763	935	978	853	772	3,538	764	680	599	2,043	13,920
	T	2,783	2,664	5,447	2,868	2,697	2,466	2,397	2,280	12,708	2,201	2,080	2,024	1,801	8,106	1,777	1,596	1,500	4,873	31,134
Sharjah Edu. Zone	M	1,166	1,033	2,199	1,261	1,102	1,023	914	837	5,137	865	736	635	483	2,719	443	427	352	1,222	11,277
	F	1,114	910	2,024	1,026	942	887	746	765	4,366	613	554	461	397	2,025	314	322	305	941	9,356
	T	2,280	1,943	4,223	2,287	2,044	1,910	1,660	1,602	9,503	1,478	1,290	1,096	880	4,744	757	749	657	2,163	20,633
Ajman Edu. Zone	M	246	192	438	210	241	211	181	180	1,023	164	180	143	124	611	71	52	55	178	2,250
	F	182	174	356	189	153	132	108	89	671	79	78	56	37	250	29	16	23	68	1,345
	T	428	366	794	399	394	343	289	269	1,694	243	258	199	161	861	100	68	78	246	3,595
Umm Al Quwain Edu. Zone	M	91	64	155	125	88	73	69	62	417	44	23	15	14	96	1	2	0	3	516
	F	89	66	155	97	60	35	56	37	285	42	11	11	8	72	1	1	2	4	671
	T	180	130	310	222	148	108	125	99	702	86	34	26	22	168	2	3	2	7	1,187
Al Fujairah Edu. Zone	M	338	292	630	317	295	242	178	163	1,195	142	103	61	35	341	30	20	16	66	2,232
	F	313	305	618	275	226	159	142	94	896	107	68	42	32	249	25	11	8	44	1,807
	T	651	597	1,248	592	521	401	320	257	2,091	249	171	103	67	590	55	31	24	110	4,039
Ras-Al-Khaimah Edu Zone	M	442	367	809	413	362	264	246	222	1,507	185	159	99	60	503	35	27	29	91	2,910
	F	409	318	727	344	336	219	224	192	1,315	153	104	66	54	377	39	26	41	106	2,525
	T	851	685	1,536	757	698	483	470	414	2,822	338	263	165	114	880	74	53	70	197	5,435
Total	M	3,715	3,387	7,102	3,239	3,541	3,165	2,933	2,699	16,224	2,666	2,303	2,124	1,745	8,838	1,593	1,444	1,353	4,390	36,554
	F	3,458	2,998	6,456	3,125	2,961	2,546	2,328	2,222	13,296	1,929	1,793	1,489	1,300	6,511	1,172	1,056	978	3,206	29,469
	T	7,173	6,385	13,558	7,346	6,502	5,711	5,261	4,921	29,520	4,595	4,096	3,613	3,045	15,349	2,765	2,500	2,331	7,596	66,023
Grand Total	M	6,831	6,366	13,197	7,346	6,708	6,265	5,750	5,302	31,371	3,695	4,256	3,750	3,191	16,460	2,736	2,491	2,353	7,580	68,608
	F	6,291	5,469	11,760	5,903	5,666	5,013	4,464	4,151	25,197	5,263	3,384	2,775	2,368	12,222	2,089	1,891	1,702	5,682	54,861
	O	13,122	11,835	24,957	13,249	12,374	11,278	10,214	9,453	56,568	8,958	7,640	6,525	5,559	28,682	4,825	4,382	4,055	13,262	123,469