Accessibility of Inclusive Provisions for Students with Disabilities Transitioning into Higher Education in the UAE: An Investigative Study

استخدام معايير الدمج في انتقال الطلبة من ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة من التعليم الثانوي للتعليم العالي في دولة الإمارات: دراسة استقصائية

by

KHAWLA RASHED AL SHEHHI

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the

requirements for the degree of

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ABSTRACT

Embodying the aspiration of the United Arab Emirates leadership, the vision of the Ministry of Education (MOE), is to ensure quality education for all. To implement the Federal Law 29 of 2006 on the rights of People with Disabilities (PWDs), the MOE launched the "School for All" guideline 2010, under the title "General Rules for the Provision of Special Education Programs and Services for Public and Private Schools." Transitional services are included in these provisions. This was also declared in the country's National Policy in 2017 on PWD, currently known as People of Determination (POD). It has been noted that, transitional Services as outlined by the "School for All" guideline do not describe detailed provisions as current international transition practices do, where an Individual Educational Plan (IEP), a summary of performance and required supports are delineated in an exhaustive manner. In contrast, the Quality Standards (QSs) of services for PWDs in governmental and private institutions, issued by the Ministry of Community Development in 2016, introduces a more comprehensive sets of standards for non-specialized institutions to guide provisions for PWDs. For this study, it seemed befitting to explore inclusive provisions in Higher Education through the lens of those QSs.

The study aims at investigating inclusive provisions that facilitate transitioning PWDs from high school into HEIs. How inclusive provisions are perceived by PWDs at the opposite ends of a transition, as well as by those who provide these services in high schools and colleges, can point out whether higher education in the UAE is regarded as accessible. This study utilized a sequential mixed methods approach. The 222 participants are from eight high schools and four colleges in the UAE. The qualitative and quantitative data was generated using: documents review, interviews, questionnaire and observation. Statistical analysis and coding of the data revealed themes of PWDs readiness for the journey from high school to higher education highlighting needed provisions that can facilitate their transition to HEIs. The findings point to a "missing link" between secondary and post-secondary education that needs to be urgently addressed for a smoother transition into HEIs. Recommendations serving that purpose are offered. This study contributes to the scant literature considering inclusive higher education in the UAE, and sets a new direction for future research to examine transition services in national post-secondary education.

KEYWORDS: UAE, Persons with Disabilities, Secondary Education, Higher Education, Accessibility, inclusive Provisions, Transition Services.

ملخص الدراسة

تمثل رؤية وزارة التربية والتعليم، تطلع قيادة دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة، لنظام تعليمي عالي المستوى لضمان جودة التعليم للجميع، ولتنفيذ القانون الاتحادي (رقم 29 لعام 2006) بشأن حقوق الأشخاص من ذوي الإعاقة، أطلقت وزارة التربية والتعليم مبادرة (المدرسة للجميع) لعام 2010 لدمج المعاقين في المدارس، قدمت المبادرة "القواعد العامة لتوفير برامج وخدمات التعليم الخاص في المدارس الحكومية و الخاصة، و تعتبر الخدمات الانتقالية واحدة من فئات الخدمات الدامجة التي نصت عليها المبادرة، وتم التأكيد على ذلك أيضًا في السياسة الوطنية للدولة في عام 2017 بشأن الأشخاص من ذوي الإعاقة، المعروفين حاليًا باسم (أصحاب الهمم). لقد لوحظ أن الخدمات الانتقالية على النحو المبين في دليل (المدرسة للجميع) ونظراً لتوجهها العام، لا تصف الأحكام التفصيلية للخدمات الانتقالية كما يتضح عند المقارنة بالممارسات المتعلقة بالخدمات الانتقالية المعاصرة في جميع أنحاء العالم ، حيث توجد خطة تعليمية فردية (IEP)، وملخص للأداء ويتم تحديد الدعم المطلوب بطريقة تفصيلية و شاملة. في عام 2016، أطلقت وزارة تنمية المجتمع (MOCD) معايير الجودة (QSs) لخدمات الأشخاص من ذوي الإعاقة في المؤسسات الحكومية والخاصة، و يتضمن هذا الدليل ثلاثة عشر معيارًا للخدمات التي تقدمها المؤسسات المتخصصة، وثمانية معايير للخدمات التي تقدمها المؤسسات غير المتخصصة، نظرًا لأن هذه الدراسة تستكشف الخدمات الدامجة في مؤسسات التعليم العالي (HEIs)، فكان من المناسب استخدام المجموعة الأخيرة من تلك المعايير في استقراء الواقع.

تعد الدراسة بحث استقصائي يستكشف إلى أي درجة تسهم الممارسات الدامجة المستخدمة حاليا في تسهيل انتقال الأشخاص من ذوي الإعاقة من المدرسة الثانوية إلى مؤسسات التعليم العالي، إذ أن آراء الأشخاص من ذوي الإعاقة في تلك الخدمات الدامجة، وكذلك آراء القائمين على تقديم هذه الخدمات داخل مؤسسة التعليم العالي ترسم تصور لمدى فاعلية تلك الخدمات الدامجة كخدمات انتقالية تسهل على الأشخاص من ذوي الإعاقة الالتحاق بالتعليم العالي، إذ اشتملت عينة الدراسة على 222 مشاركاً من ثماني مدارس ثانوية، و أربع مؤسسات من التعليم العالي في إمارة رأس الخيمة ودبي وأبوظبي لتمثيل دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة. استخدمت الدراسة المنهج المسحي، و تم جمع البيانات (النوعية والكمية) باستخدام خليط متسلسل من وسائل جمع البيانات: مراجعة الوثائق، المقابلة الشخصية، الملاحظة و الاستبيان، ثمّ تحليل البيانات باستخدام أساليب تحليل المضمون، والتحليل الأحصائي. كشفت نتائج الدراسة عن محاور استعداد الأشخاص ذوي الإعاقة للرحلة من المدرسة الثانوية إلى التعليم العالي، و الخدمات الدامجة الانتقالية التي تسهل تلك الرحلة، علاوة على ذلك ، كشفت نتائج هذه الدراسة أنه يبدو أن هناك "حلقة مفقودة" ناتجة عن نقص في المعلومات، و نقص في التواصل بين المدارس الثانوية من جهة، و الجامعات من جهة أخرى. و قدمت الدراسة التوصيات المقترحة للتقليل من آثار تلك "الحلقة المفقودة" لضمان انتقال الطلاب من ذوي الإعاقة للتعليم العالي في إطار خطة توضّح الخدمات الدامجة الانتقالية التي تلبي احتياجاتهم. تعتبر هذه الدراسة إضافة للباحثين في شأن التعليم الدامج في الجامعات بدولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة، كما أنها تحدد توجها جديدا للبحوث المستقبلية التي تسعى لاستكشاف الخدمات الانتقالية كجزء من الخدمات الدامجة التي تسهل الالتحاق بالتعليم العالي بالدولة.

الكلمات الرئيسية: الإمارات العربية المتحدة، الأشخاص ذوو الإعاقة، التعليم الثانوي، التعليم العالي، إمكانية الوصول، الأحكام الشاملة، خدمات الانتقال.

DEDICATION

To my parents and Grandparents

To my Uncles, Aunts and Cousins

To my Sisters and their Husbands

To my Brothers and their Wives

I also dedicate this work to all my lovely Nieces: Noof, Fatima, Malak, Shahad, Noora, Worood,

Meera, Maitha, Hoor, Qamar, Maryam, Amna, Khulood, Hessa, Rawda, Noora and Mouza

To my lovely Nephews: Nasar, Saif, Mohammed, Ali, Rashed, Rashed and Mahfoodh

My friends from the UAE and abroad, colleagues, security and cleaners

Thank you for your unlimited support and prayers

To them, I dedicate this effort and humble work

To my country the United Arab Emirates

Love.. and Loyalty.. and

Gratitude..

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

The following List of abbreviations, Acronyms, Initials, and Symbols are utilized over the thesis:

Serial	Abbreviation	Definition
1.	ADA	American with Disabilities Act
2.	AHEAD	Association on Higher Education and Disability
3.	BUiD	British University in Dubai
4.	CEPA	Common Educational Proficiency Assessment
5.	EmSAT	Emirates Standardized Test
6.	HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
7.	IEP	Individual Educational Plan
8.	IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
9.	IASAS	International Association of Student Affairs and Services
10.	IELTS	International Language Testing System
11.	IQ	Intelligence Quotient
12.	KHDA	Knowledge and Human Development Authority
13.	MOCD	Ministry of Community Development
14.	MOE	Ministry of Education
15.	MOH	Ministry of Health
16.	MOHESR	Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
17.	MOSA	Ministry of Social Affairs
18.	NAPO	National Admission and Placement Office
19.	NCSER	National Center for Special Education Research
20.	NDCO	National Disability Coordination Officer Program
21.	NPEPWD	National Policy to Empower People of Determination
22.	PWDs	Persons with Disabilities
23.	QSs	Quality Standards
24.	RAK	Ras Al Khaimah
25.	SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
26.	SWDs	Students with Disabilities
27.	SEND	Students with Special Education Needs and Disabilities
28.	SWVI	Students with Vision Impairment
29.	UAE	United Arab Emirates
30.	UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

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1.0 CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The vision of the Ministry of Education (MOE), following the United Arab Emirates (UAE) leadership guidance, is to build a conscious generation who will fulfil the purpose of their life, while achieving the knowledge requirements of economy and sustainable development. Education in the UAE is believed to be one of the most important pillars to build a strong society.

The rights of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) are given high priority in the UAE's national agenda by envisioning these rights to encompass a variety of domains: society, participation, support among family members, respect, equality, and aspiration to long life and good health (Gulf News, April 2017). Central to these rights is providing PWDs with equal access to Education with the highest standards of quality of life.

In 2006, the UAE President, His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, issued the UAE Federal Law No. 29/2006, under the title of Concerning the Rights of PWDs. This Federal Law calls for equal care rights and opportunities for PWDs by providing the best services in Education, health care, and rehabilitation.

The Federal Law dedicates two chapters to the rights of the people with disabilities to access Education. The first chapter covers general provisions, while the second chapter emphasizes access to equal educational opportunities (see Appendix A, articles 12, 13, 14 & 15) and accessible environment (see Appendix A, articles 22, 23, 24, 25 & 26). This study would be examining the translation of this law into the reality of Higher Education and in particular, investigating to what extent the rights of Students with Disabilities (SWDs), as stated by the Federal Law, are taking shape in the selected Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).

In May 2010, the UAE MOE, in collaboration with UAE Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA), initiated the School for All guideline that sets the parameter for both public and private schools to support all PWDs to cope well with others in mainstream classes and to receive their Education equally (MOE 2010). More inclusive K-12 schools can be seen as the gateway to equal access to higher Education and better postsecondary outcomes for PWDs.

Complementing these efforts in a more comprehensive way, the UAE Ministry of Community Development (MOCD) has played a key role in providing the best services to PWDs to enable

them to live and participate in their family environment and the social environment that provides them with their human emotional needs. In 2016, they launched the Quality Standards (QSs) of services for PWDs in governmental and private institutions. This guide includes thirteen standards of services provided by specialized institutions, and eight standards of services provided by non-specialized institutions. Since this study is exploring inclusive provisions in HEIs, the focus would be on the latter set of eight standards/domains: (1) Policies and procedures, (2) modifications and accommodations, (3) Knowledge of Employees and Service Providers, (4) environmental accommodations, (5) technical accommodations, (6) other accommodations, (7) service quality, and effectiveness and (8) orientation to emergencies (MOCD 2016). Each of the mentioned domains consists of different items for identifying the individual needs of the disabled.

1.2 Researcher background

The story behind conducting this study in this field begins with the researcher meeting one inspirational student with disabilities, Meme (pseudonym). The researcher met Meme one day in 2014. The researcher was asked by the college director to invigilate one student with disabilities from one of Ras Al Khaimah (RAK) Government high schools for the Common Educational Proficiency Assessment (CEPA) containing two tests, English for two hours and Math for ninety minutes. This test was then considered as a prerequisite for the admission of high school (grade 12) students into public and private higher Educational institutions (UAEMOE 2019). On the day of the exam, Meme arrived at the campus to do her test. Since it was a paper-based exam, the researcher received the paper exam and started by greeting Meme, but she did not respond.

Then, the researcher handed Meme her English test, she held her paper very close to her face to try and read the questions. Seeing that, the researcher flipped her exam paper over then started to write for her in Arabic "Al Salam Alaikum", meaning hello in English. Immediately, she wrote "Wa Alaikum Assalam", which means hello back in English. The researcher was pleased to communicate with her by writing and then the researcher asked her what her difficulties were, and she wrote: "I cannot hear, nor speak, and I cannot see very well." Lastly, the researcher wrote to her, "just do your best, you can do it," She smiled and replied in writing, "Yes, I can Do It." Then she started her exam like the rest of the non-disabled test takers with an A4 paper size. While she

was writing her exam, the researcher's mind went so far and started to think about how to support these individuals, what are their rights? Is there any specific policy related to people with disability? At that time, the researcher was doing her Bachelor's degree in Information Management, but she decided to complete her Master's degree in a field that relates to disability to learn more. After the researcher graduated from the Bachelor's program from ITTIHAD University, she started immediately the Master's degree at the British University in Dubai in Special and Inclusive Education. During the Master's journey, the researcher was not only attending her classes at the British University in Dubai, but the researcher was also traveling abroad to learn more about Inclusive Education and how other countries are supporting persons with disabilities at inclusive schools in the United Kingdom, Portugal, Ireland, Greece, and Saudi Arabia. Moreover, the researcher also attended international conferences related to inclusion, universal design and accessibility. In 2016, the researcher graduated from the Master's degree program. In the same year of 2016, the researcher started her Doctorate at the British University in Dubai in the same field to learn more about Inclusive Education.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The final dissertation project aims at investigating inclusive provisions that facilitate transitioning high school SWDs into HEIs. How inclusive provisions are perceived by SWDs as well as by those who provide these services within the HEIs can point out the accessibility of the college. Additionally, the study explores the standards that could be used to develop and improve services for SWDs in the HEIs. The idea is that the more accessible HEIs are, the more encouraged the SWDs would be to join higher education, graduate, move on to the job market and achieve their goals while contributing to their society.

To a great extent, this study is an ethnographic observation to explore higher education institutions' accessibility for individuals with mobility, hearing, and visual impairments in terms of the institution maps, doors, signage, ramps, parking, SWDs restrooms, elevators, nursing room, SWDs classes location, mosque, events halls, cafeteria, specialized equipment, and evacuation procedures.

The researcher in this study will focus on chapter one and chapter two of the UAE Federal Law No. 29/2006 and the Quality Standards for services provided by non-specialized institutions. Using the QSs as a screening tool, the study would explore the current practice of the Federal Law 29/2006 in the selected HEIs across the UAE for each domain. This study will subsequently investigate the selected HEIs employees' perceptions of SWDs' provisions.

1.4   Study background

This section describes the Higher Education in the UAE and the role of the UAE MOE, Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MOHESR) for all grade twelve students, including SWDs, especially the importance of the Emirates Standardized Test (EmSAT) test, which is considered to be key college entry requirement. This is followed by a brief description of the role of the National Admission and Placement Office (NAPO) at the UAE MOHESR for the admission services, they help students know when and how to select their HEIs to complete their higher Education. Furthermore, this section also briefly covers the roles of the MOE and MOHESR and MOSA related to inclusive Education in the UAE. Lastly, the Federal Law No. 29 of the year 2006 on the rights of PWDs to have equal access to Education is delineated. The MOCD main strategic goals towards PWDs is also described.

This section also outlines the "School for All" guideline and the transitional services provided in the UAE schools by listing the main seven inclusive aspects and the main stages for SWDs to move from one stage of transition services to another. The sections ends with a brief reference to, the recently introduced UAE National Policy of Empowering People of Determination (2017) that aims to create an inclusive society for PWDs and their families to accommodate and support their health, rehabilitation, Education, vocational rehabilitation, public life, culture, and sports.

1.4.1   Higher Education in the UAE

Nowadays, there is a wide range of educational levels in the UAE (Al-Shaiba 2014). Higher Education in the UAE is managed by the MOE and MOHESR. MOHESR was established in 1992 to achieve four main objectives: (1) assisting the UAE students in joining the world's top

universities, (2) improving students' performance in higher Education, (3) improving the effectiveness of private HEIs, and (4) supporting scientific research and encouraging innovation (Al-Shaiba 2014, p. 71-72). The Dubai Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA) also works with the MOE and MOHESR to improve the Education sector in the UAE.

Education in the UAE is free for all Emirati students (Gaad 2010). In the recent past, all high school students were required to take the CEPA (Common Educational Proficiency Assessment) for the higher Education entry requirement. Nowadays, all grade twelve students have to sit for a new national test called the EmSAT (Emirates Standardized Test). This 2 hour computer-based exam covers skills in Arabic, English, Science and Mathematics, it was announced by the MOE in 2017. (MOE 2017b). There are three different EmSAT test types that target different grades, and they are; (a) baseline test; this type targets grade one students (b) advanced test; this type targets grade four, six, eight and ten, and the las,t type (c) achieve test; this one targets grade 12 students (general and advanced tracks) (UAEMOE 2019).

The importance of these tests lies in their potential to address the gaps in students' performance, as mentioned above, in Arabic, English, Science, and Mathematics; specifying the students' performance level (national and international) serves as an alternative for other HEIs entry tests and helps, decision makers, in light of test results data, to improve the Education system (UAEMOE 2019). Furthermore, there is no pass or fail score for this test, but each HEI sets their passing scores depending on specific major requirements.

Once grade 12 students complete the EmSAT exam, they can start applying for HEIs. The role of the NAPO at the MOHESR is to provide the admission services and academic counseling for all government HEIs across the UAE (UAEMOE2019). The role of the NAPO team is to help and support students to make choices that match their capabilities and career goals. A students' choice of HEIs is the most important decision that each student has to make in their life (Rentz & Mackinnon 2004).

1.4.2 Inclusive Education in the UAE

To establish inclusive education, the UAE announced the first Federal Law, No. 29 of the year 2006 on the rights of PWDs. According to this law MOHESR is responsible for providing access for PWDs to higher Education. Furthermore, Federal Law No. 29 of the year of 2006, Article 12, 14, and 15 (see Appendix A) considered Education as a fundamental right for these individuals (Gaad 2010). According to Gaad (2010), the inclusive education in the UAE is under two main ministries: the MOE and the MOSA.

The role of MOE is to facilitate special need Education and to make sure that PWDs are having equal access to their Education like others. This can be in the form of pull-in support (extra teacher to work with PWDs) or pull-out support (where PWDs leave the mainstream class to attend alternative settings (Gaad 2010). Gaad (2010), highlighted that the MOE accepts mild disabilities and PWDs with 75 Intelligence Quotient (IQ). IQ is "a test often used to identify highly intelligent children and diagnose those with learning problems" (Berk 2015, p.327). However, the MOE transfers PWDs with an IQ below 70 to available special needs centers, and the reason is that these individuals cannot progress in their studies like others (Gaad 2010).

The second ministry is the MOSA that manages provisions in the special needs centers and collaborates with both schools and higher education institutions to offer needed support services. Gaad (2010) also mentioned that there is a third ministry that is also involved when it comes to SWDs provisions, the Ministry of Health (MOH). The MOCD also declares on its official website that including PWDs is one of their main strategic goals. They aim to:

- empower PWDs to access basic rights and services

- guarantee quality and sustainability

- enable PWDs to achieve *happiness* (MOCD 2017 – emphasis added here).

A well-planned collaboration between the MOE and MOSA to provide Education services, including human and physical resources for schools and centers to support PWDs, can lead to successful inclusive practices (Gaad 2010).

1.4.3 The "School for All" and the transitional services

To implement the Federal Law, the MOE, in the UAE, launched the "School for All" guideline 2010 under the title "General Rules for the Provision of Special Education Programs and Services for Public and Private schools". Each school across the UAE has received a hard copy of this guideline, while the soft copy is available online to implement Inclusive Education in each school. This guideline covers seven inclusive aspects listed below:

(1) Special Education Categories and Special Education Programs and Services

(2) Procedures for Identification and the Provision of Special Education Programs and Services

(3) Transitional Services

(4) Organizational Structure, Primary Duties, and Responsibilities for the Administration of Special Education Services in the UAE

(5) Academic Qualifications and Professional Development in Special Education

(6) Rights, Duties, and Responsibilities of Parents or Guardians of Students with Special Needs

(7) Special Education Programs in Private Schools and Institutes (MOE 2010, p. 17).

The guideline identified nine main categories for special education students: emotional and behavioral, (2) speech and language disorder, (3) physical and health-related disabilities, (4) gifted and talented, (5) intellectual disabilities, (6) autism spectrum disorder, (7) visual impairment, (8) specific learning disabilities, and (9) hearing impairment (MOE 2010, p. 58).

According to the definition provided by the "School for All" guideline, transitional services refer to "a coherent set of activities designed to prepare the student with special needs to move from one stage or from one environment to another, and from school to the activities of public life to increase his/her level of independence to the maximum extent possible" (MOE 2010, p. 67). Similarly, Wehman (2011, p.4) states that the term "transitional services" is generally understood to mean a coordinated set of activities for PWDs.

The "School for All" guideline lists six main moves PWDs are expected to go through: (1) from one class level to another; (2) from one school to another school; (3) from an institution to a school;

(4) from a school to another school; (5) from one program to another; (6) from school to the next phase or university, vocational training program or other programs and institutions of rehabilitation and Education (MOE 2010, p. 33). Each of these moves requires a set of preparatory activities/services to facilitate the transition of special needs students to the next phase.

It remains to be noted that Transitional Services as outlined by the "School for All" guideline, given its more general orientation, do not describe detailed provisions as current transition practices worldwide do where Individual Educational Plan (IEP), a summary of performance and required supports are delineated in an exhaustive manner (Izzo & Horne 2016; Moore et al. 2012).

In an attempt to ensure that the implementation of the Federal Law is standardized, the Ministry of Community Development issued a set of guidelines that ensures the provision of quality services to PWDs in specialized and non-specialized institutions. Thus providing another set of universal standards that should guide efforts aiming for including PWDs in the general society, and for the purpose of this study those Quality Standards would be used to examine inclusive provisions for students with disabilities in HEIs.

1.4.4   The UAE National Policy of Empowering People of Determination

In April 2017, the National policy of Empowering People of Determination was launched by His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashed Al Maktoum, Vice President and the prime minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai. This policy aims at creating an inclusive society for PWDs and their families to support and accommodate their health, rehabilitation, Education, vocational rehabilitation, public life, culture, and sports (see Appendix W). The Ruler of Dubai said: "Impeding a human being means that they will never progress or move forward and will be unable to achieve anything. What the determined ones have achieved in different fields over the course of previous years is a proof that determination and willpower help us achieve the impossible and firmly overcome any circumstances or challenges to reach our goals,", Gulf News (18 April 2017, p.1). This statement underscores disabled people's other abilities and the role of society in removing disabling barriers to promote their growth.

Therefore, the announcement of the National Policy to Empower People of Determination has been a fundamental complement to the role being played by the UAE to embrace its people,

generate optimism and spread hope in the hearts of those who have never been dissuaded from creating win-win opportunities and being successful in all scientific, cultural, literary, sports and professional fields.

The National Policy to Empower People of Determination is an integrated national plan that aims at redefining all concepts related to the people of determination, including laws, rights, care, and rehabilitation programs and labels. Thus, the term "people with special need" has been changed and is replaced with "people of determination", a move that inspires us to continue moving forward with fulfilling greater achievements and promoting the true sense of justice and equality among all segments of society without any discrimination or neglect (Gulf News 2017).

Gaad (2015) warns that the UAE has the highest rate of Down syndrome in the world. Moreover, proactive steps are called for post-secondary Education to be ready for PWDs when they wish to join HEIs by documenting their disabilities, particularly when they are requesting specific accommodations (Lovett, Nelson & Lindstrom 2015). Consequently, HEIs are responsible for providing the right and best accommodations for PWDs (Davis 2015).

According to Reed and Curtis (2012), joining higher Education after post-secondary school for PWDs increases their (a) engagement with others, (b) self-confidence, (c) independence, (d) ability to deal with different issues regardless of their disability, (e) potential to have careers, and (f) ability to set goals. Yet, these individuals are still struggling to receive appropriate support while studying at the HEIs (Riddell & Weedon 2014).

Research-based evidence shows that there is a lack of inclusive provisions and support services for PWDs in higher Education in the UAE that may have a direct impact on PWDs adaptation to educational environments and long-term productivity (Alhammadi 2014; AlObeidli 2018; Gaad & Almotairi 2013).

PWDs has as much right to a post-secondary Education as everyone else (Mutanga 2019). Nevertheless, many countries struggle to provide the best services for these individuals. In the UAE, only few studies focused on the current provisions provided for SWDs in the UAE HEIs (Alhammadi 2014; AlObeidli 2018; Gaad & Almotairi 2013).   The UAE needs to provide appropriate accommodations for these individuals to receive their education equally, like their

peers. This study would investigate the current higher Education accessibility in terms of inclusive provisions offered to PWDs to facilitate their transitioning into the UAE HEIs.

Finally, the UAE is steadily pressing ahead with empowering PWDs in all domains to maintain their rights nationwide. It is doing its best to turn the society's feelings of sympathy towards their conditions into a source of pride in their achievements that they have accomplished with their strong determination, will, and sense of challenge, which brings their bright ambitions into fruition and success. In the broader scheme, this study is an attempt to propel these national efforts in the intended direction.

1.5 Context of the study

This thesis has been carried out in two government higher Education institutions at the UAE, and selected 8 public RAK high school (Grade 12) PWDs who will be applying to join the HEIs after their post-secondary education.
This study focused on transitioning PWDs from high school into higher Education; how current SWDs perceive inclusive provisions and how those who provide these services within HEIs view these provisions would indicate how accessible the campus is.
The main purpose of this study is to investigate the provisions facilitating transitioning high school SWDs into HEIs in the UAE.

1.6 Problem statement

According to the UAE Federal Law No. 29/2006, PWDs have a right to Education in K-12 to higher Education systems (see Appendix A). Despite of this, PWDs are still facing significant challenges in various educational environments. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is an Education law in the United States with a federal funding for children with disabilities which provides a free and appropriate public Education to receive an equal Education as others (Jones, Apling & Smole 2004). IDEA offers specialized services for all PWDs in school grades through graduation to age 21 (Burns 2007).

The UAE Federal Law No. 29/2006, under the title concerning the rights of PWDs calls for equal care, fairness and opportunities for persons with disabilities by providing the best services in Education, health care, and rehabilitation. The Federal Law No. 29/2006 dedicates two chapters to the right of people with disabilities to access Education. The first chapter covers general provisions, while the second chapter emphasizes access to equal educational opportunities and accessible environment (see Appendix A). This study would be examining the translation of this law into the reality of higher Education and, in particular, investigating to what extent the rights of PWDs, as stated by Federal Law No. 29 of the year 2006, are taking shape in the selected HEIs.

Research-based evidence shows that there is a lack of inclusive provisions and support services for PWDs in higher Education in the UAE that may have a direct impact on PWDs adaptation to educational environments and long-term productivity (Alhammadi 2014; Gaad & Almotairi 2013; AlObeidli 2018).

This study will shed light on the importance of developing a guideline for better inclusive services in HEIs, taking into account the findings of this study, this proposed guideline would be the main study recommendation.

1.7 Research questions

This study investigates the current transition provisions available to high school PWDs that facilitate their move to and graduation from HEIs.

Below are the research questions that will be used to guide this investigation:

RQ1: How are transition services perceived by Grade 12 students with disabilities and their specialists?

RQ2: What inclusive provisions do students with disabilities in higher education perceived as the most valuable?

RQ3: How inclusive are the policies, practices, procedures, and other accommodations in selected higher Education institutions?

RQ4: What accommodations and practices can HEIs adopt to be more inclusive?

To answer the above study questions, the researcher will utilize a mixed-methods approach (qualitative and quantitative) to collect and analyze the research data.

The proposed study will take into consideration the human rights-based approach, the social model of disability, Education in the UAE, persons with disabilities rights in the UAE, people of determination national policy (2017), and the new terminology and implication on services offered for persons with disability in UAE.

1.8   Definitions of key terms

Understanding terminology is a very important component of understanding the purpose and the topics discussed in this study. This section is to clarify a number of terms used in this study.

Accessibility – is usually defined as a physical accommodation such as parking places and ramps to support individuals with disabilities. The United Nations Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities defines accessibility as a measure "to enable persons with disabilities to live independently and to participate fully in all aspects of life" (Fina, Cera & Palmisano 2017, p. 355). It is a "term used to describe the degree to which products, devices, services, or environmental resources are accessible by as many people as possible" (Moore 2012, p. 18). Previously the term focused on: (1) individuals with disabilities, and (2) the rights of individuals with disabilities to access entities (via the use of assistive technology) (Moore 2012).

Accommodation – is the changes in procedures or materials that allow PWDs to complete their school work or tasks with greater effectiveness (Shaw, Madaus & Dukes 2010). It is a device, practice, intervention or procedure provided to a student that affords equal access to instruction or assessment (Izzo, M. & Horne 2016, p. 104). Moreover, it aims at "reduc(ing) the impact of physical, cognitive or sensory barriers that may prevent students from gaining access to the targeted domain" (Reynolds & Fletcher 2007, p. 41). Thus accommodation can be through modifying the length of the assignments or the time allowed to complete the assignment, submission extension, extra time, large print, seating, aids, read orally, etc. (Burns 2007).

Higher Education – is "used very broadly to mean post-secondary Education, which is delivered by a university or college" (Seale 2014, p. 4). It is "more important than ever, for individual success and for national economic growth" (Clawson & Page 2011, p. 2). It includes undergraduate and postgraduate studies. Moreover, it gives students a chance to select their interesting subject to study.

Inclusion – The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), defined inclusion as "a process that helps overcome barriers limiting the presence, participation, and achievement of learners" (UNESCO 2017, p. 13). They also view inclusion as "a dynamic approach of responding positively to pupil diversity and of seeing individual differences not as a problem, but as opportunities for enriching learning" (UNESCO 2005, p.12). Inclusion is about; (a) welcoming diversity, (b) benefiting all learners, not only targeting the excluded, (c) children in school who may feel excluded, and (d) providing equal access to Education (UNESCO 2005, p.15).

Individualized Education Plan (IEP) – it is the "most important document in a child's special Education file" (Wilhurst & Brue 2018, p. 183). It describes their disabilities, their needs to work on it, and the services or assistive technologies the institution provides to support and meet their needs (Paquette & Tuttle 2006). This document is "designed both to benefit and to protect children with special needs and to provide their parents with procedural safeguards (Cullen & Bassett 2011, p.7). The IEP contains essential parts including: the level of performance, annual goals, special Education and related services/supplementary aids, and services, participation with nondisabled students, participation in state and district testing, dates and places, transition services, needed transition services, age of maturity, and measuring progress (Wilhurst & Brue 2018, p. 183-188). A special services committee develops this document. This committee is composed of special Education teachers, classroom teachers, counselors, the principal, school psychologists, and special Education supervisors (Slavin 2014).

Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) – "Includes those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others" (Bendix 2013, p. 36).

Students with disabilities (SWDs) – are students who have "an inability to do something that most others of the same age, and with similar opportunities and instructions, can do" (Brownell 2012, p. 6). The most common learning and behavioral characteristics of SWDs are: (a) attention disorder, (b) poor motor disabilities, (c) psychological processing differences, (e) oral language difficulties, (f) reading difficulties, (g) writing difficulties, (h) mathematics difficulties, (i) poor social skills, (j) mild intellectual disabilities, and (k) emotional disturbance (Brownell 2012). Not all SWDs have to receive special services as some students only need specific accommodations (e.g., preferential seating, extended time for their exams or assignments, etc.) to perform as adequately as their non-disabled peers (Brownell 2012).

In this study both PWDs and SWDs are used interchangeably as a SWD is a PWD in a learning environment.

Transition – is defined as a plan or movement from one phase to another phase, and this can include different activities, places, etc. (Simons 2010). It is the path "from high school to life after high school" (Paquette & Tuttle 2006, p. 184). It includes measurable goals for each student, especially PWDs, which should be based on students' performance, goals and needs (Grigal, Madaus & Hart 2018). This meaning of "transition" is much more focused, and it is the movement of PWDs from secondary school to postsecondary education, work and community environments. Moreover, it is to assist these individuals in achieving their career and life goals and become more active members of their communities (Bakken & Obiakor 2008, p. 5).

1.9 Summary of methodology

This dissertation combines both qualitative and quantitative research to investigate the inclusive provisions that facilitate transitioning government high school PWDs into the UAE government HEIs. The research data was collected using: interviews, documents reviews, and observations, questionnaire. The interviews, documents reviews, and observations rendered qualitative data, while the data derived from the questionnaire was analyzed quantitatively. This mixed methods approach provides researchers with useful and in-depth insights. Moreover, it gives a better understanding of the research problem (Creswell & Plano Clark 2011).

In this paper, the researcher reviewed two research approach philosophies: post-positivism, and interpretivism paradigms. Implementing the research philosophy is necessary, especially when researchers view the world, to adopt and contain important assumptions to answer the specific problem, and develop new knowledge (Saunders et al. 2009). Post-positivism allows researchers to have direct access to the real world, provided that they believe in a single and external reality (Carson 2001). Interpretivism, on the other hand, focuses on meaning and understanding what is happening, it develops ideas, it uses multiple methods to establish different views of phenomena, and it also utilizes small samples investigated in depth over time (O'Gorman, MacIntosh & Coutts 2014).

Participants in this study were selected from RAK government high schools (Grade 12), and HEIs from RAK, Dubai, and Abu Dhabi. The sampling includes all stakeholders in the institution and PWDs. The data for each instrument was gathered by the following means: (1) interviewing PWDs on how inclusive provisions are perceived by them face-to-face at the selected campuses, (2) questionnaire, all current stakeholders from the selected institutions were requested to respond to a questionnaire gauging their perceptions regarding the availability of inclusive services in their campuses, (3) observation, of the chosen institutions reviewed the campus environmental accessibility in terms of the campus map, doors, signage, ramps, parking, disabilities washrooms, elevators, nursing room, PWDs classroom locations, mosque, event halls, cafeteria, special equipment, and evacuation procedures. The researcher of this study used a manual wheelchair on each campus to get a first-hand experience with the campus accessibility, and (4) document analysis from the selected sites regarding the targeted departments (academic services, counseling team, work placement, etc.). These documents were related to admission requirement, persons with disabilities policy, accommodation forms, announcements, etc.

The mentioned methodology is explained in-depth in chapter three, which highlights the length of the interviews, participants, coding procedures, data collection, and the data analysis process in the study.

1.10 Significance of the study

It is very important that schools prepare their PWDs for higher education. This would help these individuals overcome a variety of different challenges during their transition from high school to higher Education (NCSER 2011). A report from the National Center for Special Education Research (NCSER) shows that PWDs graduate from high school while they are still unprepared to face higher Education challenges. With a limited number of studies (Alhammadi 2014; AlObeidli 2018; Gaad & Almotairi 2013) conducted to explore inclusive provisions in HEI in the UAE, this study is addressing a gap in the field. Since none of these studies focused on transitioning to higher education, this study is expected to introduce a comprehensive outlook to transitioning. Based on which current inclusive education policies can be reviewed and potentially amended to enable teachers, specialists, special education center managers and staff to enhance the accessibility of higher education for PWDs.

1.11 Organization for each chapter

This thesis is structured into six chapters as shown in Figure 1.

| CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION | → | Introduction to the whole thesis |

| CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW | → | Review published research |

| CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY | → | Selection of research tools |

| CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS | → | Coding for themes |

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION
(Missing Link Discussion)

APPENDICES
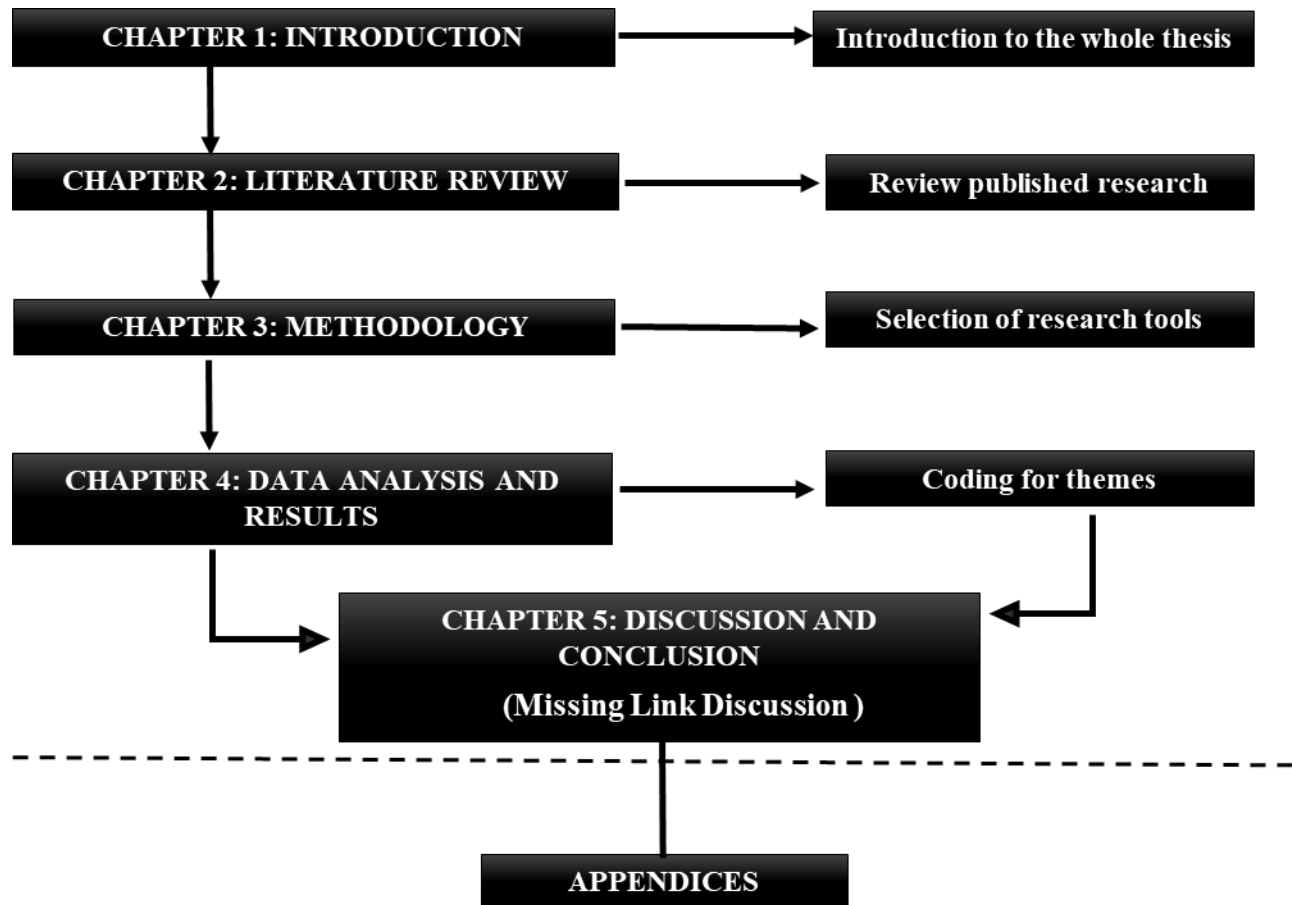
Figure 1: Outline of the thesis

The below section highlights the purpose of each of the chapters.

Chapter 1 provides an introduction to the whole thesis. This chapter covers the research background and the purpose of the study. The study background highlights the higher education in the UAE, inclusive education in the UAE and the UAE National Policy of Empowering people of Determination. This chapter also highlights the study's context, the problem statement, and the

study research questions. Furthermore, the conceptual framework, definition of key terms, summary of methodology and finally the significance of the study are briefly referred to in this first chapter.

Chapter 2 reviews the published research relevant to this study. This chapter is organized into three major parts: (1) theoretical framework; (2) literature review; and (3) summary of the literature review. This chapter provides an overview comparison between high school settings and higher education settings for PWDs. This includes the challenges facing PWDs at higher education via reviewing previous studies. Finally, this chapter provides a transition overview, including the definition of transition, the importance of transition planning, transition components, and the individuals involved in transition planning.

Chapter 3 presents the selection of research tools used for the data collection. This study adopted two approaches, the qualitative and the quantitative, to investigate the inclusive provisions that facilitate transitioning high school PWDs into higher education. This chapter demonstrates the research design and research instruments by providing detailed information related to the site selection, participant selection, the study's procedures, and the pilot study. Lastly, this chapter covers the limitation of the research and ethical considerations.

Chapter 4 presents the research data analysis and findings of the study as derived from the data collection instruments (document analysis, interview, observation, and questionnaire).

And finally, chapter 5 includes a discussion of the results and conclusion of the study (Missing Link Discussion). Furthermore, this chapter presents some recommendations for further research.

The literature review is discussed in the next chapter.

1.12 Summary

This chapter provided a summary of section 1.2 to 1.12 by identifying the reason for conducting this study and its purpose. It also highlighted the study background of higher education in the UAE, inclusive education in the UAE, the School for All and the transitional service, and the UAE National Policy of Empowering People of Determination. It also provided the context of the study, the problem statement and the study's research questions. The conceptual framework builds a sound theoretical background for the study, this was accomplished through reviewing six main concepts (the challenges from the legal aspects, social justice approach - disability in higher Education, Schlossberg's transition theory, Vygotsky's Sociocultural theory, Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems theory and Allport's Contact theory). This chapter also briefly explained the research design, methodology and identified the significance of the study. Finally, the outline of the thesis structure was presented.

The literature review presents a detailed review of published research in the next chapter, Chapter 2.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

2.2 Theoretical Framework

2.2.1 Theoretical perspective

2.3 Literature review

2.3.1 Disability in Higher Education: a social justice approach

2.3.1.1 Established models

2.3.1.2 Critical approach to disability

2.3.1.3 Social justice model

2.3.1.4 Emerging models

2.3.2 Comparison between High School settings and Higher Education settings for PWDs

2.3.3 Challenges facing PWDs at higher education

2.3.3.1 Previous studies

2.3.3.2 Previous studies breakdown

2.3.4 Transition overview

2.3.4.1 Definition of transition

2.3.4.2 Importance of transition planning

2.3.4.3 Transition components

2.3.4.4 Individuals involved in transition planning

2.4 Summary

2.0 CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Literature reviews provide a framework for building the importance of the study (Creswell 2009, p. 25). By reviewing the results of other related studies, the researcher is participating in the ongoing dialogue and helping in filling in gaps (Cooper & Schindler 2014). This is in brief what this chapter aims to achieve.

This chapter is organized into three major parts. The first part highlights the theoretical framework where the researcher provides a descriptive overview of the theoretical perspectives that guided this research. This overview covers: (1) Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, (2) Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, (3) Allport's Contact Theory; and (4) Schlossberg's transition theory. The second part reviews related studies and a summary is provided in the last part.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

2.2.1 Theoretical perspectives

The next section of this study describes different theories used to conceptualize persons with disabilities: development, social, and attitude theories. These theories would inform the researcher's understanding as to how PWDs are learning and behaving in different environments. The mentioned theories will be discussed in the following section.

2.2.1.1 Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory

Every student learns differently as their emotional development, social development, and learning style all play a role in differentiating their learning experience. According to Gaad and Almotairi, the "educational system has been applying the cognitive development theories of Piaget and Vygotsky for many years" (2013, p. 288). Daniels, Hedegaard, and Ebrary (2011, p. 162) argue that Vygotsky's theory can provide equal learning opportunities for people with disabilities since his approach emphasizes social interaction as key to cognitive development and calls for the differentiation of the level of teaching support. Slavin (2014, p. 45) underscores the two main

principles of Vygotsky's theory: the notion that intellectual development can only be understood historically and culturally based on children's experience, and that development is dependent on mediation. Kemp (2015, p. 32) summarised this theory in a brief but powerful statement: "that humans learn from each other".

Vygotsky's observations clarified that every child, from the first day of their life, learns, and he believed that children develop by copying others, mainly adults' speech and their activities (1978, p. 48). Assistance can enable children to do everything they want independently (Vygotsky & Kozulin 1986, p. 187). To understand how children make use of provided assistance to learn, Vygotsky introduced the concept of proximal development. He explained that there are two main levels of development: The first level is the actual development level, and this level indicates children's mental development and is measured by using a battery of tests. The second level is the zone of proximal development, and it is the range between the current developmental level and the potential level of development. This potential development is possible to reach provided that adult collaboration and guidance is available (Vygotsky & Cole 1978). This concept of proximal development fits inclusive education settings well because it allows students with disabilities to work with non-disabled others who can scaffold their development correctly at the required level.

2.2.1.2 Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory

According to Hayes, Toole, and Halpenny, Bronfenbrenner's doctoral research focused on the "development of children within their peer group" (2017, p. 2). The ecological theory may help to "illuminate the limitations of prejudice-reduction interventions and highlight opportunities to build on past successes" (McKown 2005, p. 197). Vygotsky's social-cultural theory on child development provided a basis to explore this theory and examine how social interaction affects integration. Bronfenbrenner's theory introduces a framework to look at the multi-level development of child interaction.

This theory explains the connections between the environment and individuals, and the environment and people, as they influence each other. Bronfenbrenner's approach helps to understand how each individual behaves in various environments differently (1986). The Ecological Systems theory (1986) is multi-dimensional as it confirms the two main models that are usually referred to when conceptualizing human development: (a) the medical model, and (2)

the social model. Furthermore, these models have different cultural, social, biological, and psychological systems, and these systems affect each other. As a result, human actions and behaviour will be difficult to understand if the situations are not considered. In other words, as we attempt to understand PWDs' needs and support these needs, we are reminded to take into account their context, whether physical, social or cultural; in short, a more inclusive approach is recommended by the Systems' Theory.

This study will seek to understand the inclusive aspect of the UAE higher education system and how the characteristics of this system will affect the delivery of services and support to PWDs. Therefore, the Ecosystematic model is one of the useful theories that would guide understanding in this study. This model will be explained further below.

Exosystemic model

This model is a mix of systems theory and ecological theory. Bronfenbrenner identifies five main environmental systems (see Figure 2): (1) macrosystem, exosystem, mesosystem, microsystem, and chronosystem (Hayes, O'Toole & Halpenny 2017).
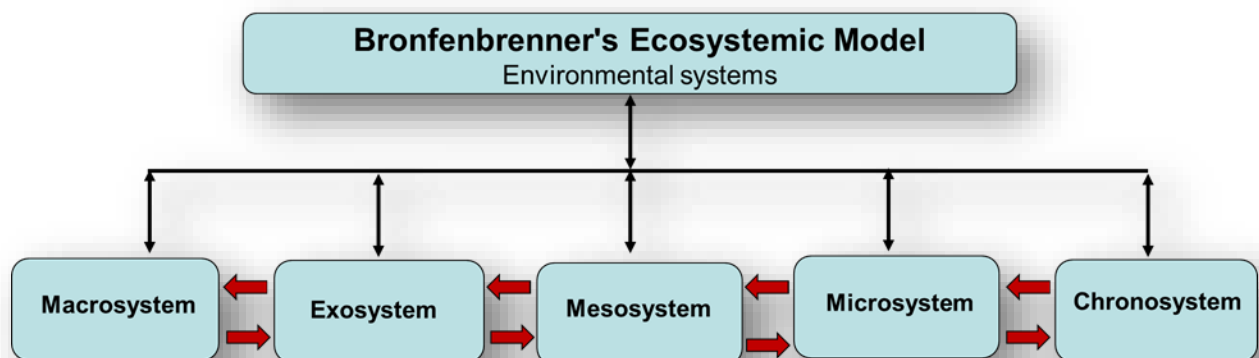
Figure 2: Bronfenbrenner's Ecosystemic Model

Hayes, O'Toole, and Halpenny (2017) define each system as the following:

- The *macrosystem* "represents the influence of even more distant factors" (Hayes, O'Toole & Halpenny 2017, p.7), and it refers to social values, culture, attitude, beliefs for the individuals. Moreover, it is "factors and culture outside the physical environment" (Hewette et al. 2017, p. 94).

- The *exosystem* refers to more distant influences, and factors external to the children, and adults but influencing them nonetheless, like curriculum design and educational policy (Hayes, O'Toole & Halpenny 2017, p.7). Also, it includes "factors outside the individual's immediate environment that impact upon their development (Hewette et al. 2017, p. 94).

- The *mesosystem* is the "communication and interactions between the various elements of the individual's Microsystems" (Hayes, O'Toole & Halpenny 2017, p.7). In particular, this system is related to the type of available educational support for PWDs in HEIs. It is also, "interactions between factors within the microsystems" (Hewette et al. 2017, p. 94).

- The *microsystem* refers to employees, students, college, peer group, family, friends, and interpersonal relationships. It also includes "factors in the environment immediately around the individual" (Hewette et al. 2017, p. 94). This is when staff and PWDs interact with each other, every one of those interactions at the microsystem can be facilitated by provisions to help SWDs succeed in their education (Hayes, O'Toole & Halpenny 2017, p.7).

- The *chronosystem* refers to "the influence of the time development. It takes account of time from the individual's perspective, and its relevance to early years practitioners when, for instance, considering issues of transitions" (Hayes, O'Toole & Halpenny 2017, p.7). In other words, it is "human development over time" (Hewette et al. 2017, p. 94).

Bronfenbrenner (1986) underscores that the educational environment as one of the main factor which affects students' development, and this must go beyond the effect of the positive attitude towards PWDs and should encompass all aspects of all systems.

2.2.1.3 Allport's Contact Theory

Many researchers agree that a positive attitude towards PWDs leads to successful inclusion (Otero 2012; Geidel 2015; Head & Pirrie 2007; May 2012). A negative attitude towards these individuals does not promote successful inclusion (Geidel 2015). According to Eiser (2015, p.1), "attitude, not just a 'good feeling' or 'bad feeling,' but a feeling that something is good or bad or whatever."

This is an interesting observation that considers noncommittal feelings as an attitude that people could adopt and behave based on it. Attitude is defined as a cluster of beliefs, feelings, and behaviour towards specific persons, ideas, or groups (Kumar & Ebrary 2010). Allport has considered attitude as the main concept of social psychology (Allport, Clark & Pettigrew 1954). His book, entitled The Nature of Prejudice, explores different kinds of discrimination and prejudice, and these include ethics, gender, socioeconomic, racial, and religious. Allport believes that positive contact facilitates interactions, increases social acceptance, and reduces prejudice (Bridges & Tomkowiak 2010).

According to May (2012, p. 241), interactions between PWDs and persons without disabilities in inclusive settings help "foster non-prejudicial attitudes and promote personal social development among persons with disabilities". Allport specified four main conditions (see Figure 3) to reduce prejudice and to improve social relations. These conditions are: (a) equal status, (b) intragroup cooperation, (c) common goals, and (d) social and institutional support (Allport, Clark & Pettigrew 1954). Clearly, the presence or absence of these conditions would make or break inclusive efforts.
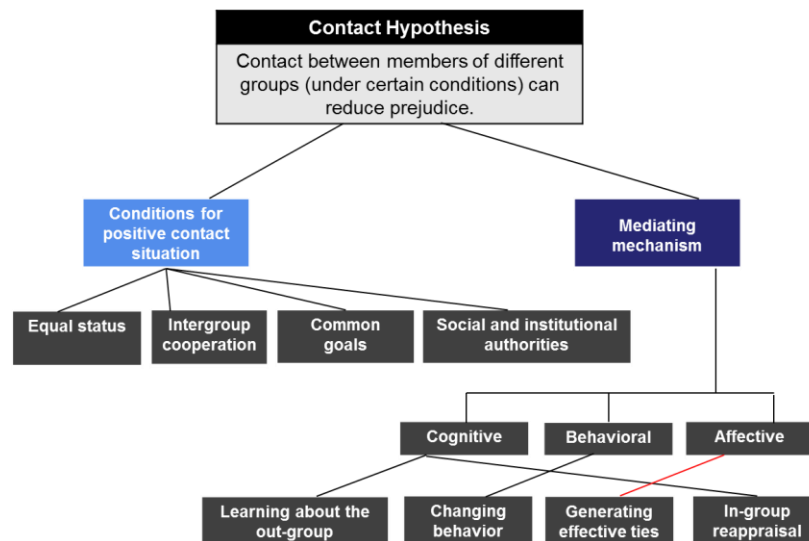
Figure 3: Allport Contact Hypothesis

2.2.1.4 Schlossberg's transition theory

Bakken and Obiakor (2008, p. 5), refer to transition as "the movement of PWDs from secondary school to postsecondary education, work, and community environment". It is viewed as fundamental "to assist these individuals in achieving their career and life goals and become more active members of their communities". This view is close to those of Simons' (2010), and Paquette and Tuttle's (2006, p. 184) who define transition as a plan charting the move from one phase to another phase, and this can include different activities, places, etc. Furthermore, it is seen as the "path from high school life to after high school".

To facilitate people's experience of transition three main issues need to be considered: (1) the type of transition that has happened or is happening: was it anticipated or unanticipated? (2) Changing stages of their lives, and (3) the resources needed to be implemented to make transition a successful experience (Anderson, Goodman & Schlossberg 2012). Transition includes measurable goals for each student, especially PWDs, and these must be based on students' performance, goals, and needs (Grigal, Madaus & Hart 2018). Anderson, Goodman, and Schlossberg (2012, p. 59) have provided a clear description of transition: "transition has no endpoint; rather … (it) is a process over time that includes phases of assimilation and continuous appraisal as people move in." through and out of it".

According to Anderson, Goodman, and Schlossberg (2012), there are three main transition strategies: "moving in", "moving through", and "moving out". The first stage is "moving in": it is when people obtain new opportunities, they need to understand new skills and to be familiar with new regulations of a new system framework. The second stage is "moving through": it is when people are obtaining new opportunities and learning new skills and beginning to be familiar with new systems regulations. The third stage is "moving out": it is the time of finishing one part of the transition to start and expect what comes after (Anderson, Goodman & Schlossberg 2012, p. 183-187).

Graduates from grade twelve often decide to join higher education regardless of their academic abilities, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status (Forest & Kinser 2002). Therefore, first-year students in higher education face many challenges during their transition period, for example, academic performance activities, daily self-care and joining social events to make new friends and create a

social community (Harper et al. 2018). Schlossberg's theory "provides insights into factors related to transition, the individual and the environment" which defines the stage and the impact of providing a transition process to facilitate the move from one stage to another (Forney et al. 2013, p. 212-213). These four factors, the 4Ss: situation, self, support, and strategies, have been identified as potentially important in influencing an individual's ability to cope with the transition (Patton et al. 2016, p.48). When taken into account during implementation phases, the 4Ss (see Figure 4) can decide the type of transition that is called for (Anderson, Goodman & Schlossberg 2012).
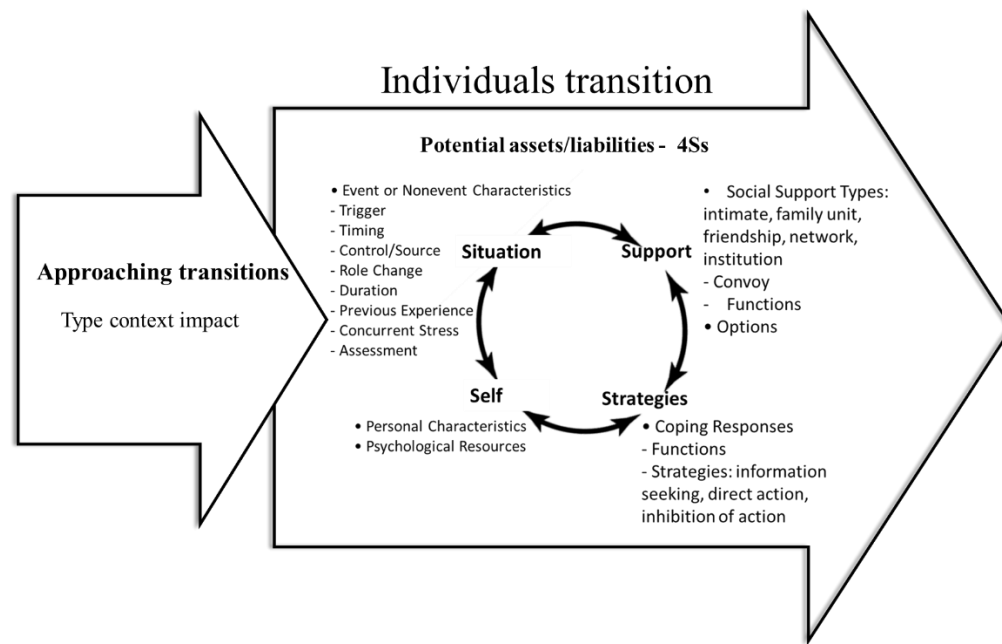
Figure 4: Transition process (Anderson, Goodman & Schlossberg (2012, p. 62)

According to Goodman and Anderson (2012), each mentioned factor is a combination of different variables supporting and identifying possible resources for the change in adaptation. The following describes how the 4Ss can inform the transition process.

The situation as one of the factors impacting the transition process indicates the individuals' conditions during the transition, There are eight main features related to the situation: (1) a trigger that stimulates individuals to look at themselves and their lives in a new way, (2) timing of the transition – to be off-time can make individuals feel uncomfortable, (3) the locus of control – whether the source of transition is internal or external, (4) whether a role change is required- many but not all, transitions involve role change, (5) duration – transitioning to a change that is regarded

as permanent will be perceived differently from one that is viewed as temporary, (6) previous experience with a similar transition – it is generally assumed that individuals are more successful at assimilating to another transition of a similar nature, (7) concurrent stress - often transitions in one area stimulates additional stress, and (8) assessment of the situation – an individual's view of who or what is responsible for the transition affects how that individual appraises the transition (Anderson, Goodman & Schlossberg 2012, p. 68-72).

With regard to the Self as another main factor impacting the transition process, Anderson, Goodman, and Schlossberg (2012) identified ten main characteristics that are mainly relevant for individuals as they cope with change: socioeconomic status, gender, age and stage of life, health, ethnicity and culture, psychological resources, Ego development, outlook – optimism and self-efficacy, commitment and values, and spirituality and resilience . These characteristics might be difficult to identify and professionals are required to report the most salient factors that are likely to be either a liability or an asset during transitioning (Goodman & Anderson 2012).

Support is the next essential factor in shaping the transition process, it is the key to handling stress. Anderson, Goodman, and Schlossberg (2012, p. 84), identify four types of social support individuals would need to facilitate the transition : (a) intimate relationships, (b) family units, (c) networks of friends and (d) institutions and/or communities. Social support can be as simple as "reactions offered that might be negative as well as positive", (Anderson, Goodman & Schlossberg 2012, p. 85).

The fourth crucial factor impacting the transition process is "strategies". Goodman and Anderson (2012, p. 15) mentioned the suggested types of strategies in Schlossberg's theory: "(a) strategies that change the situation, (b) strategies that change the meaning of a situation, and (c) strategies that manage the stress of transition". Both Goodman and Anderson (2012) added a fourth type of strategies related to counseling and client-advocacy. They also believe that when individuals can reformulate a situation, they manage to find a chance to face any adversity. Therefore, strategies that promote individuals' self-advocacy is highly important when it comes to working through transition as it assist in coping with stress (Goodman & Anderson 2012).

2.3 Literature review

The literature review is an overview of the available research for a specific topic. Hempel (2019, p. 3) mentions why researchers write a literature review: to summarize existing research to answer questions; to provide the context for new research, to identify important gaps in the existing body of literature, and to provide a fantastic opportunity to use the existing research evidence. According to Machi and McEvoy (2016, p. 5), the literature review can be defined as "a written argument that supports a thesis position by building a case from credible evidence obtained from previous research". A further definition is given by Efron and Ravid (2018, p. 2), who describe it as a "systematic examination of the scholarly literature about one's topic"; and that is what this researcher is intending to do here.

The main aim of this section is to review and explore the literature on the inclusive provisions that facilitate transitioning PWDs from high school into higher education. How inclusive provisions are perceived by PWDs and those who provide these services within the HEIs can point out how accessible higher education is for PWDs. Additionally, the study indirectly is attempting to explore the implementation of the standards that could be used to improve and develop services for PWDs in the HEIs.

The studies mentioned in this section represent a selection of international literature on transitioning and inclusive services for PWDs. Given the limited number of related studies conducted in the UAE (Gaad & Almotairi 2013), considering the topic from an international perspective would provide a beneficial frame of reference. This would allow the researcher to extend an overview of approved best practices and standards for disability services in higher education spearheaded by the Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD). This might encourage the UAE policy makers to re-evaluate and assess the provided services against the international standards for PWDs at schools and in higher education institutions.

The researcher of the study provides an overview of the literature in four main sections. The first section highlights the disability in higher education and how disability is defined and classified in higher education under four main headings: (1) Established models (moral, medical, functional and minority), (2) Critical approach to disability, (3) Social justice model, (4) Emerging models.

The second section sheds light on the comparison between high school settings and higher education settings for PWDs. This section explains how PWDs' high school settings are different from higher education and how this impacts PWDs' expectations during college education. The third section identifies the challenges facing PWDs in higher education. The last section offers the transition overview under four main headings: (1) Definition of transition, (2) Importance of transition planning, (3) Transition components, and (4) Individuals involved in transition planning.

2.3.1 Disability in Higher Education: a social justice approach

An overview of various models of disabilities summarizes how PWDs have been and are currently perceived by their societies. This also explores how a mix of these models does shape the attitudes of all involved stakeholders (teaching, facilities, operations, academic services, etc...) and impacts how they deal with these individuals. The following section covers how the disability is defined and classified in higher education under four main headings: (1) established models (moral, medical, functional, social and minority), (2) critical approach of disability, (3) social justice model, and (4) emerging models.

At the end of this chapter, a summary for each model's key points is provided.

2.3.1.1 Established models

Established models of disability starts with the moral model, then the medical model in the 19th century, those are followed by the functional model (20th century), the social model and the minority model (1960s and 1970s) (Evans et al. 2017, p. 55).

The Moral model

Altmaier and Hansen (2012, p. 463) explain that within the moral model "a disability is a manifestation of a moral lapse, sin, failure of faith or evil; alternatively, it is a test of faith or honor". It is also seen as a result of "religious, or personal weaknesses or strengths, either in this life or past lives" (Altmaier and Hansen 2012, p. 462). Evans et al. (2017, p. 56) stated that

nowadays views adopting the moral model are not the most common views of disability; however, upon closer examination of today's language, culture, and beliefs traces of those views remain evident. An example was given by Evans et al. (2017, p. 56) that one common thing that individuals keep repeating is "It is God's will", especially when a child is born with an illness. However, Western culture's belief that disability is "bad" stems from considering disability as a punishment from the gods, and it is the oldest view of disability (Chin & Trimble 2004, p. 58; Olkin 2000). Furthermore, Dunn (2014, p. 62) found that moral models are still active in some cultures. Olkin (2017, p. 84) stated that "the language used the moral models often contains emotionally evocative words".

Medical model

The study of Mantey (2017) implemented the social model because it challenges the medical model of disability that refuses the patient and sees him/her as "the defective" and thereby "situating disability exclusively in the individuals rather than in the society" (p. 19). For example, Dirth and Branscombe (2017) found that a wheelchair user would be primarily identified by their diagnosis, like cerebral palsy and multiple sclerosis. Dirth and Branscombe (2017, p. 415) state that "the medical model of disability conceptualizes disability as a medical issue which is the property of individual bodies, and minds". Drum, Krahn, and Bersani (2009) mentioned that internal biological conditions, illnesses, and diseases could cause disabilities. In the 19th century, "disability began to be understood in the biological and medical term" (Wilson 2017, p. 241). Furthermore, it is observed that the medical pathology lens might create the foundation for discrimination towards persons with disabilities because it would be very difficult to separate the disability from the individuals who suffer from and live with them (Dirth & Branscombe 2017). In- the 1800s, disability was considered a public health issue (Evans et al. 2017, p. 57). The medical model of disability explains disability as a physical ailment that draws the line at people with disabilities (Cameron 2014). The scholars Jaeger and Bowman (2005), and Burchardt (2004), argue that this medical model views disability as an individual problem caused directly by disease or injuries or other health conditions.

According to Emran (2013), "disability has been seen through a medical lens" (p. 18). She attempted to see a benefit in this by adding that "persons with disabilities are perceived as victims and policies adopting the medical perspective may support persons with disabilities by compensation for and reducing their suffering" (Emran 2013, p. 19). Similarly, Mantey (2017) mentioned that the medical model is focusing on the people with disabilities mainly according to their biological disorder. This would lead to including limitations in functioning that are seen as the foundation of disability when defined as a "lack of ability to perform an activity in a normal way" (Mantey 2017, p. 19).

Evans et al. (2017, p. 57) mentioned in their book that Fine and Asch 1988 listed the medical model's five main assumptions: that disability is only located in the body, that a person's impairment causes a person's problems, that PWDs must learn how to handle the circumstances they face, how they view and compare themselves to others, and that PWDs need help and support all the time.

On the other hand, proponents of the social model believe that 'disability' is how society recognizes the "different ways of being in the world" (Gallagher, Connor & Ferri 2014, p. 1136). Despite the fact that the social perspective has been criticized for distinguishing 'disability' from 'impairment,' and for its view of how knowledge is constructed, the social model remains valuable for liberating the persons with disabilities from the confines of the medical view. The social interactional model designates them an equal status from the start. In practice higher education PWDs specialists implement a medical perspective when they consider PWDs' access to appropriate health care (Evans 2017). According to (Altmaier & Hansen 2012, p. 463), the medical model's main benefit lies in reducing the sense of shame which can be seen as progress when compared to the moral model views.

Disability as Functional limitation

Nelson and Webb (2019) stated that this model recognizes that PWDs need many things, such as services, therapies, and interventions like assistive technology. Moreover, with the availability of mentioned services, PWDs can receive enough support to seek an appropriate job. Furthermore,

they said that this model's main significance is in providing the best and relevant services for PWDs (Nelson & Webb 2019).

The functional limitation model views disability as a deficiency that may be overcome with support from specialists in charge of treating both social and medical problems facing each individual (Evans et al. 2017). The main focus of providing training, providing education, and social rehabilitation is to give PWDs a chance to find a place to fit in society (Evans et al. 2017). The specialists assess and develop rehabilitation plans that focus on the individuals according to their previous work level and helps them adapt to their environment (Evans et al. 2017).

The main argument of the rehabilitation or functional limitations model is that disability does cause limitations in PWDs to perform in their daily life (Bryan 2010). This model may include some medical issues such as moving difficulties, breathing difficulties, and inability to work independently (Evans et al. 2017; Bryan 2010).

Evans et al. stated that the team working at the disability resource office, when implementing this view: (a) provide accommodations, (b) help PWDs accomplish their academic goals, (c) provide adaptive equipment, (d) help PWDs succeed in college, (e) provide individual coaching to enable students with disabilities to "overcome" their functional limitations; and (f) enter the workplace (2017, p. 61).

However, it remains to be mentioned that this model, by expecting the disabled person to adjust to the environment, failed to consider the possibility of changing the environment to support PWDs' needs. In this way, when PWDs change environments and face new limitations, according to this model they are expected to readily adapt with no re-evaluation of the required support.

The Social model

The social model declares that inclusion is not about persons with disabilities; it is about society. Social models see disability as a "social category shaped by changing social factors" (Wilson 2017, p. 241). It also sees disability as a "problem raised in the environment that fails to accommodate PWDs, and in the mismatch between the individual and the environment" (Altmaier & Hansen

2012, p. 463). According to Cameron (2014), the social model can help persons with disabilities learn from persons without disabilities by emphasizing the PWDs' capabilities. Mantey (2017) explains that the social model is the outcome of integrating individuals who get along with environments which is full of attitudinal, physical, communication, and social barriers, on one hand, and weaknesses on the other. In light of this, environments should change to enable individuals. In this way the social model is redefining the understanding of the main reason of why discrimination is happening in society (Mantey 2017). Moreover, it invites individuals to respect and value PWDs and accept them as they are rather than looking at them merely to help (Nelson & Webb 2019).

According to Oliver and Barnes (2010), persons with disabilities are faced with many barriers, economic, institutional, and environmental. All of these barriers can be identified and addressed. Mole (2012) recognizes the shift and states that, nowadays, the focus has changed from the persons' approach; disability is not the individual's problem anymore. Furthermore, Oliver and Barnes (2010) argue that disability can be caused by disabling practices of society, not the persons with disabilities impairment.

In reality, society sets many barriers for these individuals, such as putting stairs for wheelchair users and arranging time and accommodations for persons with learning difficulties only when it comes to exams. Common practices such as these form barriers that create disabilities. Thus, when educational institutions provide the right spaces and activities to accommodate persons with disabilities, these individuals will not face any difficulties when joining inclusive settings, mainly when they want to continue their higher education. Oliver and Barnes (2010) debate whether viewing a disability in this way might increase or decrease the number of persons with disabilities.

The researcher of this study agrees with Oliver and Barnes's argument that the institutions' design must be ready from the beginning to include persons with and without disabilities (2010). Mole (2012) states that once the social model of service provision is implemented from the beginning in each institution, it will be accessible for these individuals. It follows that if higher education institutions were to adopt the social model, and consider offering inclusive service provisions, learning would be fully accessible. The physical environment should be re-evaluated to meet persons with disabilities' requirements so that they could receive their education like their nondisabled peers.

The view of disability within the social models started to develop from the 1900s to the 1970s (Cameron 2014). The movement of the social model of disability development began in 1972 via the Union of Physically Impaired Against Segregation (UPIAS) (Gallagher, Connor & Ferri 2014). In 1976, the UPIAS published the Fundamental Principle of Disability document. A disability activist group from the United Kingdom with key figures such as Michael Oliver, Colin Barnes, and Vic Finkelstein formulated the ideas used to write this document (Evans et al. 2017). This document emphasizes the main contribution of the social dimension by drawing on the conceptual uniqueness between impairment and disability (Retief & Letsosa 2018).

Furthermore, central to the social model is the importance of developing disability awareness to improve the strength of persons with disabilities (Oliver 2013). Mutanga (2019) points out that the social model has been very important in higher education and employment, especially against discrimination and denying access and inclusion for PWDs, which led to the emergence of inclusive education (Goodley 2010). In 2019 Mutanga concluded that the social model helped in composing, structuring education, and work setting via shifting the main focus from the individuals to social challenges that stop their equal participation (Mutanga 2019).

One of the main advantages of the social model is that it promotes integration of the disability into the self, together with a sense of community and pride. However, this comes with greater challenges related to how it defies prevailing ideas, and the inevitable feelings of powerlessness in the face of needed broad social and political changes (Altmaier & Hansen 2012, p. 463).

The Minority model

The minority model views disability as a social structure (Chin & Trimble 2004). The researchers revealed that the problem is not with PWDs, but it is in the environment that fails to adapt to the PWDs (Chin & Trimble2004, p. 58). This model is also referred to as a "sociopolitical model" Evans et al. (2017, p. 85) defines disability within this model as "the product of an interaction between the environment and individuals". It also grew out of the disability rights movement. According to Longmore and Dawidoff (2003), researchers of disabilities rights argued that individuals without disabilities who did not know any PWDs or came across challenges facing

PWDs, were often biased. Due to their understanding of these issues, it is recommended that researchers (with no first-hand experience with PWDs) must conduct more research about disability. It is also necessary for all the staff working with the disability resource center to work within this model's context and raise awareness among all PWDs in terms of any discrimination they might face during their college journey and within the broader society. Implementing this would raise awareness to encourage all students to obtain their rights and help in drafting policies that create a fair environment (Evans et al. 2017). The main factor affecting PWDs is the societal attitude, which is the most powerful environmental barrier (Jones & Basser Marks 1999). Jones and Basser Marks (1999) mentioned three prevailing assumptions that shape the societal attitude. The first assumption is a negative attitude and it is the main reason for causing the barriers that PWDs face. The second assumption is that public policy drives all aspects of the environment. The last assumption is that social attitudes play a role in creating public policy (Evans et al. 2017, p.65). In other words, without raising awareness to change negative attitudes, the society is likely to keep going around PWDs in vicious circles.

In addition, the minority model upholds that "attitudes and bias of society are the problem, not individual impairments" (Nelson & Webb 2019, p. 5). It has also confirmed that a disability should not denote a negative concept, and a disability can be a point of pride (Nelson & Webb 2019). On the other hand, according to Batavia and Schriner (2001), this model has some weaknesses. They mentioned that it was viewed as oversimplified as it leaves out the consideration of some of the key factors (family, individual, and cultural), or variables that impact the individual's ability to live independently and to be more proactive.

2.3.1.2 Critical approach to disability

The critical disability theory and critical realism are recent models that have a strong potential for professionals who deal with disabilities (Evans et al. 2017). The critical approach introduces the concept that disability is not fixed and can change over time (Evans et al. 2017).

The main objective of the critical disability theory is to "challenge … assumptions and hypothesis so that PWDs can participate fully in contemporary society" (Pothier & Devlin 2005, p 2). This theory includes ideas related to human rights, local knowledge, and the link between embodiment

and disability (Evans et al. 2017). Moreover, this model encourages specialists to consider disability reactions with other social identities (Evans et al. 2017). Including local knowledge as a method to understand the lived experience of PWDs (Evans et al. 2017, p. 67).

Implementing a critical disability theory would allow higher education specialists to understand that the reasons for the impairment are more important, and to consider the environment during intervention planning (Evans et al. 2017).

To understand disability experiences in a complex and intersectional manner, this theory provides higher education specialists with a unique collection of tools. It also includes social justice opportunities, but according to researchers, it might build up some difficulties in engaging higher education students, staff, and community members (Evans et al. 2017).

For critical realism, as the second aspect of this model, disability is defined as "the outcomes of the interaction between individual and contextual factors, which includes impairment, personality, individual attitudes, environment, policy, and culture" (Shakespeare 2014, p.77). Evans et al. (2017, p. 70) further describes this aspect as a "paradigm that holds that reality exists in ways that allow us to make casual truth claims". Critical realism researchers believe that the physical and social phenomena are there, but they are separate from participant's perceptions (Evans et al. 2017).

Yet, the reality is shaped by the experience of each individual and "the conditions and social relations of the production of knowledge influence its content" (Montuschi 2003, p. 111). According to Shakespeare (2014), disability cannot be understood as a social structure, even if the barriers have been removed or enough support was given to PWDs, still it will remain problematic for them.

This model has two main limitations though. The inaccessibility of the model has been noted. In addition, the model seems to alienate studies in the social sciences (Evans et al. 2917, p. 71). In terms of the first limitation, most of the books related to critical realism were challenging to understand due to the written language without any practical training related to the implemented language, which caused some difficulties to the specialists. Regarding the second limitation, it is it is even more challenging to find studies related to disabilities (Evans et al. 2017).

2.3.1.3 The Social justice model

According to a definition provided by Watts and Hodgson (2019, p. 24), social justice is "not simply justice; it is a fairly recent idea in the long history of philosophy and debates about justice generally". Moreover, this model is a fundamental value of social work, and the meaning of it remains the same. Evans et al. (2017) reveal that "the concept of disability is central to social justice (2017, p. 72). Researchers mentioned that this model helps support and explain the experiences of disability, and it allows for more examination of the effects of the policy (Hutcheon & Wolbring 2012). There are three main components to the social justice model of disability: (a) a focus on privilege and oppression, (b) an emphasis on diversity and intersectionality of the disabled individuals' experiences, their role, and their disabilities, and (c) adoption of intentionally educational mission (Evans et al. 2017, p. 72). In 2017, Bell described four features of oppression of PWDs: restrictive, pervasive, hierarchical, and internalized (Fawcett & Evans 2012, p. 174). In addition, Adams (2010, P. 10) mentioned three main dimensions of oppression: context, application, and consciousness.

It has been noticed that oppression can happen at the individual level and caused by attitude and behavior. Furthermore, it can happen in institutional settings (that includes family, government, education, religion, the legal system, values, beliefs, and norms). Thus, oppression can be intentional or unintentional due to the lack of awareness (Evans et al. 2017, p. 73). An example was given by the researchers Evans et al. (2017, p. 73) that the courses related to diversity must include units on disability and on negative attitudes and the stereotyping of PWDs. Advocates and specialists of PWDs can check policies and practices such as admission processes, activities, etc. whether they are equal for PWDs and non-disabled students. These advocates and specialists can highlight the main values and beliefs through their campus media, newsletters, newspapers, students' handbooks, and their main campus websites (Evans et al. 2017, p.73).

Rentz and Mackinnon (2004, p. 389) and Zhang (2016) recognized three basic dimensions of this advocacy model in education when applied to disability: (1) providing support to PWDs, (2) educating PWDs and students without disabilities to create an environment that values differences, and how to advocate for themselves, and (3) working to modify institutional structures and policies that support the oppression of PWDs (2004, p. 389). According to Evans et al. (2017), this model

is more complicated than the earlier models. This complexity is in terms of understanding how PWDs view themselves and how other individuals view them (Evans et al. 2017, p. 76).

2.3.1.4 Emerging models.

To understand disability, there are two main emerging models: the disability justice model, and the interactionist model of disability (Evans et al. 2017).

The disability justice model is defined as "socioeconomic status" (Events et al. 2017, p. 76-77). Researchers stated that interdependence is one key idea in this model, and it is an immediate challenge to the disability rights argument that PWDs want to be independent (Events et al. 2017).

Generally, specialists of disability resource offices support this model, and they work on the premises that a focus on PWDs would be the right place to start making change (Events et al. 2017).

Within the interactionist model of disability "the experience of disability" is seen as "a consequence of the interaction of three components; the person, the person's impairment, and the environment" (Events et al. 2017, p. 90). Each of the three mentioned components oscillates and can impact each other (Events et al. 2017). As noted by the researchers, the environment can enable or disable; and individuals can make less or more efficient choices than before. Furthermore, environment impairments can vary from minimum to significant (Events et al. 2017, p. 78). The environment component can impact the weaknesses to a small degree, which might in turn affect the environment (see Figure 5).
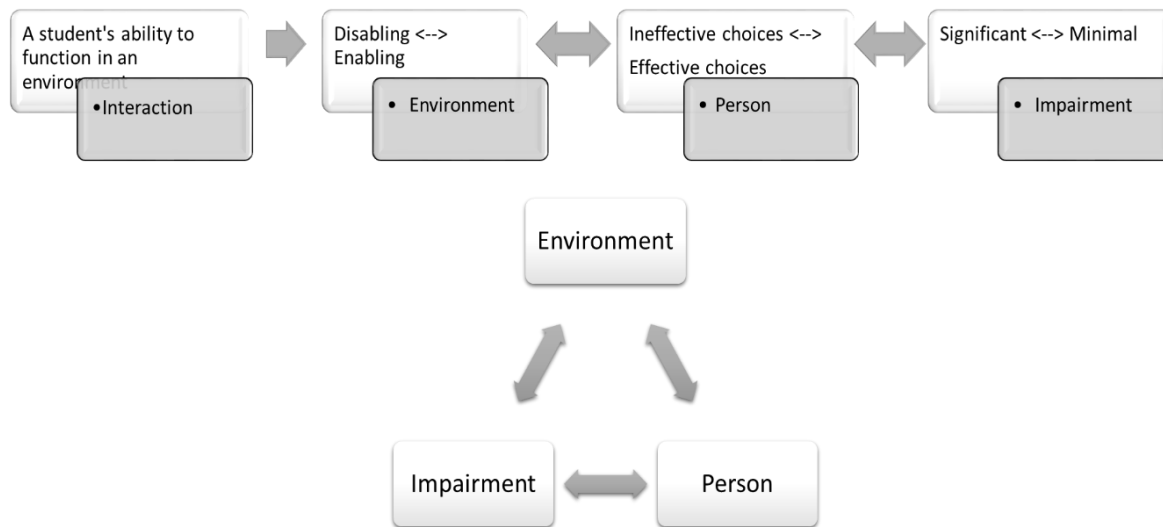
Figure 5: Interactionist model of disability (Events et al. 2017, p. 79)

2.3.2 Comparison between high School settings and higher education settings for persons with disabilities

According to researchers Antony et al. "today, more individuals with disabilities are seeking admission into colleges than ever before" (2015, p. 15). Everyone needs to be aware of what is different between high school settings and higher education, especially persons with disabilities. They need to understand their current high school setting and how it is different from higher education settings. Moreover, they need to know what is going to be expected from them by the college for their education programs. The parents of persons with disabilities also need to be aware of these two different settings (High School and Higher Education) in terms of provided services and the legal issues related to their sons or daughters.

Conley (2010) explained the differences between high school settings and college courses. All students seem to think that higher education courses are the same or similar to high school courses. Higher education instructors expect their students to work independently, to conduct research, solve problems, and support arguments with evidence and think deeply. Science courses in higher education are often separate, one class is a lecture, and the other one has lab components, and each student receives their credit for each category. Moreover, independent task completion is a must for all students in post-secondary education.

Furthermore, students may ask their instructor's support if they need or can ask for an extension of the deadline if they could not submit their work or assignments on time. Conley (2010) also mentioned eight main resources available for persons with disabilities when they need any support in higher education: (1) tutoring services, (2) writing consultation, (3) technology labs, (4) academic support centers, (5) advisors, (6) counselors, (7) students life, and (8) residence hall assistants (p. 47).

Izzo and Horne (2016) explained how persons with disabilities' rights and responsibilities change from high school to higher education: in high school, parents and teachers are helping those with disabilities; while, in higher education, persons with disabilities must seek help as needed from disability services. Next, in high school the school team is responsible for arranging the right accommodations for persons with disabilities. On the other hand, in higher education, persons with disabilities must self-advocate, and arrange for their accommodations. Moreover, usually high school classes run at the same building, while in higher education, most of the courses run in different places on campus. Class duration in school settings is from forty five to fifty minutes. In comparison, the lecture time in higher education can take from fifty minutes to three hours every day depending on student schedules. Another main difference between educations on both ends is teacher's role; high school teachers often remind their students about assignments and due dates, whereas higher education professors expect their students to read and follow the course requirements with no assistance.

Parents of persons with disabilities have to be aware of the difference between high school settings and higher education settings in terms of the availability of the support services related to their children's needs (Hughes & Lackenby 2015). Martinez, Conroy, and Cerreto (2012) explained the importance of parents' involvement in the transition process of their children from high school to higher education to ensure that their children receive the appropriate services in higher education. However, Martinez, Conroy, and Cerreto's (2012) study results indicated that parents still do not fully understand the transition process, and they demonstrated low knowledge about higher education settings.

Hamblet (2014) mentioned the differences between high school and higher education regarding persons with disabilities accommodations. Teachers provide study guides in high school, whereas in higher education, teachers train their students to create their own study guides. High school

teachers also prompt students to pay attention but in higher education, inattentive students are expected to make up for what they missed in class.

Moreover, while persons with disabilities at high school receive an extension of the deadline for projects, in higher education, teachers help students to develop their time management skills. For example, they teach them how to break big assignments into smaller pieces to meet the deadlines. In addition, in high school, teachers explain test questions for their students. This is replaced with providing students with test taking strategies like underlining keywords and rephrasing difficult questions as statements in higher education (p. 56).

The National Disability Coordination Officer Program (NDCO) is an Australian Government initiative to assist persons with disabilities. They identified key areas of differences between pre and post-secondary education: learning environment, study expectation, enrolment, classroom, managing student study, and support for student disability (NDCO 2015). The differences inherent in each of these areas are highlighted below.

Regarding the learning environment, at high school persons with disabilities depend on their parents to contact the school directly to discuss attendance or study matters while in higher education, students' study matters will not be addressed directly with their parents. The attendance at high school is compulsory because the teachers follow up on their attendance regularly, but it is students' responsibility to attend their classes in higher education. Moreover, parents of persons with disabilities and their teachers would be responsible for joining high school, submitting their assignments, and accessing services with additional support. Higher education is the opposite because students would be responsible for everything (NDCO 2015).

Regarding the enrollment, students' parents are the one who submit their children documents to enter or join high school. Students are in charge of applying for their registration to enroll for their specific subjects for the selected program or course for higher education. Furthermore, after the student enrolls to study in high school, they remain enrolled until they graduate. For higher education, students would need to keep signing up for their courses yearly or every semester (NDCO 2015).

Regarding the classroom, at high school, the classroom duration can run across the year, and classes might be shorter. Still, in higher education, classes are divided into different semesters.

Also, students usually spend their time from 08:30 am to 03:00 pm. In higher education they start earlier from 08:00 am until the evening depending on the course nature. Moreover, attending classes is mandatory for all high school students because their teachers' attendance would be monitored. In higher education, teachers do not offer advice related to the importance of attendance, but students must attend their tutorials to avoid failing their subjects (NDCO 2015).

Regarding managing the student study, teachers at high school check their students completed homework but in higher education, teachers do not check everything, but students must read everything from the tutorial, exams, assignments, and they need to reference the required assignments. Teachers of high school usually approach their students when they believe they need assistance whereas in higher education, students need to contact their teachers once they need any help. The teacher often sets revision tasks in high school but it is necessary for higher education students to establish their plan for the study revision (NDCO 2015).

Regarding study expectations, students at high school will hear the class presentations only once. Still, in higher education, students will need to review everything regularly, such as lecture notes. Students at high school are expected to read a particular material like a book chapter only. However, students in higher education will need to read more from extra materials, not only assigned course books. They need to read journal articles for their assignments. Students at high school are not requested to reference anything, but in higher education, they have strict policies related to plagiarism (NDCO 2015).

Regarding support for students with disabilities, high school teachers are usually advised about persons with disabilities by previous schools or parents. In higher education, students are required to provide their updated medical reports related to their disabilities to seek reasonable adjustments during their study. Furthermore, students receive their support based on their high school teachers' recommendation. But in higher education, provision of support is based on students' medical reports and recommendations by the skilled people who look after these individuals (NDCO 2015).

As evident from above, the comparison between High School settings and Higher Education settings outlines problematic areas for persons with disabilities that can create some challenges for these individuals due to lack of expectation management. The following section presents an overview of the transition literature that highlights these challenges and emphasizes that when

PWDs are aware of the differences between high school and higher education settings during the transition phase, they are more likely to succeed.

2.3.3 Challenges facing PWDs at higher education

The purpose of this section is to highlight the challenges faced by PWDs at HEIs. The transition into higher education constitutes an unstable life stage for PWDs and their parents (Siew et al. 2017). Moreover, PWDs may face many challenges once they move from high school to post-secondary education (Johnson, Taga & Hughes 2018). According to Izzo and Horne (2016, p. 39), challenges refer to PWDs struggling with: learning, communication, social skills, organization, perception, multitude of other behavior, and abilities impaired by their disability.

Due to the importance of this topic, the researcher tried, through the review of the literature in this field, to extract the most prominent challenges faced by PWDs when they move from the secondary stage to the post-secondary stage, they appeared as follows.

Moving from one environment to another unusual environment denotes a movement away from provisions of special education support services at the secondary school level, to provisions at the university level. This change is not limited to the difference in services at the universities level, but there is the added difference in the style in which those services are provided in these universities (First, Cheak-Zamora & Teti 2016). There is also a clear shift in legal rights for students with disabilities, as IDEA (1997) and the Rehabilitation Act -Section 504 both emphasized that it is mandatory for compulsory education schools to provide appropriate free special education as per student needs, but higher education entities are not subject to the same obligation (Osborne & Russo 2014; Jacob, Decker & Lugg 2016). This leads to an additional challenge; there is a change in the level of responsibility for the PWDs and their parents. At the university level, PWDs are responsible for themselves, unlike what was prevalent in the secondary level (Doyle, Mc Guckin & Shevlin 2017; Hirano et al. 2016; Simons 2010; Talapatra, Miller & Schumacher-Martinez 2018; Wilt & Morningstar 2018).

Furthermore, after PWDs join the university, they may find unexpected conditions for graduation, which may seem impossible and cannot be achieved. This can happen due to the lack of special

education services. Furthermore, each university is running their education according to a specific plan for students (with disabilities and without disabilities) without any modifications to the admission requirements or the content to the courses (Gaad & Almotairi 2013). Internationally, rights for PWDs have been receiving a greater attention which was confirmed by ADA and section 504 that each student is receiving their support services (Jacob, Decker & Lugg 2016).

Also, undergraduate PWDs may face some challenges while they are studying at college. These challenges are not the same challenges they used to face in high school. Therefore, it is very important for PWDs to learn appropriate processes for higher education, which may help them to cope with more demanding educational institutions (Izzo & Horne 2016). In addition, a lack of interaction between higher education service providers and PWDs in high school has been documented, and when PWDs move from high school to college, their ability to describe their difficulties is underdeveloped. As a result, they become unable to express their needs (Johnson, Taga & Hughes 2018). Participation and coordination are very important at all levels. Teachers at public and private education need to engage in a collaborative effort to assess and support PWDs for their transition services (Johnson, Taga & Hughes 2018).

2.3.3.1 Previous studies

Previous studies specifically related to PWDs transitioning from high school into higher education in the UAE is not available. Still, there is very little literature available related to PWDs in higher education in the UAE. While internationally, there are many studies available about transitioning of PWDs from secondary school to post-secondary stage. To shed more light on this theme, this section reviews the main challenges PWDs face at the HEIs in the UAE.

According to Gaad and Almotairi (2013), PWDs in the UAE face many challenges once they move from high school to the post-secondary level. It is believed that lacking in preparation for the transition plan for PWDs joining post-secondary education causes these challenges (Wehman 2011). Moreover, once PWDs finish high school, they leave without advocacy skills and without knowing when to ask for specific services (Izzo & Horne 2016; Simons 2010). Simons (2010, p. 5) notes that "Having a vision is different from having a plan". He further elaborates that the plan

is a series of clear and identified steps, while a vision is a statement of what PWDs want to help them get there.

The first research study related to issues and challenges faced by PWDs in higher education in the UAE was conducted by Gaad and Almotairi (2013). Their study aimed at examining the status of PWDs in higher education in the UAE as it was at the end of the first decade of the twenty first century. They used a qualitative approach and implemented a triangulation of data collection (interview, observation, and documentation review). Three major themes emerged: training for staff and PWDs in higher education, accommodation for disability, and advocacy and cultural issues.

Issues related to training staff and PWDs indicate that training to support both staff and PWDs is lacking in higher education. The researchers found that the secondary school has a clear system for PWDs when they move to the next phase with a clear provision. On the other hand lecturers and instructors stated that they did not attend professional training related to dealing with PWDs. To improve future practice, the study participants from faculty suggested the following: to attend more smartboard training, to have a disability center to foster good communication, to provide equipment to be available at disability centers, to offer training in specific disabilities and accommodations, the disability center needs to provide both the recommended accommodations and assessment for faculty to be able to seek feedback from special education advisors, to provide more courses on self-determination for students to be able to self-advocate, to train all staff for health and safety including emergency procedures (Gaad & Almotairi 2013, p. 289).

For issues related to accommodations for a disability, the researchers, Gaad and Almotairi (2013), revealed that the difference between high school and higher education could also cause some challenges for PWDs in terms of (a) university settings, (b) college courses, (c) unstructured time (d) risk of failure, (e) decision making, (f) need assistance, (g) self-advocacy skills, (h) referrals received (Gaad & Almotairi 2013, p. 290). Gaad and Almotairi (2013) explained how HEIs are different from high school settings. In terms of university settings, they stated that the class size is larger than the schools. In terms of the college courses, they mentioned that each student is required to complete a range of projects. In terms of unstructured time, they revealed that in general, students struggle to manage their time between their family and friends. They also stated that experiencing these new learning conditions for PWDs puts them at a greater risk of failure. In

terms of decision making, it is difficult because of their untrained ability to identify their strengths, interest, and values. Thus, researchers see that these individuals do need assistance to define the specific accommodation that they need. Furthermore, PWDs should develop self-advocacy skills, which would help them communicate about their strengths and weaknesses. (Gaad & Almotairi 2013).

For challenges related to advocacy and cultural concerns, researchers, Gaad and Almotairi (2013), reveal that teachers' attitudes are a very important variable for reducing the stress linked to advocacy and cultural issues; they explained that teachers' attitude is a key factor determining the success of including PWDs in the regular classroom.

The researchers recommended a better implementation of the IEP with proper funding support. Also, they added, there are no accurate statistics related to PWDs. More importantly, there is an urgent need for an entity to supervise the provisions of PWDs for all the country (Gaad & Almotairi 2013, p. 291). The researchers concluded that there is a need for a better implementation of policies. Moreover, they called for efforts to raise more awareness campaigns and increase professional development for a successful inclusion (Gaad & Almotairi 2013, p. 291).

Alhammadi (2014) is another key study that examined PWDs in the Emirati higher education. She utilized a qualitative study approach (face-to-face interview and observation) to analyze the PWDs lived experiences and to explore the educational challenges facing Students with Vision Impairment (SWVI) in the UAE. In addition, her study aimed at developing an understanding of the main challenges that are facing SWVI staff and lecturers. The total of these study participants was fifty-six. The first case study was about the researcher as an autobiographical account. An autobiographical account is "a person's written account of her or his own life" (Thomas, & Brubaker 2000, p. 99). Alhammadi herself is vision impaired, while the rest of the case studies were from different HEIs in the UAE, including staff, SWVI and specialists.

Focusing on the barriers faced by SWVI in the UAE HEIs, seven major themes emerged in the study: (1) issues in the preparation of SWVI for higher education in the UAE, (2) accessibility issues (3) exam accommodations and modifications (4) challenges in HEIs classrooms (5) difficulties in studying certain subjects (6) limitation in choosing the study area, and (7) personal challenges (Alhammadi 2014).

The first theme of issues in the preparation of SWVI for higher education identified three aspects: Braille literacy, orientation, and mobility using assistive technology. The findings of this theme indicate that only nineteen of SWVI (out of twenty-four) did not attend any Braille training at the university. Only ten of them are using a Braille device at their university. Only a few of SWVI attended a Braille training, but they did not practice it. In terms of the orientation and mobility, the results revealed that only ten of SWVI were able to use a white cane. Also, a lack of orientation and mobility training across the UAE has been noted. In terms of using assistive technology, the results revealed that fifteen of SWVI out of twenty, four of them did not attend any computer training, whereas only six of them can use computers independently (Alhammadi 2014).

The second theme of accessibility issues centered on: access to the physical environment, access to information; and access to the social environment. In terms of access to the physical environment, the results showed significant accessibility issues across all the selected sites. This study focused on ramps, special toilets, and parking for PWDs. Participants indicated that the elevators were not fully accessible for SWVI as they were lacking the audio announcement and Braille writing on the buttons. In terms of the access to information, SWVI stated that their inability to access their course materials, using online access and libraries was the most significant barrier facing them (Alhammadi 2014).

For the third theme of issues related to exam accommodation and modification, Alhammadi (2014) mentioned in her paper that the most accommodation needed for SWVI is a test-writer, extra time, and accessible materials with a separate room. All the SWVI interviewed stated that they were not given enough support for their exams, lacking mentioned services. Moreover, she mentioned the most needed exam modification for SWVI was to adjust their questions that contain images, tables, and charts. Overall, the results revealed that each study site is struggling to provide the main services i.e. clear policy, experienced support staff, and experienced lecturers.

For the fourth theme of challenges facing SWVI in the classroom, Alhammadi's (2014) analysis revealed that six main common classroom challenges: (1) taking lecture notes, (2) reading what lecturers write on the board, (3) understanding images, (4) participating in-class activities, (5) finding a chair in the first row in the class, and (6) socializing with their classmates. According to Ahammadi's (2014) study results, all SWVI were facing serious struggles taking lecture notes. SWVI stated that they are not fast enough to type using a Braille device, and many lecturers are

not allowing them to record their lectures. Moreover, their course materials were accessible for some SWVI who also pointed out that they wanted to sit in the first row for a better opportunity to hear their lecture and record or take notes (Alhammadi 2014, p. 161).

For the fifth theme of difficulties in studying certain subjects the study results revealed that SWVI were struggling in English, Mathematics, and computer subjects. Moreover, the selected sites' lecturers did not attend training to accommodate SWVI (Alhammadi 2014).

In terms of the sixth theme of the limitation in choosing the study area. According to Alhammadi (2014), few SWVI could not get into majors that they wanted to study (for example, physics, television radio, broadcasting, education, business, geology) due to the claim that higher education across the UAE did not have enough funding to adjust visual information.

As for the last theme of personal challenges, in her study, Alhammadi (2014) focused on multiple personal challenges SWVI face that have a strong influence on development of their educational abilities: severity of vision loss, deteriorating eye conditions, health issues, multiple disabilities status, their level of self-reliance, and self-advocacy.

The study also showed that the selected three universities do offer to accommodate SWVI by establishing a disability department. Only two universities established an assistive technology room to support SWVI, and only one university is supporting SWVI to access the study materials. Furthermore, the study showed three main challenges that facing higher education in accommodating SWVI: namely shortage in experienced staff, supportive policy, and dedicated budget (Alhammadi 2014).

One more study was done in the UAE by AlObeidli (2018) who conducted a study of the effectiveness of existing policies and procedures in the admission of Students with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in the UAE higher education.

AlObeidli (2018) utilized qualitative research implementing two methods, interview, and document analysis across five universities (two public universities and three private universities), enlisting a total of nineteen participants. According to AlObeidli (2018, p. 17), "PWDs still face challenges to access higher education". The researcher of this study identified three main challenges: (1) in order to get needed accommodations, PWDs need to be active, independent and responsible, (2) lack of parents involvements in this process, (3) PWDs would receive a different

type of services – than what they were provided with in high school environment. Subsequently, PWDs need to build their time management, study planning skills and develop their self-advocacy skills (AlObeidli 2018, p. 54). According to Morina (2017, p. 13), "the university should be proactive in transition planning to avoid early leaving and foster academic success for PWDs".

AlObeidli (2018) highlighted the experiences of PWDs in higher education. The first participant started her higher education in 1991 and finished in 2000. This is almost ten years to get her degree. There were two reasons for this delay. The first reason was her health condition, and the second one, she kept changing her majors. Moreover, she was unaware of any law regarding regulations and rights of PWDs.

The second participant got great support from his family to continue his higher education. In terms of the university, before he joined, he was invited by his current university as a guest for an inspirational talk. Then, the same university told him that they were waiting for him to join them. He used to face many challenges before, and he felt that he was separated from the university environment. But once the university provided a support center for PWDs, they started to support him and empower him. This participant mentioned one main challenge that is likely to face any PWDs, and that is to achieve the admission requirement to pass their Emirates Standardized Test (EmSAT) or International Language Testing System (IELTS) exam. He revealed that without these tests, no one is allowed to enroll in any university. Despite the fact of his initial positive experience with the university, this admission test challenge also did not allow him to complete his higher education until he passed it (AlObeidli 2018).

The last participant completed his study only from kindergarten to grade nine, and in 1994 he could not continue his high school due to lack of support for hearing impairment individuals at that time. For this reason, his family supported him to complete his high school in the United States (US). He joined one of higher education colleges in the UAE, but they could not provide a translator for him, and they asked him to search for a translator. Due to this challenge, he decided to go back to the US to continue his higher education. This participant suggested that the UAE's education system should support SEND individuals in schools and higher education by providing a translator for them (AlObeidli 2018).

AlObeidli (2018, p. 58), stated that when PWDs finish their high school and then join higher education, they face huge challenges and to reduce these challenges a solid preparation plan by the previous school (high school) transition team is very important to ensure their success in higher education.

Several international studies confirmed these findings about challenges that is facing PWDs in higher education and identifying these challenges as the main cause of the low enrolment rate of the PWDs in higher education (Arnold 2018; Bell 2017; First, Cheak-Zamora & Teti 2016; Francis, Stride & Reed 2018; Hees, Moyson & Roeyers 2015; Hewett et al. 2017; Maymon, Hall & Harley 2019; Johnson, Taga & Hughes 2018; Morina 2017; O'Byrne, Jagoe & Lawler 2019; Wilt & Morningstar 2018).

2.3.3.2 Previous studies: Identifying the gap

In terms of methodology, it is obvious that all three reviewed local studies made use of the qualitative approach including interviews, observation and document reviews, to get in-depths insights. However including quantitative approach would be beneficial, as it allows the researchers to dissect the phenomena they are attempting to study into its key elements (Muijs 2004). This step could be used as a springboard for designing qualitative data collection tools and enhance the internal validity of the study.

Sample size is indicative of the representativeness of the study and the generalizability of the findings (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2011). The selection of participants in the reviewed studies, while serving the purpose of the study (Alhammadi (2014) studied 19 participants of SWVI, their staff and faculty), still indicates an overall need for a larger sample size that is representative of PWDs in higher education. A significant representation would consolidate PWDs perceptions of their lived experiences.

In terms of key documents related to PWDs, the School for All guideline "General Rules for the Provision of Special Education Programs and Services for Public and Private schools" (MOE 2010) has been reviewed (Gaad & Almotairi 2013, AlObeidli 2018), while the recently published the Quality Standards of Services for PWDs in Governmental and Private Institutions (MOCD 2016) has not been included in any of the local previous studies. This document provides a more

comprehensive set of universal standards that should guide efforts aiming for including PWDs in the general society, and could be used to examine inclusive provisions for PWDs in HEIs.

Gaad and Almotairi (2013) and Alhammadi (2014) mentioned the concept of the transition while AlObeidli (2018) highlighted it in more details. However in her study, transition (related to admission services) was considered to take place during the higher education stage which is a limited view of transition planning since it is a process that includes pre-higher education preparation.

2.3.4 Transition overview

"The transition of students with special needs to postsecondary experiences is shaped by the history, context, and causes that combine to create policies, systems, and practices that help or hinder those transitions".

(Johnson, Taga & Hughes 2018, p. 9).

2.3.4.1 Definition of transition

In chapter one, under the definition of the key terms, transition is defined as a plan for a move from one phase to another phase, which can include different activities, places, etc. (Simons 2010). It is the path "from high school to life after high school" (Paquette & Tuttle 2006, p. 184). It includes measurable goals for each student, especially PWDs, and these should be based on students' performance, goals, and needs (Grigal, Madaus & Hart 2018). This meaning of "transition" is more focused. Transition has also been described as the movement of PWDs from secondary to post-secondary education, work, and community environment, a movement if well-planned should assist these individuals in achieving their career and life goals and becoming more active members of their community (Bakken & Obiakor 2008, p. 5).

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 2004 listed thirteen categories of disability: (a) autism, (b) deaf-blindness, (c) emotional, (d) hearing impairment, (e) deafness, (f) intellectual disability, (g) multiple disabilities, (h) other health impairment, (i) specific hearing disability, (k) speech-language impairment, (l) traumatic brain injury, and (m) visual impairment

(including blindness) (Izzo & Horne 2016, p. 3-4). As per this classification, PWDs at state schools receive special education services according to their needs. In 2014, the data collected by the United States department of education for the total number of PWDs who received specialized training for each category was more than 5.8 million PWDs. About (40.1%) of specific learning disabilities receive special education services at their schools. In contrast, the second-largest category is speech-language impairment (18.2%) (Izzo & Horne 2016, p. 3-4).

The IDEA defines specific learning disability as "a border in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or using language, spoken or written that may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell or do mathematical calculations, including brain injury and dyslexia" (Izzo & Horne 2016, p. 3). However, IDEA defines speech-language impairment as "communication disorder, such as stuttering, impaired articulation, a language impairment, or a voice impairment that adversely affects a child's educational performance" (Izzo & Horne 2016, p. 4).

The educational system in the UAE starts from kindergarten, the first cycle includes two levels of education, from grade one to grade three (age 5 to 7 years), and then from grade four to grade five (age 8 to 9) years. The second level of education includes grades six, seven, and eight (age 10 to 12 year olds). The secondary stage is the last level, from grades nine to twelve (age 12 to 16 years) (MOE 2010).

Chapter two of the general rules for the provision of special education program and services 2010 guideline (school for All) defines transition services as "a coherent set of activities designed to prepare PWDs to move from one stage or from one environment to another and from school to activities of public life to increase his or her level of independence to the maximum extent possible" (MOE 2010, p. 67). The transition services in this chapter from the School For All Guideline identified six main moves requiring transition for PWDs: (1) from one class to another, (2) from one school to another school, (3) from one institution to a school, (4) from school to another school, (5) from one program to another, (6) from school to the next phase or university, vocational training program or other program and institutions or rehabilitation and education (MOE 2010, p. 33).

The term transitional services generally refer to "a coordinate set of activities for PWDs" (Wehman 2011, p. 4), it remains to be noted that transition services as outlined by the "School for All" Guideline, given its more general orientation, does not describe detailed provisions as a current transition practice worldwide do, where Individual Educational Plan (IEP), a summary of performance (SoP) and required support are delineated in an exhaustive manner (Izzo & Horne 2016; Moore 2012).

Through the previous definitions, the researcher developed the understanding that transition is described as a set of activities that are designed as part of a process that focuses on: post-secondary education, vocational training, employment, continuing education, achieving independence, social participation, planned individually according to the student's preferences, goals for the post-secondary phase. Transition design is achieved through a collaborative effort and involves all the relevant authorities.

Transition support for PWDs is very important for the success of students (Strnadova & Cumming 2014). Considering transition at the international level, Izzo and Horne (2016) mention that there are three Federal Laws that focus on PWDs, their services, education, and transition support. Namely: (a) the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA), (b) the Rehabilitation Act Section 504, and (c) the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) (Izzo & Horne 2016).

The IDEA Federal Law was implemented through the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, and this law was the first law for special education services for PWDs in public school settings. This law is to protect PWDs from birth to age twenty-one (Grigorenko 2008). In the 1970s, education for PWDs was characterized by limited educational opportunities for PWDs (Morgan & Riesen 2016). Table 1 illustrates the federal laws for special education of the IDEA and its amendment for the year 1970 to 2004.

Year	Title
1970	Education of the Handicapped Act
1974	Education Amendments of 1974
1975	Education of all Handicapped Children Act
1986	Handicapped Children's Protection Act of 1986
1986	Education of the Handicapped Amendments of 1986
1990	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
1997	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997
2004	Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act 2004

Table 1: The IDEA and its Amendment (Osborne & Russo 2014, p. 37)

In 1997, the IDEA had additional significant changes to prompt parents to be involved in the education process by requesting schools to include them in the IEP for PWDs (Osborne & Russo 2014). Kopel and Kilduff (2016), state that setting an IEP goal could be the most challenging part; therefore, parents need to be involved.

First, in July 2005, the IDEA 2004 law became fully effective and ready to be implemented. Osborne and Russo (2014, p. 104) stated that in Hawaii, it had been approved to coordinate a set of activities that were designed to enhance students' movement from their school to the post-school events, which were mentioned in their IEP. Their IEP aimed to assess them to complete their high school, to support them to become part of the community, and to explore their careers and colleges. Similarly, in Wisconsin, it was approved that an IEP should include detailed transition statements such as; suggested courses of study, instructions, employment, post-school adult living, daily living, related services, and community services experiences (Osborne & Russo, 2014, p. 104).

According to IDEA 2004, school members must provide transition services to PWDs to facilitate their path from school to another phase or activities (Osborne & Russo, 2014, p. 104). According to Burns (2006), three main teams are involved in implementing the IDEA provisions for students with disability: the referral team, evaluation team, and IEP team. This is different in IDEA 2004 which reduces the IEP team by simplifying the IEP document. The IEP team according to IDEA 2004 includes: PWDs parents, not less than one regular education teacher, not less than one special education teacher, a representative of the local educational agency (and they all need to be qualified, knowledgeable about the general education curriculum, and knowledgeable about

resources availability), an individual to evaluate results, other individuals who know PWDs, and of course the PWDs individuals (Burns 2006, p. 61-62).

"Parents and teachers are important and active members of the IEP team" (Kopel & Kilduff 2016, p. 147). Caruana (2017) added that the teacher's role is not only to implement the IEP for PWDs. Their role is also to observe their behavior and to come up with new ideas as to how best to engage them. He sees this role as a strong enough reason for teachers to take an in-depth look at their own beliefs and biases that could filter their observations of SWDs in their own classrooms.

An IEP team must engage in a general discussion relating to PWDs' academic needs and strengths and weaknesses, in addition to their regular classroom participation. All this must be completed before implementing an IEP for each individual (Burns 2006; Shaw, Madaus & Dukes 2010).

Section 614 of the IDEA 2004 listed eight main components to provide a basic format to develop an IEP: the parent level of education, measurable annual goals (including long-term and short-term objectives), special education related services (aids and program modifications for school personnel), nonparticipation, (an explanation of the extent to which a students is allowed not to participate if any), a modification, the timeframe (to begin the service including the location and duration of provided services and modifications), a transition (begins in high school at age 16 for appropriate measurable postsecondary goals with a proper transition process to assess PWDs to reach their goals), and the last component is a section reporting on progress which is to ensure the progress towards the annual goals and for reporting to their parents (Burns 2006, p. 108-109). IEP is an integral part of IDEA 2004, IEP "must include appropriate, measurable postsecondary goals and transition services needed to help PWDs reach their goals" (Shaw, Madaus & Dukes 2010). Furthermore, it was noted that these federal laws require all schools to include transition services within the IEP process, including PWDs, their parents, and persons in charge (Izzo & Horne 2016).

The IDEA 2004 is not the only federal law that controls services to PWDs, because section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) also support PWDs. Section 504 and ADA covers all PWDs, their parents, employees, and others who visit schools (Burns 2006). Table 2 below illustrates five main significant differences between the IDEA and section 504.

Points of consideration	IDEA	Section 504
Age limits	3-21	None; all are covered
Identification	School officials must identify and assess	Individuals must/can self-refer
Disabilities/ impairments	Covers only specific disabilities	Covers all who have, had, or are believed to have had impairments affecting major life activities
Limits/defenses	None: zero reject	Costs significant alternation in nature of programs; health/safety
Funding	School boards receive additional federal aid	No extra funding for compliance
Dispute resolution	Must exhaust administrative remedies	Exhaustion unnecessary; may file suite directly

Table 2: Differences between the IDEA and Section 504 (Osborne & Russo 2014, p. 276)

Section 504 defines PWDs as having a physical or mental impairment, has a record related to their impairment, and is regarded as having such an impairment (Burns 2006, p. 38). This section was designed to eliminate discrimination based on disability in any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance (Jacob, Decker & Lugg 2016, p. 167). PWDs are students who are characterized with "an inability to do something that most others of the same age, and with similar opportunities and instructions, can do" (Brownell 2012, p. 6). The most common learning and behavioral characteristics of PWDs are: disorder of attention, poor motor of disabilities, psychological processing differences, oral language difficulties, reading difficulties, writing difficulties, mathematics difficulties, poor social skills, mild intellectual disabilities, and emotional disturbance (Brownell 2012). Not every PWDs has to receive special services because some students only need specific accommodations (e.g., preferential seating, extended time for their exams or assignments, etc.) as adequately as their peers without disabilities (Brownell 2012). Jacob, Decker and Lugg (2016, p. 166) draws attention to three types of potential discrimination issues prohibited by law. Section 504 prohibits public schools from excluding students from participating in school programs and activities based on disability. The School are also required to take effective steps to stop harassment based on disability. They are also required to make accommodations to guarantee that PWDs have opportunities to benefit from the programs and activities that are equal to individuals without disabilities.

For PWDs to be under the protection of section 504, they must provide documents related to their disability. Section 504 is the first civil rights of PWDs that broadly prohibits all forms of bias against any PWDs in governmental, educational, employment, or services agencies who received government support (Kaplin & Lee 2014).

The International Association of Student Affairs and Services (IASAS) has also contributed to support higher education for PWDs. This association works to promote international standards for: student services, professional growth of practitioners, and the development of students in higher education. Furthermore, it provides a platform for global sharing of best practices, internships, conferences, and research. Also, they assist developing countries in creating their student services systems (Marie 2016, p. 47).

In light of the legal changes that are happening in the field of disability, it has become mandatory for HEIs to re-examine their practices including their educational systems and environments to cope with PWDs' needs especially for the ones who are qualified to complete their college education. It has also become necessary to make these changes educationally and systemically that are in line with PWDs needs to achieve equality and to receive equal opportunities that would enable them to join HEIs like non-disabled students (Lyner et al. 2014).

In response to what was mentioned above in relation to disability laws (IDEA 2004, section 504 and ADA), it has been suggested to provide a central authority to work on supporting PWDs during their post-secondary education. Therefore, many HEIs in the United States and Europe have started to establish these centers and offices to support PWDs directly. This led to establishing a special association and a supervisory organization. These organizations follow up all the HEIs when it comes to PWDs on daily basis (Kim & Aquino 2017). The Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD) is a voluntary association that leads professional membership association for individuals committed to equity for PWDs in higher education. AHEAD has offered a unique member experience to disability encompassing a variety of roles: recourse professionals, students affairs, ADA coordinators, diversity officers, AT/IT staff, faculty and other instructional personnel, and colleagues who are invested in creating welcoming higher education for PWDs (AHEAD 2012). By 2010, the AHEAD association had over 2,500 members from eleven countries (Harbour & Madaus 2011, p. 11). Currently, the AHEAD website reports over 4,000 members representing 50 states and over ten countries (AHEAD 2012). Furthermore, the AHEAD

contributions cover delivering professional development opportunities via conferences, workshop, webinar, publications, and consultations. They also foster community and member networking, as a disability authority they inform their members about emerging issues related to disability and higher education in legislative and regulatory spheres. They disseminate data, promote research and further evidence-based practice (AHEAD 2012).

The AHEAD team published a guideline for their member offices that provides services to PWDs to facilitate equal access to post-secondary education for PWDs. These affiliate offices must follow the guidelines when program planning (see Appendix L for full guidelines).

AHEAD standards consists of twenty-eight standards across eight main categories. Table 3 below presents each standard with their subcategories: (1) Consultation/ Collaboration, (2) Information Dissemination, (3) Faculty/Staff Awareness, (4) Academic Adjustments, (5) Counseling and Self-Determination, (6) Policies and Procedures, (7) Program Administration and Evaluation; (8) Training and Professional Development (AHEAD 2012).

Content of the standard	Performance indicators for applying these standards
1. Consultation / Collaboration	**1.1** Serve as an advocate for issues regarding students with disabilities to ensure equal access. **1.2** Provide disability representation on relevant campus committees.
2. Information Dissemination	**2.1** Disseminate information through institutional electronic and printed publications regarding disability services and how to access them. **2.2** Provide services that promote access to the campus community. **2.3** Disseminate information to students with disabilities regarding available campus and community disability resources.
3. Faculty / Staff Awareness	**3.1** Inform faculty regarding academic accommodations, compliance with legal responsibilities, as well as instructional, programmatic, and curriculum modifications. **3.2** Provide consultation with administrators regarding academic accommodations, compliance with legal responsibilities, as well as instructional, programmatic, physical, and curriculum modifications. **3.3** Provide disability awareness training for campus constituencies such as faculty, staff, and administrators. **3.4** Provide information to faculty about services available to students with disabilities.
4. Academic Adjustments	**4.1** Maintain records that document the student's plan for the provision of selected accommodations. **4.2** Determine with students appropriate academic accommodations and services. **4.3** Collaborate with faculty to ensure that reasonable academic accommodations do not fundamentally alter the program of study.
5. Counseling and Self-Determination	**5.1** Use a service delivery model that encourages students with disabilities to develop independence.
6. Policies and Procedures	**6.1** Develop, review and revise written policies and guidelines regarding procedures for determining and accessing "reasonable accommodations." **6.2** Assist with the development, review, and revision of written policies and guidelines for institutional rights and responsibilities with respect to service provision. **6.3** Develop, review and revise written policies and guidelines for student rights and responsibilities with respect to receiving services. **6.4** Develop, review and revise written policies and guidelines regarding confidentiality of disability information. **6.5** Assist with the development, review, and revision of policies and guidelines for settling a formal complaint regarding the determination of a "reasonable accommodation."
7. Program Administration and Evaluation	**7.1** Provide services that are aligned with the institution's mission or services philosophy. **7.2** Coordinate services for students with disabilities through a full-time professional. **7.3** Collect student feedback to measure satisfaction with disability services. **7.4** Collect data to monitor use of disability services. **7.5** Report program evaluation data to administrators. **7.6** Provide fiscal management of the office that serves students with disabilities. **7.7** Collaborate in establishing procedures for purchasing the adaptive equipment needed to assure equal access.
8. Training and Professional Development	**8.1** Provide disability services staff with on-going opportunities for professional development. **8.2** Provide services by personnel with training and experience working with college students with disabilities (e.g., student development, degree programs). **8.3** Assure that personnel adhere to relevant Codes of Ethics (e.g., AHEAD, APA).

Table 3: AHEAD Program Standards and Performance Indicators (Appendix L)
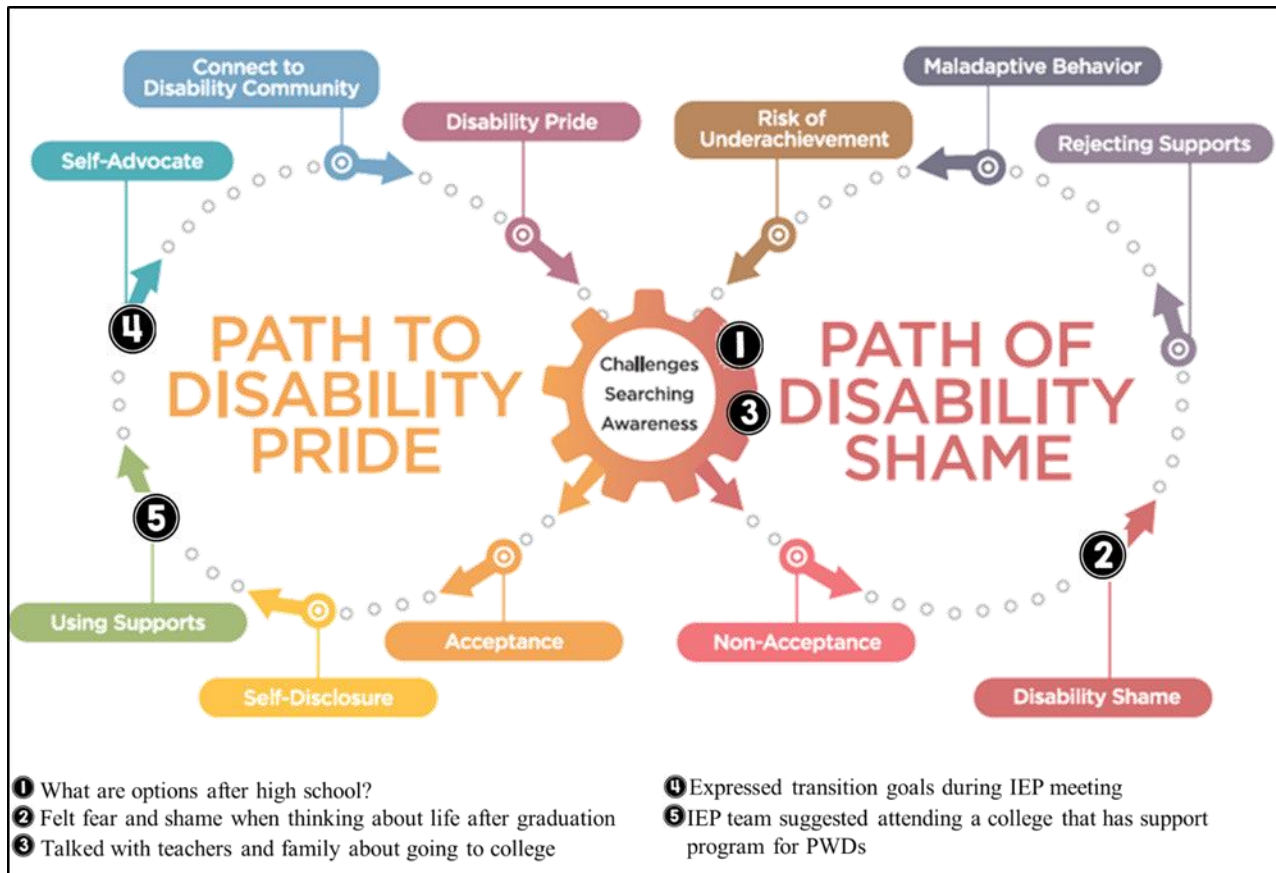
Figure 6: Path of Disability Pride: Challenge of transition (Izzo & Horne 2016, p. 107)

If AHEAD represents the culmination of institutional efforts to standardize inclusive provisions in higher education while dedicating special attention to transition services, Izzo and Horne (2016, p. 107) focused on hidden disabilities and came up with the path to disability Pride framework that supports PWDs as they transition to education (college) or career (see Figure 7 for an example of one PWD who faces challenges of transition).

Figure 6 illustrates an example given by Izzo and Horne (2016) of one PWDs during transitioning to higher education. When LeDerick was in high school, he did not understand what his disability was or what opportunities were available for him once he left school. This caused him to experience shame and get depressed. During his senior year, he started to search for different ways to make his dream a reality. He talked about dreaming of joining a college one day like others, and he advocated for this goal during his last IEP meeting while still in high school. Happily, his IEP

school team supported him by explaining and guiding him to join an inclusive college where they have excellent support for PWDs.

Having knowledge about different laws that relate to equal opportunities for PWDs is extremely important for parents of children with disabilities as it allows them to ask for their children's rights. It also strengthens PWDs ability to participate fully in the educational programs; and it increases their interest in independence. Moreover, it is also very important for PWDs to understand these laws and their implications for better decision making. Knowing the laws may also support the professionals to understand the service delivery system. Furthermore, it improves corporation entities and other families, and it allows professionals and parents to collaborate to work together to make education an equal opportunity for their kids (Izzo & Horne 2016; Shaw, Madaus & Dukes 2010).

There are seven key skill areas that all students with disabilities should have experience with and develop to help them prepare for the transition: (1) transition assessments, (2) self-determination/self-advocacy, (3) communication skills, (4) executive function skills, (5) use supports (i.e., accommodation, technology, medication, tutoring center, etc.), (6) mentoring programs, and, (7) high expectations from parents, teachers, and students (Izzo & Horne 2016).

In terms of transition assessments, it describes the results of the PWDs transition assessment process from the IEP meeting, their college and career goals, post-secondary goals, and their annual goals which they need to accomplish during their final year in high school. In terms of self-advocacy, Kim and Aquino (2017) state that it is an important skill set. According to Kochhar, Bassett, and Webb (2009, p. 54), self-advocacy is knowledge of disability, active communication, goal setting, the importance of support systems, and understanding of the law.

Test et al. (2005, p. 50) developed a conceptual framework of self-advocacy involving: knowledge of self, knowledge of rights, communication and leadership; combined these skills empower students with disabilities and help them develop a meaningful understanding of their disabilities.

2.3.4.2 The importance of transition planning

In recent years, research related to the transition process into higher education has increased (Coertjens et al. 2017; Siew et al. 2017). The transition can also be challenging for some PWDs-Students with Autism and their families in particular (Siew et al. 2017).

According to Wehman (2011, p. 2), the transition planning promotes PWDs self-determination and self-advocacy. It also ensures that PWDs have access to general standards. With effective transition planning the graduation rate of PWDs is expected to increase. It can also raise the participation and involvement of their parents as it develops collaboration between the systems that support PWDs achievement of meaningful school and post-school outcomes. Proper transition planning makes sure that specialists are available and PWDs have full active, participation in all aspects of the college experience.

It can increase communication and collaboration between PWDs parents and school, and smooths their transition from high school to higher education (McCoy, Shevlin & Rose 2020). Transitional planning from high school to higher education is a very important stage for PWDs, mainly for individuals with intellectual disabilities, and these preparations are significant for their successful transition (McCoy, Shevlin & Rose 2020).

Coertjens et al. (2017) revealed that the majority of PWDs who withdraw had been found to give up during the first year. It has also been found that there are three important transitions: (1) on coming to university, (2) at the end of the first year, and (3) in the final year of study (Coertjens et al. 2017, p. 363). Consequently, the results of Coertjens et al. (2017) emphasize the importance of the transition to provide support to PWDs in order to integrate them into the academic community to support them to succeed and complete their higher education. The results also highlight the potential importance of university services for the first-year student during orientation sessions (Maymon, Hall & Harley 2019).

The environment of high school is different from higher education in terms of many aspects, as has been explained in details in the section on the comparison between high school and higher education settings for PWDs. Proper transition planning is the called for intervention as evident from its importance as indicated above and delineated in studies reviewed below.

Hewett et al. (2017), found that the students with visual impairment in higher education tend to face more difficulties because of the environment is not the same as their previous school.

An exploratory study was done by Maymon, Hall, and Harley (2019) with 126 students in higher education and 36 in institutions in Canada to evaluate their perceptions of the actual support that they receive. Two major themes emerged in this study: social support measures, and well-being measures. For the social support measures, the researchers used four items to assess how often they received social support, and these themes were family, friends, faculty, and institution. Respondents needed to rate their answers from (0=never to 4= often). Also participants needed to indicate, the quality of support they received (via rating from 1=very poor to 5=very good). In terms of the well-being measures, the researchers examined the following related well-being factors: (1) burnout over the previous month, and to assess this point researchers used the emotional exhaustion subscale from the Maslach Burnout Inventory, (2) students' feeling of loneliness over the past month, using a four-point Likert scale (1=never to 4=often), (3) students' general sense of belonging over the previous month via an adapted version of psychological sense of school membership scale, implementing Likert-type scale from (1=not at all true to 5= completely true), (4) students' intentions to quit, first they assessed students' thoughts by (1=never to 5=constantly), then they assessed students' intentions from (1=very unlikely to 5-=certain) of leaving their university and post-secondary education completely over the previous month, (5) students' life satisfaction of studying during their first month at university. Here the researchers used an abbreviated version of the satisfaction with life scale via a seven-point scale from (1=strongly disagree to 7=strongly agree).

Findings showed that social support is an essential component of student success during their transition from high school into higher education to create a learning environment that provides enough inclusive services. Furthermore, provided services received by the first-year students during their transition is very important as it allows the HEIs to provide the best support for them to contribute to their well-being (Maymon, Hall & Harley 2019).

Talapatra, Miller, and Schumacher-Martinez (2018) conducted a qualitative study with 26 parents of intellectual and developmental disabilities graduates from post-secondary education in the United States. The study focused on the positive transition experiences. Seven major themes emerged in the study:

(1) start earlier, (2) maintain high expectations, (3) permit choice and risk, (4) recognize family interdependence and involvement, (5) prioritize parent skill development and support, (6) maximize technology, and (7) promote inclusion. The study participants recommended the first strategy of starting earlier and to start the transition plan as early as pre-school and apply for services and support in secondary school. For the second strategy, "maintain high expectations", participants revealed that they expect these individuals to experience and overcome failure. Moreover, locating positive examples of these individuals in the community is very important. For the third strategy, "permit choice and risk", participants recommended that all, particularly the parents of PWDs, can support them via engaging and allowing them to make their own decisions and give them opportunities to experience natural consequences. For the fourth strategy, of "recognizing family interdependence and involvement", participants confirmed the importance of parents' involvement in supporting their kid's outcomes, this promoted their self-determination. The fifth strategy "prioritize parent skill development and support", participants reinforced the importance of facilitating parent-to-parent connections for emotional support and teaching each parent a skill to 'let go' and support effective family interdependence. The sixth strategy, "maximize technology," participants reported that using a text in communication can help their language when it comes to communicating with their kids. Participants also noticed that skype and face time for families keep them connected. The last strategy, "promote inclusion", participants encourage parents (a) to take their kids out of the segregated setting, (b) to promote social engagement for them, (c) to teach them social and self-regulation skills, (d) to provide a community-based learning experience (Francis, Stride & Reed 2018, p. 285-290). Richardson et al. (2017) added that there are many policies across the world related to positive transition for PWDs, but there is a need to research the implementation of these policies.

Research shows that the best practices in transition planning can create positive outcomes for PWDs when they move from one phase to another. Strnadova and Cumming (2014) study focused on the importance of the quality transition process for students with disabilities. A qualitative study with 75 school teachers that surveyed them about actual practices for students with developmental disabilities when transitioning from primary to secondary school to post-school life. Strnadova and Cumming (2014, p. 320) highlighted some positive outcomes of transition planning. These outcomes included students' participation, parents' involvement in the transition plan process, vocational training, career awareness activities, identification and instruction in professional skills,

academic skills and social skills, self-advocacy skills, inclusion, and assistive technology assessment and implementation. Three main major themes emerged in this study: (1) current practices used during the transition from primary to secondary school, (2) ways to improve the transition from primary to secondary school, and (3) current practices used during the transition from secondary school to post-school life. For the first theme, the results revealed that 84.3% of respondents prepare their students to transition from primary to secondary level through initiatives. 44.3% of respondents believed that collaboration among stakeholders could improve PWDs transition. 37.1% of respondents found that teaching students the advocacy skills must be required in secondary school. 21.4% of respondents believed that to develop transition planning, schools should implement different initiatives in the primary school environment.

As for results related to suggested ways to improve transition panning, respondents suggested that the communication between the relevant stakeholders should continue and assign a particular staff member who could coordinate the transition process. In terms of results related to current post-school life transition practices, participants indicate the importance of planning, collaboration, teacher experience, student self-determination, academic preparation, specialized post-school setting, follow up in new setting, staff, student immersion into post-school setting, and exploration of post-school setting (Strnadova & Cumming 2014).

2.3.4.3 Transition components

Section 614 of IDEA 2004, listed eight main components to provide a basic format to develop an IEP. The researcher of this study mentioned these components earlier. One of these elements was IEP measurable annual goals, including short-term and long-term objectives (Burns 2006). The transition services are considered as part the IEP that focuses on the PWDs' academic and career achievement. Therefore, an IEP should contain a number of necessary elements:

- Current performance rates should define the PWDs' current performance, and this is for the transition team to decide where it should start (Burns 2006).

- Abilities and interest, the transition team, should add and take into consideration the PWDs' interests, ability, and vision.

- Post-secondary goals: the transition plan should recognize post-secondary goals according to the needs of PWDs, their parents, and the transition plan team should discuss employment, post-secondary education, training, and society involvement (McDonnell & Hardman 2010).

- Transition activities, the transition plan should include specific transitional activities such as work experience, educational career work, community-based instructions, and vocational education (Bakken and Obiakor 2008).

- Appointing or hiring a person to be in charge of the implementation with their name added to the transition plan, it is this person's responsibility to continue the transition of PWDs after high school (Strnadova & Cumming 2014). Additional seven components were highlighted by Johnson, Taga, and Hughes: "individualized planning, integration within a mainstream, paid employment, engagement of families, coordination of services and information, job readiness and placement support, and follow-up support" (2018, p. 11).

2.3.4.4 Individuals involved in transition planning

In this regard, (Izzo & Horne 2016) indicated that the school should form a committee for the transition plan of the following members: (a) members of the IEP team; (b) PWDs, (c) PWDs parents, (d) representative of agencies, (e) employees, (f) related social and academic programs according to the PWDs needs and performance. As mentioned by Wehman (2011, p. 15), the roles and responsibilities of an IEP transition team members includes:

As for Students: they are expected to work on acquiring the required strategies and skills to be professionally successful, and then to work towards achieving autonomy, and to gain skills that are required for post-secondary education. These strategies might be in the field of education or work (Kellems et al. 2016). According to Wehman (2011), the responsibility of the team member is to identify the following: (a) PWDs character strengths and needs, (b) their set goals, (c) their interests and performance for employment, (d) adult living, (e) post-secondary training and

education, (f) assist in identifying transition strategies and activities, and (g) provide feedback (Wehman 2011, p. 15).

As for Parents: They have the responsibility of supporting their children to develop realistic career goals by enabling them to search for suitable careers for the future, to support employment, and to let their children feel independent. (Doyle, Guckin & Shevlin 2017; Hirano et al. 2016; Johnson, Taga & Hughes 2018; Simons 2010; Talapatra, Miller & Schumacher-Martinez 2018; Wilt & Morningstar 2018). According to Wehman (2011), parents' role in IEP transition as a team member includes: (a) sharing their children's vision and needs and long-term vision for employment, (b) considering post-secondary training and adult living options, (c) providing information on family support, (d) participating in implementing the plan, (e) providing feedback (Wehman 2011, p. 15).

As for the Special educator: Special educators act as the main manager of transition plans. They also teach and work on developing PWDs strategies in collaboration with the transition planning team to coordinate the plan and teach PWDs self-support skills (Izzo & Horne 2016; Shaw, Madaus & Dukes 2010). According to Wehman (2011), there are three main roles of a special educator: before the meeting, at the meeting, and after the meeting. Before the meeting, the special educator collects information about the PWDs performance and interests and prepares them to be active IEP participants. At the meeting, educators provide the present level of performance information beyond what the student and family shared (Kellems et al. 2016, p. 216). Moreover, they facilitate the participation of the parents, record meeting discussions, and decide on the IEP. After the meeting, educators provide follow-up to all team members, they also monitor implementation of the transition plan and related services. They also report progress towards annual transition goals and objectives (Wehman 2011, p. 15).

Related services providers: such as psychologists, physical therapists, assistive technology specialists, etc... Provide a general assessment. According to Wehman (2011), these specialists, when appropriate communicate assessment data and results. They also share observations of the students' strengths and needs. They also identify options for developing transition related to skills.

Furthermore, they participate in the transition planning process, collaborate, advise, and support team efforts and goals (Wehman 2011, p. 15). Bakken and Obiakor (2019, p. 7) also mentioned that psychologists role is to collaborate with PWDs parents, their educators, and other professionals to create safe, supportive and healthy environment that strengthens connections between home, school and the wider community.

Advisors or counselors: They provide group or individual counseling sessions for students to raise their professional awareness to seek their future jobs. Wehman (2011) specified their role in the transition planning process to be able to identify the services and supports for students. Furthermore, they provide links to other adult services, and community supports when appropriate (Wehman 2011, p. 15).

Administrator: according to Wehman (2011), administrators are the ones who make the arrangements for support services that are not available (Wehman 2011, p.15).

General educators-professional teachers: Nowadays, PWDs work with both general education teachers and special education teachers in their schools (Bakken & Obiakor 2019, p. 5). Wehman (2011) described their role in providing professional training inside and outside the school. Moreover, they adjust some education guidelines to suit each individual's needs and requirements.

Based on the above, the IEP transition planning team plays the main role in transition services. Also, their cooperation in implementing these services supports PWDs to benefit from them as much as possible. Planning for transition as part of IEP helps PWDs transition to the post-secondary stage smoothly and successfully. To participate in transition planning is "not only an opportunity for life after high school experience but to also learn and practice self-advocacy skills" (Johnson, Taga & Hughes 2018).

2.4 Summary

In this chapter, the researcher provided a summary of section 2.2 to 2.3 by reviewing publications related to the study theme. The researcher has chosen to look at the national and international research to provide an overview of the social justice approach, comparison between high school and higher education settings, challenges facing PWDs in higher education and transition overview. The transition overview section discussed the definition of transition, the importance of transition planning, transition components, and individuals involved in transition planning. There is limited literature about the transitioning PWDs from high school into higher education in the UAE. Moreover, there is little literature related to PWDs at the UAE higher education.

The research design and methodology used to collect the data is detailed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

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3.2 Research approach

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3.9 Summary

3.0 CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This study focuses on inclusive provisions that facilitate transitioning UAE high school students (Grade Twelve) PWDs into HEIs. Moreover, it explores standards that could be used to develop and improve services for PWDs in the HEIs. To a great extent, this study is an ethnographic observation to explore campus accessibility for PWDs. The study adopted a mixed-methodology approach: the qualitative and the quantitative research to investigate the inclusive provisions that facilitate transitioning high school students with disabilities into the UAE government's higher education institutions. Using these methods, the researcher attempted to answer the four main research questions: (a) how are transition services perceived by Grade 12 students with disabilities and their specialists? (b) What inclusive provisions do students with disabilities in higher education perceived as the most valuable? (c) How inclusive are the policies, practices, procedures, and other accommodations in selected higher education institutions? (d) What accommodations and practices can HEIs adapt to be more inclusive?

This chapter describes the study's research methodology; the following will be detailed in the upcoming sections: (1) research approach, this includes the research approach philosophy, (2)research design, site selection, participants selection, study procedures, and pilot study,(3) qualitative research instruments and this includes an interview, document analysis, observation, and a quantitative instrument (a questionnaire), (4) data analysis, this highlights the qualitative data analysis and the quantitative data analysis, (5) limitation of the study and (6) ethical consideration, this covers permission to conduct the research, informed consent and anonymity and confidentiality. Lastly a summary of this chapter is included.

3.2 Research approach

As mentioned above, the researcher adopted a mixed approach to collect the data (qualitative and quantitative).

According to Creswell (2009), the mixed-method approach is an investigation that includes qualitative and quantitative forms. It also provides researchers with useful and in-depth insights. Moreover, it gives a better understanding of the research problem (Creswell & Plano Clark 2011).

Hesse-Biber also believes that the mixed method approach is "a rich field for the combination of data" (2010, p. 1).

Hesse-Biber, explaining the rationale for adopting a mixed-methodology approach, asserts that the researchers need to consider five main reasons: (1) triangulation, (2) complementarity to gain full understanding of research problem, (3) development of the research project, (4) initiation to clarify the study questions and, (5) expansion to produce detailed findings (2010, p. 4-6). By utilizing the mixed methods approach, this study would realize a combination of those five outcomes.

3.1.1 Research approach philosophy

According to Patten and Bruce (2009), there are many phenomena still not understood well, and they believe that research can attain these understandings. Therefore, research can be perceived as an investigation to increase the knowledge to solve a specific problem.

Research philosophy is not just about getting and analyzing data. Saunders et al. (2009) argue that the researchers' view of the world is influenced by the research philosophy they adopt. It is, therefore, necessary for researchers to be cognizant of their philosophical affiliation for it contains important assumptions to answer the specific problem, and to develop new knowledge. In this light, there are four main models of research philosophy: (1) positivism, (2) realism, (3) interpretivism, and (4) pragmatism. This study will only review positivism and the interpretive paradigms.

Post-Positivism

According to O'Gorman, MacIntosh and Coutts, adopting post-positivism in research can focus on many aspects: (a) it focuses on facts, (b) it looks for causality and fundamentals, (c) it reduces a phenomena to simplest elements, (d) it formulates hypotheses and tests them, (e) it operationalizes concepts so that they can be measured and (f) it takes large samples (2014, p. 61). As Carson (2001) believes, adopting post-positivism, allows researchers to have direct access to the real world provided that they believe in a single external reality.

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Pragmatism

According to the pragmatism paradigm "the knowledge claims arise out of actions, situations, and consequences rather than antecedent conditions" (Creswell, 2003, p.11). This focus on "actions" can be seen as a justification to disconnect what people do and what they believe in. Despite the fact that pragmatic researchers derive knowledge by concentrating on lived experiences, the potential of losing the link to how beliefs shape these experiences is very high. Therefore, while pragmatism is valuable, action oriented paradigm, the researcher believes that it fails to capture key components of the study - namely beliefs and attitude.

Constructivism/Interpretivism

The Interpretivists believe that the reality is multiple and it needs to be fully understood. According to O'Gorman, MacIntosh and Coutts, adopting Interpretivism in research can focus on many aspects: (a) it can be focus on meaning, (b) it tries to understand what is happening, (c) it looks at the totality of each situation, (d) it develops ideas through induction from the data, (e) it uses multiple methods to establish different views of phenomena and lastly, (f) it utilizes small samples investigated in depth over time (2014, p. 61). While Carson (2001) argues that there is no direct access to the real world like positivism, to develop insights about human experience, which is at the heart of this study, the researcher finds it essential to follow the interpretive paradigm.

To answer the above study questions, the researcher will use a mixed methodology approach. The first approach would generate qualitative data using interviews, documents, and observations, while the second approach would yield quantitative data using a questionnaire.

3.3 Research Design

A sequential mixed methodology of qualitative and quantitative methods was used in this study. Check and Schutt mentioned that the main reason for using mixed-method is "to add a unique insight about the educational process that cannot easily be obtained from the primary methods used

in an investigation" (2012, p. 239). Furthermore, mixed methods provide more evidence for the study problem and help answer the study questions (Creswell & Plano Clark 2011). Moreover, using qualitative and quantitative is highly appropriate within one study (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2016).

The purpose of the study design is to draw a useful conclusion (Mcmil & Schumacher 2006). The below flowchart (Figure 7) illustrates three main phases of the study: process, planning, data collection, data analysis and reporting.
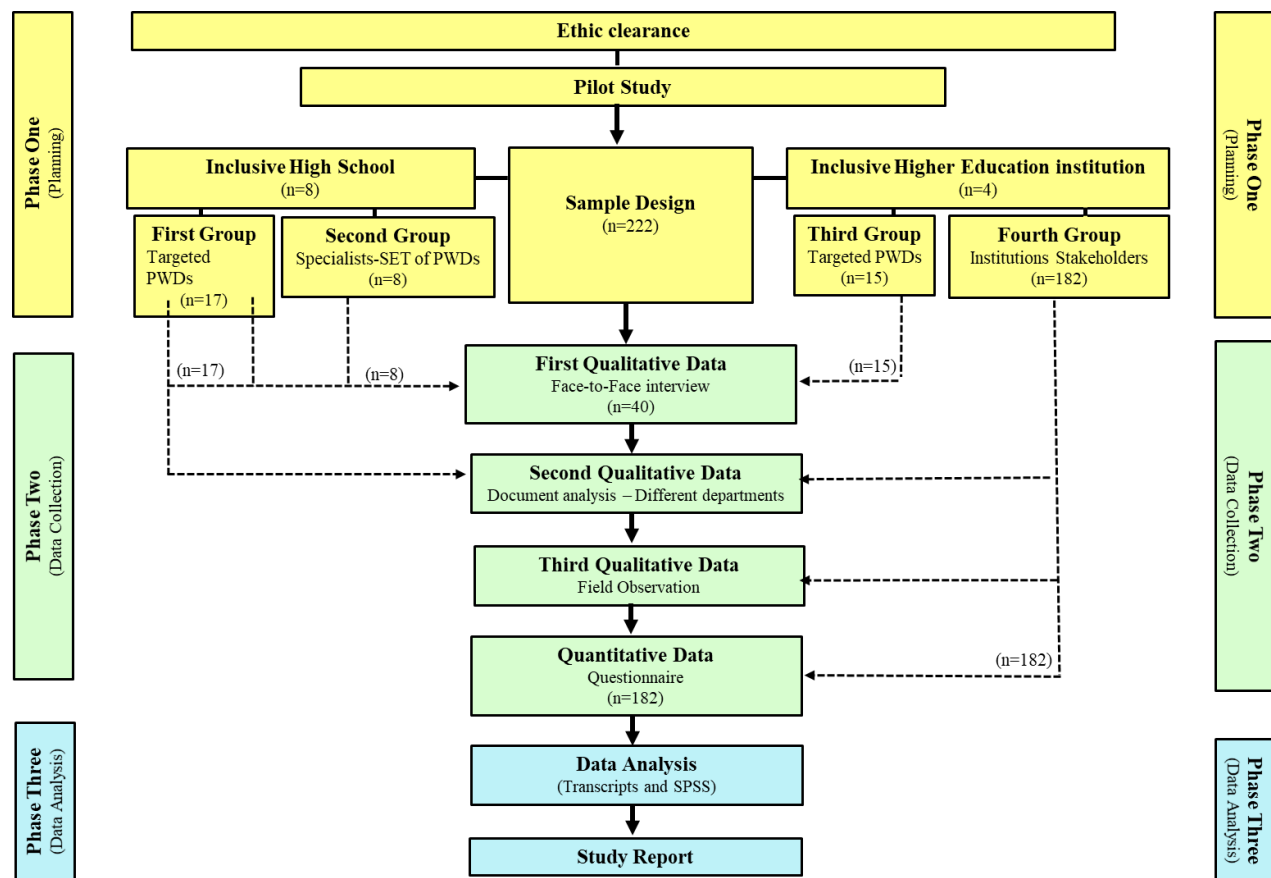
Figure 7: Study design phases

Conducting qualitative research allows the study researcher to examine in detail information related to social behaviors, and organizational characteristics. There are three main techniques used by qualitative researchers: interviews, documents analysis, and observations (Fraenkel & Wallen 1993). Each researcher uses the needed method depending on their research topics. Researchers who use this approach can also select their participants, through the collaboration

approaches, and this can include the stakeholders in the research (Lapan, Quartaroli & Riemer 2011). Furthermore, qualitative research gives the study participants an opportunity to express their feelings (Creswell 2014).

Fraenkel and Wallen list five general characteristics of qualitative research: (1) the direct source of data is the natural settings, (2) instead of numbers all collected data is presented in words, (3) it concerns both the process as well as the product, (4) tends to analyze the collected data inductively and (5) it captures how people make sense of their lives because, in general, researchers would like to know what the study participants were thinking of what they do (1993, p. 380-381). The researcher of this study selected this approach to gain a more in-depth knowledge of transitioning PWDs from high school into higher education.

The quantitative approach is usually about collecting numerical data to explain specific questions and specific phenomena (Muijs 2004). A further definition is given by Muijs (2004, p. 1) who describes quantitative research as, "explaining phenomena by collecting numerical data that are analyzed using mathematically based methods (in particular statistics)." Muijs (2004) also mentions that researchers begin with dissecting the phenomena they are attempting to study into its key elements for them to be able to quantify derived data in numerical form. In this approach, the researcher's role is to observe and measure the data (Thomas 2003).

The below section provides a brief description of the methods and instruments that were used in the study.

3.3.1 Site selection

Before beginning to collect any data, the researcher waited for the MOE approval (see Appendix B) and selected HEIs approval (See appendix C-D). The researcher selected eight public high schools and two public HEIs from different Emirates (RAK, Dubai, Abu Dhabi), and all approved to participate in this study. The first selected group of participants were from the eight public high schools according to the availability of PWDs in each school, attached to grade 12 SWDs group is another group of participants made up of special education teachers (SETs/coordinators). The second group of participants was chosen from two public HEIs, this group included two subsets: the SWDs and all the campus employees (teaching faculty, facilities operations, and administrative

staff). Furthermore, NAPO, the department in charge of enrolling and registering students in public higher education institutions, was also involved in the study. Table 4 below illustrates all eleven sites.

Site	Participants per site
Enroll and registration office of the higher education	**NAPO** from **MOHSER**
Public high schools (grade 12 PWDs and SETs)	- School A - School B - School C - School D - School E - School F - School G - School H
Public HEI	- HEI I - HEI J - HEI K - HEI L
HEI: Higher Education Institution **MOHSER:** Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research **NAPO:** National Admission and Placement Office	

Table 4: Participants per site

The first site, the NAPO office for admission services at MOHESR, is the office to help students to know when and how to choose their HEIs. The NAPO office also provides academic consulting for all public HEIs across the UAE. They are also responsible for providing access for PWDs into higher education.

The second group of sites, the selected eight high schools grade twelve SWDs attended (School A, School B, School C, School D, School E, School F, School G and School H). Each of these schools has a specialist (STE/coordinator) to support SWDs, and since 2009 they have been implementing inclusive education. Their role is to help all SWDs by providing the best services and ensuring that all SWDs are receiving proper accommodation that can meet their needs to enable them to succeed in their academic journey.

The third group of sites included four campuses for two public HEIs (HEI I, HEI J, HEI K, HEI L), and each of these sites do accept SWDs depending on their disability type and how severe it is.

Since the Federal Law No. 29 of the year 2006 to protect PWDs right was introduced, each selected site provides several services for SWDs to continue their education on equal basis as their non-disabled peers. For the HEIs, each institution operates different campuses across the UAE with different policies related to PWDs. The selected sites for this study were chosen mainly because they accept SWDs at their institution depending on their disabilities type by providing various support services and accommodations – as reported by the MOE website (MOE 2018).

The researcher met with the study supervisor (Professor Eman Gaad) to discuss the plan of the proposal of this thesis to conduct the study. The main point is that the more accessible the HEIs, the more encouraged PWDs would be, not only to join higher education, but also to graduate, and move on to the job market and achieve their goals while contributing to their society.

3.3.2 Participants selection

According to Vogt et al., usually, the study participants "share some characteristic that makes them suitable for answering the research questions" (2014, p.51). This study's main focus was the SWDs of 2018-2019 and the 2019-2020 academic year from high schools and higher education. Furthermore, the study focused on SWDs who have currently joined HEIs and receiving their accommodation from their respective institutions like the additional time during exams to read and write, a particular exam that fits their abilities, need specialists, exam questions reader, enlarge the exam papers, provide simple questions, IEP, etc.

SWDs in the study were selected randomly with different types of disabilities (see Appendix U for detailed descriptions for each type of disability according to the United Arab Emirates National standard classification of disabilities of the year 2018, in Arabic, and see Appendix V for the National Policy of Empowering People of Determination.

The researcher called each site first and then sent an email to different departments who support SWDs at their campuses. Each participant was interviewed individually via one-to-one

communication. One-to-one communication was arranged through skilled people (specialists, counselors, or coordinators of SWDs). All the meetings with each participant took place at their campuses and mainly during their breaks. Furthermore, participants were informed that participating in this study is voluntary, and each participant can participate or withdraw at any time (see Appendix E for consent form).

Information related to the participants' demographics was very important to the researcher as it would help in understanding their perceptions related to their education and transition. Table 5 below summarizes the number of study participants per site.

Participant	Type of disabilities	Gender	Age	Complete education	Accom modatio n	IEP	Site
1.	Intellectual and physical disability	Female	17	Yes	Yes	No	School A
2.	Intellectual disability	Female	17	Yes	Yes	No	School B
3.	Specific Learning Disorder	Female	18	Yes	Yes	No	School B
4.	Visual impairment	Female	18	Yes	Yes	No	School C
5.	Specific Learning Disorder (Partial silence)	Female	18	No	Yes	No	School C
6.	Autism Spectrum Disorder	Female	20	Yes	Yes	No	School C
7.	Specific Learning Disorder	Female	19	Yes	Yes	No	School D
8.	Sever Learning Disorder	Female	18	No	Yes	No	School D
9.	Sever Learning Disorder	Female	19	No	Yes	No	School D
10.	Physical Disability	Male	18	Yes	Yes	No	School E
11.	Diseases and health conditions (diabetes)	Male	21	Yes	Yes	No	School F
12.	Intellectual disability	Male	19	Yes	Yes	Yes	School G
13.	Specific Learning Disorder	Male	17	Yes	Yes	Yes	School G
14.	Specific Learning Disorder	Male	19	Yes	Yes	Yes	School H
15.	Visual impairment	Male	18	Yes	Yes	Yes	School H
16.	Intellectual disability	Male	20	Yes	Yes	Yes	School H
17.	Autism Spectrum Disorder	Male	17	Yes	Yes	Yes	School H
18.	Vision impairment – genetic disease	Male	26	Yes	Yes	Yes	HEI I
19.	Brain injury	Male	25	Yes	Yes	No	HEI I
20.	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder(ADHD)	Male	21	Yes	Yes	Yes	HEI I
21.	Learning Difficulties	Female	19	Yes	Yes	Yes	HEI J
22.	Learning Difficulties and Vision impairment	Female	23	Yes	Yes	Yes	HEI J
23.	Vision impairment totally (Blind)	Female	24	Yes	Yes	No	HEI J
24.	Vision impairment (Blind)	Female	23	Yes	Yes	No	HEI J
25.	Cerebral Palsy	Female	19	Yes	Yes	No	HEI J
26.	Vision impairment (Blind)	Female	19	Yes	Yes	No	HEI J
27.	Anxiety	Female	18	Yes	No	No	HEI K
28.	Hearing loss and speech impairment	Female	20	Yes	Yes	No	HEI K
29.	Medical issue (Diabetes)	Female	18	Yes	Yes	No	HEI K
30.	Physical Disability	Male	24	Yes	Yes	No	HEI L
31.	Anxiety	Male	19	Yes	No	No	HEI L
32.	Anemia	Male	19	Yes	No	No	HEI L

Table 5: Study participants per site of school and higher education

3.3.3 Study Procedures

To conduct this study, the researchers put a plan and sent an email to all the selected sites. The researcher prepared all the documents related to doing the research, and this included: (a) permission letter to access each site (see Appendix Q), (b) consent form for participants (see Appendix E), (c) parents' permission letter to interview their child (see Appendix R) and (interview questions were shared with each site before meeting any PWDs (see Appendix H).

The researcher received an email from all the specialists of PWDs and their suggestions of available interview time. All the interviews were conducted in the specialist's office, but depended on the office availability. The researcher also allowed each participant to choose a suitable location and time to ensure that the study was conducted in a safe, convenient, and accessible environment. Each participant was given a chance to read the consent form and then to sign it (see Appendix E). But before they signed the form, the researcher clearly explained the research purpose and confidentiality. They were also given time to read the introduction, research title, research overview, and confidentiality document.

Furthermore, PWDs were asked questions on how inclusive provisions are as perceived by them in three main parts which included subsets of questions related to (1) disability definition, (2) skilled person and learning resource center, (3) policies and procedures, (4) accommodation and facilitation, (5) knowledge of employees, (6) environmental facilitation, (7) evacuation in emergencies, (8) activity clubs or events, and (9) lastly, each participant was asked where they see themselves after five years from now.

For documents collection, the researcher sent an email to different departments at the HEIs (such as the administrative staff handling academic services, students' life, counseling, work placement office, volunteers office, and career advising). Each of these departments received a separate email from the researcher to ask them a few questions related to the study and other documents like policy related to PWDs admission requirements, accommodations, announcements, etc.

For observation, the researcher also received permission to observe the selected and approved sites' environmental facilitation to explore accessibility for PWDs in terms of maps, parking, PWDs classrooms, signage, elevators, etc. the researcher prepared a checklist to use during each

field observation (see Appendix M). To collect this data, the researcher used a manual wheelchair on each site to get firsthand experience regarding the sites accessibility.

As for the questionnaire participants, they were expected to respond to the study questionnaire to understand their perceptions regarding the availability of inclusive services at their institution. The researcher obtained the selected site contact number and email address. After getting the contact details, the researcher approached them first to check whether they are willing to participate in the study. Once each agreed to participate, the researcher distributed a printed hard copy for each site along with consent form. Moreover, the researcher shared a questionnaire online link as well.

The below pilot study summary shows the importance of piloting the study before implementing real research and how this can help researchers establish the content and validity of the study tools to improve the study questions.

3.3.4 Pilot study

The researcher piloted the study questionnaire. The piloting of the questionnaire was conducted with ten participants. Piloting the study is very important, and it is to judge the study respondents' interest, and attention (Yin 2009 Burton 2000). It helps the researcher to avoid lengthy and broad items and to make the study questions shorter and more precise (Burton 2000). Furthermore, piloting helps in assisting the researcher in establishing the content validity of the study instrument, and it also improves the study questions, the scale, and the format (Creswell 2014).

To start piloting the questionnaire, the researcher sent an email to each site to seek their permission to distribute the study questionnaire for piloting in person. After asking permission, the researcher printed the questionnaire to distribute randomly among ten participants, and they were all answered and returned. Accordingly, the researcher thanked each participant for their cooperation in completing the questionnaire (See Appendix F) as part of the pilot study. Then the questionnaire was handed over to them. The researcher asked each participant to read, answer the questions, and they were also encouraged to share their thought process while working through the questionnaire questions by adding notes in case they found something unclear or confusing. Each participant was given one week to answer the given questionnaire and to provide their feedback.

While waiting for the pilot study participants to return their completed questionnaire, the researcher continued to collect some documents related to the study from different departments. After that, all the answered questionnaires were reviewed by the researcher. The piloted questionnaire was ready, but with a slight adjustment based on participants' feedback after responding to their questionnaire.

As a result, the researcher has made five main adjustments to the study questionnaire: (1) the number of questions was reduced from 52 to 48. It was reduced due to question similarity. (2) The definition of PWDs was missing at the beginning of the questionnaire, so it was added. (3) Some questions were too long during the piloting. They were modified to shorter items, (4) during the piloting; there were only four options to choose for each question. A fifth option was added so that the results would be more accurate, and (5) reformatting the items to enhance the readability of the questionnaire.

The modified version of the pilot study sample is presented in Appendix G.

3.4 Research instruments

3.4.1 Qualitative study instrument

The qualitative data collection instruments included: interviews, documents analysis, and observation. Semi-structured interviews with a group of SETs/teachers (supervisors of PWDs) and the PWDs with (First group and Second group) from the inclusive high school. Another interview was for participant PWDs from the selected higher education (Third group). Document analysis from all study sites. Using a qualitative approach and quantitative approach for the study allowed for triangulation. This raises the trust in the validity of the data (Creswell & Plano Clark 2011; Creswell 2012) and outcomes (Mcdavid et al. 2012). Consequently, for this reason, the triangulation protocol was used in this study.

3.4.1.1 Interview Semi-Structured

The interview was used as the first data collection tool in this study. According to Johnson and Christensen (2014), interview protocol is a script written by the researcher that would be better

read by each participant. (For the interview protocols used with the study participants see Appendix H and Appendix I). Fraenkel and Wallen mention that using this method allows the researcher to find out what is on each participant's mind and what they think or feel about the issue discussed (1993, p. 385). Moreover, they mentioned that apart from the main study questions, the researcher can ask the participants different questions about their (a) background or demographic, (b) opinion or values, (c) feeling and lastly, (d) sensory questions (Fraenkel & Wallen 1993, p. 386).

In this study, the researcher used a semi-structured interview with all groups (First group, Second group, and Third group), as shown in Figure 9. To conduct this method, the researcher used the funnel approach. Seidman (2006) mentioned that the funnel approach includes three main steps to use for an interview (see Figure 8).
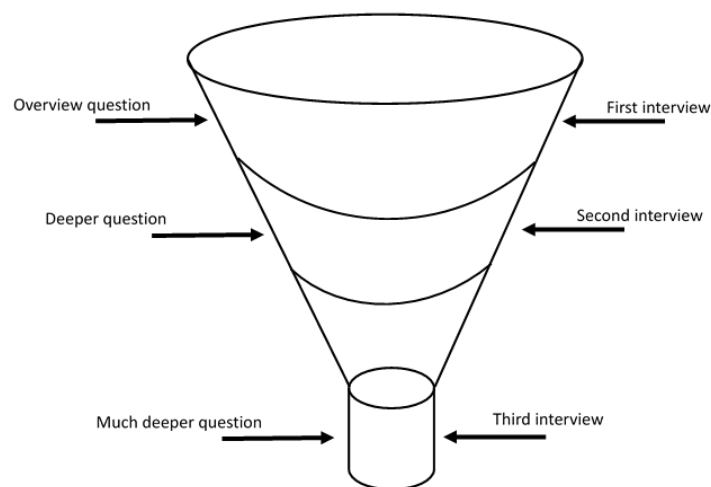
Figure 8: Interview Funnel Approach

The above figure illustrates the three main steps used in this study. The first step is a set of overview questions where the researcher asks general questions about their personal information and background demographic. In the second step, the researcher asks more in-depth questions into the study topics. In the last step, the researcher focuses much deeper on transition and accommodation.

The researcher prepared two main different sets of interview questions, one for PWDs at high school and higher education, and the second set were for SETs teachers (specialists of PWDs) at

high schools. Each interview section included different sets of questions with an open-ended question at the end for all participants. According to Creswell (2009), a semi-structured interview is always followed by open questions. The reason for providing an open question is to allow the participants to explain and feel free to express themselves.

The first interview questions were for participant SETs teachers (supervisors of PWDs) in grade twelve of eight RAK government secondary education. This interview included two main sections. The first section was for collecting the demographic information, and this includes (gender, highest education level, years of experience in dealing with PWDs and whether they know anyone with disabilities. The second section of this interview was related to support services for PWDs in school, including four main headings. Each heading covers different items. The first section, participant opinion about the provided services for PWDs at their school in terms of the IEP, whether it includes long-term goals or a section related to the transition to higher education.

More in depth questions followed related to the orientation sessions provided by prospective HEIs (as these orientation sessions are usually conducted in schools), the registration process and admission exams (NAPO. EmSAT) and selection of the right higher education institution. It also included the awareness sessions related to support services available for PWDs at other HEIs across the UAE. The third set of questions sought participants' opinion related to services provided for PWDs that facilitate the transition of PWDs from secondary to university in terms of seven topics: (1) availability of clear and comprehensive definition of PWDs, (2) the existence of regulations of the policies and procedures related to requesting the services, (3) availability of specialists and resource centers, (4) availability of awareness raising opportunities for all employees and students to know how to deal with PWDs, (5) availability of environmental accessibility like sliding doors, entrances with ramps, elevators, etc. (6) availability of training related to emergency and evacuation, and (7) importance of clubs and activities. The fourth question was generally related to the third question where the researcher asked the participant about their opinion in general, they were asked to provide examples to the above main inclusive services and what will happen in the case there is any absence of mentioned services and how this might impact on PWDs academic level at higher education. Lastly, the researcher allowed each participant to add any additional comments if they wished.

The second set of interview questions were for the participant PWDs at RAK government high school and PWDs at the selected HEIs. This interview included three main sections. The first section was the demographic information including a question about who encouraged them to continue their studies, and whether they wanted to advance in their higher education or not. The second section related to transitioning services, and this included the description of PWDs journey from high school into the college, in terms of EmSAT admission requirements and college selection. The third section covers higher education provision for PWDs under eight main topics. First, disability definition and how different types of disabilities are defined. The secondly point was about the availability a skilled person responsible for dealing with PWDs and the availability of a resource center and whether PWDs can use it once needed. Thirdly, policies, and procedures, whether it is included in orientation sessions. Fourthly, the accommodation and facilitation. PWDs were asked to describe their registration admission phase (facilitation, challenges, or challenges), and they were also encouraged to explain how PWDs can schedule an appointment when they need to meet teachers or specialists or request the accommodation (forms, meeting, etc.). The fifth is, knowledge of employees and students, and here the researcher asked PWDs to elaborate on whether they think "It is necessary to provide a training course for everyone on how to deal with PWDs". Sixth is, environmental facilitation where PWDs were prompted to describe how ready they think their campus is for PWDs, including doors and elevators, PWDs restrooms, etc. The seventh is, evacuation in emergencies and this includes fire drill evacuation, assembly points, etc. The eighth topic included a prompt about activity clubs and events, and here, students needed to mention all activities they are involved in or participate in by referring to their primary duties. After that, to get an understanding of how they perceive their near future, the researcher asked about their plan after five years from now. In the end, the researcher allowed all the study participants to add additional comments if they wished to do so.

As mentioned in the study procedures 3.3.3, all interviews were scheduled first (See Appendix J) to save traveling time from one city to another. Duration for each interview was ranging from 30 to 40 minutes. All interviews were conducted on the selected schools and HEIs, particularly at the specialist office or meeting rooms. All conversations with the participants were in Arabic (See Appendix K) because the study participants' first language is Arabic. After that, the researcher translated everything from Arabic to English (See Appendix H). The researcher also gave them

some time for each participant to read the consent form of the study to understand the study purpose and how all the collected data is going to be confidential.

Furthermore, participants were informed that their interview would be recorded as it was mentioned in the study consent form. The researcher was recording all the conversations for each participant and taking notes at the same time. Recording interviews provide permanent records, and it allows the researcher to focus on the participant interview (Robson 2002).

3.4.1.2 Document analysis

Document analysis was used as the second data collection tool, and it was also used to gain supplementary ideas and information for the questionnaire. It is one of the key factors that are relevant when the researcher is designing a study that uses documents as data (Grant 2018). Researchers state that "persons or groups conscious and unconscious beliefs, attitudes, values, and ideas are often revealed in the documents" (Fraenkel & Wallen 1993, p. 389). The researcher focuses on the national documentation, international documentations, related documentation at selected sites (high schools and HEIs) and online sources from official websites such as the MOE, MOSA, MOSHER, NAPO, and MOCD.

The researcher reviewed all the documents by using coding. Secondly, all data derived from collected documents was placed in different categories related to the study questions. Thirdly, after categorizing the data, the researcher went back again to details to match them against the study questions.

In the study, the researcher examined **the UAE Federal Law No. 29 of the year 2006**. This law considered education as a fundamental right for PWDs. This Federal Law calls for equal care, rights, and opportunities for PWDs to provide the best services in education, health care, and rehabilitation. It also includes two main chapters of the rights of these individuals to access education. The first chapter covers general provisions, while the second chapter emphasizes access to equal educational opportunities (see Appendix A).

Documents related to **the "School for All" guideline 2010**, under the title of General Rules for the Provision of Special Education Programs and Services, lists seven inclusive aspects: (1) special

education categories and special education programs and services, (2) procedures for identification and provision of special education program, (3) transitional services, (4) organizational structure, primary duties and responsibilities for the administration of special education services in the UAE, (5) academic qualifications and professional development in special education, and (6) rights, duties and responsibilities of persons or guardians of students with special education programs in private school and institutions (see MOE 2010). This guideline defined the third aspect of transitional services as "a current set of activities designed to prepare the students with special needs to move from one stage or from one environment to another, and from school to the activities of public life to increase his/her level of independence to maximum extent possible" (MOE 2010, p. 67).

The third set of documents examined for this study is **the international standards by Association on Higher Education and Disability (best practices) 2015** (See Appendix L), the best practices standards for inclusive higher education were released by AHEAD in the Unites States of America 2015 This document provides a clear framework for a more inclusive higher education that could be applied in the UAE to provide equal best services for all PWDS.

The document of **the quality standards of services for PWDs** in government and private institutions was extensively scrutinized. This document was launched in 2016 from the MOCD to provide the best services for all PWDs to enable them to live and participate in their family environment and the social environment that provides them with their human emotional needs. The first set of standards relates to inclusive services offered by specialized institution while the second set of standards relates to inclusive services provided by non-specialized institutions. The focus on this study was on the second set of standards which highlights eight domains as the following: (1) policies and procedures, (2) modifications and accommodations, (3) knowledge of employees and services providers, (4) environmental accommodations, (5) technical accommodations, (6) orientation to emergencies (MOCD 2016) (see Appendix W).

The UAE national policy of empowering people of determination 2017 is another document that had to be included in the study for its innovative approach. This policy aims at creating an inclusive society for PWDs and their families to support and accommodate their health, rehabilitation, education, vocational rehabilitation, public life, culture, and sports. This policy also

aims at redefining concepts related to the people of determination, including laws, rights, care, and rehabilitation programs and labels (Gulf News of April 2017).

The document of the UAE education system of the three years of achievement 2015-2017 (MOE 2018): this document gives information about student registration guide for the UAE standard EmSAT test for grade twelve students (UAEMOE 2019).

Document of the **United Arab Emirates National standard classification of disabilities** of the year 2018 (see Appendix U) for detailed descriptions for each type of disability, in Arabic. This classification is based on (a) the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act 2004, (b) Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders fifth edition, American Psychiatric Association 2013, (c) the United Nations of Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2006, and (d) The UAE Federal Law No. (29) Of the year 2009 concerning the rights of persons with disabilities. This document involved viewing national and international policies. It was used to benchmark provisions for PWDs concerning human rights, social justice, and equal opportunities, accessibility, universal design, communication, awareness, and examine inclusive provisions in the HEIs.

Document analysis involves generating codes and categories that can be compared and contrasted with driving answers for the study questions (Fraenkel & Wallen 1993). Fraenkel and Wallen (1993) argue that using document analysis lies in its being "unobtrusive" as it allows the researcher to observe the documents without influencing its contents.

Implementing this method for this study helped the researcher gain a deeper understanding (Creswell 2013) of the UAE's educational context. Moreover, it allowed for studying inclusion in the UAE.

3.4.1.3 Observation

Observation is used as the third data collection tools for this study, observation was conducted of the selected HEIs. It follows the traditional ethnographic approach where the emphasis is on "documenting … the everyday experiences of individuals" (Fraenkel & Wallen 1993, p. 392). Creswell (2013) indicates that researchers can collect their data with participants and without participants, which means that the study researcher would observe the field by recording all observed information as it is. Utilizing ethnography as an approach allows the researcher to explore the lived experiences of participants in the selected sites: HEI I, HE J, HEI K and HEI L. Furthermore, with permission from the selected HEIs, the researcher used a manual wheelchair on the selected HEIs for nine days to investigate the provided services and accessibility for PWDs to develop firsthand experience of how inclusive and accessible the study sites are.

The observation contained five main sections: (1) institution information, (2), institutional process, (3) the institution's special equipment, (4), accessibility, and environmental facilitation, (5) emergencies and evacuations (see Appendix M).

A checklist was used during the field observation, and then it was coded. Using a checklist is a beneficial way to gain information and record it immediately (Beaver 2004).

Utilizing this tool of data collection aimed at checking out the physical accessibility provided for PWDs and facilities offered for them by their institution to meet their needs to experience the educational life in the least restrictive environment.

Accessibility services checklist	YES	NO	Observation
Policies related to Persons with disabilities is available.			
Procedures related to Persons with disabilities is available.			
Positive notices about Persons with disabilities' rights are well distributed across the College.			
Rights of Persons with disabilities are included in College handbooks.			
College orientation sessions cover provisions for Persons with Disabilities.			
Lectures on Persons with Disabilities' rights and equal opportunities are provided on regular bases.			

A guideline for Persons with disabilities accommodations and modifications is available upon request.			
Persons with disabilities can request for their accommodations easily.			
College website is accessible by Persons with disabilities.			
Classrooms tables are with adjustable height for Persons with disabilities (particularly wheelchair users).			
Different computer programmes are available for Persons with Disabilities.			
Information about assistive devices (such as mobile hearing aids for deafness and hearing impairment etc.) is available.			
There is a contact person when it comes to supporting Persons with Disabilities.			
Using various equipment and materials to help Persons with Disabilities (including accessible computers, etc.). is quite easy.			
Training on how to accommodate Persons with Disabilities is provided regularly.			
Representatives from specialized service providers are regularly invited to run training sessions related to Persons with Disabilities.			
The main reception is accessible for wheelchair users.			
Automatic doors are available across the College.			
The automatic doors are well spaced across the College.			
Handrails are available on both sides of the main entrance.			
Ramps for Persons with Disabilities are available.			
The location of available ramp(s) are highlighted on the College map.			
Handrails are available on both sides for each ramp.			
Handrails are available on both sides of the stairs.			
College elevators have visual and audible signals to guide Persons with Disabilities.			
Accessible restrooms are clearly marked with the international symbol.			
Accessible restrooms are highlighted on the College map.			
The height of all light switches are appropriate for wheelchair users.			
Sufficient lighting in Persons with Disabilities parking area is available.			
Enough and appropriate signage with the right directions is available throughout the College.			
Signage used through the College uses raised letters and number and/or Braille characters.			
Parking spaces for Persons with Disabilities are available.			

All the parking spaces for Persons with Disabilities are marked with the international symbol of disability.			
Parking spaces are designed to accommodate Persons with Disabilities.			
All emergency exits are clearly defined and reachable by all.			
Fire alarms around the College have audio and visual signs.			
Evacuation emergency training related to specific disabilities is provided.			
A list of the response team to contact in case of any emergencies related to Persons with Disabilities is available.			
The height of all first aid kit are appropriate for wheelchair users.			

Table 6: Observation checklist items

3.4.2 Quantitative study instrument

The quantitative component of this study utilized a questionnaire, and it is the fourth data collection tool used for the study. According to Walliman (2011), using questionnaires is a useful tool in research. This part of the study targeted participants in the fourth group, all stakeholders from the selected inclusive government education (HEI I, HE J, HEI K and HEI L). The researcher constructed the questionnaire of this study (see Appendix G) with the aim of investigating the accessibility of inclusive provisions for transitioning PWDs into government higher education.

3.4.2.1 Questionnaire

The focus of this questionnaire was to obtain participants' perceptions regarding the availability of inclusive services at higher institutions.

It took approximately 30 minutes to complete. The researcher included a brief introduction mentioning that all provided information would be confidential.

The researcher personally visited higher education institutions to distribute approximately 250 questionnaires for participants. Moreover, the questionnaire was shared online for those who would like to use this platform (see Appendix N). This questionnaire consisted of 48 items with three main parts of the study as follows.

The first part was closed-ended questions which includes six main questions:

(1) gender of participants, (2) their age, (3) highest education level, (4) current position (management, teaching, facilities operations, and administrative staff), (5) years of experience at their institution, and (6) if they know anyone with disabilities outside the context of the study.

The second part was a five Likert scale under the title of the accessibility services provisions. This section includes five sets of items related to the perceived availability of accessibility services and their perceived importance consisting of thirty-eight items in total. The five sets of items are: (1) policies and procedures, (2) accessibility and facilitation, (3) knowledge of employee, (4) environmental and facilitation, (5) evacuation and emergencies. Each of the mentioned sets of items consisting of several sub items. These sets of items were derived mainly from the document of the UAE quality standard of services for PWDs in government and private institutions (see MOCD 2016). For the availability of accessibility services, each participant needs to provide their opinion. To express their opinion, they needed to tick their answer: 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= neither agree nor-disagree, 4= agree, and 5= strongly agree. For the second section, for the perceived importance of the mentioned services, participants needed to rate to what degree they think or see the provided services as important. In this part, each participant also needs to tick the following: 1= not at all important, 2= not so important, 3= somewhat important, 4= very important, and 5= extremely important.

The third and last part of this questionnaire included closed-ended questions. It consists of only three general questions. For the first question, each participant was asked if they do not mind being contacted by the study researcher for the second part of this study. For the second question, the researcher asked participants to provide their email address if they wanted to receive a soft or hard copy of this research report. The last question was an open-ended question for participants to provide any additional comments.

A summary of the study instruments and participants groups is available in Appendix T, and the table is summarizing each instrument, participants, required contribution, the details, and the required access facilitations for each site.

3.5 Data Analysis

Once the study starts to flow, each researcher's attention turns to data analysis (Cooper & Schindler 2014). Moreover, data analysis helps researchers to explore the past and create prediction models (Cuesta & Kumar 2016). Analyzing the data also allows researchers to understand what has happened or what is happening; it helps predict what is likely to happen and guides researchers in making decisions (Pearson 2018). At this phase researchers start their data preparation, including editing, coding, and data entry (Cooper & Schindler 2014).

This study aims to investigate inclusive provisions that facilitate transitioning high school PWDs into higher education. It also focused on exploring the standards that could be used to improve and develop services for PWDs in the HEIs. Qualitative and quantitative data collection tools were used in this study. According to Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2011) a researcher uses mainly two analytical approaches: statistical analysis and coding by data type.

Editing is the first stage in analyzing the data. Researchers need to make sure that these data sets are accurate, complete, and arranged to specify coding, appropriate with the study questions or survey, and uniformly entered (Cooper & Schindler 2014, p.377). The second stage of the data analysis is coding, and coding is a kind of translation of the study data into symbols (Vogt, Vogt, Gardner & Haeffele 2014). These symbols can be "number, words, graphics makers, for example, + for more or ↓ for decreasing or a letter. Also, it is a name or a label that the researchers give to a piece of text that contains an idea or a piece of information" (Vogt, et al. 2014, p.559). According to Vogt, et al. (2014, p. 13) there are two main phases for coding. In the first phase, researchers need to make coding decisions to determine how they will collect their evidence. During the second phase and after the data collection, the researcher defines their initial coding to get their data ready for analysis. However, Cohen, Manion, & Morrison (2011) mention different kinds of coding, open code, analytic code, axial code, and selective code, but for the grounded theory, it focuses only on three types: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding.

This study followed the models of Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2011) open, axial, and selective coding. A code is "a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing and evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data" (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison 2011, p. 559).

For this study the researcher created a Google drive form to copy all the interview transcripts and then prepared a word document. The researcher did not use any software to transcribe the interview but spent about one week transcribing each recorded interview to word document using tables. Then each interview was re-read to code them and begin to use different colors, and each color presented a theme. For example, distance, accommodation, accessibility, challenges, etc. This type of coding is called open coding. Open coding involves exploring the collected data by identifying units of analysis to code for meaning, events, actions, etc. (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2011, p. 600). Open coding can proceed on line-by-line, sentence-by-sentence, or paragraph-by-paragraph (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2011 p.561). After open coding, researchers start and sort and store everything to link between categories and codes. The aim of axial coding is a "set of procedures that the researchers follow, whereby the data that were originally segmented into small units of fractions of whole text are recombined in new ways following the open coding" (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2011 p. 561).

Lastly, the researcher summarized all contents for all files and stored them all by implementing selective coding. Selective coding is identified as the relationship between the core code and other code in a text to make a connection between subgroups of a category and between one category and another (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2011 p. 562).

Statistical analysis was used for analyzing data generated by the questionnaire; it is to "convert information gathered by the secondary or primary methods to a medium for viewing and manipulation" (Cooper & Schindler 2014, p.391). In this stage, the researcher created a data file to store collected information and by keyboard entry from pre-coded instruments — for example, data entry for statistical packages like Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) (Cooper & Schindler 2014).

3.6 Limitation of the study

Expressing and recognizing limitations in the research study is very important (Creswell 2009). It "reminds the reader that the research study was located within specific context" (Bloomberg, & Volpe 2008, p. 79). For Bui limitation is a mistake or weakness in any study that affects both internal validity and external validity of the results (2014, p. 113). Bui pointed out three main

benefits of considering the limitations of the study: the researchers learn from their mistakes, it can help another researcher to learn from the current researcher's mistake, it helps the researcher provide a possible explanation for unexpected results (Bui 2014, p. 202).

The researcher of this study recognized the following challenges and limitations. The first challenge would be seeking the approval letters from the selected HEIs and MOE. As the letters might not be easily granted, and to overcome this foreseen challenge, the researcher built a list of potential HEIS to contact. The second challenge was the translation from Arabic to English and from English to Arabic. The researcher took about more than one week to translate each interview and to transcribe them too.

As for the study limitations, the first limitation of the study was the study scope. The study did not investigate all the HEIs across the UAE, only the selected ones. As for the second limitation, some employees from the selected institutions chose not to participate in this study, limiting the generalizability of the study findings and compromising its validity. However, it is the very nature of small sampling that is expected to render true insights and counterbalance, potential weak external validity.

3.7 Validity and reliability

According to Zohrabi (2013) researchers need to consider both validity and reliability before and after collecting any data. Validity is a particular standard to evaluate the quality of research. If the findings were matching the study or no (Robson 2002). Ebert the reliability is an essential requirement for any research to find data, whether it is similar results or no (Bell 1999).

Furthermore, using mixed methods approach for data collection through the interview, document analysis, observation, and questionnaire allowed for triangulation. Examining data produced via these different instruments side by side helped common themes to emerge and aggregate during the data analysis phase. Relying on this mixed methodology approach also consolidated data validity by avoiding researcher bias.

Additionally, piloting of the research survey maintained internal validity and subsequently reinforced its reliability. Detailed of pilot study is available in chapter three section 3.3.4 Pilot

study page 83 to 84. The researcher also used the survey items to guide the interview schedule and thereby increased the internal validity of the study.

3.8 Ethical consideration

3.8.1 Permission to conduct the study

The researcher's first step was to plan, and this included downloading and studying the British University in Dubai (BUiD) ethical guideline (see Appendix O). This guide is very important as it informs the role of the researcher. Furthermore, with BUiD support, the researcher was able to access the selected sites (see Appendix P). Moreover, the researcher requested permission to conduct the study from the UAE MOE. This includes the research ethics committee of the selected sites (see Appendix C).

3.8.2 Informed consent

Check and Schutt (2012, p.54) list five key aspects of the consent form: (a) the form must be clearly written and easy for the participants to understand the topic, (b) need to state who is going to conduct the study, (c) it must summarize the research, (d) it should describe how the confidentiality will be maintained, and this includes the recorded data from tapes and transcripts, and (e) participants can withdraw at any time without giving a reason. It is also stipulated that the consent form needs to be given to the study participants before they accept or do not accept participating in the study because they need time to read and understand the research (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2017).

The consent form of this study clearly explained the overview of the research purpose and procedure. Moreover, the researcher had told each participant that it is voluntary participation, and they were free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason.

Furthermore, this form clearly mentioned that each participant was allowed to select the time and location for the interview. The form also included that a voice recorder would be used during the interview to transcribe the data for the research purpose. Lastly, each participant was asked to sign the consent form as a volunteering participant (see Appendix T).

3.8.3 Anonymity and confidentiality

According to Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2017), there are two main ways to protect the study participants' rights. The first way is anonymity. The main purpose of anonymity is that all the information provided by the study participants must in no way reveal their identity, and that they would be given pseudonyms. Confidentiality is another way to protect participants' rights and this means that what was shared by each participant will be protected and will remain a secret.

Anonymity and confidentiality are "the key considerations in the ethical research practice" (Wiles 2012, p. 41). According to Love (2012), the rules of anonymity and confidentiality are "designed to protect the privacy of information and the security of researchers" (p. 9).

According to a definition provided by Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, anonymity is "where not even the researcher knows who the person is," while the definition of confidentiality is "where the researcher knows but nobody else knows or is allowed to know" (2017, p. 92).

Finally, all the collected data from the selected institutions were kept safe by storing the received data on one device, in soft copies in a password-protected external hard disk.

The data will be destroyed after a set period of time post the completion of the study project. To maintain confidentiality, the study participants were asked to provide pseudonyms for the study report. Moreover, the names of the selected sites were not mentioned in the study, and were mentioned as (school A, school B, school C, school D, school E, school F, school G, school H, HEI I, HE J, HEI K and HEI L). All the interview participants in this study were identified as the study participants 1-20, and their real names were recognized only by the researcher.

3.9 Summary

In this chapter, the researcher described the methodological design of section 3.2 to 3.7. In order to answer the study research questions, the researcher utilized a mixed-methods approach (qualitative and quantitative) (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2011 and 2017) and Creswell (2009 and 2014). These approaches are used to provide useful and in-depth insights. It also highlighted the research design. A detailed explanation of the research instruments used to collect the data (document analysis, interview, observation and questionnaire) was provided. This chapter also included reference to how the data was analyzed. Limitations of the study were also mentioned (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2011 and 2017), Cooper and Schindler (2014), and Muijs (2004). Finally, the ethical considerations of the study were discussed. The researcher used these methods to dig deeper into the data to find information to answer the study research questions. Thus, the data analysis and findings will be presented in details in the next chapter, Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

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4.0 CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This study investigated inclusive provisions facilitating transitioning UAE high school PWDs (Grade 12) into HEIs. Using the national Quality Standards as a benchmark this study aimed at identifying areas of concern where more support is required to improve and develop services for PWDs in the HEIs. This study attempted to answer the following four main research questions: (1) how are transition services perceived by Grade 12 students with disabilities and their specialists? (2) What inclusive provisions do students with disabilities in higher education perceived as the most valuable? (3) How inclusive are the policies, practices, procedures, and other accommodations in selected HE institutions? (4) What accommodations and practices can HEIs adopt be more inclusive?

This chapter presents the data deduced from the various data collection tools: document analysis, interview, observation and questionnaire. Data from these tools have been presented and analyzed into two parts: Part1 data, from documents analysis, interviews, and observations, has been analyzed qualitatively. As for the document analysis, to gain supplementary information for the questionnaire the researcher focused on the national and international documentation provided by investigated sites in addition to online sources from official websites. As for the interview, semi-structured interviews were conducted with targeted groups of PWDs from selected HEIs. As for the observation, the researcher utilized ethnographic approach to explore participants' lived experience in the selected HEIs. To implement this tool the researcher used a manual wheelchair (with permission from the selected sites) to investigate the provided services and accessibility for PWDs to develop a feeling of how inclusive the study sites are. Furthermore, to get a first-hand experience with the physical environment accessibility of the visited site.

Part 2 data, collected using questionnaires, were analyzed quantitatively. The study questionnaire aimed to investigate the accessibility of inclusive provisions for transitioning PWDs into government HEIs.

The presentation of this data will follow the following order: document analysis, interview, questionnaire, and lastly observation findings.

4.2 Document Findings

4.2.1 Disability Category and Policy

The international Federal Law IDEA (2004) has recognized thirteen different disability categories that help PWDs to receive special education and related services. These are; (1) autism, (2) deaf-blindness, (3) deafness, (4) emotional disturbance, (5) hearing impairment, (6) mental retardation, (7) multiple disabilities, (8) orthopedic impairment, (9) other Health Impairment, (10) specific Learning Disability, (11) speech or Language Impairment, (12) traumatic Brain Injury, and (13) visual impairment (Including Blindness) (Maanum 2009, p. 2).

In 2010, the national School-for-All guidelines provided public and private schools with a clear roadmap to support all PWDs to cope well with others in mainstream classes and receive their education equally. This guideline lists seven main disabilities: (1) specific learning disabilities, (2) physical and health-related disability, (3) visual impairment, (4) hearing impairment including deafness, (5) speech and language disorder, (6) autism spectrum disorder, (7) emotional and behavioral disorder, (8) intellectual disabilities, and (9) definition of gifted and talented (MOE 2010, p. 19-20).

In 2018, recognizing the need for of a consistent classification of disabilities across the UAE, His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashed Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister the Ruler of Dubai, issued Cabinet Resolution No. (3) Of 2018 regarding the adoption of the National Standard Classification of disabilities (People of Determination) PWDs in the UAE (see Appendix U). This classification includes eleven disabilities. Before listing these in more details, it is worth mentioning that the 2018 national classification is flexible and open for the best global practices in the field of disability to accommodate categories of disabilities whose rights are recognized by the United Nations Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Florian& Mclaughlin 2008). Additionally, the classification process is performed based on diagnostic and evaluation reports, and is determined by the Ministry of Community Development and is issued by accredited specialists by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. According to the classification, the disabilities are as follows:

The first category, mental disabilities, is defined as an obstructive disorder during the growth period, including deficiencies in mental performance and adaptation in the areas of social and procedural understanding. The classification must meet three main certain criteria: (1) insufficient mental functioning like problem-solving, planning, judgment, academic learning as measured by standardized individual mental disabilities tests, (2) insufficient adaptive performance that results in failure to achieve developmental, social and cultural process of personal independence, and social responsibility, and (3) to be at the beginning of the growth stage. This classification also includes the general development delay for children under five years whose severity of mental disability cannot reliably be determined during early childhood. This category is diagnosed when the child cannot tolerate structured evaluation because they are too young to participate in standardized tests. So this category requires re-evaluation after a while. Lastly, unspecified intellectual disability includes persons over five years old with an additional physical or sensory impairment such as blindness, deafness, behavioral problems, and mental disorder, and therefore cannot be evaluated using standardized tests. This category should be used in exceptional circumstances and a re-evaluation is required after a while.

The second category is communication disorders. Speech, and communication is considered an expressive product with sounds and includes verbal, fluency, sound, and echo quality. An assessment of the capabilities of speech-language and communication must take into account the context of the individual, especially people who live in a bilingual environment, and non-verbal mental disability must be closely related to the culture. For example, the assessment that developed and met for a particular group may not provide appropriate criteria for another group from a different context.

The third category is autism spectrum disorder. It is defined as a neurodevelopmental disorder. It is one type of developmental disability caused by a dysfunction of the cultural nervous system (the brain). It is characterized by interruption or insufficiency in the development of sensory, and consequently, the ability to communicate, learn and act socially. According to the diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (see Appendix U), the fifth edition, mentioned five criteria for diagnosing autism spectrum as the following: (1) persistent deficits in social interaction across multiple contexts, (2) restricted, repetitive patterns of behavior, interests or activities, (3) Symptoms do not arise from intellectual or developmental causes, (4) symptoms must be present

in the early developmental period, and (5) symptoms cause clinically significant impairment in social, occupational or other important areas of current functioning.

The fourth category is attention-deficit/hyperactive disorder, which is defined as a lack of attention to detail, because of which they make mistakes during study or work or other activities. For example, their minds appear to be somewhere else. Frequently, they do not follow the instructions and fail to complete homework or duties in the workplace. For instance, if they start the task, they lose focus quickly, and it is easy for them to deviate from the topic. These individuals often find it challenging to organize and participate in activities. They usually avoid things that they dislike.

The fifth category is specific learning disorders. This is a disorder in one or more of the main psychological processes, including understanding and/or using both oral and/or written skills like writing, spelling, or mathematical operations. This also includes cognitive impairment, mild brain dysfunction, and dyslexia. Also, slow reading, difficulties in understanding what was read, challenges in spelling, written expression, understanding the meaning of the number, and calculations.

The sixth category is visual impairment. It is defined as a severe lack of vision that varies from the case of total vision loss to "blindness", to partial vision loss cases that cannot be treated by surgical operations or contact lenses. This can be categorized as partial blindness and with low vision. The first sub-category is total blindness, a person's total vision loss is less than 20 degrees, even if using glasses. The second sub-category is the partially sighted, best ratio of vision is 6/60 or less in the strongest eye. While the low vision is a partial loss of vision in the strongest eye, and it cannot be compensated by optical aids, contact lenses, or medicines or surgeries.

The seventh category is hearing impairment. It is defined as full or partial loss of sense of hearing in a normal learning environment, including deafness and hearing impairment. Therefore, they need special services to develop language, speech, and oral communication. Deafness individuals face challenges when it comes to communicating verbally. To interact with others easily, they use sign language. There are five levels of hearing loss, mild (26 to 40), moderate (41 to 55), moderately severe (56 to 70), severe (71 to 90), and profound, more than 90.

The eighth category is a deaf-blind disability; it is a combination of hearing impairment and visual impairment, which hinders in-depth communication and educational needs, and this cannot be provided through the special education program.

The ninth category is a physical disability that is a severe failure in nervous, muscular, or bone structure, and it reduces individuals' ability to use their body generally in daily life activities and school activities in a regular educational environment. This can be caused by birth, certain disease, fractions, or amputations.

The tenth category is psycho/emotional disorders which can fall under different other categories, passive disorder, or mental illness. It is a complex emotional disability with a combination of physical and physiological characteristics that causes the emotional reactions to be inappropriate, whether with an increase or decrease. It also remains with the individuals for a long period of time to a noticeable degree, as it negatively affects educational performance and daily life. This can appear as; (a) a lack of learning that cannot be explained by their mental disability, (b) inability to build or maintain personal relationships with their peers or others, (c) unsuitable behavior or falling, (d) general mood of not feeling happy or depressed. This also includes schizophrenia, identity disintegration, severe ill fear, severe depression, anxiety, trauma, stress, and cognitive disorder.

The eleventh category is for multiple disabilities. This is recognized when a person's disability falls into one category of the neurodevelopmental disorder (sensory impairments, physical disabilities, mental/emotional disorder). It can also be combined with other disabilities that fall into another category, such as mental and physical disability or hearing and intellectual disability. This disability causes a direct problem to developmental and educational processes.

Evidently this comprehensive description of disabilities aims at providing services that meets PWDs needs and facilitate their access to education. This national classification also helps raise the level of coordination and cooperation between concerned authorities to standardize tools and provisions for PWDs as appropriate to their needs.

Table 7 presents an overview of international and national classification of disabilities.

International Federal Law IDEA (2004)	School-for-All guidelines	National Standard Classification of disabilities POD
1. Autism	1. Specific learning disabilities	1. Specific learning disorders
2. Deaf-blindness	2. Physical and health-related disability	2. Physical disability
3. Deafness	3. Visual impairment	3. Visual impairment
4. Emotional disturbance	4. Autism spectrum disorder	4. Autism spectrum disorder
5. Hearing impairment	5. Hearing impairment including deafness	5. Hearing impairment
6. Mental retardation	6. Emotional and behavioral disorder	6. Psycho/emotional disorders
7. Multiple disabilities	7. Speech and language disorder	7. Deaf-blind disability
8. Orthopedic impairment	8. Intellectual disabilities	8. Attention-deficit/hyperactive disorder
9. Other Health Impairment,	9. Definition of gifted and talented	9. Communication disorders
10. Specific Learning Disability		10. Mental disabilities
11. Speech or Language Impairment		11. Multiple disabilities
12. Traumatic Brain Injury		
13. Visual impairment (Including Blindness)		

Table 7: Overview of international and national classification of disabilities

In comparison with the school for all guidelines, the national classification is more comprehensive and can be seen as a step forward towards better identification for SWDs.

4.2.2 The UAE Vision 2021 –Education Pathways

The UAE vision 2021 - which coincides with the UAE fiftieth National Day- includes a group of national indicators in the sectors of (a) education, (b) health care, (c) economy, (d) police and security, (e) Justice, (f) society, (g) housing, (h) infrastructure and government services (UAEV 2021).

The UAE would like to have a high-level education system to ensure quality education for all, achieve outstanding competence for leadership and educational bodies, ensure the quality, efficiency and governance of educational and institutional performance, ensure safe, supportive and stimulating learning environment, attract students and qualify them to join HEIs inside and outside the country in the way that matches their skills with the needs of the labor market, strengthening the capabilities of scientific research and innovation in accordance with globally

competitive standards, establish a culture of innovation in the work environment, and provide all administrative services in accordance with quality, efficiency and transparency standards (MOE 2018, p. 17).

In line with the UAE vision 2021, the UAE would like to develop the education system and to ensure the quality of services provided to students. The MOE launched the "Emirati School" initiative that focuses on shifting the foundation of education, by providing the Emirati Schools with world class standard specifications based on modern and developed scientific curricula. The main purpose of this initiative is to promote higher thinking skills among students to empower them with the analytical skills needed for making the right decisions. The initiative also enhances the efficiency and effectiveness of teaching and learning processes to ensure the achievement of high-quality education outcomes. There are six main goals for the initiative: (1) provide high-quality educational services for children from early childhood, (2) turn the concept of lifelong learning into a reality, (3) improve the quality and efficiency of the vocational education and training sector, (4) promote the concept of creativity and the spirit of innovation, (5) incorporate technological tracks in secondary education school, and (6) expand the range of educational skills and opportunities for vocational education and training programs that sharpen students higher thinking skills. Figure 9 below illustrates the UAE education pathway in the Emirati school initiative.
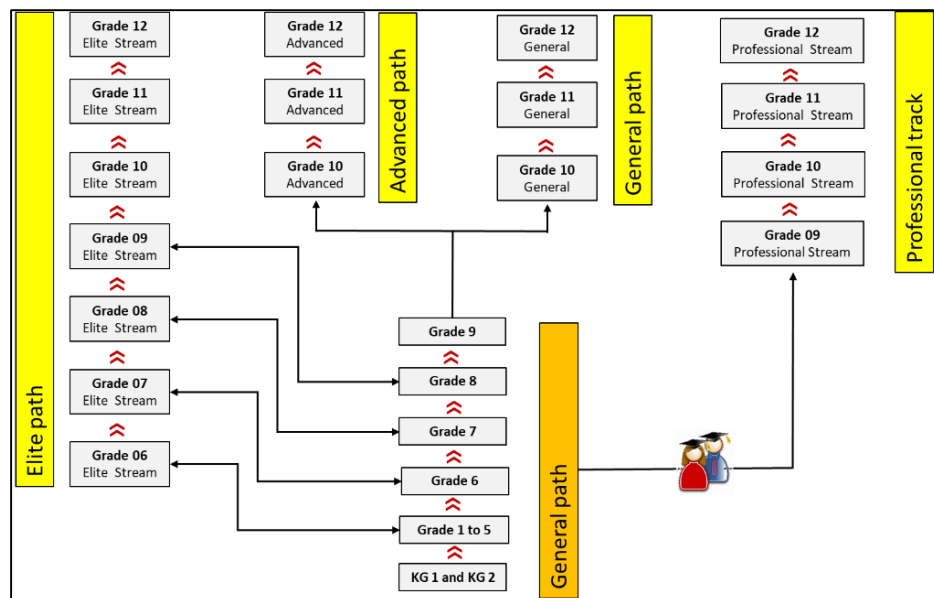
Figure 9: UAE Education pathways in the Emirati School (MOE 2018, p.54)

The advanced science program is designed for the elite path of academically excelling students from sixth grade to grade twelve. The curriculum for this path focuses on mathematics and science and in a manner that enhances the skills of analysis, logical reasoning, and problem-solving in practical ways. For the general path and advanced path, the two-track system application will start in the tenth grade. Students obtain less intensive scientific subjects for the general path, but they are still able to join related academic disciplines at the university level. Alternatively, the advanced track students can obtain an intensive preparation in scientific subjects (mathematics, chemistry, and physics).

This multiple tracks system achieves educational equity for all students giving them an equal amount of knowledge, skills, values that enable them to join all scientific and human specialties in HE. Students, thereby, would be qualified for the requirement of HE and the labor market in line with the country's educational policy in terms of goals, elements of sustainable development, and future needs.

The professional track, on the other hand, provides an alternate applied high school diploma equivalent to the secondary technical certificate upon graduation from high school. The professional track follows a "practical" curriculum for teaching and learning.

4.2.3 Zooming in on PWDs

The UAE paid special attention to PWDs, as mentioned in chapter one, the term "people with special needs" has been changed to "people of determination", a move that inspires all to fulfil greater achievement and promote true sense of justice and equality among all segments of the society without discrimination or neglect. The UAE also continues its support to PWDs via launching a number of community initiatives that enable PWDs to be productive individuals throughout the entire community. Moreover, the country provided them with different support services including issuing PWDs ID cards.

PWDs ID card is a personal card issued by the MOCD; it is considered to be an official document indicating that grants them access to the support services established by the Federal Law No. 29 of the year 2006. In chapter one of this law PWDs ID card is defined as "the personal ID granted by the Ministry to a person with a disability, which shall be considered an official document

showing that a holder is a person with a disability, thus, entitling them to the rights and services set out in the law and the regulations and decisions issued for its implementation" (See Appendix A, p. 3).

About 20661 cards were issued to PWDs by the UAE MOCD for the year 2018-2019 (table 8).

Type of disability	The number of POD cards issued in 2018-2019
Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder	1
Deaf-blind disability	1
Communication disorder	7
Psycho/emotional disorder	34
Visual impairment	851
Hearing impairment	2233
Multiple disabilities	2349
Autism spectrum disorder	2566
Physical disability	6050
Intellectual disability	6569
Total	20661

Table 8: The number of POD cards issued in 2018-2019 (MOCD 2018)

Clearly, the statistics show that the last three categories (autism spectrum disorder, physical disability, and intellectual disability were the highest PWDs who registered for the PWDs ID card. Moreover, about 4695 PWDs joined 97 centers across the UAE, to receive their educational, therapeutic, and vocational rehabilitation services. This includes 7 federal government, 22 local government, 8 semi government, and lastly, 59 private centers (MOCD 2018).

A more recent study indicates that registrations for the POD ID card is increasing, as the current number is standing at 23266 (Abdat 2020, p. 45).

To ensure equal quality education for all and provide high-quality services for different disability categories and learning difficulties, the MOE Emirati School initiative lists twelve education services:

1. Provide PWDs needs during their exam period, such as additional time.
2. Provide support services (speech and language therapy services).

3. Apply the IEP for each PWDs according to their needs.

4. Evaluate and diagnose PWDs using qualified teams and expertise.

5. Implement early detection and intervention in the childhood phase.

6. Provide assistive technologies for PWDs in the classrooms and also at their homes. Training them on how to use those technologies is also to be facilitated.

7. Enroll the PWDs in a special class or integrate them with their peers in the regular classroom with support services.

8. Provide PWDs with opportunities to integrate and engage with their peers and society, to change other people's perception of disability.

9. Educate and guide parents with regard to PWDs

10. Modify school environments with ramps, lifts, tools in the classrooms, and proper lighting.

11. Choose appropriate teaching strategies for each disability category.

12. Academic and social inclusion, developing PWDs skills and enhancing their capabilities (MOE 2018, p. 168).

According to the Emirati School initiative, inclusive statistics show that from the total number of PWDs receiving special services at schools, 35% are with specific learning difficulties, whereas 1% are with multiple and complex disabilities and other health conditions and developmental delay (MOE 2018, 169).

The UAE National Policy to Empower People of Determination focused more on the social aspects. As per this policy, the MOCD, working in coordination with concerned authorities, is to shift emphasis from the medical model to a social model for better integration of PWDs and removal of all environmental and social barriers. Figure 10 below sums up the main aspects comprising this shift.
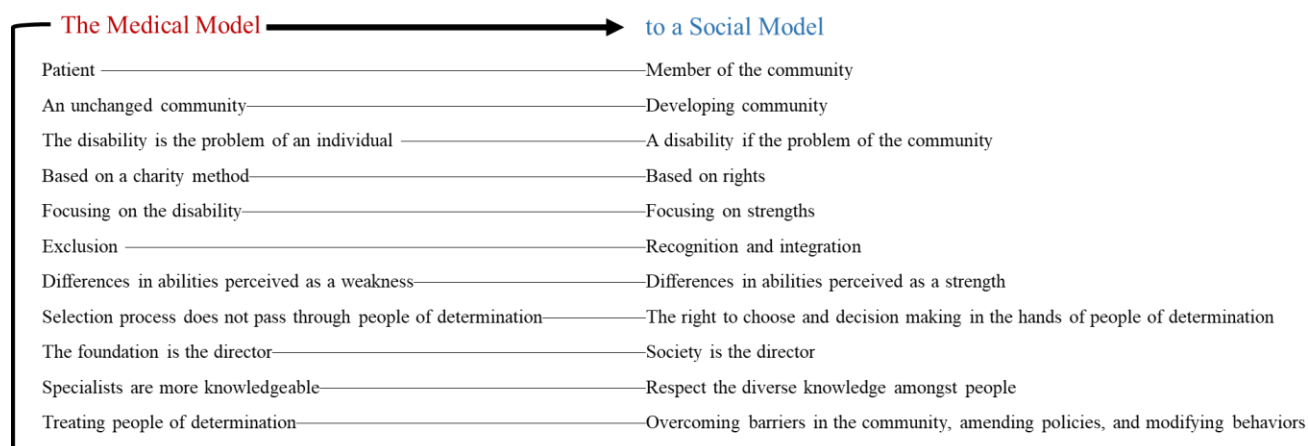
Figure 10: Shifting process from the medical model to social model (Appendix V p. 8-9)

The policy related to education has two main goals with several outcomes. The first educational goal is to enhance the inclusion in education (public, vocational and HE) with the following initiatives: (a) to provide a clear education track for PWDs through all stages, (b) redesign and adapt the curricula to respond to their needs, (c) provide additional resources tools and technologies to support their education, (d) provide treatment support services, (e) empower and engage families and communities in educational, arts, sport, and cultural activities, (f) launch awareness campaigns that target the community and school students related to the importance of inclusion, and (g) launch homeschooling programs for certain disabilities. The second educational goal is to provide highly qualified teachers and experts in Education for PWDs across different stages with the following outcomes: (1) inaugurate specialization in education for PWDs in universities and colleges such as education in the case of autism and severe disabilities, (2) to ensure that university does introduce the teacher in the pre-service stage, to the principles of teaching and assessing PWDs, and (3) launch a training program for Emirati nationals who work in the field of disabilities; it also includes teachers and education specialists (See Appendix V, p. 14-15).

The below section covers the admission mechanisms into higher education.

4.2.4 Admission into higher education.

Online application services for admission into higher education is provided by the MOE through the NAPO. NAPO office is a link between Grade twelve students and government HEIs in the UAE. The NAPO team provides admission services and academic counseling via visiting schools in all seven Emirates to share information about the national HEIs and scholarships to study abroad. The main idea of visiting schools is to ensure all grade twelve students register online to meet the deadline for registration. With cooperation with HEIs, the proper orientation campaign conducted by representatives from NAPO and HEIs gives a brief idea about facilities, programs, and opportunities available at their campuses.

There are three main general admission requirements for grade twelve students to be aware of: (a) applicants must be UAE nationals or mother must have UAE citizenship, (b) applicants must fill the online application form and submit the required documents, and (c) applicants must take the EmSAT. All applicants are eligible to choose only two from any of the following HE options: 1. United Arab Emirates University (UAEU), 2. Zayed University (ZU), 3. Higher Colleges of Technology (HCT), 4. Abu Dhabi Polytechnic (AD Poly), 5. Abu Dhabi Vocational Education and Training Institute (ADVETI), 6. Fatima College of Health and Science (FCHS), 7. Khalifa University (KU), 8. Mohammed V University (Abu Dhabi), 9. Scholarship to study abroad, 10. Sorbonne University. The following are the processes for admission through the NAPO into public HEIs.

To register for public HE Grade twelve students need to visit the main website of the MOE www.moe.gov. All students, including SWDs, need to accurately fill in data fields about (a) student's information, (b) address communication, (c) school information, (d) health status, (e) HE institution, (f) final confirmation, and (g) upload documents. For the health status, PWDs, applicants with special education needs or with a chronic condition, must complete this section with valid and relevant documents. The online system allows selected HE institutions to access these documents to be able to provide PWDs with appropriate medical support along with a suitable academic environment. After that the NAPO team at the MOE review their applications. Once they submit their application, each student receives their application number via a text message. The MOE also follows-up with the registrar in each of the HEI in case of missing documents or inaccurately provided information. Lastly, once the academic year finishes and all

grade twelve students received their final grades and met the institutions' requirements, their registration will be confirmed.

The following section provides details regarding the University admission test-EmSAT

4.2.5 University Admission Test – EmSAT (process-procedures)

In the academic year 2016-2018, the UAE MOE started implementing a standardized test (EmSAT) based on the national standard. EmSAT test is replacing the CEPA, this can provide decision-makers with data on students' performance in the UAE for the Arabic, English, mathematics, and Science (biology, physics, and chemistry) (See Table 3) across different ages from grade one to grade twelves. The test includes public and private schools across the UAE. There are three main levels for this test; the first level called the Baseline test for grade one. The second level is an advanced test for grades four, six, eight, and ten, and the last level is the EmSAT-Achieve test, for grade twelve students.

According to the EmSAT main website, there are 47 test centers across the UAE. It is noted that no information is available on the website as to how inclusive any of these test centers. Also, there are two students' categories, and Table 9 illustrates these Students' categories A and B for the EmSAT test.

(A) Emirati Grade 12 students							
Targeted subjects	Arabic	English	Mathematics	Physics	Chemistry	Biology	Computer Science
Track Type	Compulsory for General and advanced track				Advanced only		
School Type	All public and private schools						
(B) Non-Emirati Grade 12 students							
Targeted subjects	Arabic	English	Mathematics	Physics	Chemistry	Biology	Computer Science
Track Type	Compulsory for non-UAE nationals who study in a public school or in a private school (Ministry of Education curriculum)					Pilot Phase / Public school or Private school (Ministry of Education curriculum)	
School Type	International curriculum: If a student will study in one of the (Public and Privet) Universities.						

Table: 9 Students' category A and B for EmSAT (MOE 2017b)

The first category is A for Emirati grade 12 students, and the second category is B for Non-Emirati grade 12 students. Category A and B are targeted at the same subjects (Arabic, English, Mathematics, Physics Chemistry, Biology, and Computer Science). Still, they are different in the case of track type and school type.

There are three main steps for students to follow regarding registering in the university admission test. In the first step, students need to contact their school coordinator to register for their Emirates ID availability. In the second step, students need to activate their accounts via a link they receive when they register using their email address. In the last step, students need to schedule for the required test through the EmSAT portal (MOE 2017b).

Furthermore, there are seven main EmSAT exam policies for students to be aware of, and they are: (1) registration policy, (2) exam registration change policy, (3) late policy, (4) required document policy, (5) absence policy, (6) cheating policy, and (7) score reporting and validity policy. In the case of the fifth policy – absence policy, in case any students were unable to attend their exam. If they wish to register for another exam date, they must submit an appeal to the Director of the National and International Assessment department. To repeat the test, they must include a detailed explanation and reason, and once it is approved, students will be given a chance to repeat the test.

There are three main test instructions that students need to be aware of, and these are: (a) instructions before the test, (b) instructions during the test, and (c) instructions after the test. Instructions before the test, students need to make sure they completed their registration for all enquired tests. Also, they need to print their tickets and to read all the instructions carefully by checking the test center (location, date, and time). In the case of students who have a disability, they need to check with their EmSAT coordinator to register them under the special needs category by attaching their medical approved documents. Moreover, students need to review their information and the sample items type for each test which they are required to take. As for instructions during the test, registered students need to check and make sure to bring their original Emirates ID with their ticket to the exam hall. They also need to arrive at their exam center at least fifteen minutes before the test. Students also need to answer all the questions, and in case they face any technical issues, they immediately have to inform the person in charge. Also, they cannot enter their exam room with any electronic devices (including mobile phones). Lastly, with regard to

instructions after the test, within three weeks' time students, would be able to check their results on the portal.

It can be seen from the above description that SWDs are not exempted from any of these registration steps, policies or EmSAT test instructions.

There is no fail or pass for this exam, but each University may set their passing score, especially for HEIs. Grade twelve students must achieve the required score for direct entry admission. For example, most universities require students to attain an EmSAT score of 1100 for the college's immediate entry requirement. Additionally, the MOE also provides special accommodation for PWDs, via EmSAT Special Needs Communication Department, and EmSAT offices. This department works closely with the PWDs candidates and college admission offices to communicate, advise, contact, and if any assistance is needed. Depending on the type of disability some PWDs can be exempted from the EmSAT exam. In case PWDs are exempted from this exam, the Special Needs Communication Department recommends PWDs individuals to contact the admission office of their college that they choose, to determine if they can be accommodated with special services of study. In case their chosen college was unable to accommodate PWDs, another college would be contacted.

Moreover, all PWDs will be flagged in the EmSAT database for the EmSAT Special Needs Communication Department. The database will have full descriptions of each PWDs and provide explanations. PWDs must also contact this department ahead of the schedule for their exams. The main reason for doing this is to give opportunities and the right accommodation on the day of the exam. In case any PWDs candidate does not notify this department, their test will be rescheduled for another test date without prejudice.

Each request will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. PWDs need to submit their medical report that should be completed and signed by a physician familiar with the type of disability. If possible, the Special Needs Communication Department team can also include the required accommodations.

Around 99 PWDs applied for the EmSAT test for the academic year 2017-2018, and only 83 sat their exam where 16 of the PWDs were exempted, as mentioned earlier. Table 9 below summarizes

examples of 16 cases in which accommodations were provided by the EmSAT Special Needs Communication Department during the EmSAT test of the year 2018. It can be seen that extra time was the main inclusive service provided with exemptions offered as per the national and international assessment department guidance. This information was shared by the test specialists from the National and International Assessment Department (Alshehhi 2018).

Categories	Accommodation
Cerebral palsy, specific paraplegia with an inability to walk	Wheelchair accessibility, private room assigning, extra time.
PWDs under chemical treatment	Extra attention.
For PWD with learning difficulties	Extra time.
Specific paraplegic-wheelchair	Extra time, wheelchair accessibility.
Hearing loss and mute	Extra time, witting exam instructions on board
Learning difficulties/had an accident recently	Extra time.
PWDs with hearing loss	Extra time, witting exam instructions on board
Epilepsy ADHD	Extra time in main EmSAT office.
Irlen Syndrome and slow reading	Extra time.
Learning difficulties, hearing impairment, speech disorder, and poor sight	Extra time, enlarged font.
Mental retardation with bronchial asthma, fully blind, cerebral palsy with spastic hemiparesis, cerebral atrophy, severe learning difficulties, and brain disorders.	Exempted

Table 10: Accommodation provided by Special Needs Communication Department (Alshehhi, 2018)

4.3 Interview findings

To answer the first part of the first research question related to *how grade twelve PWDs perceived transition services provided in their school.* 17 interviews were conducted with SWDs in grade 12.

4.3.1 Analysis of grade twelve SWDs interview

4.3.1.1 Profile of interview Grade twelve SWDs participants

The researcher in chapter two mentioned in details the process of collecting the data. Participants of this study were asked to sign the consent form as a volunteering participant. In this section, PWDs volunteers were selected from eight public high schools in the UAE. A semi-structured interview is always followed by open-ended questions (Creswell 2019). This tool offers participants the flexibility needed to elaborate and share their stories.

Table 11 presents the profiles of 17 participants' interviewed from high schools.

Participant	Type of disabilities	Gender	Age	Accommodation	IEP availability	School
1.	Intellectual and physical disability	Female	17	Yes	No	School A
2.	Intellectual disability	Female	17	Yes	No	School B
3.	Specific Learning Disorder	Female	18	Yes	No	School B
4.	Visual impairment	Female	18	Yes	No	School C
5.	Specific Learning Disorder (Partial silence)	Female	18	Yes	No	School C
6.	Autism Spectrum Disorder	Female	20	Yes	No	School C
7.	Specific Learning Disorder	Female	19	Yes	No	School D
8.	Sever Learning Disorder	Female	18	Yes	No	School D
9.	Sever Learning Disorder	Female	19	Yes	No	School D
10.	Physical Disability	Male	18	Yes	No	School E
11.	Diseases and health conditions (diabetes)	Male	21	Yes	No	School F
12.	Intellectual disability	Male	19	Yes	Yes	School G
13.	Specific Learning Disorder	Male	17	Yes	Yes	School G
14.	Specific Learning Disorder	Male	19	Yes	Yes	School H
15.	Visual impairment	Male	18	Yes	Yes	School H
16.	Intellectual disability	Male	20	Yes	Yes	School H
17.	Autism Spectrum Disorder	Male	17	Yes	Yes	School H

Table 11: Profile of participants' high school PWDs

Interview questions were also classified in two main sections, and interviewees' responses were coded for themes as below table 12 shows:

Section 1. Grade Twelve PWDs readiness journey from high school to higher education

Perception of the admission process
    ➢ **Process**
    ➢ **College selection**
    ➢ **Major selection**

Section 2. Grade Twelve PWDs perception of inclusive provision

Other provisions services are:
    ➢ **Clear definition guides others to deal with PWDs normally (awareness)**
    ➢ **Importance of assistive resources and training sessions for PWDs**
    ➢ **Orientation related policies and procedures builds PWDs sense of their rights**
    ➢ **Accommodation and facilitation builds PWDs self-motivation**
    ➢ **Training sessions related to dealing with PWDs promotes inclusive community where PWDs treated with respect**
    ➢ **Accessible environment allows PWDs to have a normal life**
    ➢ **Enhance PWDs' self-advocacy skills (in case of an emergency)**
    ➢ **Activities out of the schools can help PWDs succeed beyond the academic setting**

Table 12: Interviewees responses in themes of Grade Twelve PWDs

4.3.1.2 Section 1: Grade Twelve SWDs readiness journey from high school to HE

For the first part of the research question, the grade twelve PWDs were asked to describe their readiness journey to transition from high school to higher education, in terms of three major themes: college selection, and major selection.

Each participant highlighted different kinds of supports that they depend on. This support was self-support, family support, and school support (peers, subject teacher, SET). All the participants were asked to describe the EmSAT admission requirements. Most of the participants' received support from their schools. One participant did a self-registration without any support from others, and he finished his English exam, and only Arabic and physics remain to do.

Family support for PWDs was very important. For example, one participant went through the EmSAT process with her sister, but she did not attend her exam. Another support is friends and

friends are like family when it comes to asking for support. For example, one participant was informed via the school to register for the exam and what the requirement was. This PWD was confused and did not understand the process, but one of his friends supported him until he submitted his request for the exam.

One participant was supported by the school subject teacher to go through the registration process together. The student went through the process step by step by mentioning the needed accommodation, but on the day of the exam, he discovered missing accommodation. Moreover, the exam test center was not informed about his health condition. Sadly, he did not achieve the required score for HE admission, but the school's SET supported him. The SET did communicate with the EmSAT team to give him a second chance. He also uploaded all the needed documents related to his health condition and the needed accommodation (separate room with additional time).

Only one participant did not follow the process to register for the EmSAT test. Whereas, the rest of the study participants did follow the process with the support of others. All participants found the test challenging to achieve the required score for HE admission. For this reason, some of the study participants were trying to apply again for this test to achieve a better score for the admission to higher education.

Most of the participants of this study went through the NAPO process for college selection. Whereas two participants did not follow the NAPO process, nor they registered. Almost, few participants said support from family, teachers, and self-support impact their decision to choose a suitable institution. For example, one participant went through the whole process to select an appropriate institution. This participant was informed that each student is allowed to choose two institutions only (including the scholarship to study abroad). So the student wanted a specific major to study, and it was only available in another Emirate. Still, while he was exploring the institution, he realized that the distance of the selected institution was too far and not easy to reach because of the transportation and the location of his home. Later on, he decided to study another major at one institution, which is nearby and very close to his house. Another participant faced a similar issue because he wanted to explore a specific major at a specific university. Still, because of the distance

from his home to university, he decided to continue his HE at his Emirate to be very close to his family.

Seven participants in this group were undecided yet on major selection. While the rest of the study participants have decided and named their major such as law, biology, information technology, veterinary, and engineer and medical doctor). One participant wanted to complete her study in veterinary, but her family refused to continue her studies. Participants' reluctance to name their majors indicates how having poor self-image can impact their abilities to join HE. Four participants stated: … *"If I were accepted, I would study computer"*.

While another participant said: *…"I did not decide yet".*

From the above it can be seen that the transition services related to the admission process is perceived by grade 12 SWDs as complex and requiring intensive support from family, SETs and subject teachers. In addition, evidently distance from home and family support influence SWDs choice of college and major selection.

4.3.1.3 Section 2: Grade Twelve PWDs perceptions of other inclusive provisions

For the second part of the research first question, the grade twelve PWDs were asked to talk about the provided services by school for PWDs in terms of eight themes: Disability Definition, Assistive Resources, Policies and Procedures, Accommodation and Facilitation, Training Sessions, Accessible environment, Emergency and Evacuation, and lastly, activities.

Clear definition guides others to deal with PWDs normally (awareness): School for all guidelines defines "disability" as a term that refers to any permanent or temporary conditions resulting from an illness. It is also used more often to describe a lack of capacity to perform the functions or less or loss of a body part. Consequently, it affects an individual's ability to implement specific tasks like hearing and speaking. Disability is often related to physical problems, but it is also referred to as social adjustment and educational issues (MOE 2010, p. 60). The study

participants were asked how their school defined disability like blindness, autism, dyslexia, etc. four participants answered the question briefly, and each of them had different answers.

For example, one participant said, "*… the school raises awareness for all about different disabilities. One day, they give us awareness sessions about autism and how to deal with these individuals in terms of the definition of autism and how we can support them always.*

Another participant said,

"*… in our school, we have a student with vision impairment, hearing impairment, and autism. The participant described the role of SET and resource center for PWDs. The SETs at their school always introduces new PWDs to everyone to spread the awareness related to each category and how to deal with them.*

One participant added that,

"*… our school treats us normally as we are not disabled, and they let us feel we are all the same and not different. Everyone, helpful, and everyone is talking to us. Moreover, our school SET always provides workshops to cover different disabilities categories to raise awareness to educate everyone*".

The last participant also indicates the role of SET when they raise awareness, and others communicate and respect them. Whereas one participant said,

"H*onestly, since I joined school from primary level to high school, I did not notice any awareness sessions related to each category*".

With a clear definition, it can guide others to deal with PWDs normally.

It is noticeable that none of the responses reflected specific understanding of the definition of "disability" as it relates to the participant. Their responses were relevant but too generic. This finding does emphasizes the importance of shedding light on how "disability" is defined as a clear definition can guide others to deal with PWDs in a more inclusive way.

Importance of assistive resources and training sessions for PWDs: Assistive resources and training sessions for PWDs are very important. In this section, the study participants were asked

about the availability of skilled personnel and learning resource center/room. Nine participants (64%) indicated that they did not have a resource center, but they did indicate that their school does have an SET.

One participant said: "…*Yes we have a resource center but without assistive resources or computers.*"

Another participant mentioned that he uses it, and he also attended some workshops at schools. Moreover, he also said that after school, he goes to another center to improve his English.

Orientation related policies and procedures builds PWDs sense of their rights: Orientations related to policies and procedures build PWDs' sense of their rights. Six of the participants indicated that their school does highlight policies and procedures related to PWDs during the school orientation sessions. The participants noticed that information about PWDs via orientation sessions are very important to raise awareness on how to deal with PWD and what are the services provided for them. In contrast, the rest of the study participants said that they did not receive any orientation related to PWDs policies and procedures.

Accommodation and facilitation builds PWDs self-motivation: Building PWDs' self-motivation is key to their success. In this section of the interview, participants were asked to describe their registration phase in terms of facilitation, challenges, or problems they face at school and how they communicate with their school when they need anything. One participant faced some difficulties during the study, especially in Grammar. Still, the school did understand her health condition, and they started to accommodate her needs, and later on, she started to follow her lessons.

Another participant added: "… *At the beginning, I faced some challenges during my daily classes because all my subject teachers were unaware of my health condition. Daily they were using color on the board while they teach, but I can only see black and white colors. I told the school SET, and she informed me that she would be talking to all my teachers. A few days later, when I came to my class, I noticed my teachers were teaching us using only two colors (black and white). Now*

I can learn quickly with my classmates without any challenges, and during my exams, they enlarge my exam, give me additional time, and do all my exams in a separate room".

Another participant said: "*… When I joined this school, in the beginning, I was scared to complete grade 12, but when I started to study, I began to enjoy my time while studying. I am still facing some challenges, especially during exams, but very kind of my school, they allowed one teacher to support me and to teach me before any exams"*.

Another participant added: "*…I am facing some difficulties when it comes to submitting the assignments on time, which reduces my grades"*.

Three participants faced some difficulties at their schools, especially dealing with their peers, because they were subject to mistreatments from peers who sometimes beat them, and kept bothering them.

One participant described his experience at his school, and he said: "*... When I joined this school, I did not know anyone at all, but one student started to talk to me. Then he started to support me to complete the registration process for college, guiding me to (my class location, teachers' offices, mosque location, playground area, library, director office, etc.). After two weeks, I started to communicate with others, especially my peers, at my class. The main challenges that I had faced when my school started to change my teachers (Arab with Native) because my English was not good and I met some difficulties with understanding and communicating with them. Still, I decided to improve my English skills so now I can communicate, and I also can understand them in a better way."*

Most participants preferred to visit their teachers' office when they needed to communicate with them or if they needed any support for their study and to meet them face to face. In contrast, only two participants mentioned that their mothers are the one who communicates with their teachers and SET via email and telephone.

Training sessions related to dealing with PWDs promotes inclusive community where PWDs treated with respect

Training sessions related to dealing with PWD promote an inclusive community where PWD is treated with respect. The participants were asked to respond to the following sentence: "it is very important to offer training sessions for all employees and students related to dealing with PWDs".

One participant answered by saying the following: "... *It is an important excellent sentence, and everyone will understand how to deal with PWDs and to let them feel that they are not different from other people.*"

Another participant said: "… *It is a very important sentence, especially if it offers sign language because this will help to say it is here for everyone to communicate with hearing impairment individuals.*"

One participant also added: "… *That training session related to PWD will affect the PWDs. They will help them deal with PWDs and stop bullying because usually, PWDs whether in the elementary, preparatory, or secondary level face bullying and these training sessions will reduce bullying.*"

The study participants mentioned the importance of a training session related to dealing with PWDs. They said that everyone would be able to deal with a different disability. One participant gave an example, and such training will know how to deal and communicate with autistic individuals. Moreover, everyone will be familiar with dealing with PWDs and respect them.

In conclusion, all participants viewed the training sessions as opportunities to facilitate communication which in turn would promote a sense of equality and respect.

Accessible environment aloows PWDs to live a normal life

In this section, participants were asked to describe their school readiness in terms of accessibility for PWDs like parking, reception, doors, entrances, stairs, etc. All the participants state that their school is accessible for PWDs, but they lack auto doors and elevators.

For example, one participant said,

"…*the school is ready, but if we have the emergency elevator, it will be better because one of our school teacher broke her leg, and she was using a wheelchair, but she faced difficulty with moving*

due to lack of the elevator. Moreover, the school has shifted all the classes downstairs to make it easier for her when she needs to teach them." An accessible environment leads to PWDs a normal life. This observation underscores how accessible environment is perceived to enable PWDs during their normal life.

Enhance PWDs to use self-advocacy skills (in case of an emergency)

The study participants were asked whether they received clear guidance regarding what to do and who to contact in case of emergencies. The clear guidance including fire alarms around the school audio and visual signs, evacuation emergency training, and the emergency response team list. All the participants revealed that the fire alarms across the school were sound only. Six participants from six schools were trained by the police and civil defense on how to evacuate in case of any emergency, and how to meet at the Assembly points. The rest of the study participants were informed to meet out at the Assembly points.

Only one participant said:

"…*The school trained all to evacuate schools and to meet at other Assembly points, but because I am one of PWDs, I was told in case of any emergency I have to refer to the school SET who is in charge of me.*" Moreover, participants mentioned the availability of the emergency response team list across the schools, except for one participant who could not remember if her school had the list or not.

Enhancing PWDs to use self-advocacy skills can help them to support themselves and other individuals during a crisis.

Activities out of the schools can help PWDs succeed beyond the academic environment

In this section, the study researcher asked the participants to talk about any activities, clubs, or events that they have participated in at their schools. Only four participants mentioned that they did not participate in any activities clubs or events with their schools. While the rest of the study participants have participated in different activities inside the school like mathematics club,

reading clubs, distribute books for new students, reduce stress during the exam periods, drawing clubs, distribute a UAE flag, participated in the international day's events, and Jui Jitsu club.

Moreover, these participants were also doing different activities outside the schools. One participant joined a sport (Jui Jitsu) competition in different Emirates (Dubai, Abu Dhabi, RAK) and received rewards. Also, he always participated in different activities outside the schools with his father's support. Another participant was one of the organizer committees, and his task was the distributor of coffee and tea for everyone, and he was doing this with a lot of pride.

One participant said:

"…*I participated in more than one event, I have participated in more initiatives outside the school called "warm" it is an initiative to distribute the winter cloth to the workers. I also participated in the school during the exam period, and our school set tables at the school playground, and the school teachers were preparing breakfast. My task was asking questions, and whoever answered coreectly, he got a prize. This initiative helped students reduce stress and come to schools before the exam time they eat and play before the exam*." Participants also joined the Red Crescent to distribute meals for poor people.

Activities out of the schools can help PWDs succeed beyond the regular scholastic learning.

4.3.1.4 Analysis of the open-ended interview questions for grade twelve PWDs.

This section presents findings related to the two open-ended questions at the end of the interview for the first part of the research question one. This is related to how high school PWDs perceive transition services that are provided in their schools. The first open-ended question related to "where you see yourself five years from now?" And the second question was to provide additional comments.

Participants were asked where they see themselves five years from now. Ten participants answered that they would like to continue their higher education. Three participants wanted to stay at home. Two only would like to search for a job. Lastly, only 2 participants would like to join the National Service.

One participant said: "… *I have ambitions for a bachelor's degree, masters, and doctorate degree.*"

Two participants who suffer from severe learning disorder wishing to continue their higher education, but both are worried about not achieving a high GPA. Moreover, both are worried about the EmSAT exam because it is one of the main requirements to enroll in higher education.

Another participant who suffers from specific learning Disorder said: "… *I wish to achieve a high GPA and high score with my EmSAT exam to join higher education to complete my studies, but I will stay home because my family doesn't want me to study and stay home*."

The physical impairment participant stated that he would continue his higher education and dream of reaching his Ph.D. He also mentioned that the Ministry of Education's main website is complicated, inaccessible, and very difficult when it comes to downloading their documents, the file size, and then it needs to be converted to PDF files – inaccessible online environment.

Another participant with a specific learning disorder stated that he would like to complete his bachelor's degree in Information Technology, but he expressed his concern by saying: "... *My dream is to start my bachelor's degree, but I am worried maybe I will not receive full support as I am receiving now from my school SET. Because he always checks on me, motivates me, and keeps following my academic performance.*"

4.3.2 Analysis of grade twelve SETs interview

4.3.2.1 Profile of SETs interview participants

To answer the **second part** of the **first research question** related to how grade twelve PWDs perceived transition services provided in their school. 8 interviews were conducted with SETs in grade 12.

As clarified in the previous chapter (2), each participant was asked to sign the consent form as a volunteering participant. These volunteers were selected from different schools. Each of the participants is a Special Education Teacher (SET) who works for a public high school in the UAE. Each interviewee's questions consisted of different sections with open-ended questions for all

volunteer participants. A semi-structured interview is always followed by open questions (Creswell 2009). The main reason for providing an open question is to allow the participants to explain and feel free to express themselves.

Table 13 represented the participants' profiles of participant SETSs from public schools.

Participant	Gender	Years of experience	Highest education
SET A	F	25	Bachelor in special education
SET B	F	13	Bachelor in special education
SET C	F	10	Bachelor in special education
SET D	F	11	Bachelor in special education
SET E	M	8	Bachelor in special education
SET F	M	15	Bachelor in special education
SET G	M	2	Bachelor in special education
SET H	M	6	Master in special education

Table 13: Profile of participant high school SETs

This section presents findings for the two open questions at the end of the interview for the second part of the first research question. This is to investigate how grade twelve SETs perceive transition services provided at their schools for PWDs. The first question was, "do you think if one of the inclusive services were absent, would it negatively impact the PWDs academic performance?" Whereas the second question, participants asked to provide additional comments.

How grade twelve SETs perceive transition services provided in their schools for PWDs

Interview questions were also classified in two main sections, and interviewees' responses were coded for themes as below table 14 shows:

Section 1. Support services for PWDs in schools.
SET's role (as part of transition services)   • **School for All implementation**   • **Following up**   • **Exam accommodation providers**   • **Raising awareness of peers + teachers**   • **Moral support providers**   • **Shadowing**   **SET's perceptions of school provided transition services**   • **The link between IEP and HE access**   • **Involvement in NAPO and college selection process**   • **Benefit of informative input about PWDs about their health condition**
Section 2. SETs' views of other inclusive services that can facilitate PWDs transition to HEI.
Other inclusive services are: • **Clear definition guides transition services (accommodation, college provider role – selection)**   • **Policies + procedures for requesting services builds PWDs sense of their rights**   • **Needed to build PWDs confidence + provide network of support among institutions**   • **Facilitates integration in society**   • **Prompts PWDs independence, mobility**   • **Enhances PWDs ability to deal with emergency**   • **Enhances PWDs self-confidence + communication skills**

Table 14: Coded interviewees responses for SET

4.3.2.2 Section 1: Support services for PWDs in schools

In this section, participant school SETs were asked to describe their experience in supporting grade twelve PWDs from the beginning of the academic year to the end. The researcher found that the selected schools are following the MOE guideline of the School for All to implement inclusive education. One SET mentioned the implementation of the School for All guidelines at their school, and she said that if any students are not progressing well at the school Support Team (SST), they must be assessed by the Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team (MET). The MET teams consist of the

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speech and language pathologist, the school principal, student subject teachers, social workers, psychologists, and SET. Whereas, in severe cases, they transfer them to rehabilitation centers. Moreover, they accept PWDs, and they provide them with equal opportunities to learn. The school SETs monitor the implementation of a special education program and submit reports on the condition of programs and services. School SETs also collaborate with PWDs parents and their subject teachers. Furthermore, SETs attended different training related to PWDs to gain knowledge and skills in special education.

School SETs follow PWDs' academic level, subject achievements, and actual needs, follow up on their IEP with PWDs subject teachers, and follow up with their parents.

In terms of exam accommodation, the study school SETs mentioned the following provided accommodation for grade twelve PWDs (1) additional time – for exams or projects, (2) suitable lightening inside the exam venue with appropriate ventilation, (3) separate room with the presence of the subject teacher in case they face any difficulties in reading their questions. A school SET gave an example that Autism students need a direct question. After all, they tend to memorize more because they have visual Intelligence, and when the subject teachers read their exams questions, in a simplified way that helps the students to answer their exams, and also it helps them to focus more. Moreover reading questions like the multiple-choice allows PWD to answer them without looking at the provided options, (4) SETs invigilate PWDs during their exams in case students' needed someone to read exam questions for them, (5) provide psychosocial counseling, (6) for diabetes, the school SET makes sure the availability of the school nurse, (7) use assistive technology.

One of the school SET said, "…*each PWD should have their final exams based on their IEP according to each type of disability condition with the right accommodation and support services, but what we lack is a unified guideline for matching IEPs with high school examinations"*.

Another school SET added, "…*exams and curriculum are challenging because students with or without disabilities are receiving one final exam regardless of their limitations, and this is opposite to the PWDs IEP. Because the school SET of PWDs do follow their IEP from the beginning and they only receive the right accommodation during the course work based on their IEP, but when it comes to the final exams, they receive one exam like their peers without any modification for*

exam questions. Furthermore, we were told that the MOE would be take this into consideration when it comes to marking their papers, but this causes tension to the student, and there is disconnect between the implementation of the actual IEP and the MOE final exams".

School SET role also to educate students and teachers before entering PWDs to their classes through raising awareness about dealing with these individuals, their actual condition, and how they can accommodate each category. For example, a student with learning difficulties needs support all the time by reminding them of what to do, and also their subject teachers may need to repeat some classes if required.

One school SET said,

"…I work with everybody in school, and this includes the cleaner, the school guard, security, admin, counselor, school director, all teachers, school nurses, and all students. For example, first semester, one class did not accept on autistic students, and I did my best to stop them from bullying him, but the best solution was to change his class to another class, and he was welcomed by them. Moreover, to raise awareness among all students, I came up with an idea for a competition called "the best support staff and students for the PWDs" the main purpose of this to raise awareness among all and to encourage all to support these individuals. The support can be academic support or social support. The student started to change from being a shy person to a social person. Also, his classmates began to take him to the school library. They changed him from being quiet, and reserved to funny and playful. He began to change gradually".

The school SET also provide moral support for PWD, for example, one school SET said,

"…I support one PWD at school by engaging her to participate in different clubs. Like the reading club to challenge reading so, I gathered all the students by taking them to the library, and then I gave them a card to write for what they like. The student was very happy, and daily she is standing at the school's main gate to welcome everyone".

Another school SET helped one of the school PWD to pass the EmSAT exam, because of previous lack of exam accommodation the student did not achieve the required score for HE where he was given a second chance, the school SET supported him from the registration phase by communicating with the EmSAT team to provide required accommodation and services. This helped him to achieve a better score.

Lastly, the importance of shadowing PWD, school SET, mentioned that PWDs need someone to shadow them all the time by observing them during their classes and after their classes. School SET stated,

"…*every day I wait for one student who suffers from physical impairment until I take him to his classes, especially when he needs me to write on his behalf because he faces some difficulties when he writes. During his class, I also observe him, we see how he is managing and improving in his study*".

Another school SET mentioned his role is to provide another person to do the shadowing for SWDs, and this is with the SWDs parent agreement. The purpose of the shadow person is to organize many things like; follow the PWDs, reminds them of what to do, and how to study and where to study, and it also includes submitting their assignments too. Moreover, their role is to communicate with their teachers and parents.

This section highlights the school SET's perceptions of school provided transition services and this includes the following; (a) the link between IEP and higher education access, (b) involvement in NAPO and college selection, and (c) lastly, the benefit of informative input about PWDs about their health condition.

All school SET interviewees mentioned that the IEP of PWD at schools only related to their curriculum, which includes the academic goals and social goals, and nothing is related to the next phase (University Education). They see IEP to be lacking as not including this part in IEP may cause some challenges to PWDs once they join higher education. An example was shared by one of the selected school SET as the following,

"…o*ne of my last year's outstanding PWD graduates was accepted to join one of the higher education institutions, the student started to study, but later on and due to lack of some services and accommodation she was struggling until she left the higher education. Currently, she is home, but implementing long-term-goals or measures related to enrollment in higher education will facilitate PWDs admission. It will allow parents to change their thinking about their kids and re-evaluate their assumption that their kids will receive their education in the future in exactly the same way they do in High School.*"

School SET said, "…*it will be better if schools and universities can communicate with each other. Also, adding the academic goals as a long-term-goals PWDs develop for university education and labor market will be considered a step that a PWDs can later build on it*. School SET stated that *there are no specific training sessions for PWDs related to NAPO or college selection process*". The school SETs interviewee mentioned that the academic advisor is the one who trains and directs all graduate grade twelve students (with disabilities and without disabilities) with all the process to apply online for EmSAT and NAPO for higher education. One school SET described the process and her involvement with an academic advisor to support PWDs in applying for higher education. The description is the following:

School SET sits together with the school academic advisor to talk more in detail regarding the grade twelve PWDs.

School SET and academic advisor finalize the list of all the school PWDs.

Both filled the form of each PWD with needed accommodation for each disability category.

Send filled forms of each grade twelve PWD with their ID cards copy and their medical report.

Lastly, they send all documentation to the NAPO special department team responsible for the EmSAT exam to provide each PWDs with the right accommodation.

In terms of the college selection, some PWDs prefer to apply at home with their family or at the school with the presence of their family. Moreover, the academic advisor sits with the PWD, and the school SETs to clarify the process by helping PWDs to understand the application. Also, the academic advisor does give an introductory overview of how to apply, and to confirm their selection. They also communicate with the PWD parents via email or phone, and sometimes they invite parents to the school to explain the process when it comes to applying online for the higher education.

The study school SETs participants were asked if the orientation sessions provided by HEIs for high schools covered the provided support services related to PWDs at their institutions. The school SETs stated that there is a yearly annual visit from the universities (public and private) to high schools to meet all grade twelve students. Yearly, they introduce them with everything like admission requirements, main majors, different departments, and registration criteria only.

One of the school SET said,

"…w*e wish if the universities talk about inclusive services which can facilitate the admission of PWDs".*

Another school SET said,

"…*most of our school PWDs graduate and do not continue their higher education due to the lack of facilities, and implementing this will reduce their stress and will make it easier for them to choose the accessible higher education".*

All the school SET participants recognize the importance of promoting self-advocacy among all PWDs related to their health conditions and the requirements and facilities required for their situation. For example, a student with vision impairment only can read with black and white colors. The school SET keeps informing this student to sit in the front seat during classes because it will help her to learn and focus more. School SET also educates students about the availability of magnifiers to be able to read well. Another school SET sees that allowing PWD to be aware of their health condition and their support services is very important, and this will help PWD to overcome their challenges and to ask others in case of missing services or support when they move to the next phase and to be independent.

4.3.2.3 Section 2: School SETs views of other inclusive services that can facilitate PWDs transition to higher education.

This section presents the list of inclusive services which SETs identified to facilitate transition to higher education in terms of the following: (1) clear definition related to PWDs, (2) policies and procedures for requesting services, (3) build confidence and network of support among institutions, (4) facilitates integration in society, (5) mobility, (6) dealing with an emergency, and (7) self-confidence and communication skills.

Clear definition guides transition services (accommodations related to selection of college and majors): Some parents of the school PWDs think that higher education environment is the same as the school environment, and they don't know the difference between the school and higher education. The school SETs sees that a clear definition of disability and a clear classification of

PWDs could guide transition services and empower PWDs to choose their universities. Moreover, they will be able to select their majors and to be able to know the accommodation the college provide. An example was given by one of the school SETs: "learning difficulties is a very difficult topic for everyone. It is an intangible disorder, unlike vision impairment, physical impairment, and hearing impairment can be observed and that can be dealt with. While learning difficulties can be challenging for others to understand".

Another of the school SETs said,

"…*with a clear definition related to PWDs, all will be aware of differentiating between each disability category. Furthermore, PWDs will know their rights and what services they need to provide for them in the field*".

Policies & procedures for requesting services builds PWDs sense of their rights:

The school SETs see that availability of the policy and procedures for requesting services builds PWDs' sense of their rights. One of the school SETs mentioned that persons with Visual impairment at school do receive appropriate equipment for each category from the MOE. Following the same policy in higher education will facilitate PWD transitioning and facilitate their education journey.

SETs are needed to build PWDs confidence & provide network of support among institutions:

There is a need to build PWDs confidence and to provide support network across institutions.

One of the School SETs Said,

"…e*very year, parents of PWDs show their concern by saying what about after the graduation from high school, who will follow and support my daughter at higher education, and is she going to receive her education with the same support as you provided at your school*".

The availability of specialists and support centers enhances the confidence of PWD. An example was given by one of the school SETs that some PWDs are not confident, shy, and lonely. Some of

them are unable to speak due to speech difficulties. Some don't know how to read and write to avoid bullying. Their role as a specialist is to visit each class to raise awareness among everyone and to let them understand that they all are equal. The specialist does cooperate with each of PWD at school and inform teachers to present a short PowerPoint presentation in front of their classmates. This gives them self-confidence and help them when they join higher education, to speak in front of others with confidence without any hesitation. One of the school SET said,

"…*the specialist and support centers' presence is very important; it will provide the needed services for each PWD to follow and Shadow them. Moreover, in case of an emergency, PWD will be aware of where to go and what to do. The specialist also raises awareness towards dealing with PWD and different types of disability to control the bullying".*

Facilitates integration in society: Raising awareness related to PWD will help everyone communicate and support them inside the classroom and outside the classroom. An example was given by one of the schools SETs that many teachers, students, cleaners, etc. face some difficulty when it comes to communicating with these individuals. As the school SET, they raise awareness sessions among all regarding how to communicate with them.

One school SET said,

"…*we have a student with hearing impairment. I informed all the school that someone will be shadowing the student (Sign Language specialist), and will accompany this student during the class period".*

The school SETs indicated that dealing and communicating with PWD will reduce their feelings that they are different. Also, this will help PWDs feel that the community is supporting them, encouraging them, and being welcomed. Consequently, PWD will accept the surrounding environment because everyone in each institution is "a part of their planet" (said by one of the school SET).

Prompts PWDs independence, mobility: All the school SETs participants stated that environmental accessibility, and facilitation is very important for each institution. Moreover, the environment facilities are the most comprehensive services, allowing PWDs to depend on

themselves. When SWDs are familiar with provided services related to environmental accessibility at high school they would be able to utilize them in the next phase.

Enhances PWDs ability to deal with emergency: Selected participants mentioned the importance of emergency and evacuation training services for all students regardless of their disabilities. The civil defense trained most of the schools.

One of the school SET said,

"*…the problem at our school when they evacuate the school they don't include PWDs to be involved because of the fear of their health problems*".

While another School SET said,

"*…we do teach all the students (with and without disabilities) what to do in case of any emergency and how to evacuate. Still, at the University, the field will be new and different because of each building's long corridor and distance. Still, after raising awareness and training related emergencies, students will be aware of what to do in case of an emergency*".

Clearly SETs perceived emergency and evacuation training as not fully accessible since it is provided to all students without proper accommodation for SWDs.

Enhances PWDs self-confidence + communication skills: The school SETs participants were asked if the availability of clubs, activities, and events could facilitate the transition of PWDs from high school into higher education. All of the school SETs mentioned the importance of this point, and their role they keep encouraging and involving all the school PWDs to participate in all events and the clubs inside the schools and outside the schools.

For example, one of the schools said that one student with a mental disability she loves to draw, and they did organize a drawing event for her. Moreover, the school allowed her to participate in different exhibitions, inside the school, and outside the schools. Also, the school invited her family to attend different initiatives.

Involving PWDs in clubs, activities, and events will help them to engage and communicate with others. Moreover, it builds their personality, and it enhances their self-confidence.

When the school SETs participants were asked to highlight services most important, they all agreed that the availability of specialists is needed to build PWDs confidence and provide support network across institution is paramount.

4.3.2.4 Analysis of the open ended-ended interview questions for high school SETs

SET A, she is a female and has a bachelor's degree in special education. She has more than 25 years of experience in supporting PWDs. The interview was held in the school director's meeting room.

The researcher started by briefly describing the study purpose. The SET A stated that inclusive services are extremely very important, and lacking these services can affect PWDs' academic performance. The SET A also believed that it is very important to have a SET and support center, and

The SET A said, "…*as an SET in current school, and I keep following each PWDs education level to make sure they receive appropriate accommodations during their study including exams. I also keep checking the school events calendar to encourage PWDs to participate. Still, after they graduate from secondary education and join higher education, they will be the same as non-disabled individuals. They will only attend their classes and go home*".

She also mentioned that all the school students and staff are aware of policies and procedures that are related to PWDs. She stated that some universities are not familiar with the importance of these regulations. She also confirmed that SETs are the one who understands these regulations more to raise the awareness of everybody about them. Lastly, she mentioned that PWDs would be able to participate in different events with the support of SETs.

SET B, she is a female and has a bachelor's degree in special education. She has 13 years of experience in supporting PWDs. The interview was held in the school director's meeting room. The researcher started to brief her about the study purpose. To answer the open-ended question of the case of lacking inclusive services, she believes that there will be a shortage. She gave an example of the importance of specialized education specialists and support centers. For instance, at school, PWDs always refer to the school SETs whenever they need any assistance.

She also provided additional comments by saying, "*…I wish higher education to focus more on these individuals because they are unique, have very high capabilities, and have ambitions to join higher education and graduate like others*".

SET C is a female and has a bachelor's degree in special education. She has 10 years of experience in supporting PWDs. The interview was held in the career advisor office. The researcher started first with a brief about the study's purpose. She indicated that to have a special education specialist and support center is very important. She stated that during school life, when PWDs are transferred from one grade to another grade, the previous school does send their full documents. It includes their accommodation, IEP, medical reports, and services provided from the support services department. She said, "*…our role as SETs, we welcome PWDs by receiving their full documents from the previous school to implement the same services they used to have*". Also, she mentioned in case any institution lacking to offer these services, especially specialized education specialists and the support center, will create a barrier for PWDs. Moreover, she mentioned that for higher education, PWDs have to introduce themselves, their conditions, and needs, and perhaps they might not be able to explain everything.

She also added a few comments like the following: (1) the importance of implementing an IEP for grade twelve, and (2) communication and coordination between higher education and schools.

For the first comment, she said, "*…in our school, we implement an IEP from grade one to grade 11 only. While PWDs in grade 12 don't have an IEP, and this causes a problem for PWDs. She reveals that implementing an IEP for grade 12 PWDs can simplify their curriculum to meet their needs*".

She said, "*…at our school, we don't implement an IEP for grade 12 PWDs, because they receive an IEP in grade 11, and suddenly they continue the last grade 12 without IEP, and nowadays, without an IEP, they face many challenges. Moreover, nothing is simplified for them. Furthermore, they also receive their final exams without any exception*". Lastly, she added, "*…what is not good when it comes to marking their final exams, they consider them on that, which is not suitable for PWDs because they won't be able to understand their curriculum?*".

For the second comment, she stated that communication between higher education and schools would facilitate the affairs of PWDs.

She said, "…*communication between the higher education and school is very important because whatever support PWDs receive in school life needs to continue to higher education, and this includes all the documents, accommodation medical reports, etc. as it is happening now between schools when they move from one grade to another*".

SET D is a female, and has a bachelor's degree in special education. She has 11 years of experience in dealing with PWDs. Her interview was held in the school counselor's office. The researcher started with briefing her about the study purpose. She highlighted the importance of especial education specialists, support center, and awareness as the following:

- Simplified exams

- support and follow up PWDs

- Follow up with parents

- Provide services

- Raise awareness related to PWDs' rights and policies.

Furthermore, she states lacking the above services will lead PWDs not to complete their higher education, and especially because higher education exams are standardized. Moreover, PWDs will face many difficulties like they might face communication problems as they won't be able to progress well in their study.

Also, she revealed the importance of awareness that is very important for everyone, including staff, students, workers, and security, nurses, cleaners, and cafeteria staff, to communicate with PWDs.

SET E, is a male, and he has a bachelor's degree in special education. He also has 10 years of experience in supporting PWDs. His interview was held at the school meeting room. The researcher of the study started to brief him about the study purpose. He highlighted about six services as the following:

In terms of a clear definition of PWDs, he states that missing a clear definition of PWDs will create some barriers to PWDs. PWDs might suffer when it comes to communication, and their teachers

may not know how to communicate with them. Moreover, the teacher of PWDs will feel that these individuals are normal, like others. In terms of policies and procedures, he reveals that this statement is very important where everything can be clear for PWDs and their rights. In terms of specialized education specialists and support centers, he sees that the availability of special education specialists and support centers is very important. He also pointed out that the absence of this service may cause many difficulties for PWDs. In terms of awareness for all on how to deal and communicate with PWD. He said, "…*if any institution is lacking to provide awareness sessions that relate to PWDs, the PWDs will suffer, and they also will withdraw from their institutions"*. In terms of environmental and facilitation (doors, ramps, elevators, etc.) and evacuation in an emergency, he mentioned that these services are a major service and safety for all, including PWDs. He also revealed that lacking these accessibility services, PWDs will face some challenges in accessing the building and evacuating the building. This will lead PWDs to withdraw from inaccessible institutions to try and search for an accessible institution. In terms of clubs, activities, and events, he sees that the availability of clubs and events, including different activities, is very important and supportive of PWDs. He also mentioned that one of his school PWD with a severe speech impairment was not engaged at all in school. Moreover, this student was not in touch with anyone. Later on, he joined a club of Jutsco "Taekwondo" then he started to explore himself by looking after the difficulties that he is facing. Also, he began to join different competitions across the UAE. He also won many medals.

SET E also provided additional comments. He said, "…*whether HE will be implementing an IEP for PWDs?"*. Because he mentioned that, "…*each PWDs must have an IEP which can match their abilities"*. He also repeated and confirmed the importance of the individual education specialist and the support center. He said, "…*for example, in our school, we provide PWDs with different support services. For example, we provide special devices for vision impairment students like braille devices. As an SET, I train everyone on how to use different tools that PWDs uses at the school like fixing the camera on the PWD computer to keep capturing everything from the class board to his computer to enlarge the font which will allow him to read easily"*. He also added that after PWDs graduate from high school, they would be taking these devices with them for the next phase, here they need support in using these tools.

SET F is a male and has a bachelor's degree in special education. He has 15 years of experience in dealing and supporting PWDs. The interview was in the resource room at the school. The researcher also started to brief him about the study purpose. He stated that what has been mentioned during the interview regarding the inclusive services are very important services for PWDs and helps PWDs become more independent at the school. He revealed that there is more independence at higher education more than the schools when PWDs have to make their own decisions. In terms of the specialized education specialists and support center, he defines it by mentioning that PWDs will receive full and direct support for each type of disability via raising awareness to the surrounding community to give them a chance to learn with the appropriate support according to their needs. He added that this service also would involve PWDs activities in the clubs. In terms of policies and procedures, he mentioned that the UAE had launched the new policy of people of determination on the rights of PDWs by putting all regulations and laws that support them in enjoying their lives like others and working freely. He said, "…e*veryone must know these regulations and be aware of the importance of policy"*.

SET F, also providing additional comments that all the mentioned inclusive services are the most important. He also stated that communication between universities and schools is very important, especially the PWDs transition phase from Secondary School to higher education. He suggested that there must be effective communication between higher education and schools. He added by saying, "…*PWDs have their ambitions and hopes, but there is a gap between higher education and the schools which breaches these individuals' rights"*.

SET G, is a male and has a bachelor in special education. He has 7 years of experience in supporting PWDs. The interview was held in the school resource room. The meeting was held, in the school resource room. The researcher started to brief him about the study purpose.

He stated that the availability of a clear definition of PWDs is very important, and with a clear definition, everyone will be aware to facilitate and deal with PWDs. In terms of special education specialist and support center is also seen as very important, and the specialist will be following and supporting PWDs from the beginning of the school journey to graduate.

SET G, also provided additional comments at the end by mentioning the importance of an IEP by saying, "…*it must be implemented at all the grades, not only from grade one to grade 11, and this also by implementing it for grade 12. Moreover, to implement this in higher education*".

SET H, is a male and has a master's degree in special education. He has two years of experience in supporting PWDs. His interview was held in one of the school classrooms. He revealed that what has been mentioned related to the availability of inclusive services is very important. He also like other SETs believes that the main important inclusive service at any institution is to have a special education specialist and support center to follow PWDs, as mentioned earlier.

Furthermore, he provided additional comments related to specialized education specialists and support centers by saying, "…*it is very important to offer inclusive services to PWDs and mainly the availability of special education specialists and support centers because they play a significant role in supporting PWD. Because most outstanding PWDs are rejected from higher education because of the lack of support services in higher education. Moreover, some cannot achieve their English test to meet the requirement to join higher education*". He suggested, higher education needs to start conducting inclusive services conferences that relate to PWDs. Also, schools need to be more aware of accessible universities which should happen in these conferences.

To sum up, perceptions of SETs as evident from their responses to the open ended questions highlight the importance of the multifaceted role of the specialists and the availability of support center as integral part of inclusive transition services required for high school SWDs to be successful in higher education. They also emphasize the importance of engaging SWDs in events and clubs activities as a pre-requisite for a successful transition to higher education.

4.3.3 Analysis of higher education PWDs interview

To answer the **second research question** related to what inclusive provisions do PWDs in higher education value the most, 15 higher education SWDs were interviewed.

4.3.3.1 Profile of interview participants

In chapter two, the researcher mentioned in detail the process before collecting the data. Each participant was asked to sign the consent form as a volunteering participant. Table 15 presents the profiles for the fifteen SWDs interview participants in higher education. It can be observed that the age group is older than non-disabled peers.

Participant	Type of disabilities	Gender	Age	Accommodation	IEP	HEI
1.	Vision impairment – genetic disease	Male	26	Yes	Yes	HEI I
2.	Brain injury	Male	25	Yes	No	HEI I
3.	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)	Male	21	Yes	Yes	HEI I
4.	Learning Difficulties	Female	19	Yes	Yes	HEI J
5.	Learning Difficulties and Vision impairment	Female	23	Yes	Yes	HEI J
6.	Vision impairment totally (Blind)	Female	24	Yes	No	HEI J
7.	Vision impairment (Blind)	Female	23	Yes	No	HEI J
8.	Cerebral Palsy	Female	19	Yes	No	HEI J
9.	Vision impairment (Blind)	Female	19	Yes	No	HEI J
10.	Anxiety	Female	18	Yes	No	HEI K
11.	Hearing loss and speech impairment	Female	20	Yes	No	HEI K
12.	Medical issue (Diabetes)	Female	18	Yes	No	HEI K
13.	Physical Impairment	Male	24	Yes	No	HEI L
14.	Anxiety	Male	19	Yes	No	HEI L
15.	Anemia	Male	19	Yes	No	HEI L

Table 15: Profile higher education SWDs participants

Interview questions were also classified in two main sections, and interviewees' responses were coded for themes as below table 16 shows:

Section 1. Higher education PWDs transitioning services journey from high school to HE

Admission process
 	
    • **Unprepared for EMSAT**
 	
    • **College selection re-visited**
 	
    • **Major selection**

Section 2. Higher education PWDs perceptions of inclusive provisions

Higher education provisions for SWDs
 	
    • **Definition + list of accommodation provided**
 	
    • **Policies and Procedures**
 	
    • **Accommodation and Facilitation**
 	
    • **Knowledge of Employees and students**
 	
    • **Environmental and facilitation**
 	
    • **Evacuation in emergencies**
 	
    • **Activity, clubs or events**

Table 16: Coded interviewees responses of higher education PWDs

4.3.3.2 Section 1: higher education PWDs transitioning services journey from high school to HE

For the second study research question, higher education PWDs were asked to describe the transitioning services journey from high school to higher education in terms of three major steps, the EMSAT admission requirement, college selection, and major selection.

Unprepared for EMSAT

Some participants of higher education PWDs mentioned that they received support from their college, family (mother, father) and friends. All the study participants from higher education PWDs found the EmSAT test was not easy, and they were unprepared. Moreover, most of the participants did not get the passing score from the first time. The one who did not meet the entry

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requirements started the basic 3course (foundation). One participant shared her experience when she was at level one at the college and how she managed to pass her IELTS exam to start her main major. She said,

"…*I did not pass my EMSAT because it was challenging for me. I am a vision impairment, and I only know how to use the Braille device in Arabic, but since I joined my college, I found full support from them, especially to start and learn how to use Braille devices in English has improved my skills a lot. Later, I began to attend all the sessions related to using the device in English. Then I began to read English stories using my Braille device. Lastly, I felt I could apply for the IELTS exam using my Braille device with accommodation to do all four skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) from 08:00 am to 04:00 pm too long. Then I passed, and I achieved a score of 6.5*".
This example shows that providing needed support at the right time by the college could save the student time.

Conversely, with lack of support training and available sample to practice for the test, other higher education PWDs participants' preferred not to do their IELTS or EmSAT, and they decided to take their foundation course from the beginning without attempting the English Test.

College selection re-visited

Most of the higher education PWDs participants changed their college because of the distance between the college and their house and the accessibility of the campus.

One participant said,

"…*from school life, we were not given proper information and awareness related to accessible institutions. When universities visit our school, they only talk about the main majors and different departments and their services like (career, student life, health and safety, work placement, etc... without mentioning any services provided for the PWDs*".

Another higher education PWDs described her experience in her journey when she started her study at X higher education by saying,

"…*when I began my study at my college, I discovered that the distance between the buildings to my classes was too much. My mother's friend told her about Y higher education that it is accessible*

for my health condition, and she said I would be able to move around without any challenges. After that, I decided to visit the campus with my mother to see how accessible it is for me. I was pleased when I changed my college from X to Y higher education. I was accepted successfully, and I did start my journey with them".

Major selection

The majority of the study participants were in the foundation level because they could not meet the direct entry requirement. Only three participants were confused and unsure of their choice, and they kept changing their majors several times. This is because of the fear from the name of the course or due to the lack of a number of students who registered for each major. Only one participant wanted to study Art, but her family refused and asked her to change her major. While other participants were satisfied with their choice.

4.3.3.3 Section 2: Higher education provisions for higher education PWDs

For the second part of the research question two, the higher education PWDs participants were asked to talk about provided services by higher education for PWDs in terms of eight themes that are the same as the school PWDs: disability definition, skilled person, and assistive resources (center), policies and procedures, accommodation and facilitation, training sessions, accessible environment, emergency and evacuation, and club and activities.

Disability definition

As previously mentioned, the school for all guidelines defines "disability" as a term that refers to any permanent or temporary conditions resulting from an illness. It is also used more often too describe a lack of capacity to perform the functions or loss of a body part. Consequently, it affects an individual's ability to implement certain tasks like hearing and speaking like others. Disability is often related to physical problems, but it is also referred to as social adjustment and educational issues (MOE 2010, p. 60). The first question asked, "How does your college handbook define disability?" in terms of separate definitions for different disabilities like blindness autistic, dyslexia, defenses, etc. and provided list of accommodations provisions per disability.

Their unfamiliarity with either the definition or the list of accommodation signals a multifaceted problem.

At public HEI "I", none of the participants have seen or read the student handbook since they joined their college. Moreover, they were unaware of any provided list of accommodations provisions per disability. One participant indicated that he had not seen the accommodation list before, but the support services provided support for PWDs according to each student's needs only.

At public HEI "J", participants' answers were the same as participants at public HEI "I". They have not seen the student handbook before or read anything related to disability definition since they joined the college. Regarding the list of accommodations provisions per disability, most participants' answers were: no, don't know, and not sure. One participant added,

"…*I did not see any list, but the center at our campus does provide different accommodation to PWDs according to their needs*".

At public HEI "K", participants' answers were also the same as the above HEI "I" and "J". None of the participants saw or read the college student handbook, and they were unaware of it. In terms of the list of accommodations, all participants' answers were "don't know".

At public HEI "L", participants' responses related to disability difinition were the same as the rest of HEIs, except one participant. Only one participant said,

"…*I saw my college handbook, but it did not define or mention anything related to disabilities*". For the list of accommodations provisions per disability, none of the participants have seen it, and one participant said,

"…*no, but what you just mentioned is very important, but we don't have a clear guideline*".

Upon double checking students' handbook the researcher was able to find generic guidance advising SWDs to request for their accommodation online.

Skilled person and assistive resources - center

The second question asked, "Does your college have a skilled person to support you?" Here the study participants were asked to describe their assistive role. They were also asked, "Does your college have an assistive resources center for you to use?"

At public HEI "I", all the participants mentioned that their college has a skilled person, and their role was to help PWDs provide them with the accommodations. Like, (1) additional time for exam and assignments, (2) welcome PWDs when they join their institutions, (3) introduce the available devices at their department, (4) Prepare PWDs for EmSAT and IELTS exam, (5) teach and train PWDs how to use different devices such as magnifiers to enlarge the materials document reader, Braille output devices, Braille displays, Tactile learning system, document and book players, and Note Taker, document reader and learning system, document converter. Moreover, explaining some tools like talking dictionary, talking scientific to the calculator, and talking meter, (6) describe the available tools and software like a screen reader, document reader, learning system, and document converter. Moreover, explaining some tools mentioned above. (7) Transferred PWDs to different centers depending on PWDs' needs. For example, one participant was sent to a rehabilitation center in the UAE, and he said, "…*very kind of my college, to send me to one of the UAE rehabilitation centers to learn how to use a white cane because I have not used a white cane before, and this is something new for me. Nowadays, I can move around by myself inside the university and outside the university*".

At public HEI "J", all the participants also mentioned that they have skilled people and a center at their campus. One participant said,

"…*at our campus learning disabilities, specialists always support me when I face any difficulties, mainly when I write my assignments or during my study for exams*".

Another participant explained her skilled person and the campus center. She explained the role of the skilled person and the way she is helping and supporting her during her study at university as the following: (1) teaches her how to use the converter device to convert her course materials, (2) invigilate her exams, (3) support her to walk around the campus safely, (4) print all course materials and exams in Braille. Furthermore, the same participant mentioned that the specialist

follows her daily to check in case she needs anything, and she said, *"...she is like my shadow person.* Participants also described the availability of assistive resources at their center such as (a) printer, (b) magnifier, (c) separate inclusive center for apple products, (d) laptops, (e) Braille device, (f) screen reader, (g) iPads, (h) special keyboards, and (i) white cane.

That particular center also provided different training for PWDs at the campus to ensure that they reach the required academic standards. Training can be awareness sessions related to using a white cane, learning difficulties day, and specialized training related to dealing with Blind people. Also, the center provides specialized training to all the campus faculty members and all administrative staff. This would be more explained in detail in section "E" for knowledge of employees and students.

At public HEI "K", all the study PWD participants mentioned that their campus does lack a skilled person and inclusive resources. One participant said, "…*I face many challenges during my study, and they cannot understand me with a lack of communication. For example, when I was at my school, I received support from the SET during my study, exam assignments, and all the time, I received advice to do my best in my research"*. Participants also mentioned that they lack an resources center because, at their campus, they only have one center to improve their academic skills. It also includes only short stories, educational practices materials.

At public HEI "L", PWDs participants answered this question the same as above public HEI "K": a lack of skilled people to support PWDs and resource centers.

Where available the provision of a skilled person and resource centers are highly valued by the SWDs.

Policies and Procedures

Researcher of this study has mentioned the new policy that the government launched, the New National Policy of Empowering People of Determination in 2017, and how it reflected at their campus. The third question asked, "How PWDs are referred to in your college?" They were also asked, "Is there a section in the student handbook about PWDs rights?" Lastly, for this section, they were asked "whether college orientation sessions cover provisions for PWDs?"

At public HEI "I", one PWDs participant said, "…*here we call them people of Determination, and the University center does have a program for People of Determination ambassador. I am one of them to help others, especially the one who is visiting the campus for the first time*".

When the researcher asked participants whether there is a section in the college student handbook about PWDs rights, all the participants' answers were "don't know", and "don't remember".

At public HEI "J", one participant said, "…*there has been a great change; nowadays, there is no comparison between PWDs and non-disabled students*". Other participants mentioned that they were receiving proper services before the new UAE National Policy. Their institution started to conduct even more awareness sessions for all related to the new UAE policy and provided services for PWDs.

Moreover, their support center name has been changed from the disability center to the People of Determination center. Their answer related to the availability section in the student handbook was the same as the above public HEI "I" all said "don't know". Only two participants from this HEI answered about the college orientation session, and their answers were "don't know". Whereas, the rest of participants mentioned as the following; (a) one participant mentioned that their institution does highlight in general about the support services, (b) they take all the students (with disability and without disability) for a tour across the campus and this is to see the available services, (c) include explanation for each services and how it can support PWDs with different types of disabilities.

At public HEI "K" and "L", all the participants gave short answers for each section of this question, like "don't know", but they were told to contact a specific staff member who is in charge of PWDs.

Accommodation and Facilitation

In this section PWDs were asked to describe the following: (a) admission phase (challenges, problems, and facilitation), (b) schedule appointment, (c) requesting their accommodation, (d) accessibility of the main campus website, (e) exam accommodation, and (f) type of support for the academic progress (inside or outside the college).

At public HEI "I", PWDs participants' admission went smoothly without any challenges or problems. Only two PWDs participants have faced some challenges: the accessibility of the campus and the course materials. One participant said, "…*at the beginning, the accessibility was difficult for me, and I did not know how to reach my classrooms and other locations (cafeteria, nurse room, library, etc.). Luckily, I was trained to use a white cane, which made things better for me. Also, my course materials were very difficult, but they started to enlarge all the materials, making it easy for me*". According to their accommodation, all the participants are asked to send an email when they need any support.

Moreover, they also fill an online form to request their accommodation, and to do this, students need to access the e-services using the accessibility services tab. This tab includes five main services, (1) course materials accommodation for students of determination, (2) exam accommodation request for students of determination, (3) students of the determination registration form, (4) training and workshops for faculty and admin staff, and (5) training and workshops for students with determination. After students request their services, an email request will be sent directly to the support center department, and then they will be contacted within five working days.

Furthermore, all the PWDs received the same exam as their classmates, but with the exam accommodation, including 100% extra time, separate venue with specialists, and academic support. One participant said, "…*I do receive 100% extra time, and it is helpful, but when I was at high school, I was giving my answer orally, and someone used to write for me. I also prefer to be in a separate venue*".

At public HEI "J", the entry requirements for some PWDs participants at this institution was normal and smooth. One participant stated that she was nervous about my transition from high school to higher education, "…*I was also nervous and wondered who I am going to study with, or how I will be sitting my exams, and most importantly, who will look after me*". However, some participants faced few challenges such as accessibility, accommodation and lacking support services mainly for vision impairment learners. Lastly, submission of the documents such as medical reports, and this process was quite long. Furthermore, PWDs participants preferred to use their email when it comes to requesting any accommodation, book an appointment, or request for their academic support. Mentioned by them that their main website is accessible when it comes to

asking for anything. PWDs at this institution receive accommodation with extra time, a separate venue for exams. Still, the only thing which is causing them to struggle academically is that they receive the same exam as their classmates. Only one PWDs participant preferred to take her exam with her classmates.

One participant said, "…*during study and exam, it is difficult for me to answer a graph or a picture, but when I was at school, I used to receive less questions than my classmates*".

All the participants also receive their academic support, such as convert course materials from pdf to Braille, and provide iPads using Braille Note Touch. One participant described the support services she received from the center.

She said, "…*I face learning difficulties, and the specialists are always there for me. She arranges a weekly schedule with a full study plan, and she also gives me the shape of the mind map. She also supports me with my assignments, and I always go to our support center when I am hesitant about anything*".

At public HEI "K", PWDs participants faced some difficulties at the beginning during their registration, and some were unable to communicate with the admission team. Only one participant did not face any challenges during her registration. Participants prefer to meet face to face to talk with their teachers or their counselor, but they feel more comfortable to speak with their friends.

One participant said, "…*I don't know how to send or check email, which keeps me feeling more anxious*".

Moreover, all participants mentioned that they would like their main college website to be more accessible, more accommodation for exams such as extra time, separate exam venue, more support for their academic courses, and different exams than their classmates with less questions.

One participant said, "…*when I do my exam, they give me six options in multiple choices questions like others, and this is very difficult for me. When I used to be at school, they gave me three options only, but my classmates gave them six choices. Less exam questions would be easier for me to answer because I face some difficulties in reading*".

Another participant added, "…*I feel I am not doing well in my study because English is difficult. I only attend my classes, and then I go home. I asked one of my grade twelve student English teachers for her support to improve my English*".

At public HEI "L", only two students faced some issues during their registration. Both participants mentioned that the registration process from the beginning was unclear for them.

One participant said, "…*due to my medical condition, I stopped my study for three semesters, and again I started to struggle when I needed to register for new courses. Moreover, the availability of some classes at another Emirates was another challenge for me*".

All the PWDs participants preferred to meet their teachers, classmates, counselor etc. face- to- face when they need anything. Also, to request for their accommodation, they visit their counselor, and one participant mentioned that sometimes they receive a form to fill it. Participants were also asked about other accommodation and facilitation, but due to lack of services, they face some difficulties, such as accessing their main website. One participant said, "…*at the school they told us, for PWDs to access any webpage, they will need to look for a specific accessibility icon*".

Training and knowledge of Employees and students

The fifth question asked, "How would you describe the way college employees and students communicate with you", and "do you think your college needs to offer training sessions for all employees and students to deal with persons with disabilities?" This question focuses on their opinion of offering training sessions for all employees and students related to dealing with PWDs.

At public HEI "I", PWDs participants stated that everyone is communicating with them very well and normally.

One participant stated that, "…*they deal with us normally, but awareness remains very important because when we walk around, others are still standing in our way. All the PWDs participants see that providing training is very important, so others can easily communicate with PWDs*". One participant said, "…*some people don't have the right information on how to deal with PWDs*". Another participant added, "…*training will help not put the other side in a very embarrassing*

situation, how you know their capabilities of others, change their perception of them, and not see them in the view of compassion".

At public HEI "J", employees and students easily communicate with PWDs professionally, and they also support them. Trained employees and students also guide others to deal with different disabilities. One participant mentioned some of the training that is provided for PWDs such as disability Etiquette workshop, self-advocacy, talking calculator, the people behind the students of determination, what learning disability is and isn't, etc. Training that is provided for staff such as; introduction to assistive technology, understanding learning difficulties, advising PWDs, understanding PWD, Autism spectrum and higher education, etc. All the trainings offered to staff and students are available at the main site of the accessibility services page.

One participant said, "…*this is a very important point because every new semester they change teachers, and they don't know how to communicate or deal with me. If the teachers are trained from the beginning, it will be better, and it should be before I start the semester"*.

At public HEI "K", some participants mentioned that everyone deals typically with them, and some don't communicate with them at all, only their friends. One participant stated that she attended different workshops and training session's related to different disabilities when she was at school. She thinks offering similar training will allow all to understand different disabilities, especially communication.

At public HEI "L", all participants see that it is very important to offer training sessions for all employees and students to improve dealing with PWDs. One participant said, *"…training related to PWDs can help my teachers to understand my medical condition"*.

Environmental accessibility and facilitation

The sixth question was asked "do you think the college is accessible for PWDs like parking, reception, doors, stairs, elevator, signage, etc.?" At public HEI "I", "J", "K", and "L", all the PWDs participants' answers were similar. They reveal that their campus is accessible but not fully accessible. They lack PWDs parking, restrooms, signage, classroom numbers in Braille with other

locations such as; cafeteria, management area, different departments, library, and accessible elevator.

Evacuation in emergencies

The seventh question asked "have you received clear guidance regarding what to do and who to contact in case of emergencies (fire drills evacuation, personal emergencies, assembly points, etc.)?" including the following: (a) fire alarms around the campus have audio and visual signs, (b) evacuation emergency training, and (c) emergency response team list.

Clear guidance about evacuation and emergencies is to protect the rights of PWDs and to advance equality of opportunity for all. Moreover, the audio-visual fire alarm provides equal access to allow PWDs who are deaf (hard hearing) and with vision impairment to evacuate safely. It needs to be with a form of flashing beacons (Sawyer & Bright 2014).

At public HEI "I", "J", "K", and "L", many of the study PWDs participants did not receive clear guidance regarding what to do in case of emergencies. Participants also mentioned that they only hear the sound when it comes to evacuating the building, and only one participant said he saw the light flashing but only outside the building. In terms of the evacuation training, only two participants attended training from the Civil Defense at their university, while the rest of the participants have not participated in any training.

One participant said, *"...I wish to attend these training sessions so I can be ready for any emergency"*.

Lastly, participants were asked whether they were aware of the emergency response team list, and all participants' answers were "yes", except one participant answer was "no".

One participant said, *"...I only heard about the list for all emergency response teams, but there is nothing in Braille for vision impairment learners"*.

Activity clubs or events

The eighth question was asked, "tell me about any activity clubs and/or events you have participated in (reading club, National Day, etc.)?"

Half of PWDs participants from the selected HEIs have not participated in any events or activity. But the rest of the PWDs participants attended different activities and clubs. One participant said: *"... I have my club at the university, and it is called (engagement to success). I teach students how to become more successful and what is happening around them. I have so far ten students, I show them subcategories: 1. Responsibility, 2. Self-awareness, 3. Time management and tolerance. Also, I have another club outside the university"*.

Another participant added, *"...I have participated in different events such as a White Cane Day and hearing Day. I only participate in the support center, not with other departments"*.

4.3.3.4 Analysis of the open-ended interview questions for higher education PWDs

In this section, volunteers were selected from the different public, higher education in the UAE. Each interview question consists of different parts with open-ended questions for all volunteer participants. Creswell (2009) stated that open-ended questions always follow a semi-structured interview. Open-ended questions allow the participants to explain and feel free to express themselves.

This section presents two open-ended questions at the end of the interview for the second research question. This is related to what inclusive provisions do higher education PWDs perceive as the most valuable. The first question was, "where do you see yourself after five years from now?" Then, for the second question, participants were asked to provide additional comments in case there is any.

The results show a total of 15 PWDs from higher education were interviewed. Eleven participants want to complete their masters and doctorates degree. 13 revealed interest in post graduate education with 2 of them planning to get more work experience first.

One participant revealed that he wanted to apply to become a diplomat and complete his master's degree. He also added comment concerning parking at his institution for PWDs by suggesting to expand the parking.

Another participant indicated that he would like to work first to gain working experience, and after that, he would complete his master's degree. Moreover, he suggested raising awareness related to different types of disabilities to reduce bullying.

Another participant, stated that once she finishes her bachelor's degree, she will work, and after five years, she would start her master's degree.

Another participant added, a comment that all the elevators are inaccessible for all like missing handrails, braille signage, and audio signals. Moreover, it is small. She also revealed their lack of tactile surfaces to support those with vision impairment, providing these services would allow PWDs to walk around independently.

Another participant suggested having an audible application that can support vision impairment individuals to walk quickly across their campus, which is similar to the google map. She also added that notices/signage for all the building facilities (classrooms, teachers' offices, cafeterias, nurse rooms, etc.) must be in Braille.

She said: *"... studying bachelors is not just a one year journey; it is four years and higher education must be accessible for all"*.

Moreover, one participant suggested four things: (1) increase PWDs parking, (2) display a note at the reception area by mentioning the first service for PWDs and elderly people, (3) colored student ID card, so once the PWD presents this ID the provided service person will know that he is PWDs to provide the best services that it meets their needs, and (4) wheelchairs must be available at the main reception not only at the end of each corridor or nurse room only.

Another participant stated that he also would like to work and then to complete his master's degree. He also added additional comments by saying: *"... These days my grades are lower than before, and I am not getting high grades. I am worried about failing, and I would like someone to write on my behalf during my exams like my previous high school SET. My high school SET used to write on my behalf all the time, and I was managing. I was answering orally, and he was writing for me, and this helped me a lot, but now it is messing"*.

4.4 Questionnaire findings

The answer to the **third research question,** related to how inclusive the policies, procedures, and other accommodation in selected higher education institutions are, is in this part. It includes findings obtained from the research tools. The first tool is a questionnaire and observation. These tools used to explore the provided services and accessibility for PWDs to develop a feeling of how inclusive the study site is.

Data collected from the questionnaire was stored into a computer file using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 16.0 and IBM SPSS software statistics 20, a tool used for organizing, calculating, and analyzing the collected data from the study questionnaire. SPSS is the most common statistical data analysis software used in educational research (Mujis 2011). The detailed results of the questionnaire output are available in Appendix W and Appendix X.

4.4.1 Demographic characteristics

Demographic characteristics information of the 182 questionnaire respondents is presented in Tables 17-22. Demographic information includes employees' gender, age, educational level, current possession, the period at the institution, and knowledge of someone with a disability outside the institution's context.

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	90	49.5
Female	92	50.5
Total	**182**	100.0

Table 17: Gender of participant employees

Table 17 shows the gender distributions between the study participants. 50.5% (*n*=92) of respondents were females, and 49.5% (*n*=90) were males. It is noted that the percentage of males and females is relatively close.

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Age	Frequency	Percent
20-30 Years	36	19.8
31-40 Years	65	35.7
41-50 Years	54	29.7
More than 50 Years	27	14.8
Total	**182**	100.0

Table 18: Age of participant employees

Table 18 gives information about the age of participant employees. The participant employees described themselves to be in one of the four age groups. The majority of participant employees were between 31-40 years of age, with 35.7% ($n=65$). The second biggest age group were between 41-50 years of age, with a 24.7% ($n=45$). While employees older than 50 years were the smallest age group, 14.8% ($n=27$).

Educational Level	Frequency	Percent
Doctoral Degree	50	27.5
Master's Degree	58	31.9
Bachelors' Degree	37	20.3
Higher Diploma Degree	5	2.7
Diploma Degree	6	3.3
High School	22	12.1
No Education	4	2.2
Total	**182**	100.0

Table 19: Educational Level of participated employees

Table 19 presents data related to participants' education level. The majority of the respondents held Master's degrees, 31.9% ($n=58$). The second biggest group of participant of respondents held a Doctoral degree of 27.5% ($n=50$). 2.2% ($n=4$) of the respondents had no education.

Current Position	Frequency	Percent
Management- Director	10	5.5
Teaching- Faculty	84	46.2
Facilities Operation- Health and Safety, Security, Cleaners, Nurses etc.	45	24.7
Administrative Staff - Academic Services, Admin Staff, Counselor, IT, Career Services Staff	43	23.6
Total	**182**	100.0

Table 20: Current Position of participated employees

Table 20 presents participant employees' current positions in one of four mentioned positions (management, teaching, facilities, administration, and other services). The highest number of participant employees were from the teaching department 46.5% (*n*=84), followed by the second biggest number of participants who were from facilities 24.7% (*n*=45), all this includes the facility operations, health and safety, cleaners, security, and nurse. The lowest smallest group of participant employees were from the management side, 5.5% (*n*=10).

Period of time at institution	Frequency	Percent
Less than 1 year	16	8.8
1-2 years	49	26.9
3-4 years	51	28.0
5-6 years	19	10.4
6-10 years	30	16.5
10 + years	17	9.3
Total	**182**	100.0

Table 21: Period of time at institution of participant employees

Table 21 shows respondents' years of experience at their institutions in one of the six periods of time. The results showed that the biggest group of participant employees were between 3-4 years

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of experience with a 28.0 (*n*=51). Where the second biggest group of participants were between 1-2 years of experience with a 26.9% (*n*=49). The smallest group were with less than one year, with 8.8% (*n*=16).

Knowledge of someone with disability outside the context of the institution	Frequency	Percent
Yes	93	51.1
No	89	48.9
Total	**182**	100.0

Table 22: Knowledge of someone with disability outside the context of the institution

The researcher of the study asked employees whether they know friends or a member of their family with a disability or no. The researcher of the study also asked participants to specify the type of disability. Analysis of the employees' demographic characteristics revealed 51.1% (*n*=93) of respondents answered yes and the rest 48.9% (*n*=89) answered no.

HEIs employees' knowledge regarding accessibility services provisions

This is to answer the third research question related to how inclusive the policies, practices, procedures, and other accommodations in selected HEIs are. In this section, as mentioned in chapter three under the qualitative study instruments, the questionnaire aimed at obtaining participants' perceptions regarding the availability of inclusive services.

A total of 183 participants from HEIs responded to the questionnaire.

The questionnaire included a five Likert scale under the title of accessibility services provisions. This section consists of five sets of items related to the availability of accessibility services of them and their perceived importance, in total included 38 items. The five sets of items are: (1) policies and procedures, (2) accessibility and facilitation, (3) knowledge of employees, (4) environmental and facilitation, and (5) evacuation and emergencies. Each of the mentioned sets of items consisting of several sub-items. Employees related their response based on the following scale: (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neither agree nor disagree, (4) agree and (5) strongly agree. The researcher also included a second section at the same questionnaire for the perceived importance

of the mentioned services (see Appendix X). In this part, participants needed to rate their response based on the following scale: (1) not at all important, (2) not so important, (3) somewhat important, (4) very important, and (5) extremely important. The below section presents an analysis of the results using descriptive statistics as follows. Results show that all participants indicated that the availability of all-inclusive services listed are extremely equally important (please see Appendix X).

4.4.2 Descriptive Statistics

Collected data about availability of inclusive services provisions as perceived by participants represented in (Figures 12-25) through histogram. Fraenkel and Wallen (1993, p. 189) define a histogram as: "a bar graph used to display quantitative data at the interval or ratio level of measurement".

Employees' knowledge of policies and procedures data analysis represented in figures 11.1-11.2.

Policies and procedures, the mean score for perceived availability of policies related to PWDs were (M=3.37) with a standard deviation (SD=0.881); participants of the study showed that 34.6% (n=63) of respondents agreed that their institutional policies related to PWDs are available. At the same time, 4.4% (n=8) of the respondents strongly disagreed. The mean score for the procedures related to PWDs was (M=3.43) with a standard deviation (SD=0.888). Participants showed positive views towards the availability of procedures related to PWDs; 46.2% (n=84) were given clear information about PWDs. The mean score related to positive notices related to PWDs was (M=2.88) with a standard deviation (SD=0.9). However, a strong negative answer towards procedures was noted at 9.3% (n=17). Distributed positive notices related to PWDs rights across the college were unsatisfactory for some participants; 30.2% (n=55). The percentage of employees' knowledge towards accessibility services provisions are shown in figure 11.1. From this figure, it can be seen that the majority of respondents lack knowledge related to the mentioned services.
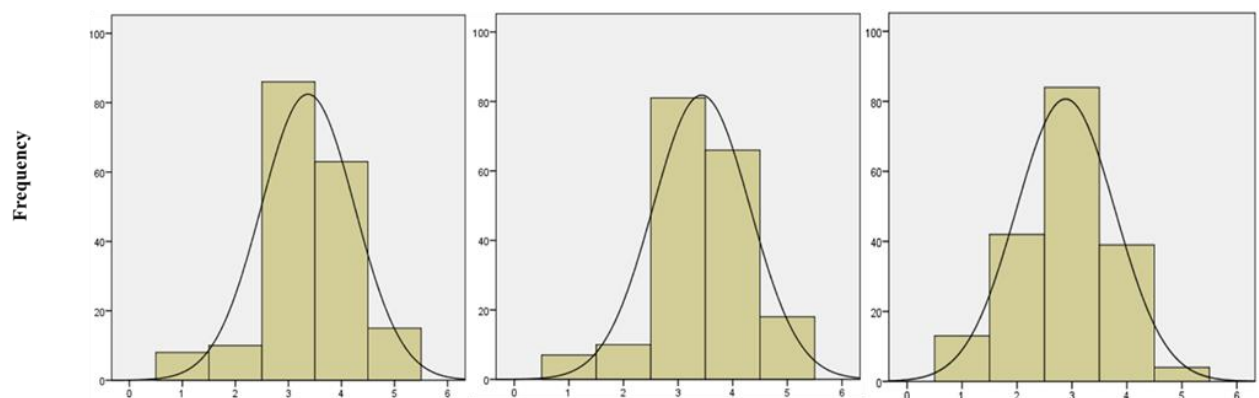
	Policies related to PWDs is available		Procedures related to PWDs is available		Positive notices about PWDs rights are well distributed across the College	
	M= 3.37	SD= 0.881	M= 3.43	SD= 0.888	M= 2.88	SD= 0.9
Strongly disagree	4.4%		3.8%		7.1%	
Disagree	5.5%		5.5%		23.1%	
Neither agree nor disagree	47.3%		44.5%		46.2%	
Agree	34.6%		36.3%		21.4%	
Strongly agree	8.2%		9.9%		2.2%	

Figure 11.1: Distribution of participants' opinion towards availability of Policies and procedures

Continuing policies and procedures, the mean score for the rights of PWDs was (M=3.07) with a standard deviation (SD=0.898). Only 20.3% (n=37) of the study participants agreed that they had read rights to PWDs in their college handbook. At the same time, 10.9% (n=5) have not seen or read about PWDs' rights. In terms of the college orientation sessions, the mean score was (M=3.07) with a standard deviation (SD=0.898). 26.9% (n=49) participants indicated that their institutions do include provisions related to PWDs during orientation sessions. Whereas, 19.2% (n=35) participants stated that they had not received any orientation sessions at their institution that covers the provisions for PWDs. In terms of lectures about PWDs rights and equal opportunities, the mean score was (M=2.98) with a standard deviation (SD=0.873). Participants showed moderate positive employees' knowledge towards lectures; 24.1% (n=44) stated that their institution provides lectures related to PWDs rights and equal opportunities on regular bases. Negative views towards lectures provisions: 25.2% (n=46) of participants indicated that their institution lacks in providing lectures related to PWDs rights. It is noted that the percentage of respondents who answered positive and negative is relatively close.

Figure 11.2 details participants' responses regarding the availability of accessibility services descriptive analyses for policies and procedures.

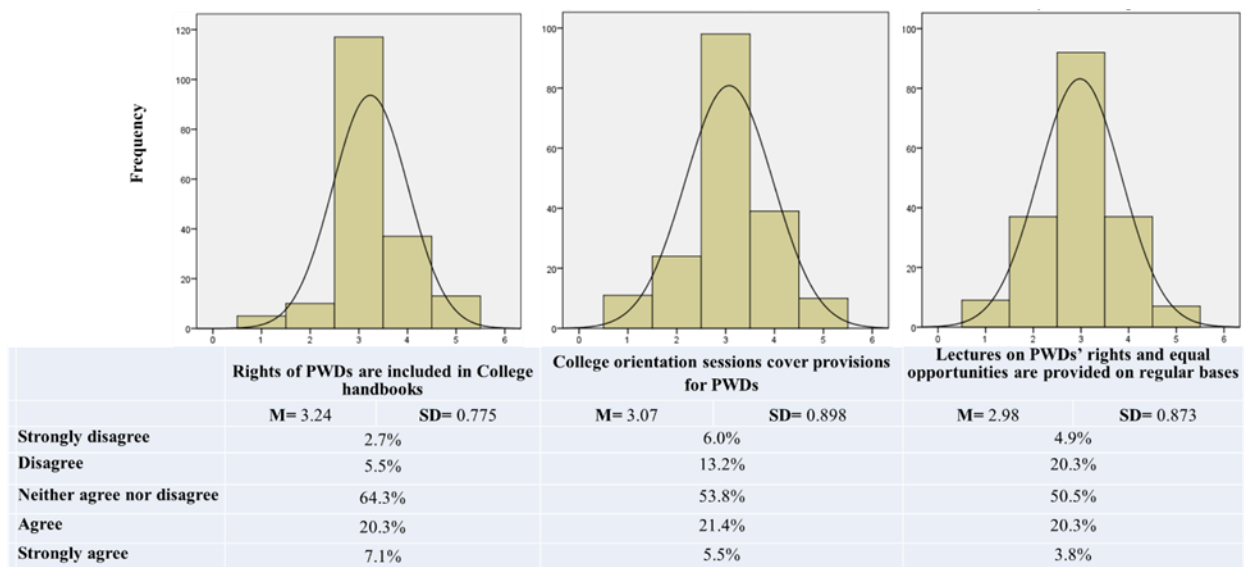|	Rights of PWDs are included in College handbooks		College orientation sessions cover provisions for PWDs		Lectures on PWDs' rights and equal opportunities are provided on regular bases	
	M= 3.24	SD= 0.775	M= 3.07	SD= 0.898	M= 2.98	SD= 0.873
Strongly disagree	2.7%		6.0%		4.9%	
Disagree	5.5%		13.2%		20.3%	
Neither agree nor disagree	64.3%		53.8%		50.5%	
Agree	20.3%		21.4%		20.3%	
Strongly agree	7.1%		5.5%		3.8%	

Figure 11.2: Distribution of participants' opinion regarding availability of Policies and procedures

Accommodation and facilitation data analyses represented in figures 12.1-12.2.

Accommodation and facilitation: The mean score for the availability of PWDs accommodations guidelines was (M=3.23) with a standard deviation (SD=0.742). 66.5% (n=121) of participants were unable to decide whether a guideline is available for PWDs that contains accommodation modifications. On the other hand, the mean score for requesting accommodations was (M=3.55) with a standard deviation (SD=0.804). 25.8% (n=47) of participants agreed that PWDs could request their accommodations at any time. 48.3% (n=88) answered with a positive view. Negative views towards requesting accommodations: 4.9 (n=9) of participants indicated that still, PWDs are unable yet to ask for their accommodation quickly. In terms of the accessibility of college website, the mean score was (M=3.51) with a standard deviation (SD=0.872). 14.3% (n=26) of participants strongly agreed, and 31.3 (n=57) agreed that their institution's main website is accessible for PWDs. Only 7.6% (n=14) disagreed with the same statement. The data shows that 53.3% were unable to form an opinion whether the institution's website was accessible.

Figure 12.1 presents the detailed availability of accessibility services descriptive analysis for accommodation and facilitation.

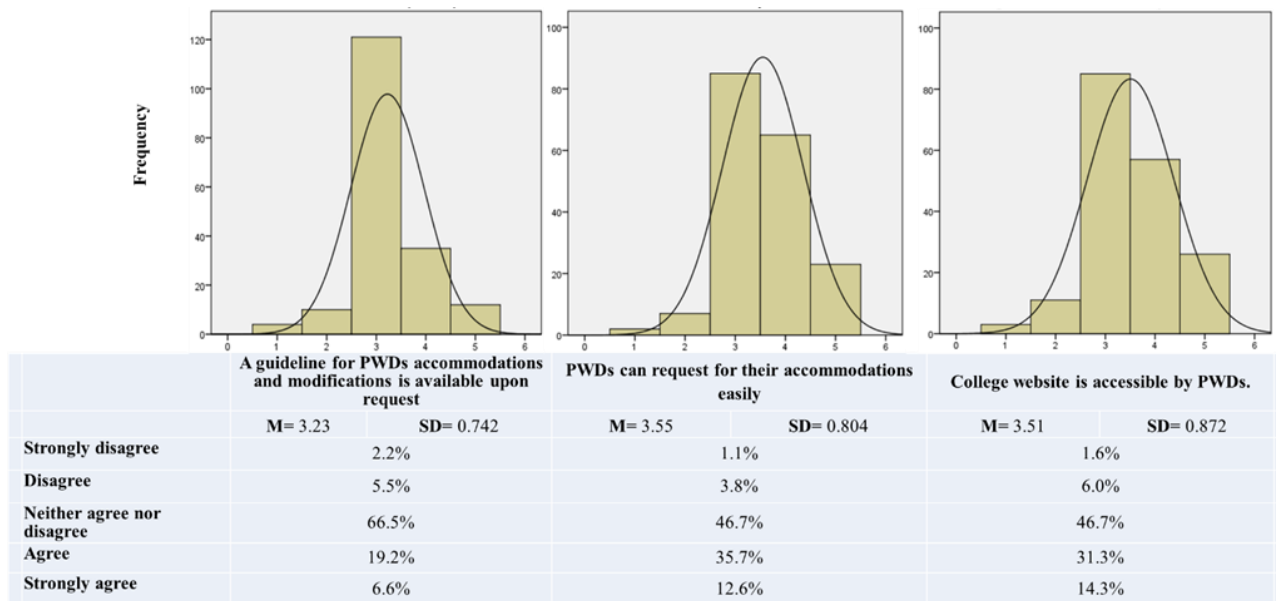|	A guideline for PWDs accommodations and modifications is available upon request		PWDs can request for their accommodations easily		College website is accessible by PWDs.	
	M= 3.23	SD= 0.742	M= 3.55	SD= 0.804	M= 3.51	SD= 0.872
Strongly disagree	2.2%		1.1%		1.6%	
Disagree	5.5%		3.8%		6.0%	
Neither agree nor disagree	66.5%		46.7%		46.7%	
Agree	19.2%		35.7%		31.3%	
Strongly agree	6.6%		12.6%		14.3%	

Figure 12.1: Distribution of participants' opinion towards Accommodation and Facilitation

This part *continues the theme of accommodation and facilitation*. The mean score for the availability of accessible classroom tables was (M=2.87) with a standard deviation (SD=0.882). 18.6% (n=34) of participants had positive views, while 29.1% (n=53) participants answered with a negative view. Whereas the rest 52.2% (n=95) participants were unable to form an opinion regarding the availability of accessible classroom tables. In terms of the mean score for the accessible computers for PWDs it was (M=3.2) with a standard deviation (SD=0.913). The results showed that 35.7% (n=65) agreed that different computer programs are available for PWDs. At the same time, 47.8% (n=87) were unable to form an opinion regarding the availability of computer services. For the related data about the availability of assistive devices, the mean was (M=3.2) with a standard deviation (SD=0.897). Here, 6.6% (n=12) of participants strongly agreed, and 29.1% (n=53) agreed that there is available information about assistive devices related to different types of disability. Half of the participants, 49.5% (n=90), have no idea related to this service.

Figure 12.2 below shows detailed percentages revealing participants' perceptions regarding the availability of accommodation and facilitation.

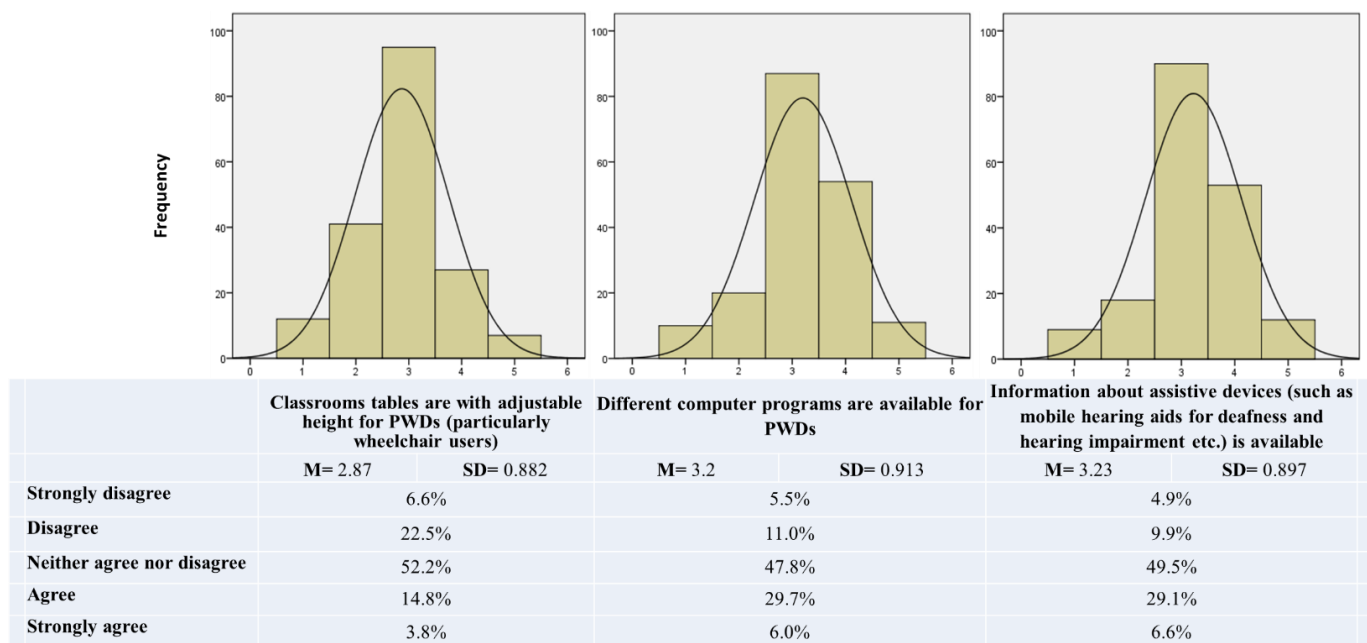|	Classrooms tables are with adjustable height for PWDs (particularly wheelchair users)		Different computer programs are available for PWDs		Information about assistive devices (such as mobile hearing aids for deafness and hearing impairment etc.) is available	
	M= 2.87	SD= 0.882	M= 3.2	SD= 0.913	M= 3.23	SD= 0.897
Strongly disagree	6.6%		5.5%		4.9%	
Disagree	22.5%		11.0%		9.9%	
Neither agree nor disagree	52.2%		47.8%		49.5%	
Agree	14.8%		29.7%		29.1%	
Strongly agree	3.8%		6.0%		6.6%	

Figure 12.2: Distribution of participants' opinion towards Accommodation and Facilitation

Knowledge of employees' data analysis presented in figures 13.1-13.2.

Participants showed positive views towards the knowledge of employees about the provided services for PWDs. In terms of the contact person to support PWDs, the mean score was (M=3.87) with a standard deviation (SD=0.801). 71.9% (n=131) of participants agreed on the availability of a contact person when supporting PWDs. While 24.2% (n=44) participants were unable to form an opinion with regard to the availability of this contact person. Regarding the use of special equipment related to PWDs, the mean score was (M=3.46) with a standard deviation (SD=0.812). 9.9% (n=18) participants strongly agreed, and 35.7% (n=65) agreed that different equipment to support PWDs is available to use. Only 1.1% of (n=2) of respondents strongly disagree and 7.1% (n=13) disagree.

Figure 13.1 below shows detailed percentages revealing participants' perceptions regarding the knowledge of employees about the provided services for PWDs.
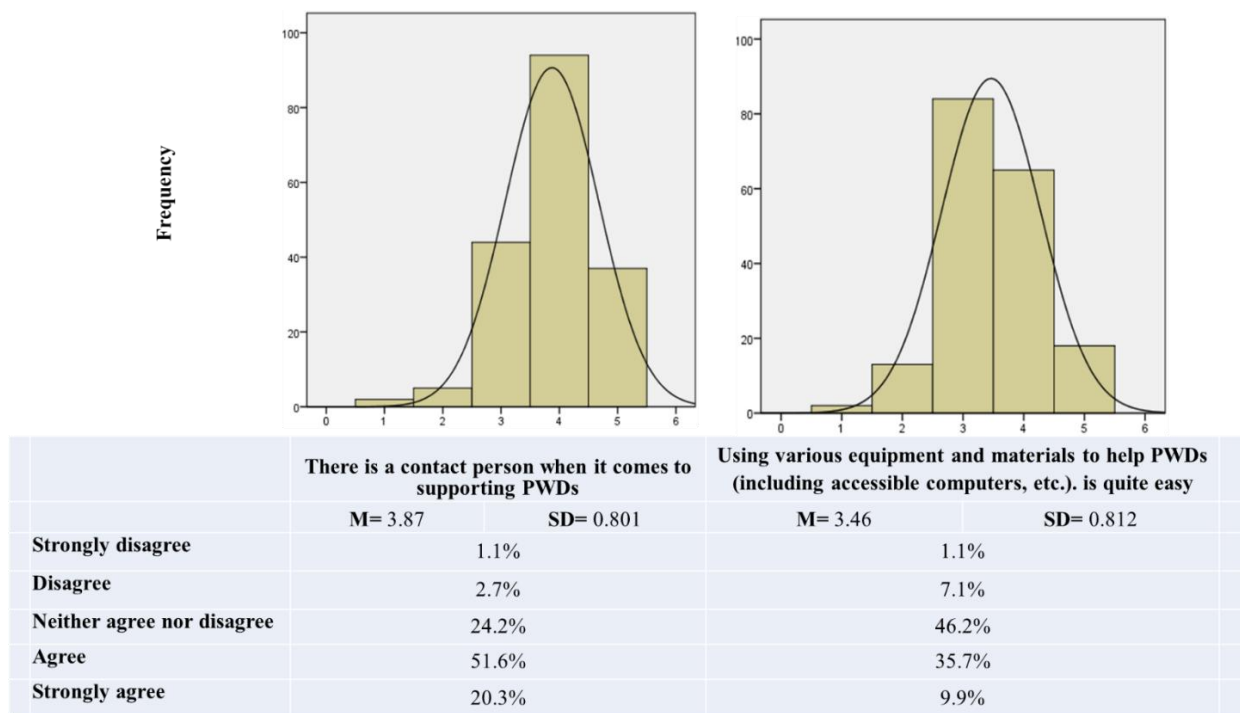

	There is a contact person when it comes to supporting PWDs		Using various equipment and materials to help PWDs (including accessible computers, etc.). is quite easy	
	M= 3.87	SD= 0.801	M= 3.46	SD= 0.812
Strongly disagree	1.1%		1.1%	
Disagree	2.7%		7.1%	
Neither agree nor disagree	24.2%		46.2%	
Agree	51.6%		35.7%	
Strongly agree	20.3%		9.9%	

Figure 13.1: Distribution of participants' opinion towards Knowledge of employees

This part is *continued for the knowledge of employees*, participants showed negative views towards provided training for PWDs accommodation; the mean score was (M=2.84) with a standard deviation (SD=1.227). 8.8% (n=16) of participants strongly agreed and 24.7% (n=45) agreed that they attended training related to accommodating PWDs. 24.25% (n=44) of respondents disagreed and 17.0% (n=75) strongly disagree. The results show that 41.25% (n=75) of participants, when they ticked the 'disagree' option they were expressing their opinion that the training related to PWDs is not available. In terms of the perceived availability of a representative from a special services provider, the mean score was (M=2.87), with a standard deviation (SD=1.105). 31.9% (n=58) of participants agreed that in their institution training sessions that are provided by a representative from a specialized service regularly is available. At the same time, 35.2% (n=64) did not agree with this statement—however, 33.0% (n=60) of participants selected their answer neither agree nor disagree which means they were unable to form an opinion regarding the availability of PWDs related trainings offered by a specialized service provider representative. So, the results shows that 41.25% of participants believed that training related to PWDs accommodations is available.
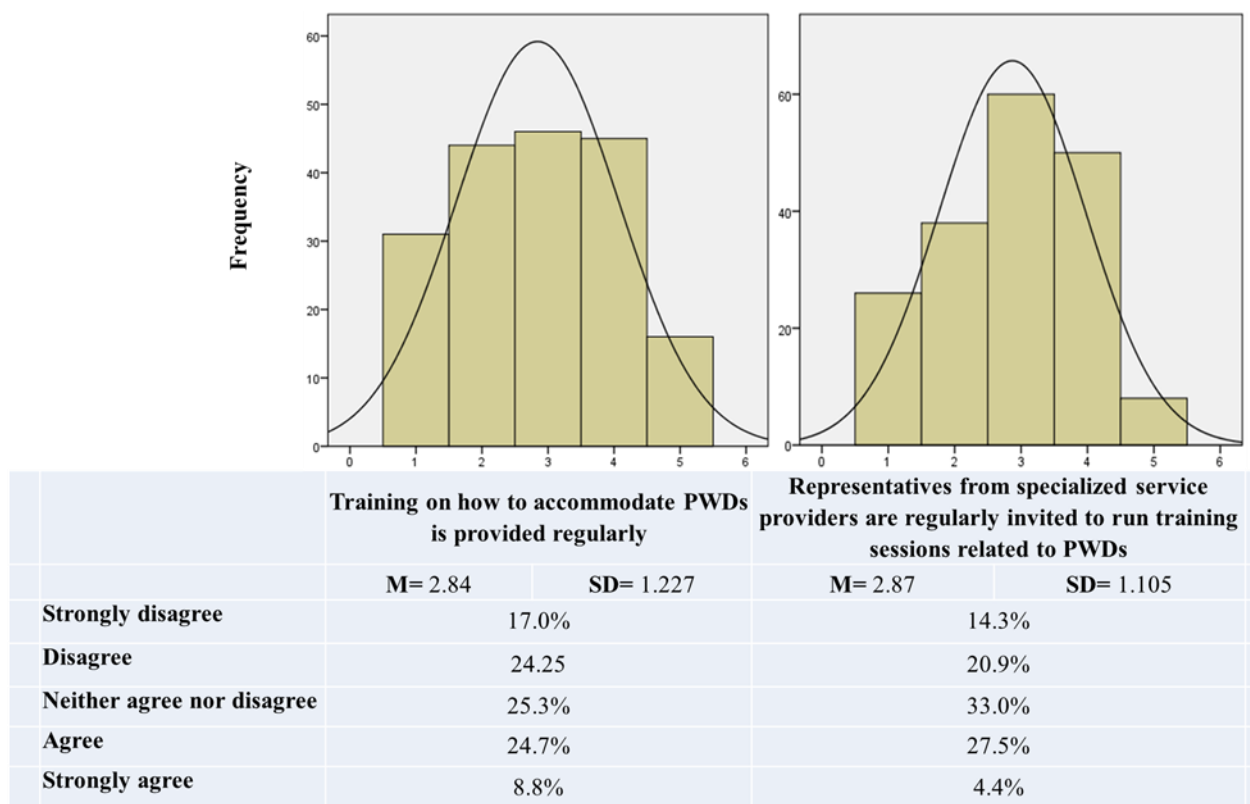

	Training on how to accommodate PWDs is provided regularly		Representatives from specialized service providers are regularly invited to run training sessions related to PWDs	
	M= 2.84	SD= 1.227	M= 2.87	SD= 1.105
Strongly disagree	17.0%		14.3%	
Disagree	24.25		20.9%	
Neither agree nor disagree	25.3%		33.0%	
Agree	24.7%		27.5%	
Strongly agree	8.8%		4.4%	

Figure 13.2: Distribution of participants' opinion towards Knowledge of employees

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Distribution of *participants' opinion towards Environmental facilitation* data analysis represented in figures 14.1-14.6.

In figure 14.1, participants showed a positive view of the environment and facilitation. In terms of the availability of parking spaces for PWDs, the mean score was (M=4.2) with a standard deviation (SD=0.693). 90.1% (n=164) of participants stated that the parking spaces for PWDs are available. As for the availability of the international symbol for the PWDs parking, the mean score (M=4.6) with a standard deviation (SD=0.766), which was quite satisfactory reaching up to 81.3% (n=148). On the other hand, 16.5% (n=30) of participants were unable to form an opinion regarding this statement. Regarding the space designed by PWDs parking, the mean score was (M=3.8) with a standard deviation (SD=0.895). 65.45% (n=119) agreed with this statement. At the same time, 6% (n=11) of participants see that PWDs available parking spaces design doesn't accommodate them. Furthermore, 28.6% (n=52) participants were unaware of whether PWDs parking spaces were well-designed or not.
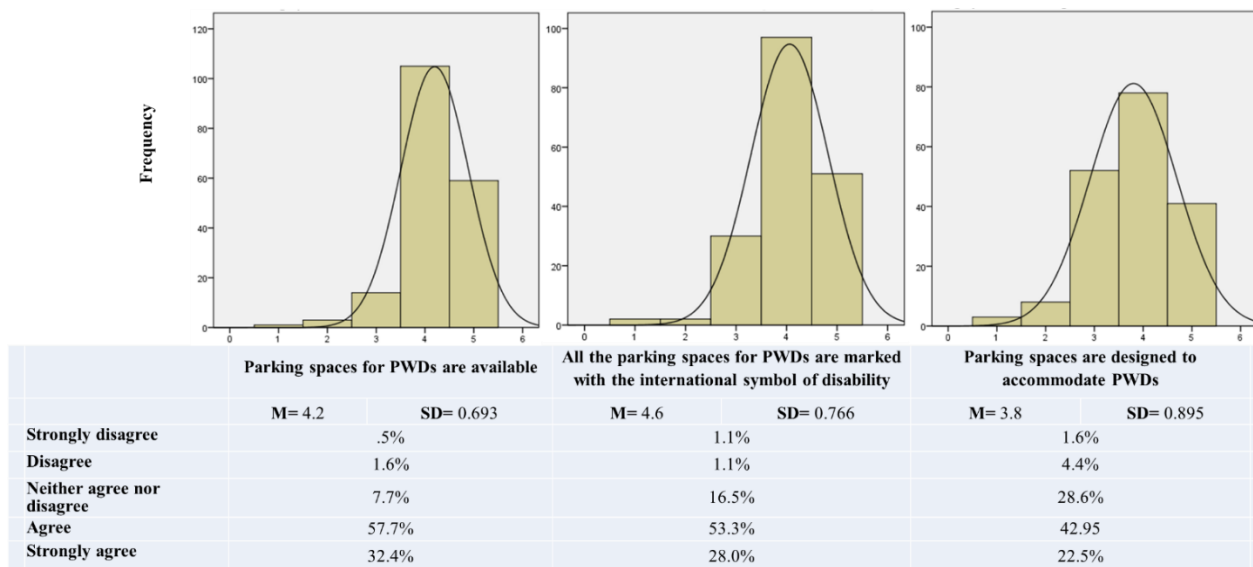

	Parking spaces for PWDs are available		All the parking spaces for PWDs are marked with the international symbol of disability		Parking spaces are designed to accommodate PWDs	
	M= 4.2	SD= 0.693	M= 4.6	SD= 0.766	M= 3.8	SD= 0.895
Strongly disagree	.5%		1.1%		1.6%	
Disagree	1.6%		1.1%		4.4%	
Neither agree nor disagree	7.7%		16.5%		28.6%	
Agree	57.7%		53.3%		42.95	
Strongly agree	32.4%		28.0%		22.5%	

Figure 14.1: Distribution of participants' opinion towards Environmental facilitation

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In figure 14.2, for the ***main reception accessibility***, the mean score was (M=3.21) with a standard deviation (SD=1.389); participants had a positive view towards the entrances; 47.3% (n=86) of participants agreed that an accessible main entrance is available. At the same time, 35.7% (n=65) of participants did not agree with this statement. In the case of the available automatic doors, the mean score was (M=3.8) with a standard deviation (SD=0.855); 77.5% (n=141) agreed that their institution does have auto doors. At the same time, 9.9% (n=18) of participants did not agree with this statement. In terms of the availability of accessible space for the auto doors across the campus, the mean score was (M=3.75) with a standard deviation (SD=0.879); 16.5% (n=30) of participants strongly agreed, and 53.3% (n=97) agreed that there are well-spaced doors across their institution. 1.6% (n=3) of participants disagreed, and 7.7 (n=14) strongly disagreed with this statement.
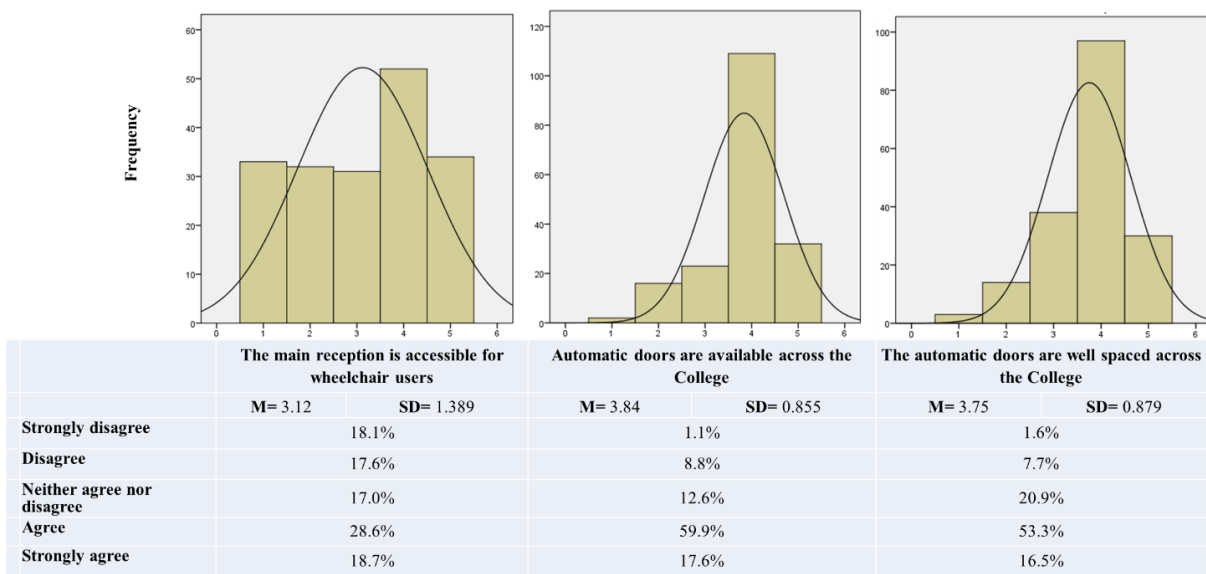

	The main reception is accessible for wheelchair users		Automatic doors are available across the College		The automatic doors are well spaced across the College	
	M= 3.12	SD= 1.389	M= 3.84	SD= 0.855	M= 3.75	SD= 0.879
Strongly disagree	18.1%		1.1%		1.6%	
Disagree	17.6%		8.8%		7.7%	
Neither agree nor disagree	17.0%		12.6%		20.9%	
Agree	28.6%		59.9%		53.3%	
Strongly agree	18.7%		17.6%		16.5%	

Figure 14.2: Distribution of participants' opinion towards Environmental facilitation

In figure 14.3, for the ***availability of handrails of the main entrances***, the mean score was (M=3.15) with a standard deviation (SD=0.931). 34.6% (n=63) of participants had a positive view that handrails are available on both sides at the main entrance. At the same time, 19.2% (n=46) of participants showed negative views of this statement. On the other hand, the majority of participants, 46.2% (n=84) were unable to decide. In terms of the ramps availability, the mean score was (M=3.77) with a standard deviation (SD=0.795); 67% (n=122) of participants had a positive view towards the availability of ramps. While 3.8% (n=7) had negative views towards this statement. In terms of the availability of the location of the ramp, whether it was highlighted on the institution map or no. The mean score was (M=3.09) with a standard deviation (SD=0.718). 4.9% (n=15) of participants disagreed, and 2.7% (n=5) strongly disagreed with this statement. This statement revealed 70.9% (n=129) were unable to decide.
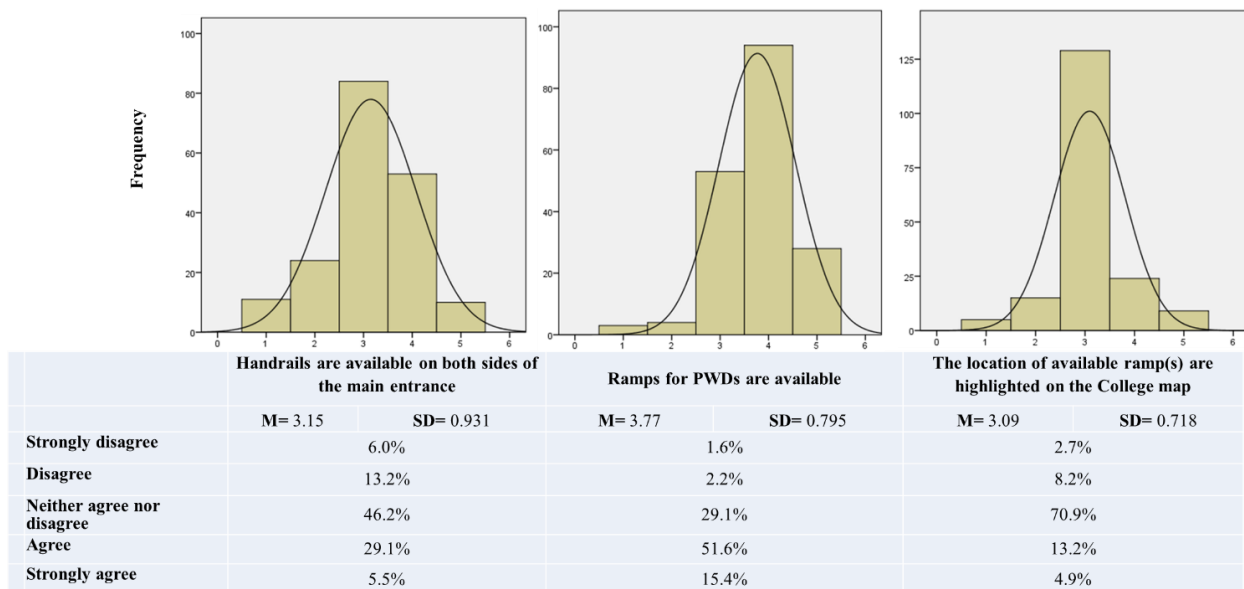

	Handrails are available on both sides of the main entrance		Ramps for PWDs are available		The location of available ramp(s) are highlighted on the College map	
	M= 3.15	SD= 0.931	M= 3.77	SD= 0.795	M= 3.09	SD= 0.718
Strongly disagree	6.0%		1.6%		2.7%	
Disagree	13.2%		2.2%		8.2%	
Neither agree nor disagree	46.2%		29.1%		70.9%	
Agree	29.1%		51.6%		13.2%	
Strongly agree	5.5%		15.4%		4.9%	

Figure 14.3: Distribution of participants' opinion towards Environmental facilitation

In figure 14.4, for the ***availability of the handrails for each ramp***, the mean score was (M=3.19) with a standard deviation (SD=0.871); 28% (n=52) of participants showed a positive view towards this statement, while 17% (n=31) of participants showed negative perceptions. On the other hand, most respondents neither agree nor disagree with 54.4% (n=99). In terms of the stairs handrails availability, the mean score was (M=3.21) with a standard deviation (SD=0.881). The highest percentage with 30.8% (n=56) strongly agreed and agreed (8.8% strongly agreed, and 2.2% agreed), participants agreed that handrails are available on both sides of each stair case. In terms of the availability of accessible elevators, the mean score was (M=2.55) with a standard deviation (SD=1.205). Towards this item, participants had negative views towards the availability of elevators. With the highest percentage of 48.3 (n=88) with strongly disagree and disagree (24.7% strongly disagree, and 23.6% disagree), the participants disagreed that accessible elevators are available. Whereas 22% (n=40) of participants agreed with this statement. Further, 29.7% (n=54) were unable to decide about this item.

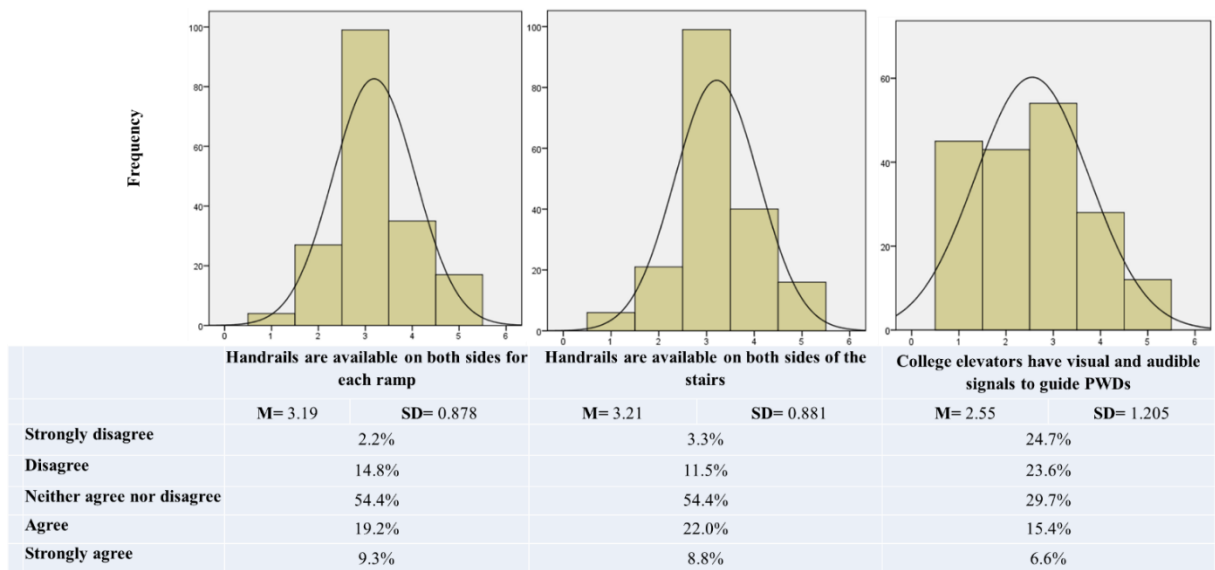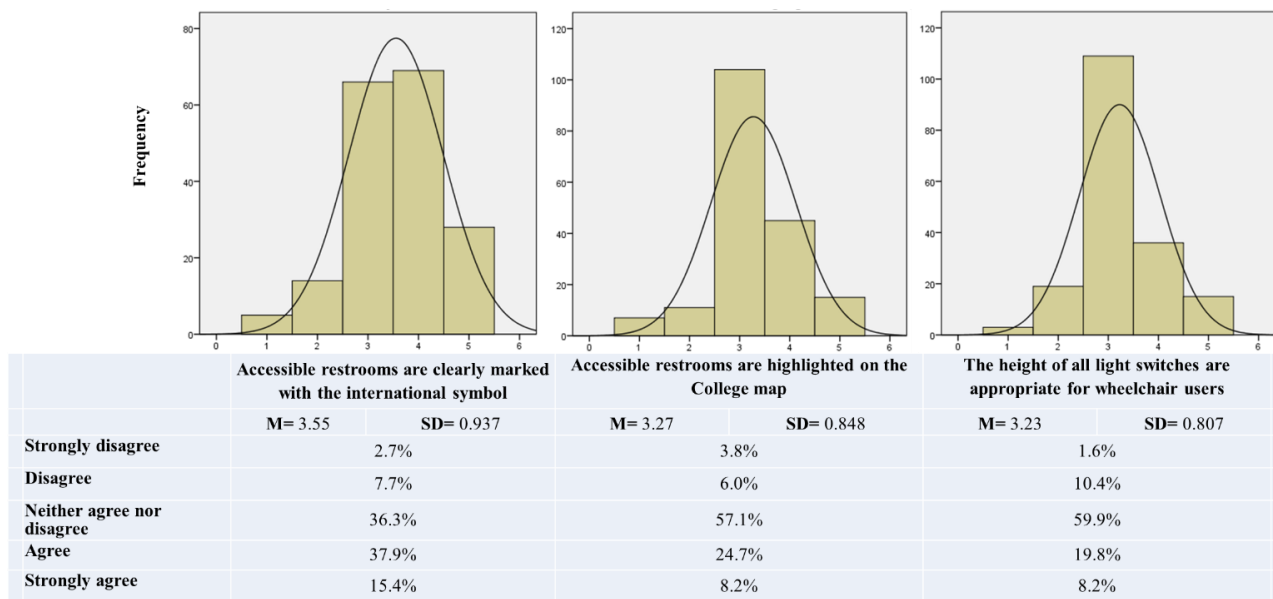|	Handrails are available on both sides for each ramp		Handrails are available on both sides of the stairs		College elevators have visual and audible signals to guide PWDs	
	M= 3.19	SD= 0.878	M= 3.21	SD= 0.881	M= 2.55	SD= 1.205
Strongly disagree	2.2%		3.3%		24.7%	
Disagree	14.8%		11.5%		23.6%	
Neither agree nor disagree	54.4%		54.4%		29.7%	
Agree	19.2%		22.0%		15.4%	
Strongly agree	9.3%		8.8%		6.6%	

Figure 14.4: Distribution of participants' opinion towards Environmental facilitation

In figure 14.5, for the *availability of accessible restrooms*, the mean score was (M=3.55) with a standard deviation (SD=0.937); 56% (n=97) of participants agreed that accessible restroom are available. Whereas 36.3% (n=66) of participants were unable to form an opinion whether the institution restrooms were accessible. Further, 10.4% (n=19) of participants did not agree with this statement. In terms of highlighting the availability of restrooms on institution maps, the mean score was (M=3.23) with a standard deviation (SD=0.807); 28% (n=51) strongly agreed and agreed (8.2% strongly agreed, and 24.7% agree) with this statement. Whereas 57.1% (n=104) were unable to form an opinion about this statement. Regarding the level of the light switches, the mean score was (M=3.23) with a standard deviation (SD=0.807); 59.9% (n=109) of participants were unale to form an opinion whether the height of all the light switches is appropriate for a wheelchair user or not, while 28% (n=51) of participants strongly agree and agree (8.2% strongly agree, and 19.8% agree). Only 12% (n=22) of participants did not agree with this statement.

	Accessible restrooms are clearly marked with the international symbol		Accessible restrooms are highlighted on the College map		The height of all light switches are appropriate for wheelchair users	
	M= 3.55	SD= 0.937	M= 3.27	SD= 0.848	M= 3.23	SD= 0.807
Strongly disagree	2.7%		3.8%		1.6%	
Disagree	7.7%		6.0%		10.4%	
Neither agree nor disagree	36.3%		57.1%		59.9%	
Agree	37.9%		24.7%		19.8%	
Strongly agree	15.4%		8.2%		8.2%	

Figure 14.5: Distribution of participants' opinion towards Environmental facilitation

In figure 14.6, shows data for perceived *availability of appropriate lighting for PWDs parking*; the mean score was (M=2.76) with a standard deviation (SD=0.994); 26.4% (n=48) of participants had a positive view towards this statement, while 13.2 (n=24) had negative opinion. On the other hand, 60.4% (n=110) were unable to the availability of an appropriate lighting for PWDs parking. Regarding appropriate signage, the mean score was (M=2.99) with a standard deviation (SD=0.986); participants showed positive views 26.9 (n=49), and negative views 25.3% (n=46). It is noted that the percentage of positive views and negative views is relatively close. In terms of signage, the mean score was (M=2.76) with a standard deviation (SD=0.994); the highest percentage with 30.2% (n=55) of participants strongly disagree and disagree (14.8% strongly disagree, and 15.4% disagree) that all the signage are accessible. On the other hand, 3.8% (n=7) strongly agreed, and 13.7% (n=25) agree with the statement.

	Sufficient lighting in PWDs parking area is available		Enough and appropriate signage with the right directions is available throughout the College		Signage used through the College uses raised letters and number and/or Braille characters	
	M= 3.2	SD= 0.831	M= 2.99	SD= 0.986	M= 2.76	SD= 0.994
Strongly disagree	2.2%		8.8%		14.8%	
Disagree	11.0%		16.5%		15.4%	
Neither agree nor disagree	60.4%		47.8%		52.2%	
Agree	17.6%		20.9%		13.7%	
Strongly agree	8.8%		6.0%		3.8%	

Figure 14.6: Distribution of participants' opinion towards Environmental facilitation

In general, participants showed strong positive views regarding items related to evacuation in emergency as detailed in figure 15.1 and figured 15.2.

In figure 15.1, for the perceived *availability of emergency exits*, the mean score was (M=4.01) with a standard deviation (SD=0.669); 90.1% (n=164) of respondents agreed that clearly defined exits which are reachable by all is available. While 4.4% (n=8) did not agree with this statement. Regarding the availability of the fire alarm, the mean score was (M=3.42) with a standard deviation (SD=0.893). A total of 46.7% (n=85) of participants agreed and strongly agreed about this statement, and only 11% (n=20) of participants disagreed. At the same time, 42.3% (n=77) of participants were unable to form an opinion of the availability of the fire alarm. In terms of availability of training related to PWDs during emergency evacuation, the mean score was (M=3.07) with a standard deviation (SD=1.062); 7.7% (n=14) of participants strongly agreed, and 27.5% (n=64) decided that they had received training related to a different type of disabilities. A total of 26.3% (n=48) of the participants disagreed about this statement. Furthermore, 38.5% (n=70) of participants were unable to form an opinion to the availability of the training related to different type of disabilities.

	All emergency exits are clearly defined and reachable by all		Fire alarms around the College have audio and visual signs		Evacuation emergency training related to specific disabilities is provided	
	M= 4.01	SD= 0.669	M= 3.42	SD= 0.893	M= 3.07	SD= 1.062
Strongly disagree	1.1%		3.3%		9.3%	
Disagree	3.3%		7.7%		17.0%	
Neither agree nor disagree	5.5%		42.3%		38.5%	
Agree	74.2%		36.8%		27.5%	
Strongly agree	15.9%		9.9%		7.7%	
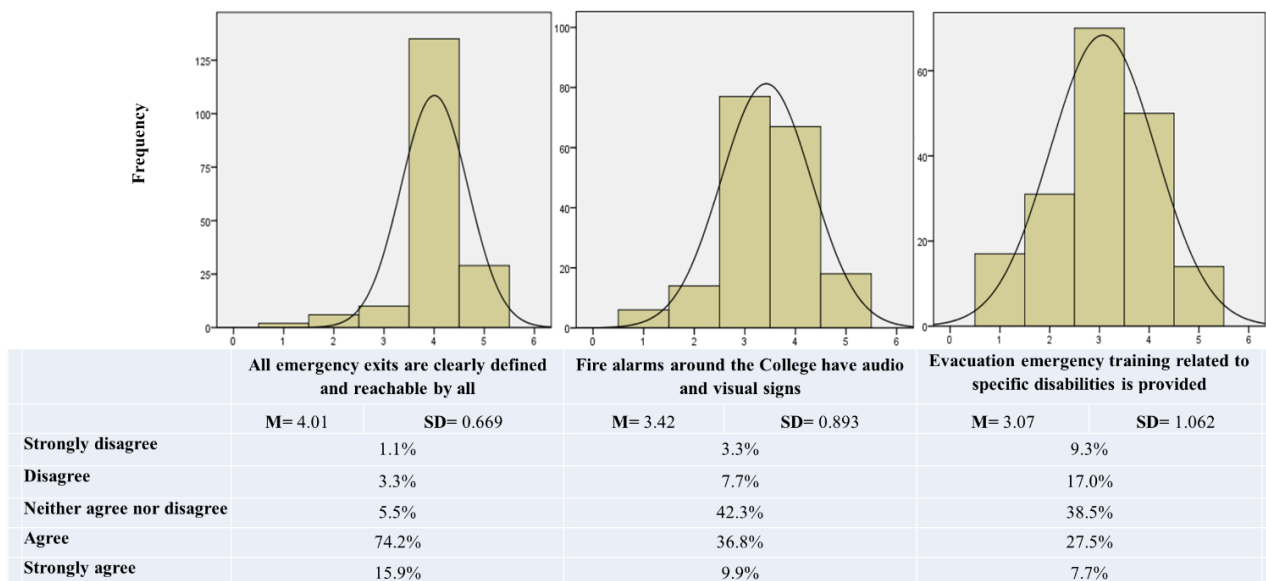
Figure 15.1: Distribution of participants' opinion towards Evacuation in emergencies

Figure 15.2, for the percieved *availability of a list of response teams*, the mean score was (M=3.27) with a standard deviation (SD=0.874); the majority of participants 41.2% (n=3.27) strongly agreed that the list of response teams across the institution is available. Another 15.9% (n=29) of participants disagree with this statement. Whereas 42.9% (n=78) of participants didn't know whether there is a specific person to contact or no. In terms of the availability of first aid kit, the mean score was (M=3.15) with a standard deviation (SD=0.672); a total of 23% (n=42) strongly agreed and agree (2.7% strongly agree and 20.3% agree), whereas a total of 7.6% (n=14) of participants disagreed with this statement. The results of this statement revealed 69.2% (n=126) of participants who answered neither agree nor disagree which indicates their inability to decide or form an informed opinion regarding the matter.

	A list of the response team to contact in case of any emergencies related to PWDs is available		The height of all first aid kit are appropriate for wheelchair users	
	M= 3.27	SD= 0.874	M= 3.15	SD= 0.672
Strongly disagree	3.3%		2.7%	
Disagree	12.6%		4.9%	
Neither agree nor disagree	42.9%		69.2%	
Agree	35.7%		20.3%	
Strongly agree	5.5%		2.7%	
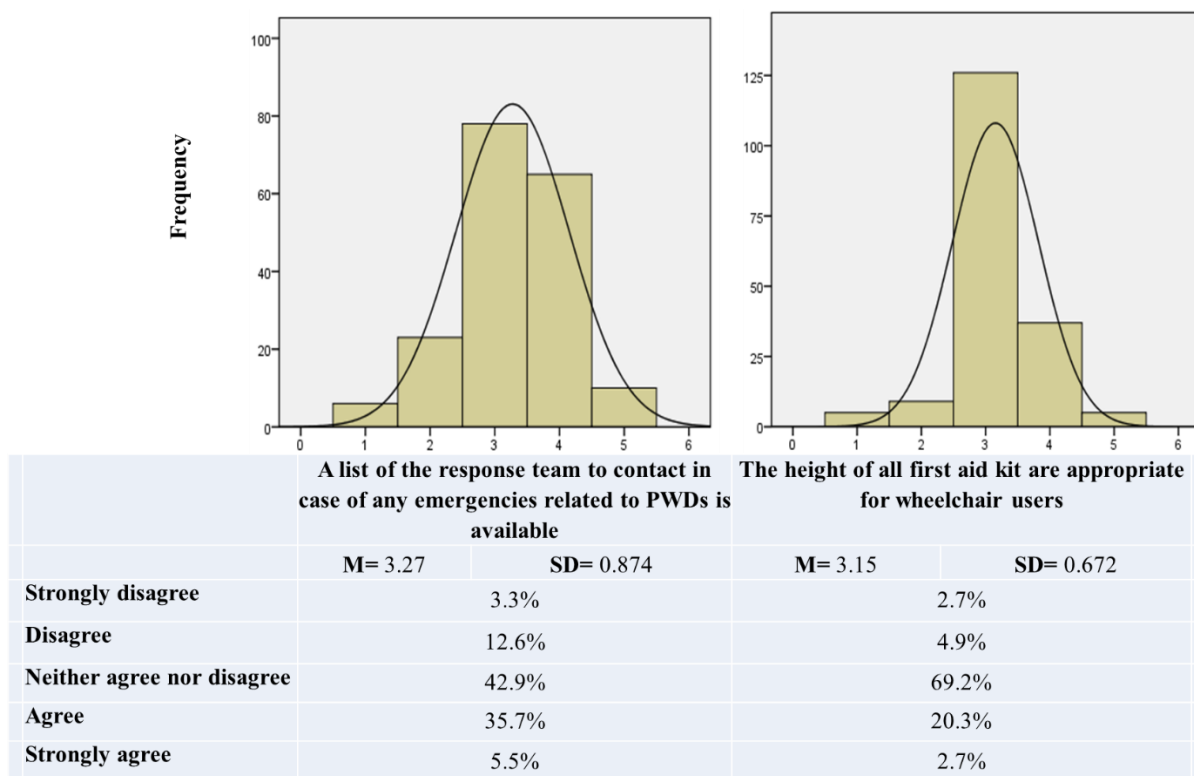
Figure 15.2: Distribution of participants' opinion towards Evacuation in emergencies

4.4.3 Analysis of the open-ended questionnaire questions

This section presents the study's open-ended questionnaire questions for the third research study question. This is to explore how inclusive policies, practices, procedures, and other accommodations are in selected HEIs. The study questionnaire consists of 48 questions, and the last three questions were open-ended.

Participants were asked if they do not mind being contacted by the study researcher for the second part of the research question. Another question they were asked to write their email if they would like to receive a copy of this research report. Lastly, they were asked to provide additional comments.

The majority of participants revealed that raising awareness towards PWDs rights is highly needed and very important. Moreover, they requested more training on dealing with and supporting PWDs. Furthermore, more than seven security guards from the facilities departments added their comments regarding the campus accessibility. One guard said: *"... I think the location of the available ramps is very important to be highlighted on the college map, so we will know which location is better for PWDs to access to reach their classes".*

Another security added: *"...I would like to know more about PWDs, how to communicate and support them, and to know their rights. Also, to know different types of disabilities, my brother suffers from speech difficulties and hardly communicates with him. One day, a student parent came to pick his son from the college and the parent was a PWD (with speech and hearing impairment). I was unable to communicate with him, so he called his son and asked me to talk to him on the phone, and then he told me that his father came to pick him up from college".*

One more security guard said: *"...blind students are increasing at our campus, and it is very important to keep the campus more friendly and accessible, and especially elevators, parking, and signage to be in Braille".*

One participant from the management revealed that training sessions related to PWDs for all and particularly for faculty is a must, mainly training on how to treat PWDs in classes. He also added that the majority from the teaching faculty would benefit from such training sessions.

One faculty member said: *"… I taught a deaf student without any support at all. I was told to write all the instructions on the board. I felt I was unable to support her in learning because I could not explain anything, and I did not know how to explain it. Also, it was difficult for me, and I was unable to divide my time between helping her and helping her classmates, but sadly she left our institution due to lack of inclusive services"*.

Many faculty participants and other employees revealed that training regarding PWDs is not available.

One faculty added: *"…it appears there is some acknowledgment of sensory and physical disabilities, but what about other disabilities? There are no specific guidelines on how faculty should proceed when concerns arise, and there is a dearth (lack) of information on students' status relating to disabilities with an impact on their access and participation"*.

4.5 Observation findings

4.5.1 Analysis of observation results

For the field observation, the researcher used the same questionnaire items to observe the accessibility services for each site. As mentioned earlier, the researcher used a personal account by using a manual wheelchair on each campus to compile a first-hand experience in campus accessibility.

Accessibility is a prerequisite to enable PWDs to access the provided facilities in each site. Also, all stakeholders must be aware of the availability of accessible provisions to support and communicate with PWDs. The following section describes the field observation for the available inclusive provisions in HEIs (see Table 23); the focus would be on five standards: (1) policies and procedures, (2) accommodation and facilitation, (3) knowledge of employees, (4) environmental and facilitation, and (5) evacuation and emergencies.

Due to confidentiality, the study researcher would be unable to present the actual physical accessibility for each site.

Standard	Accessibility services and accommodation
Policies and procedures	Policies, procedures, positive notices, rights of PWDs, and campus orientation sessions.
Accommodation and Facilitation	Accommodations guideline, request for accommodations, college, website, different programs, and assistive devices information.
Knowledge of employees	Contact person, regularly Training PWDs, and specialized Representatives
Environmental facilitation	Parking spaces for PWDs are available, parking spaces, main reception, automatic doors, handrails, ramps, elevator, accessible restrooms, lighting, and signage
Evacuation in emergencies	An Emergency exits, fire alarms (audio and visual), evacuation emergency training, specialized contact list, and first Aid Kit

Table: 23 Observed accessibility services provisions at HEIs

Policies and procedures

The researcher of the study wanted to view each institution's policy related to PWDs. The findings indicated that none of the HEIs has a specific policy related to PWDs, but they reported that it is under development and not ready to share it with the researcher. But each institution does provide its services for each PWD to meet their needs.

In terms of procedures, the researcher visited different departments such as career services, volunteering offices, work placement, etc. to see how each student, including PWDs, requests or applies for specific services in different departments. For example, according to one HEI work placement guideline, it is a graded course and mandatory for students to graduate. Students usually spend 5 to 8 weeks to complete their work placement and gain work experience in a real working environment. Here each student has to fill a form by entering their identification information and their choices with a company detail (name, location, and contact number). Also, students are asked to submit their documents such as CV, Emirates ID, etc. nothing was mentioned about PWDs in these forms, and the same was with voluntary work forms. The researcher also observed that the same institutions lack positive notices about PWDs' rights across their campuses and in student handbooks. Furthermore, not all the selected sites provide lectures on PWDs and equal opportunities.

Accommodation facilitation

Accommodation is known as a service that can change the environment for PWDs, so they may not stop or prevented from completing their task like non-PWDs. In terms of accommodation, none of the selected HEIs have clear accommodations guidelines. All PWDs can request for their accommodation via e-services, but not all the websites are fully accessible. On the other hand, the researcher found that some institutions lacked assistive devices such as specific computers with programs, mobile hearing aids, etc.

Knowledge of employees

Employees in some HEIs seem to lack regular training on how to accommodate or communicate with PWDs. Findings show that not all the HEIs have a contact person when it comes to supporting PWDs. However, some HEIs do have their center to support PWDs, and they focus on running

training for all employees, students, security, and cleaners. Moreover, there is a lack of training related to PWDs provided by representatives from specialized services.

Environmental accessibility and facilitation

In 2019 the MOCD launched the UAE universal design code to implement the national agenda, the federal government's strategy, and the UAE's vision 2021. Full services environment and facilitation to keep the buildings entirely friendly environment for PWDs (MOCD 2019).

The UAE's universal design ensures PWDs' access to their rights, as mentioned in Federal Law No. 29 of 2006 in section (V) accessible environment article (22), and (23) (see Appendix A). This law was amended by the Federal Law No. 14 2009. It is also mandated by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of PWDs (article (3) for general principals, article (9) accessibility, article (19) living independently and being included in the community, article (20) personal mobility, and (21) freedom of expression and opinion and access to information. Lastly, it was also mentioned in the National Policy for the empowerment of PWDs in 2017 (MOCD 2019).

The findings from observation show that some of the site's environmental accessibility and facilitation are not fully inclusive for PWDs, and it is not good enough to accommodate their movement. The researcher found that the selected field parking lots were not fully accessible such as parking space, signage (international symbol), missing lateral aisle, and proper lighting. Analysis of the UAE universal design code reveals that parking spaces should meet the same technical requirements (see Figure 16).
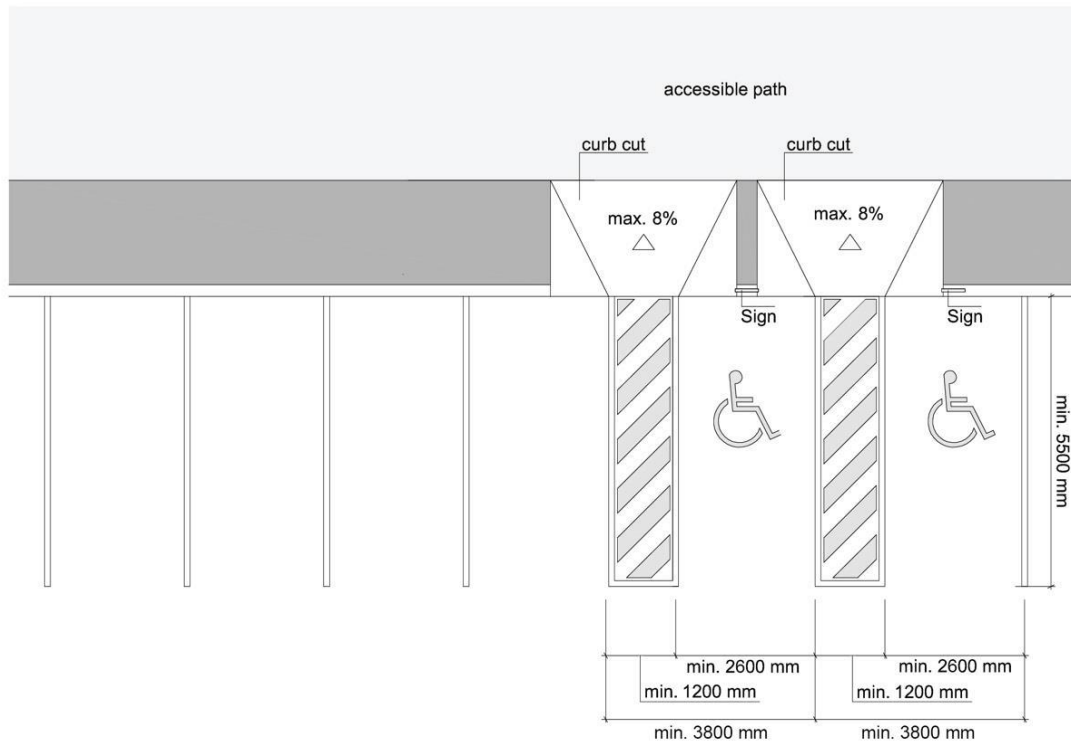
Figure 16: Example of an accessible parking (MOCD 2019)

The requirements are: (1) the drop-off should be near as possible to accessible entrance, (2) parking area must be very close less than 50 m from the main entrance, (3) signage should be vertical with international symbol and on the pavement to make visible for the driver with a proper ramp as it is shown in Figure 1 above.

Furthermore, the researcher of the study also observed the ramps and the availability of the handrails for each site. It has been noticed that the ramps are available, but aren't accessible for PWDs and they lack suitable handrails. For example; each HEIs have different gates for students to enter from. One higher education campus has a different gate and each gate has a smart gate where students need to scan their ID before entering their campus. It has been observed that not all the gates have ramps, because one of the wheelchair users was dropped by driver, and then the student reached to one gate, and due to unavailability of the ramp the student was waiting outside, then one security came outside to collect the ID to check the student in.

Mentioned in the UAE universal design code that each ramp should have usable width between the handrails on both sides and it must have an outside edge protection (see Figure 17).
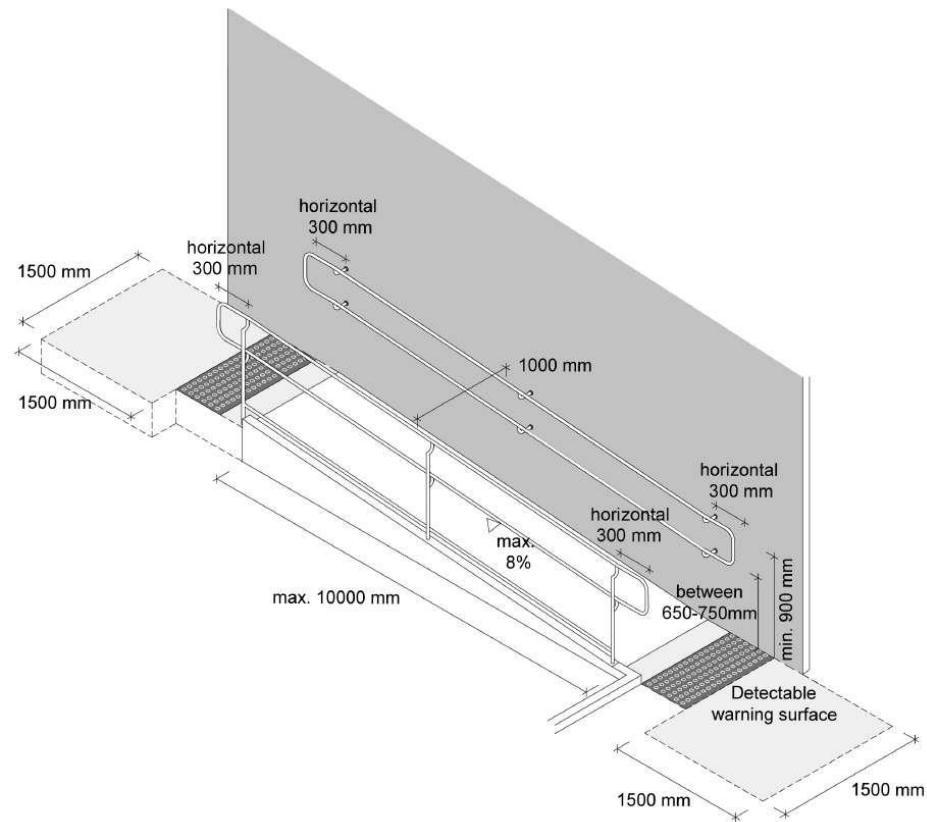
Figure 17: Example of accessible ramp with handrails (MOCD 2019, p. 44)

Outside edge protection is very important in protecting wheelchair users or others from injuring themselves if they fall (MOCD 2019).

It has also been observed that there are 310 PWDs at the selected sites, about 82 PWDs who are vision impairment and physical impairment. Most mentioned vision impairment is using a white cane, and the rest are with learning difficulties. It was observed that their campuses lack tactile surfaces (see Figure 17).
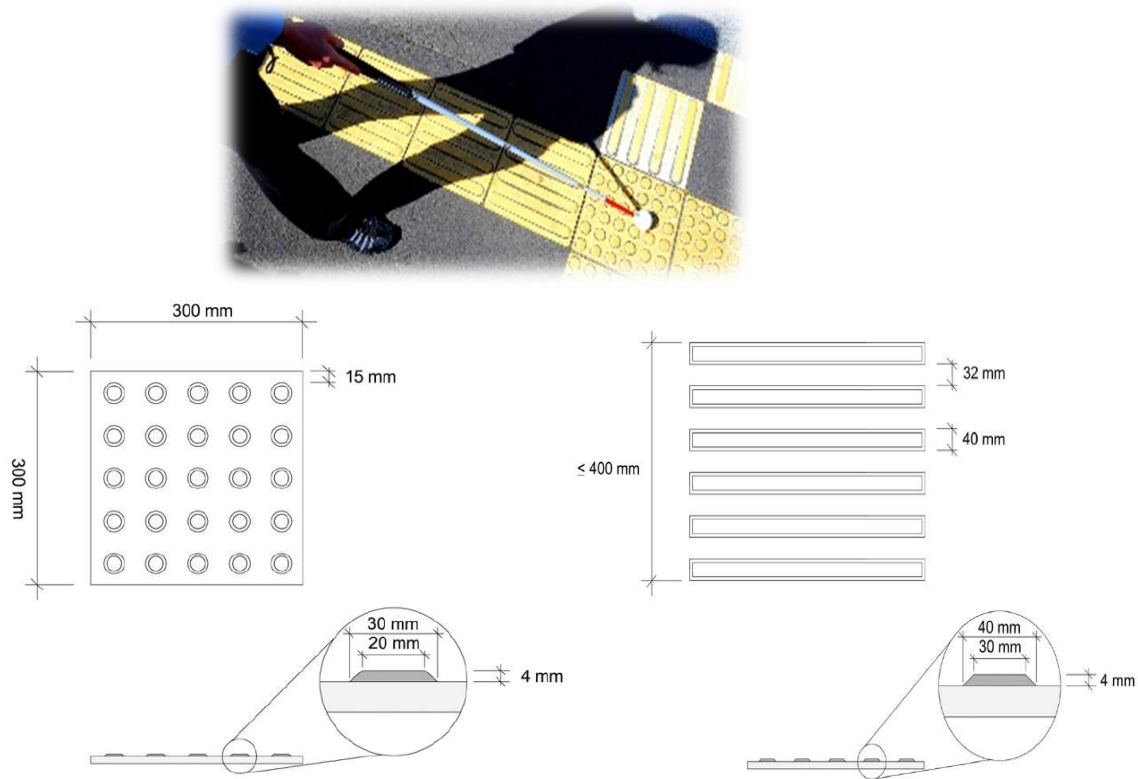
Figure 18: Example of warning and guiding pavement dimensions (MOCD 2019, p. 33-34)

The UAE universal design code defines a tactile surface as: "textures surfaces with a contrasting color that are perceptible and identifiable by the feel of cane that warns vision impairment people" (MOCD 2019, p. 32). According to this code, these tactile surfaces must be installed on two main criteria (see Figure 18). The first criteria is the warning surface, and it is used to warn PWDs of the upcoming level changes or obstacles. While the second criteria are the guiding surface, and it is a directional sign to assist the independent mobility of PWDs (MOCD 2019). Furthermore, classes' signage, cafeteria, library, etc., were missing to be in braille text to be located at the bottom of the sign.

Talking about braille, it has also been observed by the researcher that the elevators were not fully accessible in terms of missing handrails, braille signage, and audio signals. Also, it was observed

that some elevators were tight without proper spacing. There is no sound or voice announcement when it reaches each floor. Nor even the buttons, they lack tactile buttons (see Figure 19).
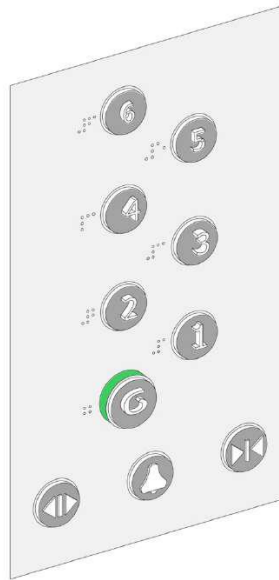
Figure 19: Example of accessible buttons

Moreover, the central reception heights were not suitable at each field and not sufficiently inclusive for PWDs, especially for wheelchair users to approach and communicate with the receptionist.

Lastly, the researcher observed the accessibility of all washrooms, and it has been observed that the washrooms in only one site are fully accessible. At the same time, the rest of the sites were not fully accessible. There was a sign outside to guide PWDs to the right door. Some of these washrooms were accessible, but they were inside with others. The researcher used a manual wheelchair to enter these washrooms, but it was hard to get in, plus other students were inside. On the other hand, some restrooms were inside, and they were fully inclusive, but the challenge is when the PWDs were entering inside, it takes time, especially when other non-disabled users are inside at the same time. Also, it had been noticed that accessible washrooms were unavailable in the activity halls.

Evacuation in emergencies

It has been observed that all the selected site emergency exits were clearly defined and reachable by all to escape. The assembly points were clearly displayed across each site, including classrooms, corridors, cafeterias, etc.

The researcher took a note of the fire alarms in the form to check whether they have audio and visual signs. It has been found that not all the site's fire alarms had audio and visual signs. For example, the researcher went inside each classroom to check the fire alarms. None of the classes has audio and visual signs, including the meeting rooms, washrooms, etc. Only loud sounds from outside the building. All the fire alarms should be in buildings, including the classrooms, and they should be audio-visual to evacuate quickly. But some have visual signs outside the building. Where also, some sites have both audio and visual signs at the big activity halls.

The researcher also was unable to find any training guidelines for assisting PWDs during any emergencies. Moreover, the list of the response team for PWDs was unavailable. Most importantly, all the first aid kit boxes were displayed at inappropriate height for wheelchair users and difficult to reach.

4.6 Deduced findings of research question four

- What accommodations and practices can HEIs adopt to be more inclusive?

This question aimed at finding out the most important inclusive provisions higher education institutions should adopt to be more accessible as per research participants voice. Below findings have been deduced from the findings of the first three research questions:

RQ1: How are transition services perceived by grade 12 SWDs and their Specialists?

RQ2: What inclusive provisions do students with disabilities in higher education perceived as the most valuable?

RQ3: How inclusive are the policies, practices, procedures and other accommodations in selected higher education institutions?

Research question four findings have been inferred based on one main criterion; what inclusive services are needed the most to empower SWDs in higher education and allow them to fulfill their full potential.

Based on Q1 findings,

- HEIs need to adopt a more inclusive framework when offering orientation visits to High Schools; providing more information about their inclusive provisions and campus accessibility would greatly facilitate the admission process.

- HEIs need to foster better communication between their SETs/Support centers and their counterparts in high schools to ensure continued support for SWDs.

Based on Q2 findings,

- HEIs need to adopt a more transparent approach to policies and procedures related to SWDs for them to become shared knowledge and practice.

- Offer SWDs training opportunities to develop self-advocacy skills to practice when requesting exam modification, or finding language support or additional tutoring when needed.

- Adopt a more inclusive volunteering and work placement program for SWDs

Based on Q3 findings,

HEIs need to adopt a more intensive approach towards inclusive accommodation and practices that recorded a seriously low availability score. Higher education employees perceived inclusive items listed in table 24 below to be available but not to a great extent, and this is where efforts should be invested. It is also recommended for HEIs to give priority to investing in inclusive services related to physical environment accessibility (highlighted in grey) as these broadcast clear and loud signals as to what extent the college is accessible for SWDs.

Inclusive accommodation / practice	Perceived availability %
Computer program for SWDs	35.7
Information about assistive devices is available	35.7
Emergency evacuation training	35.2
Policies	34.6
Handrails availability	34.6
Regular training to accommodate SWDs	33.5
Accessible restrooms marked on college map	32.9
Training by specialized providers	31.9
Handrails on both sides of stairs	30.8
Handrails on both sides of ramp	28.5
Appropriate light switch height	28
Rights in handbook	27
Orientations	26.9
Accessible direction signage	26.9
Sufficient lighting for SWDs parking	26.4
A guideline for accommodation is available	25.8
lectures	24
Notices	23
Accessible first aid kits	23
Elevators with visual & audible signals	22
Accessible classroom tables	18.6
Signage use raised letters	17.5

Table 24: Inclusive provisions for HEIs to improve

4.7 Collation of the research findings

Q1 – How are transition services perceived by grade 12 SWDs and their Specialists?		
Grade 12 SWDs perceptions of transition services		**Grade 12 SWDs' SETs Perceptions of transition services**
• **Perceptions related to admission process**		
• EmSAT registration process is not fair for ALL. • College and major selection hinges on family and distance from home.		• EmSAT and NAPO online application is mainly guided by the school academic advisor with involvement of SETs in some cases. The academic advisor also involves the SWDs parent to facilitate the process. • University orientation visits to high school would facilitate admission if info about available inclusive provisions is included.
• **Perceptions of HS inclusive services that prepare them to succeed in higher education**		
Definition	Practicalities supersede theoretical definitions – SET role, awareness training sessions	Clear definition would guide transition as it would clarify the difference in environment bet. HS and higher education. And sensitize parents to this difference
Assistive resources	The availability of an SET seems to make up for missing or under-equipped resource center	Their role as part of transition services is multifaceted and perceived to enhance SWDs self-confidence as they facilitate integration in their school community.
Policies & procedures	35% reported that they received info about their school policies and procedures in school orientation sessions	School-For-All is in implementation however IEP as part of the school-for-all lacks a link to post-secondary education – a disconnect Policies and procedures cultivates a sense of right. Better communication and collaboration between high school and HEIs is needed – As per MOE policies and procedures visual impairments receive assistive devices per category this would facilitate their transition
Accommodation and facilitation	Examples shared by SWDs participants: • Modification of instruction • Individualized pre-exam coaching • Socialization with peers	• SETs provides a list of exam modifications they routinely provide and mentioned this support is only available for course work assessments and highlighted that MOE FINAL EXAMINATION is excluded. • Support networks across institutions in secondary education and post-secondary education is needed to boost SWDs self-

	• Opportunities to meet teachers/SETs face to face to request support	confidence (parent's quote "who would follow up on my child")
Awareness training sessions	Perceived to improve communication: Sign language, reduce bullying, promotes respect	SETs attended different training related to PWDs provided by the MOE
Accessible environment	School lacks auto doors and elevators,	Availability of environmental facilitation would promote SWDs mobility independence which would benefit them when navigating new campuses.
Emergency and evacuation services	Sound only fire alarm, training provided by civil defense specialist, meeting at assembly points, emergency response team list familiar with it, "find SET in case of emergency" While available not so empowering	Emergency evacuation drills is provided to all students with some schools not including SWDs out of protection Civil defense trained most schools Still college ground will be different and more training will be needed
Activities and clubs	Promotes a sense of achievement beyond the classroom and a sense of pride and belonging	Tailored activities with parent involvement help develop SWDs self-confidence and communication skills
• **Perceived challenges to join higher education**		
▪ Pre-admission concerns – meeting EmSAT requirement, MOE website inaccessible, family attitudes towards post-secondary education ▪ Post-admission concerns - meeting program standards (GPA), expecting similar SET engagement as in HS.		IEP for grade 12 is needed Communication between High School and HEIs would ensure continued support Availability of SETs and Support centers in higher education would provide SWDs with similar support received in HS.
Q2 – What inclusive provisions do SWDs in HE value the most?		
Admission process		• **Unprepared for EmSAT –** due to lack of test practice material, need to upgrade skills to use assistive device in English, end up taking the English foundation course which sets them back in time compared to their peers

	• **College selection revisited** – college orientation offered in schools lack info, they later discover distance from home or campus inaccessible • **Major selection** – a few were unsure, "afraid from the name of the course"
	•
Higher education provisions	
Definition and list of accommodations provided	• All unfamiliar with either, haven't read the student handbook, a few mentioned that provisions are offered per need by the support center
Skilled person and assistive resources	• Available and valued in some campuses while lacking and inadequate in others – as description of the role of available skilled person and assistive devices show
Policies and procedures	• As per the national policy – while participants exhibited unfamiliarity with a section detailing their rights in the student handbook, where available they were quick to report on the changes that recently took place to reflect the new national policy such as the change of the center name
Accommodations and facilitations	• Accessible college website where available streamlines the process of requesting accommodations – and reduces students confusion, • Requests for exam modifications • Seeking support for English classes-indicating taking responsibility for their own learning which needs to be further promoted
Training and knowledge of employees and other Students	• Training removes physical and communication barriers, described as either professional or typical
Environmental facilitation	• Yes, but not fully, they would like to see accessible parking, elevators, signage in braille
Emergency evacuation services	• Audio not visual alarms • 2 attended civil defense training • List of emergency response team available but not in braille
Activity clubs	• 50% engaging in activity clubs with one leading and participating in clubs out of campus- but the majority were limited to activities at the support center

Perceived future	• Majority would like to continue their post graduate degrees with a few planning to get some work experience first • some refer to high school provisions and expect same in college
Q3 - How inclusive are the policies, practices, procedures and other accommodations in selected higher education institutions?	

• Surveyed college employees' perceptions seem to indicate that inclusive provisions need to stand out for it to be registered.
    o Responses to physical environment accessibility items such as availability of automatic sliding doors, SWDs parking spaces and ramps recorded a high score on the approval scale, (77.5%, 90%, and 77% respectively).
    o On the other hand, items related to a less tangible inclusive practice such as availability of SWDs policies, mentioning their rights in Student Handbook, or providing lectures on SWDs rights on regular basis populated the opposite end of the continuum, (34%, 27% and 24% respectively).
• Interestingly, 46% of participants approved of the item regarding availability of procedures related to SWDs in their college.	

• Q4. What accommodations and practices can HEIs adopt to be more inclusive?	

o HEIs need to adopt a more inclusive framework when offering orientation visits to High Schools; providing more information about their inclusive provisions and campus accessibility would greatly facilitate the admission process.
 	
    o HEIs need to foster better communication between their SETs/Support centers and their counterparts in high schools to ensure continued support for SWDs.
 	
    o HEIs need to adopt a more transparent approach to policies and procedures related to SWDs for them to become shared knowledge and practice.
 	
    o Offer SWDs training opportunities to develop self-advocacy skills to practice when requesting exam modification, or finding language support or additional tutoring when needed.
 	
    o Adopt a more inclusive volunteering and work placement program for SWDs
 	
    o HEIs need to adopt a more intensive approach towards inclusive accommodation and practices that recorded a seriously low availability score, particularly those related to physical environment accessibility.	

Table 25 Collation of the research findings

4.8 Summary

This section of the paper described the findings of a qualitative and quantitative study on the accessibility of inclusive provisions for students with disabilities transitioning into higher education in the UAE. A total of 222 participants from eight schools and four higher education institutions from Ras Al Khaimah, Dubai, and Abu Dhabi to represent the UAE. The study findings were divided into themes of readiness journey from high school into higher education, inclusive services included: disability definition, assistive resources, policies and procedures, accommodation and facilitation, training sessions, accessible environment, emergency and evacuation, and activity, clubs or events.

Furthermore, themes that developed from the open-ended questions from the school SETs interview included: (1) importance of the implementation of an IEP for all grades including HE, (2) the importance of communication and cooperation between schools and higher education, and (3) a significant role of specialized education specialists.

Results from the statistical analysis indicated that the questionnaire questions were statistically significant. More than half of respondents, 51.1% (n=93), said that they know someone with a disability outside their institution. Further, most of the responses with high percentages were unable to decide with the regards to availability of the provided services and accessibility for PWDs. However, they largely believed that the availability of inclusive services are extremely very important (please see Appendix X).

The next chapter is the last chapter, Chapter 5, presents the discussion, conclusion and the recommendations.

5.0 CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

5.2 summary of the study

5.2.1 Process of the study

5.2.2 Theoretical basis

5.2.3 Major outcomes

5.3 Discussion

5.3.1 Discussion of research question one findings

5.3.2 Discussion of research question two findings

5.3.3 Discussion of research question three findings

5.3.4 Discussion of research question four findings

5.4 Recommendations

5.5 Implications for further research

5.0 CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This study was conducted with the main aim of exploring the extent to which higher education is accessible in the UAE, in terms of inclusive provisions aimed at SWDs transitioning to post-secondary education. The study adopted a sequential mixed methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative techniques: document analysis, interview, questionnaire and observation were used to collect the research data. Moreover, the researcher used a manual wheelchair on each site to get first-hand experience of on-campus accessibility. This chapter discusses the findings of the study.

Many PWDs are eager to complete their higher education to actualize their dreams, but some are concerned that absence of inclusive services they were receiving in their high schools would be the common characteristic of the next educational stage. No previous studies have been conducted in the UAE regarding a clear transition process for PWDs from high school into higher education, but there are few studies that have focused on the challenges the PWDs face in higher education.

The aim of this study is investigating inclusive provisions that facilitate transitioning PWDs from high school into higher education institutions. How inclusive provisions are as perceived by PWDs as well as by those who provide these services within the HEIs can point out how accessible the universities are for PWDs. Additionally, the study explored the implementation of the standards that could be used to improve and develop services for PWDs in HEIs.

This chapter presents the summary of the study (process of the study, theoretical basis and major outcomes), discussion of the research study questions, conclusion and recommendation.

5.2 Summary of the study

5.2.1 Process of the study

The study sample included two hundred and twenty two 222 participants from eight high schools and four higher education institutions from Ras Al Khaimah, Dubai, and Abu Dhabi to represent the UAE. A total of 40 face-to-face interviews were conducted (seventeen with Grade 12 PWDs and eight with their SETs, in addition to fifteen interviews with PWDs in higher education). A

total of one hundred and eighty two participants from higher education completed the study questionnaire. Lastly, observation to explore the institutions' accessibility of PWDs was also completed.

 The researcher of this study allowed each participants to choose a suitable location and time to make sure that the interview was conducted in a safe, convenient and accessible environment. Each participant was given a chance to read the consent form. Before they sign the form the researcher explained clearly the research purpose and the confidentiality agreement.

The researcher used two main analytical approaches: statistical analysis and coding as per data type (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2011). To analyze the qualitative data, the researcher followed the models of Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) using coding. A code is defined as "a word or a short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing and evocative attribute appropriate for language based on visual data" (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2011). To analysis the qualitative data, the researcher used SPSS version 16.0 and IBM SPP software statistics version 20. This tool was used to organize, calculate and analyze the study questionnaire data. This software is the most common statistical data analysis tool used in educational research (Muijs 2011).

5.2.2 Theoretical basis

In this study the researcher have used a blend of related theories to inform the study decision making process while exploring answering the study research questions aimed at investigating inclusive services that facilitate transitioning PWDs from high school into higher education.

Schlossberg's transition theory focuses on facilitating people's transition experience by identifying the type of the transition that changes according to the stages of their lives, and the related resources that to be implemented to make the experience successful (Anderson, Goodman & Schlossberg 2012). Transition is "a movement of PWDs from secondary school to postsecondary education, work, and community environment" (Bakken & Obiakor 2008, p.5). Moreover, it is to assist PWDs to achieve their career and life goals to become more active members of their

communities. Furthermore, transition is to measure goals for each student, and must be based on their performance, goals, and needs (Grigal, Madaus & Hart 2018). Schlossberg's theory provides insights into the impact of offering a transition process to facilitate movement from one stage to another (Forney 2013, p.212-213). The main four factors 4Ss (situation, self, support and strategies) were identified as potentially important liabilities or assets that influence an individual's ability to cope with the transition. Each one of these 4Ss factors is a combination set of different variables to support identifying possible resources for effective adaptation to the change. Each of these factors were explained in details in chapter two.

Sociocultural Theory of Vygotsky calls for the differentiation of the teaching support which can be internal and external. Kemp (2015, p. 32) summarized sociocultural theory in a brief but powerful statement stating that "humans learn from each other". Gaad and Almotairi (2013, p. 288) indicated that "education systems have been applying the cognitive development theories of Piaget and Vygotsky for many years". Vygotsky mentioned two main levels of development, the actual development level, and the zone of proximal development. The concept of the proximal development fits inclusive education settings well, because it allows PWDs to work with more competent others who scaffold their development right at their required level (Vygotskij & Cole 1978).

Ecological Systems Theory of Bronfenbrenner's explains the connections between (a) the environment and individuals, and (b) the environment and people as they influence each other. This theory helps to understand how each individual behaves in various environments differently (Bronfenbrenner 1986). Furthermore, Bronfenbrenner (1986) stated that the school environment is one of the main key factors which affects students' development, and this must go beyond the effect of positive attitude towards PWDs and encompasses all aspects of all systems.

Contact Theory of Allport's, considered "attitude" as the main concept of social psychology (Allport, Clark & Pettigrew 1954). Allport also believed that positive contact facilitates interaction, increases social acceptance, and reduces prejudice (Bridges & Tomkowiak 2010). Researchers (Otero 2012; Geidel 2015; Head & Pirrie 2007; May 2012) agree that positive attitudes towards PWDs lead to successful inclusion. Equal status, intra group cooperation, common goals, and social and institutional supports are the main conditions listed by Allport to reduce prejudice (Allport, Clark & Pettigrew 1954).

5.2.3 Major outcomes

Themes related to readiness for the journey from high school to higher education, and education provisions for PWDs emerged. Findings also reveal specialized education teachers perceptions of other inclusive services that can facilitate PWDs transition to HEIs. The findings of this study indicate that there seems to be a "missing link" with a lack of awareness and a lack of information related to inclusive provisions at HEIs which can only result in a tangled transition experience. The study also revealed that many PWDs are eager to complete their higher education to actualize their dreams, but some fear the next stage because they do not know if the specialized services they were receiving in their previous high schools would be available in HEIs.

5.3 Discussion

The study aimed to investigate inclusive provisions that facilitate transitioning PWDs from high school into higher education. How inclusive provisions are as perceived by PWDs as well as by those who provide these services within the HEIs point out how accessible the universities are for PWDs. As mentioned earlier, a sequential mixed methods of qualitative and quantitative methods were used to collect and analyze the data to answer the four questions that drove this research as:

RQ1: How are transition services perceived by Grade 12 students with disabilities and their specialists?

RQ2: What inclusive provisions do students with disabilities in higher Education value the most?

RQ3: How inclusive are the policies, practices, procedures, and other accommodations in selected higher Education institutions?

RQ4: What accommodations and practices can HEIs adapt to be more inclusive?

5.3.1 Discussion of research question one findings

How are transition services perceived by Grade 12 students with disabilities and their specialists?

The study interview conducted indicated that in this study, Grade 12 SWDs perceived the process of registering for the college admission exam to be complicated, and the majority required assistance from family, friends, SETs, or subject teachers to complete it. This perception is complemented by how Grade 12 SETs described their role in facilitating the online college application process in collaboration with the school academic advisor and involvement from the SWDs' parents. McCoy, Shevlin & Rose (2020) argued that increased communication and cooperation between PWDs parents and schools is a desirable outcome of transition planning which is essential for a successful transition to higher education. With high schools playing a more proactive role in planning for transitional services related to college admission exam (EmSAT preparation and registration) and online college application (NAPO process), it is highly likely that Grade 12 SWDs would feel more empowered to complete these steps on their own or with the required support when needed as it would have been projected in the transition plan.

The following presents the Grade 12 PWDs' perceptions of inclusive services that would prepared them to succeed in higher education as identified in themes: (1) clear definition guides transition services, (2) orientation related to policy and procedures builds PWDs sense of rights, (3) accommodation and facilitation builds PWDs self-motivation, (4) training sessions about PWDs can be opportunities to facilitate communication, (5) the more accessible the environment, the better, (6) empower PWDs to use self-advocacy skills (particularly in case of an emergency), and (7) participation in extracurricular activities builds a sense of pride and achievement.

In chapter 4 of this research each theme was elaborated upon with reference to Grade 12 SWDs and their SETs views of these inclusive services that can facilitate their HEI transition.

Clear definition guides transition services – as mentioned in chapter 1, PWDs are" the one who has long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others" (Bendix 2013, p. 36). Furthermore, the UAE School for All guideline defines "disability" as a term that refers to any permanent or temporary conditions resulting from an illness. It is also used more often to describe a lack of capacity to perform due to a loss in function or a body part. Consequently, it affects an individual's ability to implement specific tasks like hearing and speaking. Disability is often related to physical problems, but it is also referred to as social adjustment and educational issues (MOE 2010, p. 60).

The majority of interviewees in the study revealed that they have not read a clear definition related to PWDs nor pertaining to different categories. But some participants mentioned that their school SETs always introduces new PWDs to everyone through conducting awareness training sessions related to each category. Generally, SETs participants mentioned that definition would guide transition as it would acknowledge the differences in the environment between high school and higher education. Supporting evidence from literature explained a number of the differences between high school settings and higher education setting for PWDs and called for raising PWDs awareness towards these different settings. (Antony & Shore 2015; Conley 2010; Hamblet 2014; Hughes & Lackenby 2015; Izzo & Horne 2016; Marie 2016; NDCO 2015). When Grade 12 SWDs were asked about the availability of a clear definition for disability their responses included

references to support provided by their SET. In other words, to be perceived by SWDs in Grade 12, definitions need to be translated into situated practices.

Orientation related to policy and procedures builds PWDs' sense of rights – as mentioned by Gaad and Almotairi (2013), it is very important to implement better policies related to PWDs' rights. In this study, only 35% of interviewed grade 12 SWDs reported that they had received information related to policies and procedures. The above percentage indicate that highlighting policies and procedures related to PWDs during orientation sessions is very important, and it can raise awareness among all staff and students. A few Grade 12 SWDs were quick to point out that those orientation sessions aid their peers in learning how to communicate and deal with them. The study findings also showed that the School for All Guideline is in implementation; however, IEP, as part of the school-for-all, lacks a link to post-secondary education. Moreover, school SETs revealed that as per MOE policies and procedures, visual impairments receive assistive devices per category, thus in a way facilitating their transition.

The findings show that only two school SETs are implementing an IEP for PWDs. Moreover not all of them are spending time to speak about higher education to PWDs during an IEP meeting. The findings of the study propose a need to implement and consider the Schlossberg's 4Ss factors as a guide to create a full plan that can support PWDs, their family, and the full team of IEP for a successful transition.

Accommodation and facilitation builds PWDs self-motivation – Interviewed grade 12 SWDs shared with the researcher how they received their accommodation, they also mentioned that they still have fears regarding joining higher education due to facing some challenges – related to registration phase, communicating with their peers, grammar, lack of awareness towards their health condition, and submitting their assignment on time. It is important to note that their fears may not be completely unfounded as a recent study by AlObeidli (2018) reviewed that one participant from her research could not continue his study due to a lack of support for hearing impairment individuals in the UAE. Due to this challenge, he decided to continue his study in the United States. AlObeidli (2018) emphasized that it is necessary to reduce the obstacles facing

PWDs and a solid preparation plan of the previous school (high school) team to ensure their higher education success.

SETs in selected schools also mentioned that they provide a list of exam modifications as their role. Still, these modifications are only available during the course work, not for Grade 12 final exams. SETs also confirmed that these modifications are excluded during the MOE final examination. Also, one SET said that every year parents of PWDs express their concern over their kids' future after high school. This comes as a result of short term planning of support related to accommodation and facilitation as it tapers off as Grade 12 approaches its end.

Training sessions about PWDs can be opportunities to facilitate communication – all the study participants revealed that training sessions are very important. According to Oliver (2013), the social model has become the main framework for developing disability awareness to build on the strengths of PWDs. The main advantage of the social models is to promote the integration of the disability into self and a sense of community and pride (Altmaier & Hansen 2012, p. 463).

Grade 12 SWDs participants also revealed that training sessions are perceived to improve communication and reduce bullying and promote respect. As Evans et al. (2017, p. 73) stated that oppression can happen due to lack of awareness; as this study finding indicate, training awareness sessions do indeed reduce oppression. The school SETs also stated that the MOE does provide different training sessions related to PWDs.

The more accessible the environment, the better – the findings indicated that the selected schools lack auto doors and elevators. These barriers play a negative role in the PWDs experience at schools. This finding confirms results from other studies maintaining that the environment is one of the main barriers that PWDs are facing (Oliver & Barnes 2010). Chin and Trimble (2004) also stated that the problem is not with PWDs, but is in an environment that fails to adapt to the PWDs. These current findings go deeply into the Bronfenbrenner's theory thereby emphasizing the connections between the environment and individuals and the environment and people as they influence each other's by identifying five main environmental systems: macrosystem, exosystem, mesosystem, microsystem, and chronosystem (Hayes, O'Toole & Halpenny 2017).

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The school SETs also mentioned the importance of providing auto doors and elevators to promote PWDs mobility and independence. Improving on the physical environment accessibility in high schools was also perceived by the SETs to have the benefit of empowering SWDs when they start navigating new campuses on their own in the next phase.

Promote PWDs' self-advocacy skills (in case of an emergency) – all of the interviewed grade 12 SWDs mentioned that the fire alarm across their schools uses only audio signals. They also noted that they had attended training related to the evacuation provided by the civil defense specialists. But interestingly, some of these participants were informed that during any evacuation practices, they don't need to evacuate, and they need to search for their school SETs. Similarly, one SET mentioned that the school does provide drills to evacuate the school, but SWDs are excluded during any evacuation for their safety. Other SETs, however, see that involving SWDs in evacuation drills is very important because college ground is not the same as the school ground, and more training is needed. This focus on self-advocacy skills confirms findings from previous studies (Alhammadi 2014; AlObeidli 2018; Cumming 2014; Gaad & Almotairi 2013; Izzo & Horne 2016; Kim & Aquino 2017; Kim & Aquino 2017; Kochhar, Bassett, & Webb 2009; Test et al. 2005; Wehman 2011).

Extracurricular activities build a sense of pride and achievement – Vygotsky's (1978) observations clarified that every child, from the first day of their life, learns, Vygotsky also believes that children do develop by copying others. In this study, due to discouragements only four of interviewed grade 12 SWDs did not participate in any clubs or activities. In contrast, the rest of participants in this group have experienced taking part in extracurricular activities both inside the school and outside the school. Participating in activities and clubs can promote a sense of achievement beyond the classrooms and a sense of pride and belonging. Alhammadi (2014), in her study, confirmed that lacking to participate in in-class activities can also be one of the challenges that PWDs encounter. Oliver and Barnes (2010) agreed that when educational institutions provide the right spaces and activities to accommodate PWDs, they will not face any difficulties when they join inclusive higher education settings.

In this study the school SETs believed that SWDs parents' involvement can help develop SWDs' self-confidence and develop their communication skills. In 1997 the IDEA prompted parents of PWDs to be involved in their kids' education process (Oliver & Barnes 2010). This finding confirms what parents themselves believe, as concluded in a study that interviewed 26 parents of children with intellectual developmental disabilities in higher education. Prioritizing parents' skill development and support was a major set of strategies needed for helping SWDs in higher education to be successful. They also confirmed that another strategy was about recognizing family interdependence and involvement, and it was confirmed that it was important for parents to be involved in supporting their kid's outcomes (Talapatra, Miller and Schumacher-Martinez, 2018).

5.3.2 Discussion of research question two findings

What inclusive provisions do students with disabilities in higher education perceived as the most valuable?

Interviewed SWDs from higher education realized that their journey from high school to higher education was not easy. This finding can be interpreted as a warning since Coertjens et al. (2017) revealed that the majority of PWDs who withdraw are more likely to drop out during the first year.

In this study, in terms of the EmSAT exam (college admission exam), higher education SWDs revealed that they were unprepared for this test. This results in them having to take the English foundation course when they join higher education which puts them back in time when compared with their peers. For example, some participants were between 20-26 years old when they started their main major, and this is due to a lack of test practice materials and assistive devices. In terms of the college selection, most participants changed their college due to the distance between the college and their houses. Higher education SWDs revealed that they did not hear anything about PWDs services before they join higher education, and when they joined, they discovered many challenges, including "fear from majors" and what to choose. Alhammadi (2014) ndicated that few of her study participants could not get into majors they wanted to study, such as physics, television radio, education, business, geology, etc. Alhammadi (2014) also confirmed that there is a lack of adjustment for visual information. Similarly, a recent study by AlObeidli (2018) found that one of her study participants spent almost ten years due to her health condition and kept changing her

majors. Coertjens et al. (2017) stated that highlighting university services for first-year students during orientation sessions is very important. Accordingly, SWDs in higher education would highly value timely information related to college admission exams and college and major selection.

The following section is as discussion of the main themes of findings related to RQ2.

First provision – the definition of disability and accommodation list, the study participants revealed that they were unfamiliar with these two points, nor did they read about it in the college student handbook. However, some participants mentioned that they do receive their accommodations as offered by the support center. Upon double-checking the student's handbook, the researcher was able to find generic guidance advising SWDs to request their accommodation online. It was mentioned by Evans et al. (2017, p. 73) that the specialists or advocates of PWDs can check policies and practices such as admission process, activities, etc. to make sure that they are equal like their peers. Evans et al. (2017) also mentioned that these specialists could highlight the main values and beliefs through the campus media, newsletters, students' handbook, and their main campus website.

Second provision – skilled person and assistive resources, results of the study indicated that a qualified person and assistive aids are available and valued on some campuses. On other campuses, they are lacking and inadequate. Wehman (2011) points out the importance of this provision in the transition plan. Also, findings from Evans et al. (2017) indicate that the specialists' role is to assess and develop rehabilitation plans that focus on the PWDs according to their previous work level and help PWDs to adapt to their environment.

Third provision – policies and procedures, in this study, the interview conducted with SWDs in higher education showed the absence of the selected sites' policies and procedures. According to the responses from participant campuses, they mentioned that their institutional policies and procedures are still under process. Each site is implementing its practices when it comes to supporting PWDs. Simultaneously, participants exhibited unfamiliarity with the new policy of people of determination to deal with their rights in the student handbook. But they were aware of the changes happening across the UAE particularly changing the centers' name removing

"disability" and using "people of determination" instead. Researchers Evans et al. (2017) confirm that whoever works with disability resources should operate within the Minority model's context to raise awareness among all PWDs regarding any discrimination that they might face. This discrimination might be there during their college journey and within society. Evans et al. (2017) see that implementing this would raise awareness to encourage all students to obtain their rights and policies to create a fair environment.

The fourth provision – accommodation and facilitation, findings related to this provision indicate that participant SWDs could access their college websites and request for exam accommodations. Participants were giving 100% additional time, and some were offered 50% extra time. Moreover, participants mentioned many other accommodations. On the other hand, few students faced some challenges while requesting their accommodation. Providing accommodation is one of the team tasks that are working at the disability resource office. Evans et al. (2017). Alhammadi (2014) indicated that accommodation needs to be implemented for each category depending on their needs. For example, all her study participants revealed that they were not given enough support during their exam. Providing the right accommodations will reduce many barriers that PWDs face when it comes to joining inclusive settings (Oliver & Barnes 2010).

Fifth provision – training and knowledge of employees and other support services. Results of this study show that all the participants believed that training sessions for all employees and students are very important. It removes both physical, and communication barriers. Nonetheless, provided trainings was described as either "professional" or "typical" depending in which campus the participant experienced which indicates disparity in related provisions. Alhammadi (2014) study presents that most of her study participants followed a Braille training provided by their university, but they did not practice it. Evans et al. (2017) point out that lacking the training for specialists can cause some difficulties. Gaad and Almotairi's (2013) study in the UAE found that higher education lacks support for both staff and PWDs. Lastly, it was suggested by the faculty that training is needed (Gaad & Almotairi 2013).

Sixth provision – environmental and facilitation, results show that all the selected sites of PWDs from higher education responses were similar. They indicated that their campus is accessible but not fully accessible. Participants of the current study would like to see accessible parking spaces, elevators, and signage in Braille. This is in line with Alhammadi's findings (2014) that showed significant accessibility issues across all the selected sites. In her study, participants indicated that elevators were not fully accessible too.

Seventh provision – emergency and evacuation services, Sawyer and Bright (2014) include that both the audio-visual fire alarm provides equal access to allow PWDs who are deaf (hard of hearing) and those with vision impairment to be able to evacuate safely. According to the responses of interviewed higher education SWDs, they did not attend any evacuation training related to PWDs and how to evacuate. But only two of the participants did attend training provided by the civil defense. Gaad and Almotairi (2013), in their study, suggested giving training to all staff for health-related and safety issues, including emergency procedures. Lastly, all the current study participants mentioned that the list of an emergency response team is available but not in Braille. A small detail but very revealing in terms of how much detailed planning is required for a smoother transition that facilitate higher education for SWDs.

Eighth provision – activity and clubs, only 50% of the current study participants were engaged in activities and clubs. Findings related to this provision also indicate that participation in activity clubs for the majority of SWDs was limited to activities at the support center only like White Cane Day, Hearing Day, Autism Day, etc. Including a set of activities in PWDs IEP to enhance students move from school to post-school events was suggested (Osborne & Russo 2014).

5.3.3 Discussion of research question three findings

How inclusive are the policies, practices, procedures, and other accommodations in selected higher Education institutions?

Surveyed college employees' perceptions seem to indicate that inclusive provisions need to stand out for it to be registered. Responses to physical environment accessibility items such as availability of automatic sliding doors, SWDs parking spaces and ramps recorded a high score on the approval scale, (77.5%, 90%, and 77% respectively). On the other hand, items related to a less tangible inclusive practice such as availability of SWDs policies, mentioning their rights in Student Handbook, or providing lectures on SWDs rights on regular basis populated the opposite end of the continuum, (34%, 27% and 24% respectively). Interestingly, 46% of participants approved of the item regarding availability of procedures related to SWDs in their college. This focus on inclusive provisions and physical environment accessibility confirms findings from previous studies (Events et al. 2017; First, Cheak-Zamora & Teti 2016; Forney et al. 2013; Hayes, O'Toole & Halpenny 2017; Izzo and Horne 2016; Oliver and Barnes 2010)

5.3.4 Discussion of research question four findings

What accommodations and practices can HEIs adapt to be more inclusive?

HEIs need to adopt a more inclusive framework when offering orientation visits to High Schools; providing more information about their inclusive provisions and campus accessibility would greatly facilitate the admission process. HEIs need to foster better communication between their SETs/Support centers and their counterparts in high schools to ensure continued support for SWDs. HEIs need to adopt a more transparent approach to policies and procedures related to SWDs for them to become shared knowledge and practice. Offer SWDs training opportunities to develop self-advocacy skills to practice when requesting exam modification, or finding language support or additional tutoring when needed. Adopt a more inclusive volunteering and work placement program for SWDs

HEIs need to adopt a more intensive approach towards inclusive accommodation and practices that recorded a seriously low availability score, particularly those related to physical environment

accessibility. More effort is also required to promote SWD' self-advocacy skills. This focus on self-advocacy skills confirms findings from previous studies (Alhammadi 2014; AlObeidli 2018; Cumming 2014; Gaad & Almotairi 2013; Izzo & Horne 2016; Kim & Aquino 2017; Kim & Aquino 2017; Kochhar, Bassett, & Webb 2009; Test et al. 2005; Wehman 2011).

5.5 Recommendations

In light of the above, the researcher recommends the following:

- The MOE need to create a link to bridge the gap between High Schools and Higher Education Institutions. Currently, there is a missing link that needs to be addressed, this can help provide the needed statistics about PWDs in higher education.

- The Ministry of higher education in collaboration with Ministry of community Development need to produce and update databases with current SWDs status in post-secondary education institutions. This would be a trustworthy resource for future researchers investigating inclusive higher education practices.

- Strengthening the relationship between the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Higher education to support transitioning process, with collaboration between high school and higher education. This can be implemented through exchanging experiences between the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Higher Education, and relative institutions.

- Ministry of Education needs to update the School for All guideline to include in-depth transition planning for PWDs at various stages. This should emphasize the importance of transitioning through including transition procedures in the IEP for every PWDs according to their needs to promote PWDs self-efficacy and to increase their academic success at higher education.

- Provide continuous training and workshops for all transition planning team members (special educators, related services providers, advisors or counselors, administrators, and general educators-professional teachers). These training and workshops train the team members to prepare and implement transition plans for PWDs' needs and goals.

- Higher education institutions need to provide seminars, awareness training and conferences conducted by PWDs professionals. These seminars and conferences can also include PWDs, their parents, teachers, and other relevant institutions. The aim of this is to introduce the provided services and the mechanism of their implementation. This does not only help everyone in the institution but is also serves the wider community.

- Higher education institutions need to facilitate the main requirements for admission of PWDs when it comes to selecting their majors at the university, taking into account the type and severity of the disability. Moreover, with some planning, colleges could provide academic majors that match PWDs capabilities and preferences.

- Higher education institutions need to develop more inclusive volunteer and work placement programs to better prepare PWDs for integration into society.

- Higher education institutions would benefit from conducting their own internal self-study to evaluate support services provisions for PWDs in light of international best practices.

- Higher education institutions should invest in hiring staff who are capable of dealing with PWDs with a high experience and scientific competence.

- Similar to the Ministry of Community Development efforts in producing the Quality Standards of Services for Persons with Disabilities in Governmental and Private Institutions, the UAE Ministry of higher education may collaborate with the Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD) to implement best practices and develop local standards for disability services specific for higher education to facilitate equal access for PWDs.

- Higher education institutions at the UAE need to consider the following provisions, presented in Table 26 in an effort to improve their inclusive practices.

Provisions	Consider
Admission process	• Identify the barriers to enter higher education • Identify the needs of PWDs • Educate PWDs about inclusive support and facilities (during orientation sessions and campus visits)
Definition and list of accommodations	• Develop a more inclusive students handbook
Skilled person and assistive resources	• Increase number of disability departments • Hire more specialists at each department • Implement IEP for PWDs
Policies and procedures	• Develop clear policies and procedures that relates to PWDs rights in line with the UAE National Policy
Accommodations and facilitations	• Focus on transition planning practices
Training and knowledge of employees and other Students	• Raise awareness campaigns related to PWDs • Provide training for faculty and all staff on how to teach and support PWDs
Environmental facilitation	• Invest more in the physical environment accessibility
Emergency evacuation services	• Promote more training • Develop the list of emergency response team in braille • Involve PWDs during the evacuation drills • Develop audio and visual warning systems
Activity clubs	• Encourage PWDs to participate and engage in different activity • Involve PWDs in community activities

Table 26: Higher education provisions for improvement

5.6 Implications for further research

This study investigated transitioning provisions provided by Higher Education Institutions for PWDs in RAK, UAE. It would be quite beneficial for further research to attempt exploring transitioning provisions for PWDs in Higher Education Institutions in other emirates such as Dubai and Abdu Dhabi. Investigating transition services offered for PWDs in post-secondary education in other gulf countries would be another parallel line of research worth exploring.

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APPENDICES

Federal Law No. (29) of the Year 2006

Federal Law No. (29) of the Year 2006
Concerning the rights of Persons with Disabilities

We, **Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan**, President of the United Arab Emirates, Having viewed the Constitution,

And Federal law No. (1) of the year 1972, dealing with the jurisdictions of ministries and the powers of ministers, as amended, and

Federal law No. (11) of the year 1972, concerning compulsory education, and

Federal law No. (12) of the year 1972, concerning the organization of clubs and associations in the field of youth care, and

Federal law No. (4) of the year 1976, concerning the establishment and organization of the UAE University, as amended, and

Federal law No. (9) of the year 1976, concerning delinquents and the destitute, and

Federal law No. (8) of the year 1980, concerning the regulating of work relations, as amended, and

Penalty law issued by federal law No. (3) of the year 1987, as amended, and

Penal procedures law issued by federal law No. (35) of the year 1992, as amended, and

Pensions and Social Security law issued by federal law No. (7) of the year 1999, as amended, and

Federal law No. (21) of the year 1995, concerning traffic, and

Federal law No. (25) of the year 1999, concerning the General Authority for Youth and Sports, and

Based on the recommendation of the Minister of Social Affairs, the approval of the Cabinet, and the endorsement of the Federal Supreme Council,

We have promulgated the following law:

Chapter I
General Provisions

Article (1)
Definitions

In applying the provisions of this law, the following words shall have the definitions set forth opposite each one, unless stated otherwise:

The State: The United Arab Emirates

The Ministry: The Ministry of Social Affairs

The Minister: The Minister of Social Affairs

Concerned Bodies: Federal and local bodies concerned with the implementation of this law.

Person with Disability : Each person with an incapacity, total or partial, permanent or temporary, in his physical, sensory, mental, communication, educational, or psychological abilities to an extent of being unable to fulfill his regular requirements.

ID Card: The personal ID card granted by the Ministry to a person with disability, which shall be considered an official document showing that the holder is a person with Disability, thus entitling him to the rights and services set out in this law and the regulations and decisions issued for its implementation.

Discrimination: Any discrimination or disqualification due to disability which incurs damages or unacknowledgment of any of the rights prescribed in the effective legislations in the UAE or enjoying or exercising such rights based on equality.

Article (2)

The purpose of this law is to preserve the rights of a person with disability and provide all the services according to his abilities and potential. This disability must not impede his ability to benefit from these rights and

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services, especially in the areas of social, economic, medical, educational, profession vocational, cultural, and recreational services.

Article (3)

The State shall guarantee to ensure equality between a person with disability and his counterparts who do not have disability, and to not discriminate due to disability in all legislations. The State shall also guarantee to observe this in all the economic and social development policies and programs, and to take all the suitable measures to prevent discrimination based on disability.

Article (4)

The Ministry shall, in coordination with the concerned bodies, develop awareness programs for person with disability, his family and local community regarding the rights specified in this law and other legislations and services provided to him.

Article (5)

Any decree, criterion, or practice based on legal grounds shall not be considered discrimination, and the State shall guarantee to take all the necessary measures to ensure the entitlement of a person with disability to his rights and privileges, and prevent any deprivation thereof in an arbitrary manner.

Article (6)

The State shall guarantee to provide legal assistance to a person with disability in all cases where his freedom is restricted for any legal reason. In cases of restriction of the freedom of a person with disability, the following measures must be taken:

1. To treat him in a humane manner with consideration to his situation and needs, being a person with disability.
2. To provide him with the necessary information and data related to the reasons for restricting his freedom.

3. To provide assistance in the case of his inability to pay judicial fees, expenses or fines, as prescribed in a Cabinet Decision.

Article (7)

The State shall guarantee to grant a person with disability freedom of expression and opinion using Braille, sign language and other communication methods, as well as the right to request, receive and transfer information based on equality.

Article (8)

The law shall guarantee to ensure the necessary protection to ac person with disability for his correspondence, medical records, and personal matters. The mechanisms of protection shall be set out in the executive regulation of this law.

Article (9)

The Ministry shall, in cooperation with the concerned bodies, establish the centers, institutions, and institutes specialized in the care, training and habilitation of persons with disabilities. These centers, institutions and institutes shall be responsible for the following:

a) habilitation of persons with disabilities to enable them to adjust and integrate to society.
b) Provision of special education for persons with disabilities.
c) Provision of vocational training programs for persons with disabilities.
d) Provision of training for the families of persons with disabilities for dealing with them.

Chapter II
The Rights of persons with disabilities

Section I:
Medical Services and Rehabilitation Services

Article (10)

Every national with disability shall be entitled to the medical services and rehabilitation and support services at the expense of the State, including the following:

a) All surgeries, whether or not arising from disability, like implants, treatment of pressure sores , correction of limbs (orthopedics), and hospitalization in specialized centers and others for intensive or regular treatment. This includes the provision of all the equipment and tools necessary for the success of the operation, be they permanent or temporary.

b) Provision of check-up and treatment by general practitioners, specialists, consultants, dentists, psychological evaluation, audiometry, radiology, laboratory tests and provision of medicines.

c) Rehabilitation and specialized treatment (internal and external), including: physiotherapy, occupational therapy speech therapy, audio therapy, psychological therapy.

d) Technological and assistive devices, both mobile and stationary, (hearing aids, artificial eyes, etc.), and mobility devices (wheel chairs, canes, walkers, sticks), for prevention of pressure sores, and all the tools used in surgeries.

Article (11)

A committee titled "The specialized committee for medical services and rehabilitation for persons with disabilities " shall be established by a Cabinet Decision. The committee shall be chaired by the undersecretary of the Ministry of Health and consist of representatives from the concerned

bodies. The Minister of Health shall schedule the committee meetings and issue its agenda.

The Committee shall have the following responsibilities:
1. To provide diagnostic, treatment, and rehabilitation services and develop the existing medical programs and services in order to serve persons with disabilities.
2. To develop early detection programs and health awareness and education programs, and to secure the means for early specialized intervention in the area of disability.
3. To provide, train and qualify medical staff specialized in all types of disabilities.
4. To conduct national studies to know the causes and consequences of disabilities, and the means for prevention thereof, and to circulate these to the concerned bodies in the UAE.
5. To submit periodic reports to the Minister for onward presentation to the Cabinet to take suitable action thereof.

Section II:
Education

Article (12)
The State shall guarantee to provide for a person with disability equal educational opportunities in all educational institutions, vocational training and continuing education in regular classes or special classes where necessary. The academic curriculum shall be delivered in Braille or sign language or any other method as the case may be.

Disabiliy do not represent an obstacle preventing an individual from applying to or joining any government or private educational institution of any kind.

Article (13)

The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research shall undertake to take the suitable measures, in cooperation with the concerned bodies, to provide educational diagnosis, academic curricula and teaching assistive devices and technologies. The two ministries shall also provide alternative methods that enhance communication with persons with disabilities, and develop alternative strategies for learning, providing a accessible environment in addition to other necessary techniques that ensure the involvement of students with disabilities.

Article (14)

The Ministry of Education and the Ministers of Higher Education and Scientific Research, in cooperation with the concerned bodies, must provide the academic specializations to prepare employees working with student with disability and their families, whether in the areas of early diagnosis and detection or educational, social, psychological, or medical or vocational training, and ensure the offering of training programs during service for the purpose of equipping employees with the latest experiences and knowledge.

Article (15)

A committee titled "The specialized committee for teaching persons with disabilities" shall be established by a Cabinet Decision. The committee shall be chaired by the undersecretary of the Ministry of Education and consist of representatives from the concerned bodies. The Minister of Education shall schedule the committee meetings and issue its agenda.

The Committee shall have the following responsibilities:
1. To develop executive programs for securing equal educational opportunities for all persons with disabilities since early childhood in all educational institutions, whether in regular classes or specialized education units.

2. To develop the methodologies of educational programs and develop the educational plans which keep abreast of technological developments and are compatible with the psychological and developmental characteristics of persons with disabilities.

3. To regulate all matters related to educating persons with disabilities, like programs and admission requirements and procedures in regular classes and taking tests.

4. To make policies for the qualification and training of educational human resources working with persons with disabilities.

5. To provide consultation and technological, technical and educational assistance to all educational institutions planning to receive students with disabilities and study the funding requests related to equipment and technologies and qualification of the environment of the educational institution.

6. To submit periodic reports to the Minister for onward presentation to the Cabinet for taking suitable action thereof.

Section III
Employment

Article (16)

A national person with disability shall have the right to occupy public positions, and disability do not impede the employment of an individual. When administering aptitude tests for employment, disability shall be observed.

Article (17)

The Ministry may sign a contract with other bodies for the implementation of projects for the qualification of persons with disabilities. The Minister shall issue directives setting out the procedure for this matter.

Article (18)

The legislations issued in the UAE specify the procedures that should be taken for securing employment for persons with disabilities in the government and private sectors, as well as provisions for work hours, leaves and other provisions related to the employment of persons with disabilities, and the regulations for end of service and pensions.

The Cabinet, based on the recommendation of the Minister, shall determine the percentage of positions allocated for persons with disabilities in the government and private sectors.

Article (19)

A committee titled "The specialized committee for the employment of persons with disabilities" shall be established by a Cabinet Decision. The committee shall be chaired by the undersecretary of the Ministry and consist of representatives from the concerned bodies. The Minister shall schedule the committee meetings and issue its agenda.

The Committee shall have the following responsibilities:

1. To make the necessary policies for the employment of persons with disabilities and set the requirements for ensuring maximum competence and guaranteeing the continuity of work for the longest period of time possible.
2. To encourage and support persons with disabilities who are qualified to establish projects with economic feasibility, and provide information on the available grants and loans and means of access.
3. To provide information on the labour market, the available jobs and future prospects.
4. To conduct studies on careers and positions so as to be in line with the technological developments and labour market needs.
5. To encourage and direct the private sector towards training, qualifying and recruiting persons with disabilities, and provide support as suitable and within the limits of the available resources.

6. To propose the necessary procedures for ensuring protection for persons with disabilities from all kinds of exploitation at work.
7. To submit periodic reports to the Minister for onward presentation to the Cabinet for taking suitable action thereof.

Section IV
Public, Cultural and Athletic Life

Article (20)

The State shall make the necessary arrangements for ensuring the involvement of persons with disabilities in cultural, athletic, and recreational life, as follows:

1. To develop the innovative, artistic, and intellectual abilities of a person with disability and invest in them for the enrichment of society.
2. To provide a person with disability with all forms of the available literary and cultural materials, including electronic texts, sign language, Braille, and audio multi-media aids, etc.
3. To empower a person with disability to benefit from the media programs, theater performances and artistic displays and all the cultural activities and to promote his involvement and exempt him from fees.
4. To promote the participation of a person with disability in athletic activities organized at the national, regional and international levels.
5. To submit periodic reports to the Minister for onward presentation to the Cabinet for taking suitable action thereof.

Article (21)

A committee titled "The specialized committee for sports and culture for persons with disabilities" shall be established by a Cabinet Decision. The committee shall be chaired by the secretary General of the Youth & Sports Authority and consist of representatives from the concerned bodies. The Minister shall schedule the committee meetings and issue its agenda.

The Committee shall have the following responsibilities:

1. To make policies that ensure the integral development of a person with disability, give him an opportunity to practice safe and enjoyable athletic, cultural and recreational activities which are well suited to his abilities and facilitate his involvement like his counterparts who do not have disability .

2. To broaden the scope of participation in athletic, cultural and promotional activities among persons with disabilities, and incorporate sports for both individuals with special mental needs and those with motor and sensory special needs in the educational programs offered in specialized institutions.

3. To develop programs for the preparation of qualified human resources to work with persons with disabilities in the areas of sports, culture and recreation.

4. To encourage the integration of persons with disabilities with their counterparts who do not have disability in athletic and cultural centers and clubs and camps and provide suitable games and activities for them.

5. To submit periodic reports to the Minister for onward presentation to the Cabinet for taking suitable action thereof.

Section V
Accessible Environment

Article (22)

Every person with disability shall have the right to an accessible environment and to have access to everything that others have access to.

Article (23)

The concerned bodies shall ensure coordination to set the engineering criteria and specifications for establishments and public facilities, issued by a Decision of the Cabinet, based on the recommendation of the Minister.

The decision shall regulate the application of these criteria, specifications and exceptions, with regard to the qualification of establishments for the use of persons with disabilities, in order to meet their needs and ensure their safety.

This Decision shall be applicable to both the government and private sectors, with the exception of institutions excluded by a special provision therein.

Article (24)

The Cabinet shall issue the regulations and conditions of the provision of government accommodation for national person with disability, and shall determine the housing specifications, rules of ownership and other relevant regulations.

Article (25)

1. The necessary technical specifications must be met on roads, public vehicles and land, air and sea transportation, for the use of persons with disabilities.
2. A Cabinet Decision shall be issued for determining the conditions and requirements for granting a driving license to a person with disability. A new special category for persons with disabilities shall be added to driving licenses set out in the traffic law, and a description shall be noted on the license according to the type of disability .

Article (26)

Every insurance company shall undertake to provide insurance for vehicles owned by persons with disabilities where required.

Chapter III
Exemptions

Article (27)
Vehicles used by persons with disabilities shall be exempted from all taxes and fees, based on a disability certificate issued by the Ministry. Exemption may not be granted for another vehicle except following the elapse of five years from the date of previous exemption or the damage of the vehicle. In the event of disposal of this vehicle during this period the taxes and fees due thereto shall be paid.

Article (28)
Vehicles owned by persons with disabilities shall be exempted from car parking charges.

Article (29)
Means of transportation for the associations and centers for persons with disability designated by the Cabinet shall be exempted from licensing fees.

Article (30)
The Cabinet shall designate the associations and centers for persons with disabilities that shall be exempted from the fees imposed on the applications for licensing of buildings submitted for the construction of buildings allocated for the use of persons with disabilities, based on a certificate issued by the Ministry in this regard.

Article (31)
The cases lodged by a person with disability shall be exempted from court fees in accordance with this Law.

Article (32)
All correspondences, including books, newspapers and magazines, for persons with disabilities or associations and centers for persons with disabilities designated by the Cabinet, shall be exempted from postal fees.

Chapter IV
Penalties

Article (33)

Without prejudice to any more severe penalty stipulated in any other law, a penalty of a minimum of Dhs. 1,000 and a maximum of Dhs. 5,000, shall be imposed on any individual who illegally uses a card belonging to a person with disability, without prejudice to the civil responsibility in court. The penalty shall be doubled in the event of repeated use.

Chapter V
Final Provisions

Article (34)

The Ministry shall approve the symbols for persons with disabilities and circulate them to all the bodies supervising the facilities or those that issue brochures and publications and develop programs that include such symbols.

Article (35)

A person with disability shall not be requested to provide any evidence of his disability except the card issued by the Ministry in this regard. The Minister shall set the conditions of access to this card.

Article (36)

The Ministry shall be responsible for licensing non-government institutions specialized in the care, education, training and habilitation of persons with disabilities. Natural or corporate persons may not establish any of the aforesaid institutions unless a license is duly obtained from the Ministry.
A Cabinet Decision shall be issued for regulating the licensing for these institutions and determining the conditions and licensing fees, as well as the commitments and penalties to be imposed in the event of violations.

Article (37)

The Minister shall issue the necessary regulations and decisions for the implementation of this Law.

Article (38)

Any provision contrary to this Law shall be repealed.

Article (39)

This Law shall be published in the official gazette and shall take effect on the date that it is published.

Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahayan
President of the United Arab Emirates - Abu Dhabi, 13.8.2006

Appendix B

MOE approval to collect the data

From: مركز العمليات المدرسية <soc@moe.gov.ae>
Sent: Sunday, March 10, 2019 8:07 AM
To: Muna Mohammad Janahi <Muna.Janahi@moe.gov.ae>
Cc: Fatima Mohamed Abdallah Al Abdouli <fatimam.abdalla@moe.gov.ae>; Naeema A.Malik Alhali <Naeema.ahli@moe.gov.ae>
Subject: تسهيل مهمة باحثة من الجامعة البريطانية بدبي : تعميم إعادة توجيه: / Facilitating Researcher's Survey from The British University in Dubai.

من: مركز العمليات المدرسية
تاريخ الإرسال: Wednesday, March 6, 2019 1:15 PM
الموضوع: تسهيل مهمة باحثة من الجامعة البريطانية بدبي : تعميم / Facilitating Researcher's Survey from The British University in Dubai.

Dear /School Directors , **Subject : Facilitating Researcher's Survey from The British University in Dubai.** - The Ministry of Education sends you their greetings and best wishes. The researcher, Ms. Khawla Al Shihhi is conducting a research study entitled: Access and transfer of students with special needs (students of determination) from secondary education to higher education in the United Arab Emirates. Therefore, the researcher will be visiting special needs support centers and public high schools that is supporting inclusion of special needs students to conduct interviews as well as collect information from students and teachers that supervise them in the Emirate of Ras Al Khaimah. Your corporation in facilitating the researcher's study is highly appreciated. **For further information, please contact:** Email: 2016152070@student.buid.ac.ae **Best Regards,**	السادة / مديرو المدارس الثانوية المحترمين الموضوع: تسهيل مهمة باحثة من الجامعة البريطانية بدبي نهديكم أطيب تحية تقوم الباحثة خولة الشحي من الجامعة البريطانية في دبي بدراسة بعنوان (إمكانية الوصول ومرحلة انتقال طلاب الاحتياجات الخاصة (أصحاب الهمم) من التعليم الثانوي للتعليم العالي في دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة). وعليه ستقوم الباحثة بزيارة مراكز الدعم ومدارس الدمج للثانوية العامة للاحتياجات الخاصة (لأصحاب الهمم) التابعة للوزارة لإجراء المقابلات مع طلاب أصحاب الهمم في إمارة رأس الخيمة ليتم تطبيق البحث ومقابلة الطلبة والمعلمين المشرفين على الطلبة المعينين في البحث وجمع المعلومات حول الخدمات المتوفرة لدعمهم داخل المدرسة الإماراتية والمجتمع المحلي. وعليه نرجو الإيعاز لما يلزم بتسهيل مهمة الباحثة المذكورة، للرد والاستفسار ومزيد من المعلومات يرجى التواصل مع: البريد الالكتروني : 2016152070@student.buid.ac.ae وتفضلوا بقبول فائق الاحترام

Appendix C

HEIs approval to collect the data

Dear Khawla,

Pleased to inform that your application has been approved by the Research Ethics Committee

Attached is the endorsement letter.

Final remark, the committee would like you to note the following:

- Students should not be identified in the reported data

From: Khawla Al Shehhi [mailto:2016152070@student.buid.ac.ae]
Sent: Tuesday, January 22, 2019 2:33 PM

Subject: Permission to Conduct Research Study

Appendix D

HEIs approval to collect the data

Khawla Al Shehhi

From:	
Sent:	Wednesday, January 23, 2019 7:39 AM
To:	Khawla Al Shehhi
Cc:	ALL; -ALL
Subject:	RE: Permission to Conduct Research Study

Dear Colleagues,

Khawla Al Shehhi is pursuing her doctorate and would like to conduct her research at RAK Campuses.

I really appreciate your support to her research.

Regards,
Dr.
Exe
Car

Consent form

CONSENT FORM FOR THE STUDY PARTICIPANTS

This is a consent form, and it is to give you the basic idea about the research.

You are invited to participate in the following research study.

Research title: *Accessibility of inclusive provisions for students with disabilities transitioning into Higher Education in the UAE: An investigative study.*

Researcher: Ms. Khawla Al Shehhi, last year doctoral student at the British University in Dubai.

Research overview: This study is to investigate stakeholders' perceptions of the inclusive provisions in the UAE HEIs. Moreover, to explore the standards that could be used to improve and develop services within an accessible educational environment for PWDs in the higher education institutions.

For your information, the study researcher will use a voice recorder, and once all the interviews are transcribed, only for the research purposes, and at the end of the project, data will be deleted. Moreover, you can withdraw from the study at any time without giving any reason.

I wish to be identified as …………………………………… (Give- preferred name in case of being a study participant the study).

I, the undersigned, give my consent to participate in the **Accessibility of inclusive provisions for students with disabilities transitioning into Higher Education in the UAE: An investigative study** carried out by Ms. Alshehhi. The below signature represents my agreement to take part in the study as a volunteer.

Name of participant	Date	Signature

Name of the researcher	Date	Signature

Appendix F

Study Questionnaire-Pilot study

Please spare a few mutinies of your valuable time to answer the questionnaire, and should take less than 30 minutes of your time to complete. The information provided by you will be kept highly confidential and will be used purely for the academic purpose by the study researcher and strictly for an analysis only.

Selected institutions name will not be mentioned in the study and it will only be mentioned as HEI1, HEI2, HEI3 and, HEI4, etc. Moreover, the researcher will hide question 5 before adding it to the study appendices

Tick the most appropriate answer

part 1: Demographic Information

Gender:☐ Male   ☐ Female

Age: ☐ 20-30 Years old   ☐ 31-40 Years old   ☐ 41-50   ☐ 51 + Years old

Nationality: ☐ Emirati   ☐ Non-Emirati (please specify…………………………………………).

What is your highest Education level? ☐ Doctoral Degree   ☐ Master's degree

☐ Bachelor's Degree   ☐ Higher Diploma Degree ☐ Diploma Degree

Please specify your institution.

What is your current position? (please tick the right box and circle your main role)

☐ Teaching (Faculty and Program chairs).

☐ Facilities operation (Health and safety, security, cleaners, Nurses, cafeteria staff and facilities staff).

☐ Administrative staff (Academic service, Admin staff, Career services staff, Counsellor, IT service staff, Library staff, Marketing staff, Sports specialist staff, Student life, Success center, Volunteering officer and Work placement).

How long have you been at this institution?

☐ Less than one year ☐ 1-2 years   ☐ 3-4 years   ☐ 5-6 years   ☐ 6-10 years   ☐ 10 + years

Do you know anyone with a disability (family or friend)?

☐ Yes ☐ No   (If yes, please specify your relationship to him/her…………………………… please specify type of disability………………………………..…………..…).

part 2: Disability provided services and Importance

The below section includes FIVE SETS OF ITEMS related to the availability of accessibility services for Persons with disabilities at the Higher education institution. For each of the items you are required to provide FIRST your opinion related to the availability of the service, and THEN you are asked to rate the service's degree of importance as you perceive it.

Policies and procedures								
To what extent do you agree with below statements regarding the availability of accessibility services at your institution?					To what degree do you think these services are important?			
1= strongly disagree, 2= somewhat disagree, 3= somewhat agree and 4= strongly agree					1= not at all important, 2= slightly Important, 3= important, and 4= very Important.			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4

Statement								
My institution has policies and procedures dedicated to Persons with disabilities services.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
In my institution, everyone can deal with Persons with disabilities according to set procedures.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Positive notices about Persons with disabilities' rights are well distributed across the campus.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My institution has a written policy related to equal opportunities and non-discrimination.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Information about Persons with disabilities rights and equal opportunities is included in orientation sessions and handbooks.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Permission from Persons with disabilities is secured before any discussion related to their disability.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Information related to Persons with disabilities is treated with confidentiality.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Lectures on Persons with disabilities' rights and equal opportunities are provided by the institution on regular bases.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Accommodation and Facilitation

To what extent do you agree with below statements regarding the availability of accessibility services at your institution?	To what degree do you think these services are important?

1= strongly disagree, 2= somewhat disagree, 3= somewhat agree and 4= strongly agree					1= not at all important, 2= slightly Important, 3= important, and 4= very Important.			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
A guideline for Persons with disabilities accommodations and modifications is available upon request.	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□
Persons with disabilities can request for their accommodations through a specific form.	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□
Persons with disabilities can easily use the institution website.	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□
Classrooms tables at my institution are with adjustable height for Persons with disabilities (particularly wheelchair users).	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□
Computer software for vision impairment and hearing impairment is available in my institution.	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□
Information about assistive devices such as mobile hearing aids for (deafness and hearing impairment) etc. is available.	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□

Knowledge of employees								
To what extent do you agree with below statements regarding the availability of accessibility services at your institution?					To what degree do you think these services are important?			
1= strongly disagree, 2= somewhat disagree, 3= somewhat agree and 4= strongly agree					1= not at all important, 2= slightly Important, 3= important, and 4= very Important.			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
I know whom to contact when it comes to supporting Persons with disabilities.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I know how to use various equipment and materials to help persons with disabilities, including accessible computers, etc.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Training on how to accommodate Persons with disabilities is provided by my institution regularly.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Representatives from specialized service providers are regularly invited by my institution to talk to all employees about different services and accommodations related to Persons with disabilities.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Environmental facilitation								
To what extent do you agree with below statements regarding the availability of accessibility services at your institution?					To what degree do you think these services are important?			
1= strongly disagree, 2= somewhat disagree, 3= somewhat agree and 4= strongly agree					1= not at all important, 2= slightly Important, 3= important, and 4= very Important.			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Parking								

My institution has dedicated parking spaces for Persons with disabilities.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Available parking spaces are in proportion to the number of Persons with disabilities in my institution.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
All the parking spaces for Persons with disabilities are marked with the international symbol of disability.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Parking spaces are designed to accommodate Persons with disabilities.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Reception, doors and entrances

The main reception in my institution is accessible for wheelchair users with a proper height.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Automatic doors are available across the campus.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The automatic doors are well spaced across the campus.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Handrails are available on both sides of the main entrance.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Ramps

Ramps for Persons with disabilities are available at my institution.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

				☐				
Ramps design seems to be with an appropriate slope.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My institution map includes the location for all the ramps.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Handrails are available on both sides for each ramp.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Stairs and Elevators

Handrails beyond the stairwell are available on both sides.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Institution elevators have the visual and audible signals to guide Persons with disabilities.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Public restrooms

The institution map includes the locations for accessible restrooms.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Accessible restrooms are clearly marked with the international symbol.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Restrooms are designed with enough space to accommodate wheelchair users.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Washbasins and mirrors are at appropriate height for Persons with disabilities.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
				☐				

Lighting

	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
The height of all light switches are appropriate for wheelchair users.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Enough lighting in Persons with disabilities parking area is available.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Signage

	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
My institution has enough and appropriate signage with the right locations throughout the campus.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Signage used through the campus uses raised letters and number and/or Braille characters.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Evacuation in emergencies

To what extent do you agree with below statements regarding the availability of accessibility services at your institution?				To what degree do you think these services are important?			
1= strongly disagree, 2= somewhat disagree, 3= somewhat agree and 4= strongly agree				1= not at all important, 2= slightly Important, 3= important, and 4= very Important.			
1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
All exits at my institution are clearly defined and reachable by all.							
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Fire alarms around the campus have audio and visual signs.							
☐	☐	☐		☐	☐	☐	☐

			☐				
Evacuation emergency training which is related to specific disabilities is provided in my institution.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
			☐				
A list of the response team to contact in case of any emergencies related to Persons with disabilities is available and up-to-date.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
			☐				

Please add your email address below if you would like to receive a copy of this research:

Email: ---

Additional comments:

Thank you so much for participation!

Modified version of the pilot study

Accessibility Services Provisions: Perceptions of Availability and Importance Questionnaire

Please spare a few minutes of your valuable time to answer the questionnaire it should take less than 30 minutes to complete. The information provided by you will be kept confidential and will be used purely for the academic purpose by the study researcher and strictly for analysis only.

Persons with Disabilities are those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments, which, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

☐ Confirm your consent to participate in this research study

Please tick the most appropriate answer for part 1 and part 2

part 1: Demographic Information

Gender:☐ Male   ☐ Female

Age: ☐ 20-30 Years old ☐ 31-40 Years old ☐ 41-50 Years old ☐ 51 + Years old

What is your highest Education level?

☐ Doctoral Degree ☐ Master's degree ☐ Bachelor's Degree ☐ Higher Diploma Degree ☐ Diploma Degree

☐ High school ☐ No education

What is your current position? (please tick the right box and please specify your main position) .

☐ Management example (director, etc.), (Please specify ……………………………..……………………………).

☐ Teaching example (Faculty, etc.), (Please specify ……………………………..……………………..…………….).

☐ Facilities operation example (Health and safety, security, cleaners, Nurses, etc.) (Please specify
……………………………..…………………………..………………).

☐ Administrative staff example (Academic service, Admin staff, Career services staff, Counselor, IT, etc.). (Please specify
……………………………..…………………………..………………).

How long have you been at this institution?

☐ Less than one year ☐ 1-2 years ☐ 3-4 years

☐ 5-6 years ☐ 6-10 years ☐ 10 + years

Do you know anyone with a disability outside the context of your institution, (Family/friends)?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, please list them all and next to each specify type of disability (Example: Brother (Autism), Friend (hearing impairment), etc.). If No, continue with the following questions.

………………………………….……………………………………………..……………………………….………………………………………………..

………………………….……………………………………………..……………………………………………………………………………..………………………

...………………………………………..……………………..……………………..……………………………………………..………………………

……………………….……………………..…………………………………………..……………………..

part 2: Accessibility services provisions: Perceptions of availability and importance.

The below section includes FIVE SETS OF ITEMS related to the availability of accessibility services for Persons with disabilities at Higher Education Institutions. For each item:

Provide your opinion

Rate the importance of the services

TICK THE MOST APPROPRIATE ANSWER

(7-12) Policies and procedures

To what extent do you agree with below statements regarding the accessibility services at your institution? If unsure, choose Neither Agree or Disagree.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not at all important	Not so important	Somewhat important	Very important	Extremely important
Policies related to Persons with disabilities is available.	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5
Procedures related to Persons with disabilities is available.	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5
Positive notices about Persons with disabilities' rights are well distributed across the College.	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5
Rights of Persons with disabilities are included in College handbooks.	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5
College orientation sessions cover provisions for Persons with Disabilities.	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5

To what degree do you think these services are important?

Lectures on Persons with Disabilities' rights and equal opportunities are provided on regular bases.	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5

(13-18) Accommodation and Facilitation										
To what extent do you agree with below statements regarding the accessibility services at your institution? If unsure, choose Neither Agree or Disagree.						To what degree do you think these services are important?				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not at all important	Not so important	Somewhat important	Very important	Extremely important
A guideline for Persons with disabilities accommodations and modifications is available upon request.	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5
Persons with disabilities can request for their accommodations easily.	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5
College website is accessible by Persons with disabilities.										

	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5
Classrooms tables are with adjustable height for Persons with disabilities (particularly wheelchair users).	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5
Different computer programmes are available for Persons with Disabilities.	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5
Information about assistive devices (such as mobile hearing aids for deafness and hearing impairment etc.) is available.	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5

(19-22) Knowledge of employees										
To what extent do you agree with below statements regarding the accessibility services at your institution? If unsure, choose Neither Agree or Disagree.						To what degree do you think these services are important?				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not at all important	Not so important	Somewhat important	Very important	Extremely important

	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
There is a contact person when it comes to supporting Persons with Disabilities.	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5
Using various equipment and materials to help Persons with Disabilities (including accessible computers, etc.). is quite easy.	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5
Training on how to accommodate Persons with Disabilities is provided regularly.	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5
Representatives from specialized service providers are regularly invited to run training sessions related to Persons with Disabilities.	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5

(23-40) Environmental facilitation										
To what extent do you agree with below statements regarding the accessibility services at your institution? If unsure, choose Neither Agree or Disagree.						To what degree do you think these services are important?				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not at all important	Not so important	Somewhat important	Very important	Extremely important

	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
			nor disagree							
Parking										
Parking spaces for Persons with Disabilities are available.	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5
All the parking spaces for Persons with Disabilities are marked with the international symbol of disability.	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5
Parking spaces are designed to accommodate Persons with Disabilities.	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5
Reception, doors and entrances										
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not at all important	Not so important	Somewhat important	Very important	Extremely important
The main reception is accessible for wheelchair users.	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5

Automatic doors are available across the College.	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5
The automatic doors are well spaced across the College.	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5
Handrails are available on both sides of the main entrance.	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5
Ramps										
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not at all important	Not so important	Somewhat important	Very important	Extremely important
Ramps for Persons with Disabilities are available.	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5
The location of available ramp(s) are highlighted on the College map.	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5

	Handrails are available on both sides for each ramp.									
	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5

Stairs and Elevators										
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not at all important	Not so important	Somewhat important	Very important	Extremely important
Handrails are available on both sides of the stairs.	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5
College elevators have visual and audible signals to guide Persons with Disabilities.	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5

Public restrooms										
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not at all important	Not so important	Somewhat important	Very important	Extremely important

Accessible restrooms are clearly marked with the international symbol.	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5
Accessible restrooms are highlighted on the College map.	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5
Lighting										
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not at all important	Not so important	Somewhat important	Very important	Extremely important
The height of all light switches are appropriate for wheelchair users.	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5
Sufficient lighting in Persons with Disabilities parking area is available.	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5
Signage										
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not at all important	Not so important	Somewhat important	Very important	Extremely important

	1	2	3 nor disagree	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Enough and appropriate signage with the right directions is available throughout the College.	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5
Signage used through the College uses raised letters and number and/or Braille characters.	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5

(41-45) Evacuation in emergencies										
To what extent do you agree with below statements regarding the accessibility services at your institution? If unsure, choose Neither Agree or Disagree.						To what degree do you think these services are important?				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not at all important	Not so important	Somewhat important	Very important	Extremely important
All emergency exits are clearly defined and reachable by all.	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5

Fire alarms around the College have audio and visual signs.	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5
Evacuation emergency training related to specific disabilities is provided.	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5
A list of the response team to contact in case of any emergencies related to Persons with Disabilities is available.	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5
The height of all first aid kit are appropriate for wheelchair users.	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5

If you do not mind being contacted by the study researcher for the second part of this research, please add your email below.

If you would like to receive a copy of this research report, please add your email below.

Please provide any additional comments.

Thank you for completing the survey

Students with disabilities at Higher Education Institution interview

part 1: Demographic Information

Gender: □ Male   □Female

Age: □ 17-20 Years old   □ 21-30 Years old   □ 31-40 Years old   □ 41+ Years old

What is your medical condition?

How long have you been at this college?

What is your main major?

Who helped you or encouraged you to continue your higher education study?

Why did you select this college to continue your education?

Have you been following an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) when you were at school (from grade 1 to grade 12)? Tell me an example.

Are you following an IEP at this college? How different is your IEP from what other students are doing?

Are you thinking of completing your master or Ph.D. after you graduate from this college (inside the UAE or abroad)?

PART 2: Transitioning services

Please describe your journey from high school to this college?

EmSAT admission requirement

College selection

Major course

Part 3: Higher education provisions for persons with disabilities

Disability definition

How does your college student handbook define disability?

Separate definition for different disabilities like Blindness, Autistic, Dyslexia, and Deafness, etc.

List of accommodations provisions per disability.

Skilled person and learning resource center

Does your college have a skilled person to support you? If yes, please describe their assistive role.

Does your college have a learning resource center for you to use?

- Available assistive resources

- Training sessions

Policies and procedures

In 2017, the UAE government launched the new National policy of Empowering People of Determination; do you think this policy is reflected in your College?

How persons with disabilities are referred to in college (publication, media, etc.)?

Is there is a section in student handbook about persons with disabilities rights?

Whether College orientation sessions cover provisions for Persons with Disabilities.

Accommodation and Facilitation

Describe your registration admission phase (facilitation, challenges, or problems), how did it go?

How do you schedule an appointment if you need to talk to someone (teacher, classmate, specialist, etc.)?

How do you request for accommodation (form, meeting, etc.) when you need it?

Is your college website accessible?

Do you receive additional time during your exams?

Do you receive different exam with less questions than your classmates do?

Do you think you need to take your exam in a separate venue? Why?

Describe different types of assistance provided to support your academic progress (in class, outside of class, etc.).

Knowledge of employees and students

How would you describe the way college employees and student communicate with you?

Do you think your college needs to offers training sessions for all employees and student related to dealing with persons with disabilities?

Environmental facilitation

Do you think your College is accessible for persons with disabilities like parking, reception, doors, entrances, stairs, elevators, public restrooms, signage, etc.?

Evacuation in emergencies

Have you received clear guidance regarding what to do and who to contact in case of emergencies (fire drills evacuation, personal emergencies, assembly points, etc.)?

- Fire alarms around the campus have audio and visual signs

- Evacuation emergency training

- Emergency response team list

Activity clubs or events

Tell me about any activity clubs and/or events you have participated in (reading club, National Day, etc.)?

Where do you see yourself after 5 years from now?

Plan for future work

Plan for postgraduate studies

Do you have any additional comments to add?

Appendix I

Students with disabilities at HEIs interview (Arabic)

أسئلة المقابلة

الفئة المستهدفة: المعلمين (المشرفين على الطلبة من أصحاب الهمم) في الصف الثاني عشر من مرحلة التعليم الثانوي

الجزء الأول: المعلومات الشخصية

الجنس: □ ذكر   □ أنثى

ما هو أعلى مستوى تعليمي لديك؟ كم عدد سنوات الخبرة في مجال الاشراف على الطلاب من ذوى الهمم؟

□ أقل من سنة   □ 1-2 سنوات   □ 3-4 سنوات   □ 5-6 سنوات   □ 6-10 سنوات   □ 10 + سنوات

هل تعرف أي شخص لديه إعاقة خارج سياق مؤسستك ، (العائلة / الأصدقاء)؟

□ نعم,

□ لا

إذا كانت الإجابة بنعم ، فيرجى ذكرها جميعًا وبجوار كل نوع من أنواع الإعاقة (مثال: الأخ (التوحد) ، الصديق (ضعف السمع) ، إلخ).

الجزءالثاني: خدمات دعم الطلاب من ذوي الاعاقة في المدرسة

من خلال دورك الوظيفي ، برجاء وصف التجربة الفعلية لدعم أحد الطلاب من ذوي الإعاقة (أصحاب الهمم) بالصف الثاني عشر من بداية العام إلى آخره – يرجى ذكركل ما يتم تقديمه من خدمات لدمج الطالب.

الخطة الفردية:

من وجهة نظرك، ماهي الخدمات التي توفرها المدرسة لتأهيل الطلاب من ذوي الإعاقة للإلتحاق بالتعليم العالي:

أ. الخطة الفردية (هل تشتمل على أهداف أو اجراءات بعيدة المدى تتعلق بإلتحاقه بالتعليم العالي)

جلسات تعريفية وارشادية خاصة بــ :

خطوات مرحلة التقديم (اختبارات ال EmSAT و ال NAPO)

خدمات الدعم/الدمج المتوفرة بالجامعات (الحكومية)

تنمية وعي الطالب من ذوي الإعاقة (أصحاب الهمم) بأهمية التعريف عن حالته الصحية و ما يستلزم الحالة من معينات وتسهيلات

هل تعتقد أن الخدمات الدامجة التالية تساعد على تسهيل عملية انتقال الطالب (من ذوي الإعاقة) من مرحلة الثانوية للتعليم الجامعي؟ ولماذا؟

وجود تعريف واضح وشامل للطلاب من ذوي الإعاقة.

وجود لوائح للسياسات والإجراءات الخاصة بطلب الخدمات

وجود متخصص ومركز دعم

وجود توعية للموظفين والطلاب حول كيفية التعامل (و التواصل) مع الأشخاص من ذوي الإحتياجات الخاصة

وجود التسهيلات البيئية (الأبواب, المداخل, والخ)

خدمات خاصة بالتدريب على الإخلاء في حالات الطوارئ

وجود نوادي، أنشطة، و فعاليات

هل تعتقد أن غياب أحد هذه الخدمات الدامجة قد يؤدي إلى تدهور المستوى الأكاديمي للطالب من ذوي الإعاقة (أصحاب الهمم). برجاء التوضيح بذكر مثال او اكثر.

هل لديك أي تعليقات إضافية لإضافتها؟

Appendix J

Grade 12 SWDs interview schedule

Want to complete higher education	الخدمات المقدمة خلال الإمتحانات Exam accommodation	العمر Age	وصف نوع الإعاقة Description of the disability	نوع الإعاقة Type of disability	الخطة الفردية IEP	وقت الزيارة Visit time	أيام الزيارة Date of Visit	اسم المدرسة School Name
Yes	*تحتاج الى وقت للكتابة وقراءة الاسئلة من معلم المادة *تحتاج لمختص و قراءة الأسئلة من معلمي المواد *وقت إضافي ويفضل الاختبار يكون موضوعي *She need time to write and read questions by the subject teacher * Need a specialist to follow her academic level * Need extra time	17	صعوبه في القدرات الاكاديمية Difficult in academic abilities.	اعاقة ذهنية وجسميه Intellectual and physical disability	YES by MOE But not implemented Only till Grade 11 (I have her G11 IEP)	From 08:00am to 11:00am	-05-2019 12	School A

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| Yes | امتحان خاص يناسب قدراتها *
تحتاج لمختص*
قراءة الأسئلة من معلمي المواد*
وقت إضافي*

*Special exam fits her abilities
* Needs a specialist
*Reading questions by her subject teacher
*Extra time | 17 | تأخر القدرات العقلية
ضعف في القدرات الاكاديمية في القراءة والكتابة ومهارات الرياضيات

* Delayed mental abilities
* Weaknesses in academic abilities in reading, writing and math skills. | اعاقة ذهنية

Intellectual disability | YES by MOE
But not implemented
Only till Grade 11 | From 11:30am to 01:00pm | -05-2019 12 | School B |
| Yes | تحتاج لمختص*
قراءة الأسئلة*
وقت إضافي*

*Need a specialist
* Someone has to read the questions for her
*Extra time | 18 | صعوبات تعلم بسيطة تشوش في قراءة الكلمات والاختلاط في الحروف مع بعضها

Learning difficulties and mixing in letters with each other | صعوبات تعلم محددة

Specific Learning Disorder | YES by MOE
But not implemented
Only till Grade 11 | | | |

School C	13-05-2019	From 12:00pm to 01:00pm	YES by MOE But not implemented Only till Grade 11	الإعاقة البصرية- ضعاف البصر Visual impairment	ضعف بصر شديد تحتاج الى تكبير الخطوط واللون A3 على ورقة في بالابيض والأسود يحتاج الى حذف المسائل التي تحتاج الى رسومات والمسائل الهندسية ووضع أسئلة بديلة *Severe vision impairment *Needs to enlarge lines on A3 paper and color in white and black *needs to delete anything related to graphics and geometric questions *develop alternative questions	18	*تكبير الورقة الامتحانيه *تحتاج لمختص *قراءة الأسئلة *وقت إضافي *Enlarge the exam paper *Need a specialist *Needs someone to read the questions *additional time	Yes
				صعوبات تعلم محددة(الصمت الجزئي) Specific Learning	صعوبات تعلم شديدة وضعف في المهارات في اللغة العربية والرياضيات والكتابة	18	*تحتاج لمختص *قراءة الأسئلة *وقت إضافي * تبسيط الاسئلة	No

Yes	Accommodations	No.	Description	Disorder	MOE	Time	Date	School
	*Need a specialist * Someone has to read the questions for her *Extra time * Provide a simple questions		*sever Specific Learning Disorder in Arabic, Math, and writing	Disorder(Partial silence)				
Yes	امتحان خاص غير مقالي ومناسب لقدراتها* تحتاج لمختص* قراءة الأسئلة من معلمي المواد وقت إضافي * need a special exam that is not too long and suitable for her abilities * need a special committee to read the questions for her. *additional time	20	ضعيفة في المهارات الاكاديمية والقراءة والكتابة Weak in academic skills, reading and writing	اضطرابات طيف التوحد Autism Spectrum Disorder				
Yes	تحتاج لمختص * قراءة الأسئلة * وقت إضافي * تبسيط الاسئلة * *Need a specialist	19	* صعوبة في التعليم * صعوبة في حل المسائل الحسابية *Difficult in learning	صعوبات تعلم محددة Specific Learning Disorder	YES by MOE But not implemented Only till Grade 11	From 08:00am to 01:00pm	14-05-2019	School D

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				صعوبات تعلم شديدة Sever Learning Disorder				
	* Someone has to read the questions for her *Extra time * Provide a simple questions		*Difficulties in solving mathematics					
No	تحتاج لمختص * قراءة الأسئلة * وقت إضافي * تبسيط الاسئلة * * Need a specialist * Someone has to read the questions for her *Extra time * Provide a simple questions	18	صعوبة التعلم * صعوبة في الإملاء * صعوبة في الكتابة * صعوبة في الرياضيات * *Difficulty learning *Difficulty in spelling *Difficulty in writing *Difficulty in mathematics	صعوبات تعلم شديدة Sever Learning Disorder				

No	تحتاج لمختص * قراءة الأسئلة * وقت إضافي * تبسيط الاسئلة * *Need a specialist * Someone has to read the questions for her *Extra time * Provide a simple questions	19	صعوبة التعلم * * صعوبة في الإملاء صعوبة في الكتابة * * صعوبة في الرياضيات *Difficulty learning *Difficulty in spelling *Difficulty in writing *Difficulty in mathematics	صعوبات تعلم شديدة Sever Learning Disorder				
Yes	مختص يحتاج الى* * يحتاج لقراءة أسئلة من معلم المادة وقت إضافي *Needs a specialist *Need his course teacher to read questions once needed *Need extra time	18	صعوبة في الحركة والمشي يستخدم مشاية خاصة Difficulty in walking, and he uses a special walker	الإعاقة الجسدية Physical Disability	YES by MOE But not implemented Only till Grade 11	From 09:00am to 11:00am	13 2019-05-	School E
Yes	يحتاج الى مختص* يحتاج إلى ممرض* يحتاج لقراءة أسئلة من معلم المادة * وقت إضافي	21	السكري درجة ثانية يستخدم ابر السكر يستخدم جهاز	الأمراض والظروف الصحيه (السكري) Diseases and health	YES by MOE But not implemented Only till Grade 11	From 11:30am to 12:00pm	13 2019-05-	School F

	*Needs a specialist *Needs a Nurse *Need his course teacher to read questions once needed *Need extra time		Second - degree diabetes and he uses a sugar injection and a device once needed	conditions (diabetes)				
Yes	يحتاج الى مختص* يحتاج إلى ممرض* يحتاج لقراءة أسئلة من معلم المادة * وقت إضافي * *Needs a specialist *Needs a Nurse *Need his course teacher to read questions once needed *Need extra time	19	لديه ضعف شديد في القراءة والكتابة وفي المهارات الحسابية وضعف عام في جميع المواد الدراسية Very weak reading and writing skills, he is not doing well in all subjects.	اعاقة ذهنية Intellectual disability	YES I have a copy	From 09:00am to 01:00pm	-05-2019 15	School G
Yes	يحتاج لمختص * قراءة الأسئلة * وقت إضافي * تبسيط الاسئلة * *Need a specialist * Someone has to read the questions for her	17	* صعوبة في التعليم * بطيئ في القراءة * صعوبة في حل المسائل الحسابية *Difficult in learning	صعوبات تعلم محددة Specific Learning Disorder				

	*Extra time * Provide a simple questions		*Very slow in reading *Difficulties in solving mathematics					
Yes	امتحان خاص مناسب لقدراته* يحتاج لمختص* يحتاج لقراءة أسئلة من معلم المادة * وقت إضافي * *A special exam suitable for his abilities *Need his course teacher to read questions once needed *Need extra time	19	يواجه صعوبات تعلم شديدة صعوبات في مهارات اللغة العربية ك عدم القدرة على حل مسائل الكلامية في الرياضيات *Faces difficulty in learning *Difficulty in Arabic language skills. * Problems in written mathematics formula	صعوبات تعلم محددة Specific Learning Disorder	YES I have a copy	From 10:00am to 02:00pm	19-05-2019	School H
Yes	*تكبير الورقة الامتحانيه *يحتاج لمختص *قراءة الأسئلة *وقت إضافي	18	ضعف بصر شديد * تحتاج الى تكبير الخطوط على ورقة A3 * يحتاج الى حذف المسائل التي تحتاج الى رسومات ومواءمة	الإعاقة البصرية ـضعاف البصر Visual impairment				

	*Enlarge the exam paper *Need a specialist *Needs someone to read the questions *additional time		الامتحان ووضع أسئلة إضافية *Severe vision impairment *Needs to enlarge lines on A3 paper *Some questions need to be deleted the one that require graphics by developing additional questions.				
Yes		20		اعاقة ذهنية			

	امتحان خاص يناسب قدراتها * يحتاج لمختص* قراءة الأسئلة من معلمي المواد* وقت إضافي* *Special exam fits her abilities * Needs a specialist *Reading questions by her subject teacher *Extra time		تأخر القدرات العقلية ضعف في القدرات الاكاديمية في القراءة والكتابة ومهارات الرياضيات * Delayed mental abilities * Weaknesses in academic abilities in reading, writing and math skills.	Intellectual disability				
	امتحان خاص غير مقالي ومناسب لقدراتها* يحتاج لمختص* قراءة الأسئلة من معلمي المواد وقت إضافي * need a special exam that is not too long and suitable for her abilities * need a special committee to read the questions for her. *additional time	17	ضعيفة في المهارات الاكاديمية والقراءة والكتابة Weak in academic skills, reading and writing	اضطرابات طيف التوحد Autism Spectrum Disorder				

Grade 12 SWDs interview questions (Arabic)

أسئلة المقابلة لطلاب الثاني عشر

الجزء الأول: المعلومات الديموغرافية

□ أنثى   الجنس: □ ذكر

العمر: .... سنة

ما هي حالتك الطبية (نوع الإعاقة)؟

من ساعدك أو شجعك على مواصلة دراستك في التعليم؟

هل لديك خطة تعليمية فردية (IEP؟عندما كنت في المدرسة من الصف الأول حتى الآن الصف)

ما مدى اختلاف الخطة الفردية الخاصة بك عن الاخرين من الطلاب العاديين؟

هل تفكر في إكمال التعليم العالي بعد تخرجك من هذه المدرسة (داخل دولة الإمارات أو في الخارج)؟ لماذا؟

الجزء 2: خدمات التعليم العالي

يرجى وصف مدى استعدادك للانتقال من المدرسة الثانوية إلى التعليم العالي؟

(EmSAT) .-الخطوات المتعلقة بالإستعداد لإختبارات القبول والتسجيل للتعليم العالي؟

اختيار الكلية ـ

ـ اختيار المجال (الكلية)

الجزء 3: أحكام التعليم للأشخاص ذوي الإعاقة (أصحاب الهمم)

(أ) تعريف الإعاقة

بشكل عام

(ب) المتخصص ومركز الموارد التعليمية

هل يتوافر مساعد مختص لدعمك في المدرسة؟ إذا كانت الإجابة بنعم ، يرجى وصف دوره وكيفية المساعدة.

هل مركزا للموارد التعليمية متوفرة لتستخدمه؟

موارد المساعدة متاحة ـ

- حصص التدريب

(ج) السياسات والإجراءات

في عام 2017 ، أطلقت حكومة دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة السياسة الوطنية الجديدة المتمثلة في تمكين أصحاب الهمم. هل تعتقد أن هذه السياسة تنعكس في مدرستك؟

- كيف تتم الإشارة إلى الأشخاص ذوي الإعاقة في المدرسة (النشر ، وسائل الإعلام ، إلخ) ؟

- هل يوجد جزء في دليل الطالب حول حقوق الأشخاص ذوي الإعاقات؟

- هل الجلسات التوجيهية للمدرسة تغطي الأحكام المتعلقة بالأشخاص من ذوي الإعاقة.

(د) التسكين والتيسير

قم بوصف مرحلة قبولك في المدرسة (التسهيلات أو التحديات أو المشكلات) ، كيف كانت؟

كيف تحدد موعدًا إذا كنت بحاجة إلى التحدث إلى شخص ما (المعلم ، زميل الدراسة ، أخصائي ، إلخ)؟

كيف تسأل إذا احتجت لأي مساعدة من خلال (اجتماع ، استمارة, وما إلى ذلك) عندما تحتاج إليها؟

هل تتواصل مع المدرسة باستخدام بريد الكتروني؟

هل تحصل على وقتًا إضافيًا أثناء اختباراتك؟

هل تتلقى اختبارًا مختلفًا مع أسئلة أقل مما يفعله زملاؤك في الصف؟

هل تعتقد أنك بحاجة إلى إجراء الاختبار في مكان منفصل؟ لماذا ا؟

اوصف أنواع المساعدة المقدمة لدعمك الأكاديمي (في الفصل الدراسي ، خارج الصف ، الخ).

(هـ) معرفة الموظفين والطلاب

كيف تصف الطريقة التي يتواصل بها موظفو المدرسة والطلاب معك؟

هل تعتقد أن المدرسة بحاجة إلى تقديم دورات تدريبية لجميع الموظفين والطلاب واللتي تتعلق بالتعامل مع الأشخاص ذوي الإعاقة؟

(و) التيسير البيئي

هل تعتقد أن مدرستك متاحة ومهيئة للأشخاص من ذوي الإعاقة مثل موقف السيارات ، الاستقبال ، الأبواب ، المداخل ، السلالم ، المصاعد ، الحمامات العامة ، اللافتات ، إلخ؟

(ز) الإخلاء في حالات الطوارئ

هل تلقيت توجيهات واضحة فيما يتعلق بما يجب القيام به والجهة التي يجب الاتصال بها في حالات الطوارئ (إخلاء الحرائق ، حالات الطوارئ الشخصية ، نقاط التجمع ، إلخ)؟

- أجهزة الإنذار بالحريق حول المدرسة تحتوي على إشارات سمعية وبصرية

- تدريب الطوارئ الإخلاء

قائمة فريق الاستجابة للطوارئ -

(ه) نوادي أو فعاليات الأنشطة

أخبرني عن أي نوادي و / أو فعاليات شاركت فيها (نادي القراءة ، اليوم الوطني ، وما إلى ذلك)؟

(و) أين ترى نفسك بعد خمس سنوات من الآن؟

خطة للعمل في المستقبل

خطة للدراسات العليا

(ي) هل لديك أي تعليقات إضافية لإضافتها؟

Appendix L

AHEAD Program Standards and Performance Indicators (best practices)

AHEAD Program Standards and Performance Indicators

The Association on Higher Education And Disability (AHEAD) is pleased to offer these revised Professional Standards and Performance Indicators to the field. The standards reflect the maturation of the postsecondary disability services profession, describe the breadth of skills and knowledge required of personnel administering the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD), and present a consensus among experts in the field regarding minimum essential services. These standards are intended to enhance service provision for college students with disabilities by directing program evaluation and development efforts, improving personnel preparation and staff development, guiding the formulation of job descriptions for OSD personnel, informing judges and requisite court decisions regarding appropriate practice and, lastly, expanding the vision of disability services at the postsecondary level.

1. Consultation / Collaboration

To facilitate equal access to postsecondary education for students with disabilities, the office that provides services to students with disabilities should:

1.1 *Serve as an advocate for issues regarding students with disabilities to ensure equal access.*

- Foster collaboration between disability services and administration as it relates to policy implementation.

- Ensure key administrators remain informed of emerging disability issues on campus that may warrant a new or revised policy.

- Foster a strong institutional commitment to collaboration on disability issues among key administrative personnel (e.g., deans, registrar, campus legal counsel).

- Work with facilities to foster campus awareness regarding physical access.

- Work collaboratively with academic affairs on policy regarding course substitutions.

- Foster an institutional commitment to promoting student abilities rather than a student's disability.

- Foster meaningful inclusion of students with disabilities in campus life (e.g., residential activities, extracurricular activities).

1.2 *Provide disability representation on relevant campus committees.*

- Advise campus student affairs regarding disability-related issues (e.g., student discipline, student activities).

- Participate on a campus-wide disability advisory committee consisting of faculty, students, administrators, and community representatives.

- Participate on campus administrative committees such as a campus committee on individuals with disabilities.

2. Information Dissemination

To facilitate equal access to postsecondary education for students with disabilities, the office that provides services to students with disabilities should:

2.1 *Disseminate information through institutional electronic and printed publications regarding disability services and how to access them.*

- Distribute policy and procedures(s) on availability of services via all relevant campus publications (catalogs, programmatic materials, web sites, etc.).

- Ensure referral, documentation, and disability services information is up to date and accessible on the institution's web site.

- Ensure that criteria and procedures for accessing accommodations are clearly delineated and disseminated to the campus community.

- Ensure access to information about disabilities to students, administration, faculty, and service professionals.

- Provide information on grievance and complaint procedures when requested.

- Include a statement in the institutional publications regarding self-disclosure for students with disabilities.

2.2 *Provide services that promote access to the campus community.*

- Facilitate the acquisition and availability of a wide variety of assistive technology to help students access materials in alternative formats (e.g., JAWS for Windows screen reader, Kurzweil Voice Pro, Mountbatten Brailler).

- Provide information for the acquisition of computerized communication, text telephone (TT), or telecommunications devices (TDD) for the deaf.

- Promote universal design in facilities.

- Promote universal design in communication.

- Promote universal design in instruction.

2.3 *Disseminate information to students with disabilities regarding available campus and community disability resources.*

- Provide information and referrals to assist students in accessing campus resources.

To facilitate equal access to postsecondary education for students with disabilities, the office that provides services to students with disabilities should:

3.1   *Inform faculty regarding academic accommodations, compliance with legal responsibilities, as well as instructional, programmatic, and curriculum modifications.*

- Inform faculty of their rights and responsibilities to ensure equal educational access.

- Inform faculty of the procedures that students with disabilities must follow in arranging for accommodations.

- Collaborate with faculty on accommodation decisions when there is a potential for a fundamental alteration of an academic requirement.

3.2   *Provide consultation with administrators regarding academic accommodations, compliance with legal responsibilities, as well as instructional, programmatic, physical, and curriculum modifications.*

- Foster administrative understanding of the impact of disabilities on students.

3.3   *Provide disability awareness training for campus constituencies such as faculty, staff, and administrators.*

- Provide staff development regarding understanding of policies and practices that apply to students with disabilities in postsecondary settings.

- Provide staff development to enhance understanding of faculty's responsibility to provide accommodations to students and how to provide accommodations and modifications.

- Provide administration and staff training to enhance institutional understanding of the rights of students with disabilities.

- Participate in administrative and staff training to delineate responsibilities relative to students with disabilities.

- Training for staff (e.g., residential life, maintenance, and library personnel) to facilitate and enhance the integration of students with disabilities into the college community.

3.4   *Provide information to faculty about services available to students with disabilities.*

- Provide staff development for faculty and staff to refer students who may need disability services.

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4. Academic Adjustments

To facilitate equal access to postsecondary education for students with disabilities, the office that provides services to students with disabilities should:

4.1 *Maintain records that document the student's plan for the provision of selected accommodations.*

- Create a confidential file on each student including relevant information pertaining to eligibility and provision of services.

- Document the basis for accommodation decisions and recommendations.

- Develop a case management system that addresses the maintenance of careful and accurate records of each student.

4.2 *Determine with students appropriate academic accommodations and services.*

- Conduct a review of disability documentation.

- Incorporate a process that fosters the use of effective accommodations, taking into consideration the environment, task, and the unique needs of the individual.

- Review the diagnostic testing to determine appropriate accommodations or supports.

- Accommodation requests are handled on a case-by-case basis and relate to students' strengths and weaknesses, which are identified in their documentation.

- Determine if the student's documentation supports the need for the requested accommodation.

- On a case-by-case basis, consider providing time-limited, provisional accommodations pending receipt of clinical documentation, after which a determination is made.

4.3 *Collaborate with faculty to ensure that reasonable academic accommodations do not fundamentally alter the program of study.*

- Provide reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities to ensure program accessibility, yet do not compromise the essential elements of the course or curriculum.

- Ensure an array of supports, services and assistive technology so that student needs for modifications and accommodations can be met.

5. Counseling and Self-Determination

To facilitate equal access to postsecondary education for students with disabilities, the office that provides services to students with disabilities should:

5.1   *Use a service delivery model that encourages students with disabilities to develop independence.*

- Educate and assist students with disabilities to function independently.

- Develop a program mission that is committed to promoting self-determination for students with disabilities.

6. Policies and Procedures

To facilitate equal access to postsecondary education for students with disabilities, the office that provides services to students with disabilities should:

6.1 *Develop, review and revise written policies and guidelines regarding procedures for determining and accessing "reasonable accommodations."*

- Develop, review and revise procedures for students to follow regarding the accommodation process.

- Develop, review and revise policies describing disability documentation review.

- Develop, review and revise procedures regarding student eligibility for services.

- Develop, review and revise eligibility for services policies and procedures that delineate steps required for students to access services, including accommodations.

- Develop, review and revise procedures to determine if students receive provisional accommodations during any interim period (e.g., assessment is being updated or re-administered).

6.2 *Assist with the development, review, and revision of written policies and guidelines for institutional rights and responsibilities with respect to service provision.*

- Assist with the development, review, and revision of policies and procedures on course substitutions, including institution requirements (e.g., foreign language or writing requirements).

- Assist with the development, review, and revision of policy and procedures regarding priority registration.

- Develop, review and revise policies and procedures that maintain a balance between "reasonable accommodation" and "otherwise qualified" while "not substantially altering technical standards."

- Develop, review, and revise policies regarding the provision of disability services (e.g., interpreter services).

- Develop, review and revise disability documentation guidelines to determine eligibility for accommodations at the postsecondary level.

- Assist the institution with the development, review, and revision of policies regarding the faculty's responsibility for serving students with disabilities.

- Collaborate with the development, review, and revision of policies regarding IT (e.g., alternative formats).

6.3 *Develop, review and revise written policies and guidelines for student rights and responsibilities with respect to receiving services.*

- Develop consistent practices and standards for documentation.

- Develop, review and revise policies regarding students' responsibility to provide recent and appropriate documentation of disability.

- Assist with the development, review, and revision of policies regarding students' responsibility to meet the Institution's qualifications and essential technical, academic, and institutional standards.

- Develop, review and revise policies regarding students' responsibility to follow specific procedures for obtaining reasonable and appropriate accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids.

- Assist with the development, review, and revision of procedures a student must follow regarding program modifications (e.g., course substitutions).

- Develop, review, and revise procedures for notifying staff (e.g., interpreter, notetaker) when a student will not attend a class meeting.

6.4 *Develop, review and revise written policies and guidelines regarding confidentiality of disability information.*

- Develop, review and revise policy articulating students understanding of who will have access to their documentation and the assurance that it will not be shared inappropriately with other campus units.

- Develop, review and revise policies and procedures regarding privacy of records, including testing information, prior records and permission to release confidential records to other agencies or individuals.

6.5 *Assist with the development, review, and revision of policies and guidelines for settling a formal complaint regarding the determination of a "reasonable accommodation."*

- Assist with the development, review, and revision of procedures for resolving disagreements regarding specific accommodation requests, including a defined process by which a review of the request can occur.

- Assist with the development, review, and revision of compliance efforts and procedures to investigate complaints.

- Assist with the development, review, and revision of a conflict resolution process with a systematic procedure to follow by both the grievant and the institutional representative.

To facilitate equal access to postsecondary education for students with disabilities, the office that provides services to students with disabilities should:

7.1 *Provide services that are aligned with the institution's mission or services philosophy.*

- Develop a program mission statement and philosophy that is compatible with the mission of the institution.

- Program personnel and other institutional staff understand and support the mission of the office for students with disabilities.

7.2 *Coordinate services for students with disabilities through a full-time professional.*

- At least one full-time professional is responsible for disability services as a primary role.

7.3 *Collect student feedback to measure satisfaction with disability services.*

- Assess the effectiveness of accommodations and access provided to students with disabilities (e.g., timeliness of response to accommodation request).

- Student satisfaction data is included in evaluation of disability services.

7.4 *Collect data to monitor use of disability services.*

- Provide feedback to physical plant regarding physical access for students with disabilities.

- Collect data to assess the effectiveness of services provided.

- Collect data to identify ways the program can be improved.

- Collect data to project program growth and needed funding increases.

7.5 *Report program evaluation data to administrators.*

- Develop an annual evaluation report on your program using the qualitative and quantitative data you've collected.

7.6 *Provide fiscal management of the office that serves students with disabilities.*

- Develop a program budget.

- Effectively manage your program's fiscal resources.

- Seek additional internal or external funds as needed.

- Develop political support for your program and its budget.

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7.7 *Collaborate in establishing procedures for purchasing the adaptive equipment needed to assure equal access.*

- Assist with the determination of the needs for assistive technology and adaptive equipment at your institution.

- Advise other departments regarding the procurement of needed assistive technology and adaptive equipment.

- Provide or arrange for assistance to students to operate assistive technology and adaptive equipment.

8. Training and Professional Development

To facilitate equal access to postsecondary education for students with disabilities, the office that provides services to students with disabilities should:

8.1 *Provide disability services staff with on-going opportunities for professional development.*

- Provide orientation and staff development for new disability personnel.

- Ensure that professional development funds are available for disability personnel.

- Provide opportunities for ongoing training based on a needs assessment of the knowledge and skills of disability personnel.

8.2 *Provide services by personnel with training and experience working with college students with disabilities (e.g., student development, degree programs).*

- Ensure staff can understand and interpret assessments/documentation.

8.3 *Assure that personnel adhere to relevant Codes of Ethics (e.g., AHEAD, APA).*

- Refer to and apply a relevant professional code of ethics when dealing with challenging situations.
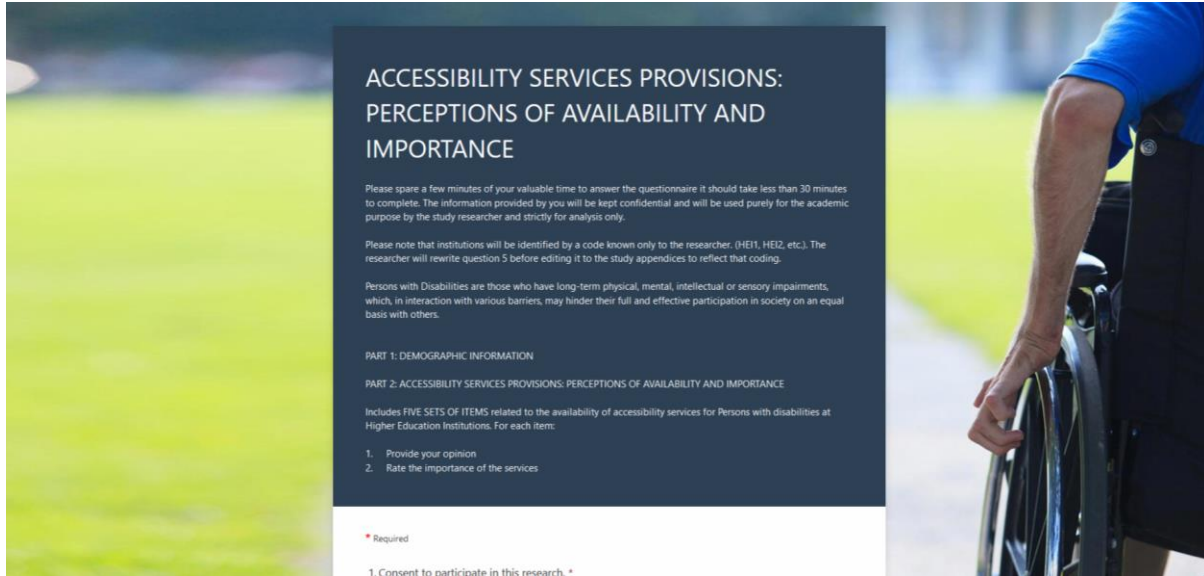
Appendix M Observation checklist

Accessibility services checklist	YES	NO	Observation
Policies related to Persons with disabilities is available.			
Procedures related to Persons with disabilities is available.			
Positive notices about Persons with disabilities' rights are well distributed across the College.			
Rights of Persons with disabilities are included in College handbooks.			
College orientation sessions cover provisions for Persons with Disabilities.			
Lectures on Persons with Disabilities' rights and equal opportunities are provided on regular bases.			
A guideline for Persons with disabilities accommodations and modifications is available upon request.			
Persons with disabilities can request for their accommodations easily.			
College website is accessible by Persons with disabilities.			
Classrooms tables are with adjustable height for Persons with disabilities (particularly wheelchair users).			
Different computer programmes are available for Persons with Disabilities.			
Information about assistive devices (such as mobile hearing aids for deafness and hearing impairment etc.) is available.			
There is a contact person when it comes to supporting Persons with Disabilities.			
Using various equipment and materials to help Persons with Disabilities (including accessible computers, etc.). is quite easy.			
Training on how to accommodate Persons with Disabilities is provided regularly.			
Representatives from specialized service providers are regularly invited to run training sessions related to Persons with Disabilities.			
The main reception is accessible for wheelchair users.			

Automatic doors are available across the College.			
The automatic doors are well spaced across the College.			
Handrails are available on both sides of the main entrance.			
Ramps for Persons with Disabilities are available.			
The location of available ramp(s) are highlighted on the College map.			
Handrails are available on both sides for each ramp.			
Handrails are available on both sides of the stairs.			
College elevators have visual and audible signals to guide Persons with Disabilities.			
Accessible restrooms are clearly marked with the international symbol.			
Accessible restrooms are highlighted on the College map.			
The height of all light switches are appropriate for wheelchair users.			
Sufficient lighting in Persons with Disabilities parking area is available.			
Enough and appropriate signage with the right directions is available throughout the College.			
Signage used through the College uses raised letters and number and/or Braille characters.			
Parking spaces for Persons with Disabilities are available.			
All the parking spaces for Persons with Disabilities are marked with the international symbol of disability.			
Parking spaces are designed to accommodate Persons with Disabilities.			
All emergency exits are clearly defined and reachable by all.			
Fire alarms around the College have audio and visual signs.			
Evacuation emergency training related to specific disabilities is provided.			
A list of the response team to contact in case of any emergencies related to Persons with Disabilities is available.			
The height of all first aid kit are appropriate for wheelchair users.			

Appendix N

Online questionnaire

5. Please specify your institution. *

Please note that institutions will be identified by a code known only to the researcher. (HEI1, HEI2, etc.).

Select your answer ⌄

6. What is your current position? *

Example, (a) Management (director, etc.), (b) Teaching (Faculty, etc.) of (c) Facilities operation example (Health and safety, security, cleaners, Nurses, etc.) or (d) Administrative staff (Academic service, Admin staff, Career services staff, Counselor, IT , etc.).

Enter your answer

7. How long have you been at this institution? *

Select your answer ⌄

8. Do you know anyone with a disability outside the context of your institution, (Family/friends)? *

If yes, please list them all and next to each specify type of disability (Example: Brother (Autism), Friend (hearing impairment), etc.). If No, continue with the following questions.

Enter your answer

9. To what extent do you agree with below statements regarding the accessibility services at your institution? If unsure, choose Neither Agree or Disagree. *

Policies and procedures

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Policies related to Persons with disabilities is available.	○	○	○	○	○
Procedures related to Persons with disabilities is available.	○	○	○	○	○
Positive notices about Persons with disabilities' rights are well distributed across the college.	○	○	○	○	○
Rights of Persons with disabilities are included in college handbooks.	○	○	○	○	○
College orientation sessions cover provisions for Persons with Disabilities.	○	○	○	○	○
Lectures on Persons with disabilities' rights and equal opportunities are provided on regular bases.	○	○	○	○	○

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10. To what degree do you think these services are important? *
Policies and procedures

	Not at all important	Not so important	Somewhat important	Very important	Extremely important
Policies related to Persons with disabilities is available.	○	○	○	○	○
Procedures related to Persons with disabilities is available.	○	○	○	○	○
Positive notices about Persons with disabilities' rights are well distributed across the college.	○	○	○	○	○
Rights of Persons with disabilities are included in college handbooks.	○	○	○	○	○
College orientation sessions cover provisions for Persons with Disabilities.	○	○	○	○	○
Lectures on Persons with disabilities' rights and equal opportunities are provided on regular bases.	○	○	○	○	○

11. To what extent do you agree with below statements regarding the accessibility services at your institution? If unsure, choose Neither Agree or Disagree. *
Accommodation and Facilitation

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
A guideline for Persons with disabilities accommodations and modifications is available upon request.	○	○	○	○	○
Persons with disabilities can request for their accommodations easily.	○	○	○	○	○
College website is accessible by Persons with disabilities.	○	○	○	○	○
Classrooms tables are with adjustable height for Persons with disabilities (particularly wheelchair users).	○	○	○	○	○
Different computer programmes are available for persons with disabilities.	○	○	○	○	○
Information about assistive devices (such as mobile hearing aids	○	○	○	○	○

12. To what degree do you think these services are important? *
Accommodation and Facilitation

	Not at all important	Not so important	Somewhat important	Very important	Extremely important
A guideline for Persons with disabilities accommodations and modifications is available upon request.	○	○	○	○	○
Persons with disabilities can request for their accommodations easily.	○	○	○	○	○
College website is accessible by Persons with disabilities.	○	○	○	○	○
Classrooms tables are with adjustable height for Persons with disabilities (particularly wheelchair users).	○	○	○	○	○
Different computer programmes are available for persons with disabilities.	○	○	○	○	○
Information about assistive devices (such as mobile hearing aids for deafness and	○	○	○	○	○

13. To what extent do you agree with below statements regarding the accessibility services at your institution? If unsure, choose Neither Agree or Disagree. *
Knowledge of employees

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
There is a contact person when it comes to supporting Persons with disabilities.	○	○	○	○	○
Using various equipment and materials to help persons with disabilities (including accessible computers, etc.). is quite easy.	○	○	○	○	○
Training on how to accommodate Persons with disabilities is provided regularly.	○	○	○	○	○
Representatives from specialized service providers are regularly invited to run training sessions related to Persons with Disabilities.	○	○	○	○	○

14. To what degree do you think these services are important? *

Knowledge of employees

	Not at all important	Not so important	Somewhat important	Very important	Extremely important
There is a contact person when it comes to supporting Persons with disabilities.	○	○	○	○	○
Using various equipment and materials to help persons with disabilities (including accessible computers, etc.). is quite easy.	○	○	○	○	○
Training on how to accommodate Persons with disabilities is provided regularly.	○	○	○	○	○
Representatives from specialized service providers are regularly invited to run training sessions related to Persons with Disabilities.	○	○	○	○	○

15. To what extent do you agree with below statements regarding the accessibility services at your institution? If unsure, choose Neither Agree or Disagree. *

Environmental facilitation

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Parking spaces for Persons with disabilities are available.	○	○	○	○	○
All the parking spaces for Persons with disabilities are marked with the international symbol of disability.	○	○	○	○	○
Parking spaces are designed to accommodate Persons with disabilities.	○	○	○	○	○
The main reception is accessible for wheelchair users.	○	○	○	○	○
Automatic doors are available across the college.	○	○	○	○	○
The automatic doors are well spaced across the college.	○	○	○	○	○

16. To what extent do you agree with below statements regarding the accessibility services at your institution? If unsure, choose Neither Agree or Disagree. *

Environmental facilitation continue

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Handrails are available on both sides for each ramp.	○	○	○	○	○
Handrails are available on both sides of the stairs.	○	○	○	○	○
College elevators have visual and audible signals to guide Persons with disabilities.	○	○	○	○	○
Accessible restrooms are clearly marked with the international symbol.	○	○	○	○	○
Accessible restrooms are highlighted on the college map.	○	○	○	○	○
The height of all light switches are appropriate for wheelchair users.	○	○	○	○	○

17. To what degree do you think these services are important? *

Environmental facilitation

	Not at all important	Not so important	Somewhat important	Very important	Extremely important
Parking spaces for Persons with disabilities are available.	○	○	○	○	○
All the parking spaces for Persons with disabilities are marked with the international symbol of disability.	○	○	○	○	○
Parking spaces are designed to accommodate Persons with disabilities.	○	○	○	○	○
Parking spaces for Persons with disabilities are available.	○	○	○	○	○
The main reception is accessible for wheelchair users.	○	○	○	○	○
Automatic doors are available across the college.	○	○	○	○	○
The automatic doors are well spaced across the college.	○	○	○	○	○

18. To what degree do you think these services are important? *

Environmental facilitation continue

	Not at all important	Not so important	Somewhat important	Very important	Extremely important
Handrails are available on both sides for each ramp.	○	○	○	○	○
Handrails are available on both sides of the stairs.	○	○	○	○	○
College elevators have visual and audible signals to guide Persons with disabilities.	○	○	○	○	○
Accessible restrooms are clearly marked with the international symbol.	○	○	○	○	○
Accessible restrooms are highlighted on the college map.	○	○	○	○	○
The height of all light switches are appropriate for wheelchair users.	○	○	○	○	○
Sufficient lighting in Persons with disabilities	○	○	○	○	○

19. To what extent do you agree with below statements regarding the accessibility services at your institution? If unsure, choose Neither Agree or Disagree. *

Evacuation in emergencies

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
All emergency exits are clearly defined and reachable by all.	○	○	○	○	○
Fire alarms around the college have audio and visual signs.	○	○	○	○	○
Evacuation emergency training related to specific disabilities is provided.	○	○	○	○	○
A list of the response team to contact in case of any emergencies related to Persons with disabilities is available.	○	○	○	○	○
The height of all first aid kit are appropriate for wheelchair users.	○	○	○	○	○

20. To what degree do you think these services are important? *
Evacuation in emergencies

for wheelchair users.

20. To what degree do you think these services are important? *
Evacuation in emergencies

	Not at all important	Not so important	Somewhat important	Very important	Extremely important
All emergency exits are clearly defined and reachable by all.	○	○	○	○	○
Fire alarms around the college have audio and visual signs.	○	○	○	○	○
Evacuation emergency training related to specific disabilities is provided.	○	○	○	○	○
A list of the response team to contact in case of any emergencies related to Persons with disabilities is available.	○	○	○	○	○
The height of all first aid kit are appropriate for wheelchair users.	○	○	○	○	○

21. If you do not mind being contacted by the study researcher for the second part of this research, please add your email below.
Provided email would be confidential

Enter your answer

22. If you would like to receive a copy of this research report, please add your email below.
Provided email would be confidential

Enter your answer

23. Please provide any additional comments
The research study is for an academic purpose only

Enter your answer

Submit

Never give out your password. Report abuse

Appendix O

Permission to conduct the study - ethical guideline

The
British University
in Dubai

Research Research Ethics Form (Low Risk Research)

To be completed by the researcher and submitted to the Dean's nominated faculty representative on the Research Ethics Committee

i. Applicants/Researcher's information:

Name of Researcher /student	Khawla Al Shehhi
Contact telephone No.	050-4313364
Email address	2016152070@student.buid.ac.ae
Date	27th May 2018

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):	The purpose of this study **"Accessibility of inclusive provisions for students with disabilities transitioning into Higher Education in the UAE: An investigative study"** is to investigate the inclusive provisions that facilitate *transitioning* high school students with disabilities into Higher Education Institutions. This study intends to find answers to the following research questions: **RQ1:** How are transition services perceived by Grade 12 students with disabilities and their specialists? **RQ2:** What inclusive provisions do students with disabilities in Higher Education value most? **RQ3:** How inclusive are the policies, practices, procedures and other accommodations in selected higher education institutions?

	RQ4: What accommodations and practices can Higher Education Institutions adopt to be more inclusive? To answer the above study questions, the researcher will utilize a mixed (qualitative and quantitative) methods approach to gather and analyse the collected data **(see attached A)**. Moreover, this study aims at sensitizing the wider community towards the importance of developing a guideline for better inclusive transitioning services into HEIs, which would take into account this proposed study recommendations.
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…):**	• Participants may be worried about their information being confidential. To prevent this: - Assure participants that they will remain anonymous. - Assure them that their answers will not be shared outside of the researcher in the study • Interviewer will not have an influence on the participants. To ensure this: - Interviewer will not know the participants personally - Interviewer will not know the teachers or schools/HEIs team personally • Before interviewing students, researcher will meet with schools/HEIs boards to gain approval In addition, the study participants would be given a consent form **(see attached B),** and all would be aware of the study's purpose. Moreover, they will be informed of their right to withdraw without giving any reason.

DURATION OF PROPOSED PROJECT (please provide dates as month/year):	September 2018 – January 2020 (see attached C)
Date you wish to start Data Collection:	November 2018
Date for issue of consent forms:	After passing the defence and before data collection phase in November 2018.
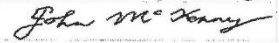
iii. Declaration by the Researcher:

I have read the University's policies for Research and the information contained herein, 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 subject-specific and University Research Policy (9.3 Policies and Procedures Manual), as well as 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: Khawla Al Shehhi

Signature: _____ Khawla Al Shehhi _____ Date: _27th May 2018_____

> *If the research is confirmed as not medium or high risk, it is endorsed HERE by the Faculty's Research Ethics Committee member (following discussion and clarification of*
>
> *any issues or concerns)*...... John Mc Kenny ....and*
> *forwarded to the Research Office to be recorded.*

I confirm that this project fits within the University's Research Policy (9.3 Policies and Procedures Manual) and I approve the proposal on behalf of BUiD's Research Ethics Committee.

Name and signature of nominated Faculty Representative: _____

Signature:_____ John Mc Kenny ___Date: __11/09/2018_____

iv. If the Faculty's Research Ethics Committee member or the Vice Chancellor considers the research of medium or high risk, it is forwarded to the Research Ethics Officer to follow the higher-level procedures.

Ashly Pinning
Dean of Research
2nd Oct 2018

Attached A

Methodology

The proposed study would use a combination of two methods: the qualitative and the quantitative research to investigate the inclusive provisions that facilitate transitioning high school students with disabilities into the UAE government higher education. Therefore, data collected using interviews, documents, and observations would be analysed qualitatively, while data derived from questionnaires would be analysed quantitatively. The below table illustrates the proposed research methodology, and selected tools for this study.

Questions	Quantitative / Qualitative	Instruments	Sample	Data analysis
RQ1: How are transition services perceived by Grade 12 students with disabilities and their specialists?	Qualitative	- Interview (closed and open-ended) - Document analysis	▪ RAK High schools - Grade 12 SWDs and their coordinators.	**Coding and content analysis** (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2011; Creswell 2013).
RQ2: What inclusive provisions do students with disabilities in higher education value most?	Qualitative	- Interview (closed and open-ended) - Document analysis	▪ SWDs at Higher Education Initiations (RAK and Dubai)	**Coding and content analysis** (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2011; Creswell 2013).
RQ3: How inclusive are the policies, practices, procedures and other accommodations in selected higher education institutions?	Qualitative	- Interview - Observation -Document analysis	▪ Higher Education Initiations employees (RAK and Dubai)	**Coding and content analysis** (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2011; Creswell 2013).
	Quantitative	Questionnaire (closed-items and open-ended items)	▪ Higher Education Initiations employees (RAK and Dubai)	**SPSS** (Muijs 2004)

RQ4: what accommodations and practices HEIs can adopt to be more inclusive	Would be extracted from the results	

Attached B

Consent form

CONSENT FORM FOR THE STUDY PARTICIPANTS

This form is a consent form, and it is to give you a basic idea about the research.

You are invited to participate in the following study

Research title: *Accessibility of inclusive provisions for transitioning students with disabilities into Higher Education in the United Arab Emirates: An investigative study.*

Researcher: Ms. Khawla Al Shehhi, last year doctoral student at the British University in Dubai.

Research overview: This study is to investigate stakeholders' perceptions of the inclusive provisions in the UAE HEIs. Moreover, to explore the standards that could be used to improve and develop better services and accessible educational environment for SWDs in the higher education institutions with the aim of facilitating their transition to post-secondary educational opportunities.

As for data collected during interviews, you are kindly informed that a voice recorder will be used during interviews to allow for transcribing the data for research purposes. At the end of the project, soft and hard copies of the recorded data would be destroyed.

Moreover, you are reminded that you can withdraw yourself from the study at any time without giving any reason.

To enable the researcher to maintain your anonymity please choose your preferred nickname and record it below.

I wish to be identified as .... (give-preferred name).

I would like to participate to take part in the study

Accessibility of inclusive provisions for transitioning students with disabilities into Higher Education in the United Arab Emirates: An investigative study

carried out by Ms. Alshehhi and the below shows my signature as a volunteering participant.

Name of participant	Date	Signature

Name of the researcher	Date	Signature

Attached C
PROPOSAL TIMELINE

Appendix P

To Whom It May Concern letter

.

10/7/2018

To whom it may concern

This is to certify that Ms.Khawla Al Shehhi with Student ID number 2016152070 is a registered part-time student in the PhD in Education offered by The British University in Dubai since September 2016.

Ms. Al Shehhi is currently collecting data for her research (Students with disabilities and Employees).

She is required to gather data through conducting Interview, Document analysis, Observation & Questionnaire that will help her in writing the final research. Your permission to conduct her research in your organisation is hereby requested. Further support provided to her in this regard will be highly appreciated. Hence, in order to achieve her academic objective and to validate her research hypothesis, your support is highly appreciated in accepting our request.

Any information given will be used solely for academic purposes.

This letter is issued on Ms.Al Shehhi's request.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Amer Alaya
Head of Student Administration

PO Box 345015 · Block 11 Dubai International Academic City Dubai U A E · T +971 4 279 1400 · F +971 4 279 1490
FB.com/BUiD.Team   BUiD_Team   youtube.com/BUiDadmin   @BUiD_Team   BUiD

Appendix Q

Study Procedures - Permission letter to access each site

INFORMATION LETTER FOR THE [   ] **DIRECTOR**

Dear Dr. [   ]

Executive Director [   ]

[   ]

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH STUDY AT THE [   ]

Full title of the project: *ACCESSIBILITY OF INCLUSIVE PROVISIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES TRANSITIONING INTO HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE UAE: AN INVESTIGATIVE STUDY*

I hereby request a permission to conduct a research.

The background information

I am last year doctoral student from the British University in Dubai (BUiD) taught in association with the University of Birmingham. The Program of (Special and Inclusive Education) for Special Needs under the supervision of Pro E. Gaad. I am working on my final dissertation project aimed to:

- Investigate the inclusive provisions that facilitate transitioning high school students with disabilities into Higher Education Institutions.
- Explore the standards that could be used to improve and develop services within an accessible educational environment for persons with disabilities in the higher education institutions.

To a great extent the study is an ethnographic observation to explore the institution accessibility for individuals with mobility, hearing, and visual impairments in terms of the institution maps, doors, signage, ramps, parking, PWD restrooms, elevators, nursing room, PWD classes location, mosque, events halls, cafeteria, special equipment and evacuation procedures.

Participation in the study

I am looking for students with different disabilities and employees to participate in this study (attached Study participants per site type). Moreover, the participation in this study is voluntary and each participants of this study would be asked to sign an informed consent form before participating in this study (the consent form is attached).

Collection and the use of the Data

This research study utilizes both qualitative and quantitative methods (*attached study research instruments and participants groups*). These include questionnaires, the questionnaire will be available in electronic and hard copy formats, and the link will be shared with the institution once approval is granted please see-attached questionnaire draft, focus group discussions (interviews questions would be shared after piloting the questionnaire), classroom and accessibility observation, and selected document analysis. After the submission of the thesis, all records (of participants' information, data collected, taken pictures for ramps) will be erased. A copy of this thesis will be shared with your organization.

On a side note, as input from all facilities personnel is also required for an all-encompassing view of the study field, it needs to be clarified that the researcher would survey and interview cleaners and security officers on Saturdays and after obtaining permission from their respective supervisors.

Why inviting facilities personnel to take part in this research study?

Cleaners, Security officers, cafeteria operators, and the nurses are likely to come in contact with any persons with disabilities (whether students or visitors) during their normal working day at this institution. Their knowledge of how to best serve persons with disabilities is an indicator of how accessible this place is. In this light, their opinions and perceptions regarding services provided to persons with disabilities would help the researcher to build a comprehensive picture of inclusive services available.

Confidentiality

All the collected data from the questionnaires, focus group interviews, classroom and accessibility observation, and document analysis will be used for this research purpose only and then it will be deleted. Moreover, the selected institutions will be identified by a code known only to the researcher. (HEI1, HEI2, etc.). The researcher will rewrite question 4 before editing it to the study appendices to reflect that coding.

I would request your support by sharing this information letter with all employees in your institutions, particularly the ones who are teaching or dealing with persons with mobility, hearing, and visual impairments to inform them about this study and encourage them to take part in it. All the shared information by the participants will be kept confidential and no one but the researcher will access the shared information.

Manual Wheelchair

As a researcher, where and when possible, I would like to use one manual wheelchair on campus to get a first-hand experience with the campus accessibility.

Your approval to conduct this study will be greatly appreciated. Thank you in advance for your interest and assistance with this research.

If you have any questions concerning the study, please feel free to e-mail me at 2016152070@student.buid.ac.ae .In addition, you can call

Respectfully,

Khawla Al Shehhi

Doctoral candidate

The British University in Dubai

Appendix R

Parents' permission letter to interview their sons and daughters (Arabic)

رسالة موافقة ولي الأمر

(للمشاركة في مشروع بحث الدكتوراه)

عنوان الدراسة : مدى اتاحة الخدمات الدامجة وامكانية انتقال طلاب الثاني عشر من التعليم الثانوي للتعليم العالي في دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة.

الباحثة :خولة الشحي

المؤسسة التعليمية: الجامعة البريطانية في دبي

مقدمة:

أنا خولة الشحي، طالبة دكتوراه في الجامعة البريطانية في دبي، أقوم ببحث مدى اتاحة الخدمات الدامجة وامكانية انتقال طلاب الثاني عشر من التعليم الثانوي للتعليم العالي في دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة.

غرض الدراسة:

ستقوم الباحثة بهذه الدراسة لاستكمال متطلبات الدكتواه في التربية، برنامج التربية الخاصة ـ التعليم الدامج (لأصحاب الهمم)

وهي تطلب تعاونكم لانجاز البحث.

الإجراءات الخاصة بالدراسة:

في هذه الدراسة سيتم مقابلة الطالبة/الطالب بعد الحصص الدراسية أو في حصص النشاط ، في الحرم المدرسي/الجامعي وسؤالهم حول الخدمات الدامجة المتوفرة. ، كما سيتم جمع معلومات من معلميهم والمختصين حول الخدمات المتوفرة لدعمهم داخل وخارج المدرسة /الجامعة.

الحق في المشاركة أو الانسحاب منها:

لكم مطلق الحرية في اشتراك ابنكم / أو ابنتكم في هذه الدراسة أو الرفض، كما يحق لكم الانسحاب منها قبل انتهائها . ولن تترتب أي عواقب سلبية على الطالبة/الطالب نتيجة ذلك.

سرية المعلومات: كل المعلومات التي سيتم الحصول عليها من المدرسة والمعلمين والطلاب ستبقى سرية ولن يتم الكشف عن اسم ابنكم / أو ابنتكم ، أو أي شيء يدل على هويتهم في الدراسة. إن المعلومات سيطلع عليها فقط موجه المادة الدراسية للباحثة، وحتى لو تم نشر الدراسة في مجلة علمية فإن اسم ابنكم وهويته لن يتم الكشف عنها.

لمزيد من المعلومات:

للتواصل الرجاء الاتصال بـ خولة الشحي 0000 أو على البريد الإلكتروني 2016152070@student.buid.ac.ae

وتفضّلوا بقبول فائق الإحترام والتقدير،

إقرار ولي الأمر بالموافقة:

لقد قرأت وفهمت متطلبات الدراسة، وأوافق بالتطوع وبمشاركة ابنتي / أو ابني فيها.

توقيع أو بصمة ولي الأمر	اسم ولي أمر الطالبة / الطالب
توقيع الباحثة	التاريخ

Appendix S

Study research instruments and participants groups

Instruments	Participants	Required contribution	Details	Required access facilitation
Questionnaire	All current Stakeholders in the organization without students. Example, (a) Management (director, etc.), (b) Teaching (Faculty, etc.), (c) Facilities operation example (Health and safety, security, cleaners, Nurses, etc.) or (d) Administrative staff (Academic service, Admin staff, Career services staff, Counselor, IT, etc.).	Attached the questionnaire with consent form at the below link Accessibility Services Provisions: Perceptions of Availability and Importance	Participants are expected to respond to a questionnaire gauging their perceptions regarding the availability of inclusive services in the college.	Once approval is obtained, the research committee is kindly requested to share the questionnaire link with all current campus stakeholders (without students).

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Instruments	Participants	Required contribution	Details	Required access facilitation
Document analysis	Targeted departments: College student services College Academic services • College resources (library) • College clinic (Nurse) • Counseling team • Support services (peer tutoring or success center) • College health and safety • Career services • Work placement • Volunteering team	Ethical committee approval	Documents related to Admission requirement, persons with disabilities policy, accommodation forms, announcement, etc.	The researcher will email the research committee requesting contact email addresses and contact numbers for the targeted departments (attach recruitment request). The researcher will contact them directly to request required documents.
Instruments	Participants	Required contribution	Details	Required access facilitation
Interview semi-structures	Current students With Disabilities	Consent form		Once approval is obtained, from the research committee

		Parents' permission letter	How inclusive provisions are as perceived by students with disabilities.	the researcher will work in the project under the supervision of the Department of Student Accessibility Services (SAS).
		Interview questions	The researcher would allow each participant to choose a suitable location, and time which would ensure that the study would be conducted in a safe, convenient and accessible environment.	Inform the potential research participants about the availability of the researcher. Arrange and attend meeting between the researcher and the potential research participants. 3 to 5 PWDs Example: (4 Female from ZU- Dubai and 4 Female from ZU- AD to start scheduling interview appointments (face-to-face or online zoom meeting) under the supervision of the Department of Student Accessibility Services.

| | Students with disabilities teachers | • Interview questions are based on questionnaire themes

• consent form | • Interview questions aim at gauging teachers perceptions about inclusive provisions. | Once approval is obtained the research, committee is kindly requested to share a list of teachers (with their name, gender, campus, major, email, and contact number) involved in teaching selected persons with disabilities (attach recruitment request).

The researcher will start scheduling interview appointments (face-to-face or online zoom meeting). |

Interview Focus group	Facilities employees	• Interview questions are based on questionnaire themes • consent form	Facilities employees are likely to come in contact with any persons with disabilities (whether students or visitors) during their normal working day at this institution. Their knowledge of how to best serve persons with disabilities is an indicator of how accessible this place is. In this light, their opinions and perceptions regarding services provided to persons with disabilities would help the researcher to build a comprehensive picture of inclusive services available.	The researcher would prepare a schedule for each visit to clarify the purpose of the study mainly for cleaners, and security officers, as this might need a translator from Hindi to English or English to Hindi, etc. The schedule will be shared with the research committee or the Department of Student Accessibility Services (SAS) one week earlier to arrange for access.

Instruments	Participants		Required contribution	Details		Required access facilitation

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| Observation | Campus Environmental facilitation | Ethical committee approval | To a great extent the study is an ethnographic observation to explore the institution accessibility for individuals with mobility, hearing, and visual impairments in terms of the institution maps, doors, signage, ramps, parking, PWD restrooms, elevators, nursing room, PWD classes location, mosque, events halls, cafeteria, special equipment and evacuation procedures.

A checklist would be used during the field observation and then it would be coded.

As a researcher, where and when possible, I would like to use one manual wheelchair on campus to get a first-hand experience with the campus accessibility. | The researcher would prepare a schedule for each visit (Saturdays only) and the schedule will be shared with the research committee one week earlier to arrange for access. |

Confidentiality:

All the collected data will be kept confidential.

Collected data will be used for the research purpose only and then it will be destroyed.

Selected institutions will be identified by a code known only to the researcher (HE1, HE2, etc.).

To maintain confidentiality, study participants will be asked to provide pseudonyms for the study report and name of college will not be used in the report.

All research collected data will be kept in soft copies in password protected external hard desk. Two years after writing the study report and completing the thesis, the hard desk containing the study data will erased/reformatted.

Outcomes for this research project :

The researcher expects to use the study results to come up with a guideline for a more accessible higher education in the UAE. The value of this should not only benefit students with disabilities in high schools and those in higher education, but also the whole Emirati community. As for dissemination of the study, the researcher will provide a bound copy of the thesis to the college. The British University in Dubai will handle online publication of the thesis post degree completion.

Sample of signed consent form by one participant

الجامعة البريطانية في دبي | The British University in Dubai

CONSENT FORM FOR THE STUDY PARTICIPANTS

This is a consent form, and it is to give you the basic idea about the research.

You are invited to participate in the following research study.

Research title: *Accessibility of inclusive provisions for students with disabilities transitioning into Higher Education in the UAE: An investigative study.*

Researcher: Ms. Khawla Al Shehhi, last year doctoral student at the British University in Dubai.

Research overview: This study is to investigate stakeholders' perceptions of the inclusive provisions in the UAE HEIs. Moreover, to explore the standards that could be used to improve and develop services within an accessible educational environment for PWDs in the higher education institutions.

The researcher will use an interview and questionnaire. Both the interview and questionnaire are likely to take about 30 to 45 minutes to complete (attached the study interview).

For your information, the study researcher will use a voice recorder, and once all the interviews are transcribed, only for the research purposes, and at the end of the project, data will be deleted. Moreover, you can withdraw from the study at any time without giving any reason.

I wish to be identified as .... **Al Sheebha** .... (Give- preferred name in case of being a study participant the study).

I, the undersigned, give my consent to participate in the **Accessibility of inclusive provisions for students with disabilities transitioning into Higher Education in the UAE: An investigative study** carried out by Ms. Alshehhi. The below signature represents my agreement to take part in the study as a volunteer.

If you have any questions concerning the study, please feel free to contact the study researcher at 2016152070@student.buid.ac.ae .

Al-Shehah	24/4/2019	⟡
Name of participant	Date	Signature
(optional)		
Khaula Al Shehhi	24-4-2019	✍
Name of the researcher	Date	Signature

Appendix U

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Document of the United Arab Emirates National standard classification of disabilities (Arabic)

التصنيف الوطني الموحد للإعاقات (أصحاب الهمم) في الدولة
المرفق بقرار مجلس الوزراء رقم (3) لسنة 2018

تم الاعتماد في هذا التصنيف على:

- قانون تعليم الأشخاص ذوي الإعاقة (الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية) 2004 IDEA—the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- الدليل التشخيصي الخامس الصادر عن الجمعية الأمريكية للطب النفسي Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition, **DSM-5**TM, American Psychiatric Association (2013)
- اتفاقية الأمم المتحدة لحقوق الأشخاص ذوي الإعاقة – 2006
- القانون الاتحادي رقم (29) لسنة 2006م في شأن حقوق المعاقين، المعدل بقانون اتحادي رقم (14) لسنة 2009.

المنطلقات الأساسية:

- الحاجة إلى تصنيف موحد للإعاقات على مستوى الدولة يشمل جميع الإعاقات. ويكون بمثابة مرجع وطني تستخدمه جميع الجهات حسب خدماتها المقدمة لذوي الإعاقة.

- تعتبر الغاية من التصنيف هي توفير خدمات واحتياجات للأشخاص ذي الإعاقة وتسهيل حصولهم عليها، وليس لمجرد التصنيف بحد ذاته، مع الأخذ بعين الاعتبار الاحتياجات الفردية لكل حالة بصرف النظر عن نوع الإعاقة.

- يساعد التصنيف في رفع مستوى التنسيق والتعاون بين الجهات المعنية لتوحيد أدوات الكشف عن الأشخاص ذوي الإعاقة وتحديد احتياجاتهم.

- يتسم هذا التصنيف بالمرونة والانفتاح على أفضل الممارسات العالمية في مجال الإعاقة، لاستيعاب فئات الإعاقة الواردة حقوقهم في اتفاقية الأمم المتحدة لحقوق الأشخاص ذوي الإعاقة.

- تتم عملية التصنيف استناداً إلى تقارير تشخيص وتقييم تحدد صلاحيتها وزارة تنمية المجتمع، صادرة عن المختصين المعتمدين من الجهات الرسمية في الدولة والمعتمدة من قبل الوزارة، أو التقارير من خارج الدولة المعتمدة من وزارة الخارجية، باستخدام أدوات ومقاييس مقننة ومعروفة عالمياً، ومناسبة للبيئة المحلية التي يعيشها الشخص ذو الإعاقة.

1

لأغراض التصنيف يتم استخدام التعريفات الآتية:

- الاضطرابات النمائية العصبية: مجموعة من الظروف تظهر مع بداية فترة النمو، وتظهر هذه الاضطرابات عادة في وقت مبكر من النمو غالباً قبل أن يلتحق الطفل بالمدرسة، وتتسم بعجز نمائي ينتج عنه اعتلالات في الأداء الشخصي، الاجتماعي، الأكاديمي أو الوظيفي. ويتراوح العجز النمائي بين قصور محدد في التعلم أو التحكم في وظائف حصرية، إلى اعتلالات شاملة في المهارات الاجتماعية أو الذهنية. ويندرج تحت مظلتها (الإعاقة الذهنية، اضطرابات التواصل، اضطراب طيف التوحد، اضطراب قصور الانتباه والنشاط الزائد، صعوبات التعلم المحددة) بالإضافة إلى الاضطرابات النمائية الأخرى .

- الإعاقات الحسية: تتضمن هذه الإعاقات (الإعاقة البصرية، الإعاقة السمعية، الإعاقة السمعية–البصرية).

تبعاً لهذا التصنيف، تكون الاعاقات على النحو الآتي:

1- الإعاقة الذهنية Intellectual Disability

ويندرج تحتها 3 فئات حسب القدرات العقلية المحددة والعمر:
1- الإعاقة الذهنية (يتم تحديد القدرات العقلية حسب اختبارات الذكاء المعتمدة).
2- التأخر النمائي العام (للأطفال 5 سنوات وأقل–غير محدد بدرجة معينة للقدرات العقلية).
3- الإعاقة الذهنية غير المحددة (للأعمار ما فوق 5 ســـنوات– غير محدد بدرجة معينة للقدرات العقلية).

تعريف الإعاقة الذهنية:

1- الإعاقة الذهنية (يتم تحديد القدرات العقلية حسب اختبارات الذكاء المعتمدة).

وتُعرف الإعاقة الذهنية بأنها: اضطراب يبدأ خلال فترة النمو، ويتضمن قصوراً في كل من الأداء الذهني والتكيفي، في المجالات المفاهيمية، الاجتماعية والإجرائية. ويجب أن تجتمع المعايير الثلاثة الآتية:

أولاً: قصور في الأداء الوظيفي الذهني، مثل: الاستنتاج، حل المشكلات، التخطيط، التفكير المجرد، الحكم، التعلم الأكاديمي، والتعلم من الخبرة، والتي يتم التأكد منها عبر التقييم الإكلينيكي واختبارات القدرات العقلية الفردية المقننة.

ويتم قياس الأداء الوظيفي الذهني عادة عن طريق اختبارات ذكاء تطبق بشكل فردي وصالحة من حيث قدرتها على القياس النفسي، وشاملة ومناسبة لثقافة الفرد. وتتراوح درجات الذكاء للأشخاص ذوي الإعاقة الذهنية بانحرافين معياريين تقريباً دون المتوسط العام للسكان، مع وجود هامش لخطأ القياس في حدود (5 درجات) على اختبارات مقننة انحرافها المعياري (15) ومتوسطها (100)، وهذا يتضمن الدرجات التي تتراوح بين 65- 75 (5 ± 70)، مما يتطلب التدريب الاكلينيكي للقائمين على تطبيق هذه الاختبارات من أجل التأكد من قدرتهم على تفسير النتائج وتقييم الأداء الذهني.

ثانياً: القصور في الأداء التكيفي: والذي ينجم عنه فشل في تحقيق المعايير النمائية والاجتماعية الثقافية لعملية الإستقلال الشخصي والمسؤولية الاجتماعية. حيث أن القصور الوظيفي التكيفي يكون في واحدة أو أكثر من أنشطة الحياة اليومية، مثل: (التواصل، المشاركة الاجتماعية، والعيش المستقل، في عدة بيئات مثل بيئة المنزل، المدرسة، العمل، والمجتمع). مقارنه بالآخرين في نفس المرحلة العمرية أو الخلفية الثقافية الاجتماعية.

ويتحقق المعيار الثاني من التشخيص عندما يكون بعداً واحداً على الأقل من أبعاد الأداء التكيفي- المفاهيمي، الاجتماعي، أو العملي- فيه قصور بما يكفي، بحيث يحتاج الفرد إلى دعم مستمر من أجل أن يمارس حياته بشكل ملائم في واحدة أو أكثر من المواقف الحياتية سواء في المدرسة، العمل، البيت، أو المجتمع. ومن أجل تحقيق معيار تشخيص الإعاقة الذهنية، فإن العجز في الأداء الوظيفي يجب أن يكون مرتبطاً بشكل مباشر بالقصور الذهني الموضح في المعيار الأول.

ثالثاً: أن تكون بداية ظهور القصور الذهني والتكيفي خلال مرحلة النمو.

2- التأخر النمائي العام (للأطفال من 5 سنوات فأقل- غير محدد بدرجة معينة للقدرات العقلية):
يتم التشخيص ضمن هذه الفئة للأطفال الذين أعمارهم أقل من 5 سنوات، الذين لا يمكن تحديد شدة إعاقتهم الذهنية بشكل موثوق خلال مرحلة الطفولة المبكرة. وتشخّص هذه الفئة عندما لا يحقق الطفل المهارات النمائية المتوقعة منه والمناسبة لعمره في عدة مجالات من الأداء الوظيفي العقلي، وذلك

يشمل الأطفال الذين لا يستطيعون تحمُّل التقييم المنظم بحيث يكونون صغار جداً على المشاركة في الاختبارات المقننة. وهذه الفئة تتطلب إعادة تقييمها بعد فترة من الزمن.

3 – الإعاقة الذهنية غير المحددة (للأشخاص أكبر من 5 سنوات– غير محدد بدرجة معينة للقدرات العقلية):

يندرج تحت هذه الفئة، الأشخاص الذين تزيد أعمارهم عن 5 سنوات، والذين من الصعوبة تطبيق الاختبارات عليهم لوجود عجز جسدي أو حسي مصاحب، مثل كف البصر، أو الصمم في مرحلة ما قبل اللغة، أو الإعاقة الحركية، أو ظهور المشاكل السلوكية الحادة، أو الاضطرابات العقلية المصاحبة. ويجب استخدام هذه الفئة في ظروف استثنائية بحيث يتطلب الأمر إعادة التقييم بعد فترة من الزمن.

الوثائق المطلوبة:

تقرير تربوي نفسي من أخصائي نفسي أو أخصائي نفسي إكلينيكي من جهة معتمدة، ويشمل تقييم: (القدرات العقلية، السلوك التكيفي، الحالة الطبية المصاحبة أو الاضطرابات السلوكية إن وجدت، التاريخ الطبي).

أهلية الخدمات:

- الخدمات الطبية بما فيها التشخيص والعلاج.
- التأهيل المساند كالعلاج الطبيعي، الوظيفي، اللغوي والسلوكي حسب الحاجة.
- خدمات التربية الخاصة.
- خدمات الدمج التربوي والمجتمعي.
- خدمات التدريب والتأهيل المهني والتشغيل.

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2- اضطرابات التواصل Communication Disorders

تعريف اضطرابات التواصل:

تتضمن اضطرابات التواصل عجزاً في اللغة، الكلام، والتواصل. ويعتبر الكلام هو المنتج التعبيري بالأصوات ويتضمن اللفظ، الطلاقة، الصوت، وجودة الصدى. وتتضمن اللغة شكل ووظيفة واستخدام النظام التقليدي للرموز (مثلاً.. الكلمات المنطوقة، لغة الاشارة، الكلمات المكتوبة، الصور) بطريقة تحكمها قواعد معينة من أجل التواصل. ويتضمن التواصل أي سلوك لفظي أو غير لفظي (سواء مقصود أو غير مقصود) والذي يؤثر في سلوك، أفكار أو اتجاهات شخص آخر.

إن تقييم قدرات الكلام، اللغة والتواصل يجب أن يأخذ بالاعتبار السياق الثقافي واللغوي للفرد، وخاصة الأشخاص الذي يعيشون في بيئات ثنائية اللغة. وإن المقاييس المقننة لتطور اللغة، والقدرة الذهنية غير اللفظية يجب أن تكون وثيقة الصلة بالمجموعة الثقافية واللغوية (مثلاً.. الاختبارات التي يتم تطويرها وتقنينها لمجموعة معينة قد لا تقدم معايير مناسبة لمجموعة أخرى مختلفة).

تتضمن الفئة التشخيصية لاضطرابات التواصل ما يلي: اضطراب اللغة، اضطراب الكلام والصوت، اضطراب الطلاقة في مرحلة الطفولة (stuttering)، اضطراب التواصل الاجتماعي، واضطرابات التواصل الأخرى المحددة وغير المحددة التي تظهر خلال أو بعد مرحلة النمو.

الوثائق المطلوبة:

- تقرير في اللغة والكلام من قبل أخصائي في علاج اضطرابات اللغة والكلام، من جهة معتمدة.
- تقرير سمعي مفصّل من مختص في السمعيات من جهة معتمدة.

أهلية الخدمات:

- التأهيل المساند كالعلاج اللغوي والسلوكي والاجتماعي حسب الحاجة.
- خدمات الدمج التربوي والاجتماعي.
- الخدمات الطبية (مثل عمليات الفك أو الأسنان، اللحمية...الخ).
- معينات سمعية أو أجهزة أخرى حسب الحاجة.

3- اضطراب طيف التوحد Autism Spectrum Disorder

تعريف اضطراب طيف التوحد:

هو أحد الاضطرابات النمائية العصبية، ونوع من الإعاقات التطورية التي يسببها خلل وظيفي في الجهاز العصبي المركزي (المخ) يتميز في توقف أو قصور في نمو الإدراك الحسي واللغوي وبالتالي القدرة على التواصل والتخاطب والتعلم والتفاعل الاجتماعي.

أورد الدليل الإحصائي والتشخيصي الخامس (DSM – V, APA ,2013) خمسة محكات لتشخيص اضطراب طيف التوحد، تتمثل في ما يلي:

- **المحك الأول:** عجز مستمر في التواصل الاجتماعي والتفاعل الاجتماعي ويظهر من خلال عدد من البيئات التي يتفاعل فيها الفرد. سواء كان ذلك القصور معبَّر عنه حالياً أم أشير إليه في التاريخ النمائي للفرد (الأمثلة الواردة هنا توضيحية وليست حصرية):

1- قصور في التفاعل الاجتماعي- الانفعالي المتبادل والممتد على سبيل المثال، من وجود نهج اجتماعي غير عادي وفشل في إنشاء محادثات تبادلية عادية ذهاباً وإياباً، إلى نقص في القدرة على مشاركة الاهتمامات والمشاعر أو العواطف، إلى الفشل في المبادرة أو الاستجابة للمبادرات الاجتماعية.

2- قصور في السلوكيات التواصلية غير اللفظية المستخدمة في التفاعل الاجتماعي، والتي تتراوح على سبيل المثال، بين ضعف اندماج السلوكيات اللفظية وغير اللفظية، إلى شذوذ في التواصل البصري ولغة الجسد، أو قصور في فهم واستخدام الايماءات، إلى نقص تام في تعابير الوجه والتواصل غير اللفظي.

3- قصور في القدرة على تطوير العلاقات الاجتماعية والمحافظة عليها وفهمها، والذي يتراوح على سبيل المثال، من الصعوبات في تكييف أنماط السلوك لتتناسب مع مختلف المواقف الاجتماعية، إلى صعوبات في المشاركة في اللعب التخيلي أو في تكوين الصداقات، إلى غياب الاهتمام بالأقران.

- **المحك الثاني:** أنماط محدودة تكرارية من السلوك، الاهتمامات أو الأنشطة، والتي يعبَّر عنها في اثنين على الأقل مما يلي: سواء كانت هذه السلوكيات واضحة للعيان حالياً أو أشير إليها في التاريخ التطوري للفرد (الأمثلة الواردة هنا توضيحية وليست حصرية):

1- النمطية أو التكرارية في الحركات الجسدية، في استخدام الأشياء أو في الكلام (مثلاً، الحركات النمطية البسيطة، صف الألعاب أو تقليب الأشياء، الصدوية، العبارات ذات المعنى الخاصة).

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2- الإصرار على الرتابة، الإلتزام غير المرن بالروتين، أو الأنماط الطقوسية للسلوكيات اللفظية أو غير اللفظية (أمثلة: الانزعاج الشديد عند التغييرات البسيطة صعوبات في الانتقال، أنماط تفكير جامدة، أنماط طقوسية عند تحية الآخرين، الحاجة إلى سلوك نفس الطريق أو تناول نفس الطعام كل يوم).

3- اهتمامات محدودة ثابتة بصورة كبيرة والتي تبدو غير عادية من حيث شدتها أو تركيزها (أمثلة: التعلق الشديد أو الانشغال بأشياء غير عادية، التقييد بشكل مفرط، اهتمامات مواظب عليها).

4- فرط أو انخفاض في الاستجابة للمدخلات الحسية أو اهتمامات غير عادية للأمور الحسية في البيئة (أمثلة: عدم الاكتراث الواضح للألم أو درجة الحرارة، استجابات متعاكسة لأصوات أو أنسجة محددة، الإفراط في شم أو لمس الأشياء، الافتتان البصري بالأضواء أو الحركات).

• المحك الثالث: يجب أن تظهر هذه الأعراض في مرحلة النمو المبكرة (ولكن قد لا تظهر هذه الأعراض بشكل واضح ومكتمل إلى أن تتجاوز الحاجات الاجتماعية للطفل قدراته المحددة، أو قد تكون هذه الأعراض محتجبة بسبب استراتيجيات التعليم في مراحل لاحقة من الحياة).

• المحك الرابع: أن تؤدي هذه الأعراض إلى اعتلال (عجز) ذو دلالة سريريه واضحة في الأداء الحالي للطفل في جوانب التفاعل الاجتماعي أو الوظيفي أو أي مجالات أخرى هامة.

• المحك الخامس: أن لا تكون هذه الأعراض ناشئة عن الإعاقة الذهنية (الاضطراب النمائي الذهني) أو التأخر النمائي العام. إن الإعاقة الذهنية واضطراب طيف التوحد كثيراً ما تتصاحب مع بعضها البعض، وحتى يُشخص الفرد باضطراب طيف التوحد والإعاقة الذهنية فلا بد أن يكون مستوى أداؤه في جانب التواصل الاجتماعي أدنى من المتوقع وفقاً لمستواه النمائي العام.

الوثائق المطلوبة:

- تقرير تربوي نفسي من أخصائي نفسي أو أخصائي نفسي إكلينيكي من جهة معتمدة.
- تقرير اللغة والكلام من اختصاصي اللغة والكلام مرخص من جهة معتمدة.
- فحص السمع صادر عن جهة معتمدة.

أهلية الخدمات:

• الخدمات الطبية بما فيها التشخيص والعلاج.

- التأهيل المساند كالعلاج الطبيعي، الوظيفي، اللغوي والسلوكي حسب الحاجة.
- خدمات التربية الخاصة.
- خدمات الدمج التربوي والمجتمعي.
- خدمات التدريب والتأهيل المهني والتشغيل.

4- اضطراب قصور الانتباه والنشاط الزائد /Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder

وتحدد المعايير التشخيصية للاضطراب كما يلي:

أولاً: نمط مســـتمر من عدم الانتباه و/أو النشـــاط الزائد-الاندفاعية التي تتداخل مع الأداء الوظيفي والنمو، والتي تتسم بـ (1) و/أو (2):

1 - **عدم الانتباه:** ظهور ستة (أو أكثر) من الأعراض التالية بشكل مستمر لمدة 6 شهور، لدرجة غير متسقة مع المستوى النمائي والتي تؤثر بشكل سلبي مباشرة على الأنشطة الاجتماعية والأكاديمية/ الوظيفية:

ملاحظة: الأعراض هي ليست بمجرد ظهور السلوك المعارض، التحدي، العداء، أو الفشل في أداء المهام أو التعليمات. بالنسبة للمراهقين والراشدين (أعمار 17 سنة فما فوق) مطلوب خمسة أعراض على الأقل.

أ- غالباً ما يفشل في إبداء الانتباه الشديد للتفاصيل أو يرتكب أخطاء نتيجة الاهمال في الواجبات المدرسية، أو في العمل، أو خلال الأنشطة الأخرى (مثلاً.. إغفال أو التغاضي عن التفاصيل، عدم دقة العمل).

ب-غالباً ما يجد صـــعوبة في مواصلة الانتباه في المهام أو أنشطة اللعب (مثلاً.. لديه صـــعوبة في البقاء مُركِّزاً خلال المحاضرات، المحادثات، أو القراءة الطويلة).

ج- غالباً لا يبدو مصـــغياً عندما يتم الحديث له مباشـــرة (مثلاً.. يبدو عقله في مكان ما، حتى في حالة غياب أي مشتت واضح).

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د- غالباً لا يتبع التعليمات ويفشـــل في الانتهاء من الواجبات المدرسـية، الأعمال المنزلية، أو الواجبات في مكان العمل (مثلاً.. يبدأ المهام ولكن يفقد التركيز بسرعة ومن السـهولة أن ينحرف عن الموضوع).

هـ- غالباً ما يجد صـــعوبة في تنظيم المهام والأنشـــطة (مثلاً.. صـــعوبة في إدارة المهام المتتابعة، صـــعوبة الاحتفاظ بالمواد والممتلكات مرتبة، الفوضى، العمل غير المنظم، ضـــعف في إدارة الوقت، الفشل في الوفاء في المواعيد النهائية.

و- غالباً ما يتجنب، لا يحب أو يكون مقاوماً للانخراط في مهام تتطلب جهداً عقلياً متواصلاً (مثلاً.. الواجبات المدرسـية أو المنزلية، أو تحضـــير التقارير بالنسـبة للمراهقين أو الراشـدين، إكمال النماذج، مراجعة أوراق كثيرة).

ز- غالباً ما يضيّع أشياءً ضرورية للمهام أو الأنشطة (مثلاً.. الأدوات المدرسية، الأقلام، الكتب، الأدوات، المَحافظ، المفاتيح، الأعمال الورقية، النظارات، الهواتف النقالة).

ح- غالباً ما يتشتت بسهولة من مثير عرَضي (بالنسبة للمراهقين والراشدين قد يتضـمن ذلك أفكاراً ليست ذات صلة).

ط- غالباً كثير النسـيان في الأنشـطة اليومية (مثلاً.. أداء الأعمال الروتينية، إدارة المهام، وبالنسـبة للمراهقين والراشدين إدارة المكالمات، دفع الفواتير، المحافظة على المواعيد).

2- **النشاط الزائد والاندفاعية**: ظهور ستة (أو أكثر) من الأعراض التالية بشكل مستمر لمدة ستة أشهر على الأقل لدرجة غير متسقة مع المستوى النمائي، والتي تؤثر بشكل سلبي مباشرة على الأنشطة الاجتماعية والأكاديمية/الوظيفية:

ملاحظة: الأعراض هي ليست بمجرد ظهور السـلوك المعارض، التحدي، العداء، أو الفشل في أداء المهام أو التعليمات. بالنسبة للمراهقين والراشدين (أعمار 17 سنة فما فوق) مطلوب خمسة أعراض على الأقل.

أ. يتململ غالباً مع أو بدون نقر الأيدي أو الأقدام أو التلوي على المقعد.

ب. غالباً ما يترك مقعده في المواقف التي يكون فيها من المتوقع البقاء جالساً (مثلاً.. يترك مكانه أو مكانها في الفصـــل، في المكتب أو مكان العمل، أو في المواقف الأخرى التي تتطلب البقاء في المكان).

ج. غالباً ما يجري أو يتسـلق في المواقف التي يكون فيها من غير المناسب القيام بذلك. (ملاحظة: عند المراهقين والراشدين قد تكون مقتصرة على عدم الشعور بالرحة).

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د. غالباً لا يقدر على اللعب أو الانخراط في أنشطة الفراغ بهدوء.

ه. غالباً فعّال للغاية، يتصرف وكأنه "مدفوع بمحرك" (مثلاً.. غير قادر أو غير مرتاح للبقاء لوقت أطول، كما هو الحال في المطاعم، الاجتماعات، معروف من قبل الآخرين بأنه لا يهدأ أو من الصعب مواكبته).

و. غالباً ما يتكلم بإفراط.

ز. غالباً ما يجيب من غير تفكير وقبل إكمال السؤال (مثلاً.. يُكمل جمل الآخرين، لا يستطيع انتظار دوره في محادثة).

ح. غالباً ما يجد صعوبة في انتظار دوره (مثلاً.. أثناء الانتظار في الطابور).

ط. غالباً ما يقاطع أو يتطفل على الآخرين (مثلاً.. تحفظات في المحادثات، ألعاب، أو أنشطة، يباشر في استخدام أشياء الآخرين بدون سؤال أو الحصول على إذن، وبالنسبة للمراهقين والراشدين قد يتطفل على أو يتولى القيام بأعمال الآخرين).

ثانياً: ظهور العديد من الأعراض المُغفَل عنها أو النشاط الزائد–الاندفاعية قبل سن الثانية عشرة.

ثالثاً: ظهور العديد من الأعراض المُغفَل عنها أو النشاط الزائد–الاندفاعية في موقفين أو أكثر (مثلاً.. في البيت، المدرسة، أو العمل، مع الأصدقاء أو الأقارب، في أنشطة أخرى).

رابعاً: هناك دليل واضح على أن الأعراض تتداخل في أو تقلل من جودة الأداء الاجتماعي، الأكاديمي أو الوظيفي.

خامساً: عدم حدوث الأعراض حصرياً خلال مسار الفصام أو اضطراب ذهاني، ولم يتم تفسيرها جيداً من قبل اضطراب عقلي آخر (مثلاً.. اضطراب المزاج، اضطراب القلق، اضطراب فصامي، اضطراب الشخصية، المواد المسكرة، أو الانسحاب).

الوثائق المطلوبة:

تقرير طبي من أخصائي نمو الأطفال أو أخصائي أعصاب أو أخصائي الطب النفسي، و/أو تقرير نفسي من أخصائي نفسي أو أخصائي نفسي إكلينيكي من جهة معتمدة.

أهلية الخدمات:

- الخدمات الطبية والنفسية والسلوكية بما فيها التشخيص والعلاج.
- الخدمات العلاجية المساندة حسب الحاجة.
- خدمات التعليم الدامج.
- خدمات الدمج المجتمعي.

5-صعوبات التعلم المحددة Specific Learning Disorder

تعريف صعوبات التعلم:

اضطراب في واحد أو أكثر من العمليات النفسية الأساسية بما فيها فهم أو استخدام اللغة الشفوية أو المكتوبة، والتي تظهر في نقص القدرة على الاستماع، التفكير، القراءة، الكتابة، التهجئة، أو إجراء العمليات الحسابية، ويتضمن ذلك الإعاقات الإدراكية، الاختلال الدماغي البسيط، حالات الديسليكسيا. ولا يتضمن المصطلح مشكلات التعليم التي هي في الأساس نتيجة الإعاقات البصرية، السمعية أو الحركية، الذهنية، الاضطرابات الانفعالية، أو نتيجة المعيقات البيئية، الثقافية أو الاقتصادية. وتكون القدرات العقلية لهذه الفئة التي تقيسها اختبارات الذكاء ضمن المستوى الطبيعي أو أعلى منه. وتتضمن المعايير التشخيصية لهذا الاضطراب ما يلي:

أولاً: صعوبات في التعلم واستخدام المهارات الأكاديمية، كما هو معبَّر عنه في وجود واحد على الأقل من الأعراض التالية والتي تظهر لمدة 6 شهور على الأقل، بغض النظر عن توفير التدخلات التي تستهدف هذه الصعوبات:

1- قراءة غير صحيحة أو بطيئة مع بذل جهد كبير مع القراءة (مثلاً: يقرأ الكلمات المفردة جهرياً بشكل غير صحيح أو ببطء وبتردد، يُخمن الكلمات بشكل متكرر، يجد صعوبة في تهجئة الكلمات).

2- صعوبات في فهم ما تمت قراءته (مثلاً: قد يقرأ النص بدقة ولكن لا يفهم الترتيب والتتابع في النص، العلاقات، الاستنتاجات، أو المعنى العميق لما تمت قراءته).

3- صعوبات في التهجئة (مثلاً: قد يضيف أو يحذف أو يستبدل حروف العلة أو الحروف الساكنة).

4- صعوبات في التعبير الكتابي (مثلاً: لديه أخطاء متعددة نحوية أو في علامات الترقيم في الجُمل، ضعف في تنظيم الفقرة، افتقار التعبير الكتابي للأفكار إلى الوضوح).

5- صعوبات في فهم معنى الأرقام وحقائقها، والطرق الحسابية (مثلاً: ضعف في فهم الأرقام، حجمها وعلاقاتها، العد على الأصابع لإضافة عدد بدلاً من استدعاء الحقائق الرياضية كما يفعل أقرانه، يشعر بالضياع في وسط مسألة حسابية وقد يبدّل الخطوات).

6- صعوبات في الاستنتاج الحسابي (مثلاً: يجد صعوبة شديدة في تطبيق المفاهيم الرياضية، الحقائق، أو الخطوات اللازمة لحل المسائل الكمية).

ثانياً: المهارات الأكاديمية المتأثرة هي أقل مما هو متوقع من الأشخاص الذين في عمره الزمني بشكل جوهري وكبير، وتسبب تداخلاً حاداً مع الأداء الأكاديمي أو الوظيفي، أو في أنشطة الحياة اليومية، والتي يتم تأكيدها عبر مقاييس التحصيل المقننة التي تطبّق بشكل فردي وعبر التقييم السريري الشامل. للأشخاص

الذين أعمارهم 17 سنة فما فوق، فإن توثيق وجود صعوبات تعلم في تاريخ الحالة قد يكون بديلاً عن التقييم المقنن.

ثالثاً: بدء صعوبات التعلم في مرحلة المدرسة ولكن قد لا تكون ظاهرة إلى أن تتخطى متطلبات المهارات الأكاديمية المتأثرة لقدرات الفرد المحدودة (مثلاً: الوقت المحدد للامتحانات، قراءة أو كتابة تقارير طويلة معقدة محدودة بوقت معين، أعباء أكاديمية مكثفة).

رابعاً: صعوبات تعلم لم تسببها الإعاقة الذهنية، حدة الابصار أو السمع غير المصححة، الاضطرابات العقلية أو العصبية الأخرى، المشكلات النفسية الاجتماعية، عدم الكفاءة في لغة التعليم الأكاديمي أو عدم ملائمته.

الوثائق المطلوبة:

تقرير تربوي نفسي من أخصائي تربية خاصة أو أخصائي صعوبات تعلم أو أخصائي تربوي نفسي من جهة معتمدة.

ويتضمن ذلك مراعاة:

1- تباين اختبار الذكاء مع الاختبارات التحصيلية IQ –Achievement Discrepancy Model (مقدار 2 انحراف معياري) بمعنى 30 درجة او أكثر. مثلاً: تكون درجة الطالب في اختبار الذكاء بمقدار انحرافين معياريين (30 درجة) أكثر من اداءه في الاختبار التحصيلي (الجدول 1).

2- جدول التباين Discrepancy Table – (الجدول 2).

3- الاستجابة لطرق التدخل Response to Intervention: ويتطلب 3 مستويات للاختبارات أو التقييمات أو أنواع التدخل (إجراء مسوحات لجميع الطلبة مع بداية العام الدراسي من خلال الاختبارات التحصيلية، وتم التعرف عل الطلبة الذين لم يؤدوا بالشكل المطلوب، ثم يتم وضع مجموعة من التدخلات والتعليمات للطلبة وتتم مراقبة أداء الطلبة من خلال المجموعات، وإذا لم يستفد الطلبة يتم إجراء تدخلات فردية (ليس تربية خاصة)، وإذا لم تتم الاستفادة يتم تحويلهم للتقييم لتلقي برامج التربية الخاصة)

الجدول 1 تباين اختبار الذكاء مع الاختبارات التحصيلية

Standard Scores	70	85	100	115	130
Standard Deviations	-2	-1	0	1	2
Grade Equivalence	2.0	2.9	4.7	7.3	10.4

IQ Score   100

Reading Score   68   Discrepancy
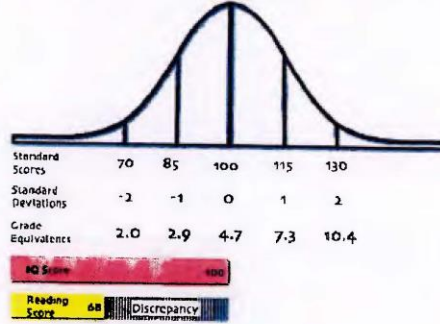
الجدول 2 جدول التباين

اختبار الذكاء	الاختبار التحصيلي	اختبار الذكاء	الاختبار التحصيلي
69	62	97	80
70	62	98	81
71	63	99	82
72	64	100	82
73	65	101	83
74	65	102	84
75	66	103	84
77	67	105	86
78	68	106	86
9	69	107	87
80	69	108	88
81	70	109	88
82	71	110	89
83	71	111	89
84	72	112	90
5	73	113	91
86	73	114	91
87	74	115	92
88	75	116	93
89	75	117	93
90	76	118	94
91	76	119	95
92	77	120	95
93	78	121	96
94	78	122	97
95	79	123	97
96	80	124	98
		125	99

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أهلية الخدمات:

- الخدمات النفسية والسلوكية والتعليمية بما فيها التشخيص والعلاج.
- الخدمات العلاجية المساندة حسب الحاجة.
- خدمات التعليم الدامج.
- خدمات الدمج المجتمعي.

6- الإعاقة البصرية Visual Impairment :

تعريف الإعاقة البصرية:

نقص حاد في الرؤية يتفاوت من حالات فقد البصر الكلي "كف البصر" إلى حالات فقد البصر الجزئي التي لا يمكن علاجها عن طريق العمليات الجراحية أو استخدام النظارات أو العدسات اللاصقة، ويمكن تصنيف حالات الإعاقة البصرية إلى:

كف البصر الكلي Totally Blindness: هو فقدان الشخص درجات الإبصار كلياً إلى أقل من 20 درجة ولو باستخدام النظارة، ولا يمكن لهذه الفئة الاستفادة من البرامج التربوية والتعليمية المقدمة للعاديين، وينطبق عليها التعريفين القانوني، والتربوي.

كف البصر الجزئي Partially Sighted: حيث تصل نسبة الرؤية في أفضل الحالات إلى 6/60 أو أقل في العين الأقوى.

ضعف البصر Low Vision : فقد جزئي للرؤية في العين الأقوى لا يمكن تعويضه عن طريق المعينات البصرية أو العدسات اللاصقة أو استخدام الأدوية أو العمليات الجراحية، حيث يختلف ضعف البصر من شخص لآخر.

الوثائق المطلوبة:

تقرير طبي من طبيب العيون وأمراضها من جهة معتمدة.

أهلية الخدمات:

- الخدمات الطبية.
- برامج تأهيل التوجه والحركة.
- معينات تقنيات وأدوات مساعدة ومعينات بصرية.
- أدوت وتقنيات بصرية.
- التعلم بطريقة برايل.
- خدمات الدمج التعليمي والاجتماعي.

7- الإعاقة السمعية Hearing Impairment:

تعريف الإعاقة السمعية:

هي فقدان كلي أو جزئي في حاسة السمع إلى الحد الذي يؤثر على قدرة الفرد على استخدام حاسة السمع في التواصل أو التعلم في بيئة تعليمية عادية، وتشمل هذه الإعاقة الصمم وضعف السمع وبالتالي يحتاج صاحبها إلى خدمات خاصة من أجل تطوير اللغة والكلام والتواصل الشفهي. وقد تكون الإعاقة السمعية توصيلية، حسية عصبية، أو مختلطة.

<u>وتشمل الإعاقة السمعية ما يلي:</u>

1- الصمم: خلل في الجهاز العصبي السمعي وبالتالي لا يستعمل الجهاز السمعي، وهذا يحد من استخدام التواصل اللفظي ويقوم الفرد باستخدام طريقة أخرى للتواصل مثل (لغة الاشارة) وتكون درجة السمع لديه أكثر من 90 ديسبل (فقدان السمع العميق).

2- ضعف السمع: فقدان من السمع المتغير أو الثابت الذي يؤثر على طرق التواصل بالاعتماد على الجهاز السمعي كمصدر للسمع ويحتاج إلى معين سمعي، وهناك درجات للضعف السمعي بدءاً من 26-90 ديسبل. وهناك عدة انواع له: (فقدان سمع ثنائي وأحادي، فقدان سمع متجانس وغير متجانس، فقدان سمع متطور ومفاجئ وثابت).

درجات فقدان السمع بالديسبل:	
Mild خفيف	26 to 40
Moderate معتدل	41 to 55
Moderately severe متوسط الشدة	56 to 70
Severe شديد	71 to 90
Profound عميق	أكثر من 90

الوثائق المطلوبة:

تقرير فحص سمع من طبيب أنف وأذن وحنجرة أو أخصائي السمعيات من جهة معتمدة.

أهلية الخدمات:

- الخدمات الطبية.
- تأهيل سمعي ولغوي وتواصل.
- معينات سمعية وزراعة القوقعة.
- خدمات الدمج التعليمي والاجتماعي.
- التعليم الخاص حسب الاحتياج.

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8ـ الإعاقة السمعية ـ البصرية Deaf-Blind Disability

وهي مصــاحبة أو تزامن الإعاقة الســمعية والبصــرية معاً، مما يؤدي إلى احتياجات عميقة في التواصــل واحتياجات نمائية وتعليمية أخرى، والتي لا يمكن توفيرها من خلال برامج التربية الخاصــة المقدمة وحدها للمكفوفين أو ذوي الإعاقة السمعية.

الوثائق المطلوبة:

- تقرير فحص سمع من طبيب أنف وأذن وحنجرة أو أخصائي السمعيات من جهة معتمدة.
- تقرير طبي من طبيب العيون وأمراضها من جهة معتمدة.

أهلية الخدمات:

- الخدمات الطبية.
- تأهيل سمعي ولغوي وتواصل.
- معينات سمعية وزراعة القوقعة.
- برامج تأهيل التوجه والحركة.
- أدوت وتقنيات بصرية.
- التعلم بطريقة برايل.
- خدمات الدمج التعليمي والاجتماعي.
- التعليم والتأهيل الخاص حسب الاحتياج.

9ـ الإعاقة الجسدية Physical Disability

حالة عجز عصبية أو عضلية أو عظمية مزمنة تحد من قدرة الشخص على استخدام جسمه بشكل طبيعي وتتأثر أنشطة حياته اليومية تبعاً لذلك وبشكل خاص الأنشطة المدرسية في البيئة التعليمية العادية، وقد تنجم هذه الإعاقة عن تشوهات خلقية منذ الولادة، أو أمراض معينة، أو كسور أو بتر.

وتتأثر من جراء الإعاقة الجسدية، واحدة أو أكثر من المهارات التالية:

1- المهارات الوظيفية: نقص في المهارات الوظيفية التنظيمية أو مهارات العمل الاستقلالية.

2- المهارات الحركية: عدم القدرة على عمل أو إنهاء مهارة حركية.

3- الأداء التعليمي: تؤثر الإعاقة الجسدية على أداء الطالب التعليمي بحيث يكون مستواه أقل من أقرانه.

	الحالات التي تشملها الإعاقة الجسدية
1	حالات الشلل: الشلل الرباعي ، النصفي السفلي، النصفي الطولي أو الأحادي الناتجة عن إصابات الحبل الشوكي، والجلطة الدماغية، والشلل الدماغي أو شلل الأطفال، أو نتيجة خلل أو اعتلال عصبي طرفي الخ.
2	حالات الشلل التي لا يستطيع صاحبها المشي مما يستدعي الاستعانة بمعينات خاصة.
3	حالات الشلل التي يجد صاحبها صعوبة في المشي، مما يستدعي الاستعانة بمعينات خاصة، ولكن يستطيع المشي بدونها بصعوبة.
4	حالات البتر في طرف أو أكثر من الأطراف العلوية أو السفلى: (فوق الكوع، خلال مفصل الكوع، خلال رسغ اليد، خلال مفصل الورك، خلال مفصل الركبة، خلال الكاحل، بتر جزئي للقدم).
5	ضعف العضلات بسبب الأمراض العصبية المركزية والمتزايدة مثل ضمور العضلات، مرض دوشين، التصلب اللويحي المتعدد.
6	تشوهات العمود الفقري الشديدة، والأمراض المزمنة التي تسبب في حدوث إعاقة.

الوثائق المطلوبة:

تقرير طبي من جهة معتمدة، من قبل طبيب أمراض الجهاز العصبي، طبيب عظام، أخصائي علاج طبيعي.

أهلية الخدمات:

- الخدمات الطبية بما فيها التشخيص والعلاج.
- التأهيل الحركي والوظيفي.
- خدمات التعليم الدامج، والدمج الاجتماعي.
- الأدوات المساعدة على الحركة والتنقل.

10 - الاضطرابات النفسية/ الانفعالية Psycho\ Emotional Disorders

تندرج تحت مظلة الاضطرابات النفسية مسميات عدة مثل (الاضطرابات الانفعالية، الاضطرابات السلوكية، أو المرض النفسي)، وهي عبارة عن حالة شعورية مركَّبة يصاحبها نشاط جسمي وفسيولوجي مميز بحيث تكون ردود الفعل الانفعالية غير مناسبة سواء بالزيادة أو النقصان، وتظهر عند الفرد من خلال واحد أو أكثر من السمات التالية لفترة زمنية طويلة ولدرجة ملحوظة، بحيث تؤثر سلباً على الأداء التعليمي والحياتي اليومي:

– عدم قدرة على التعلم لا يمكن تفسيرها تبعاً لعوامل ذهنية، حسية أو صحية.

– عدم القدرة على بناء أو الاحتفاظ بعلاقات شخصية مع الأقران أو البالغين.

– أنماط غير مناسبة من السلوك أو المشاعر في ظل ظروف طبيعية.

– مزاج عام من عدم الاحساس بالسعادة أو الاكتئاب.

– الميل إلى ظهور أعراض جسدية أو مخاوف مرتبطة بالمشكلات الشخصية أو التعليمية.

ويشمل هذا المصطلح حالات فصام الشخصية، تفكك الهوية، الخوف المرضي الشديد، الاكتئاب الشديد، القلق، الصدمات والضغوطات النفسية، واضطراب الوسواس القهري والاضطرابات العصبية المعرفية...الخ.. ونتيجة تعدد الاضطرابات وتنوعها، يمكن الرجوع إلى النسخة الخامسة من DSM لكل اضطراب ومعايير تشخيصه: www.psychiatryOneline.org

الوثائق المطلوبة:

تقرير نفسي من أخصائي الطب النفسي أو أخصائي نفسي اكلينيكي من جهة معتمدة.

أهلية الخدمات:

• الخدمات الطبية النفسية بما فيها التشخيص والعلاج.

• التأهيل المساند كالعلاج المعرفي، والسلوكي والوظيفي.

• خدمات التربية الخاصة والدمج التربوي.

• خدمات التدريب والتأهيل المهني والتشغيل.

11- الإعاقة المتعددة Multiple Disability

وجود إعاقة لدى الشخص تندرج تحت إحدى فئات (الاضطرابات النمائية العصبية، الإعاقات الحسية، الإعاقات الجسدية، الاضطرابات النفسية/ الانفعالية)، تصاحبها إعاقة أخرى أو أكثر تندرج تحت فئة أخرى من هذه الفئات، مثل: الإعاقة الذهنية والجسدية معاً، أو الإعاقة السمعية والذهنية معاً. ولا يشمل هذا النوع من الإعاقة فئة الإعاقة البصرية والسمعية معاً كونها تندرج تحت فئة الإعاقات الحسية، أو وجود إعاقتين معاً لدى الشخص من فئة الاضطرابات النمائية العصبية.

وتسبب هذه الإعاقة مشكلات نمائية وتربوية مباشرة على أداء الفرد، بحيث يكون من الصعب معها التحاق الشخص بالبرامج الخاصة بالإعاقات غير المركَّبة، وغالباً ما تُقرن المراجع العلمية الإعاقات المتعددة بالإعاقات الشديدة نظراً للصعوبات العديدة التي يواجهها الشخص في وظائفه الحياتية اليومية.

الوثائق المطلوبة:

- حسب الوثائق المطلوبة الواردة في فئات الإعاقة سابقة الذكر.

أهلية الخدمات:

- حسب أهلية الخدمات الواردة في فئات الإعاقة سابقة الذكر.

Appendix V

National Policy of Empowering People of Determination

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
MINISTRY OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

National Policy to empower
People of Determination

Centers for the rehabilitation across UAE

☆ The number of rehabilitation centers for people of determination (87)

UAQ
1
1

Abu Dhabi
37
23
14

federal 7
23 **Local**
57 **private**

RAK
3
1
2

Al Fujairah
3
2
1

Sharjah
23
15
8

Ajman
5
1
4

Dubai
15
2
1 12
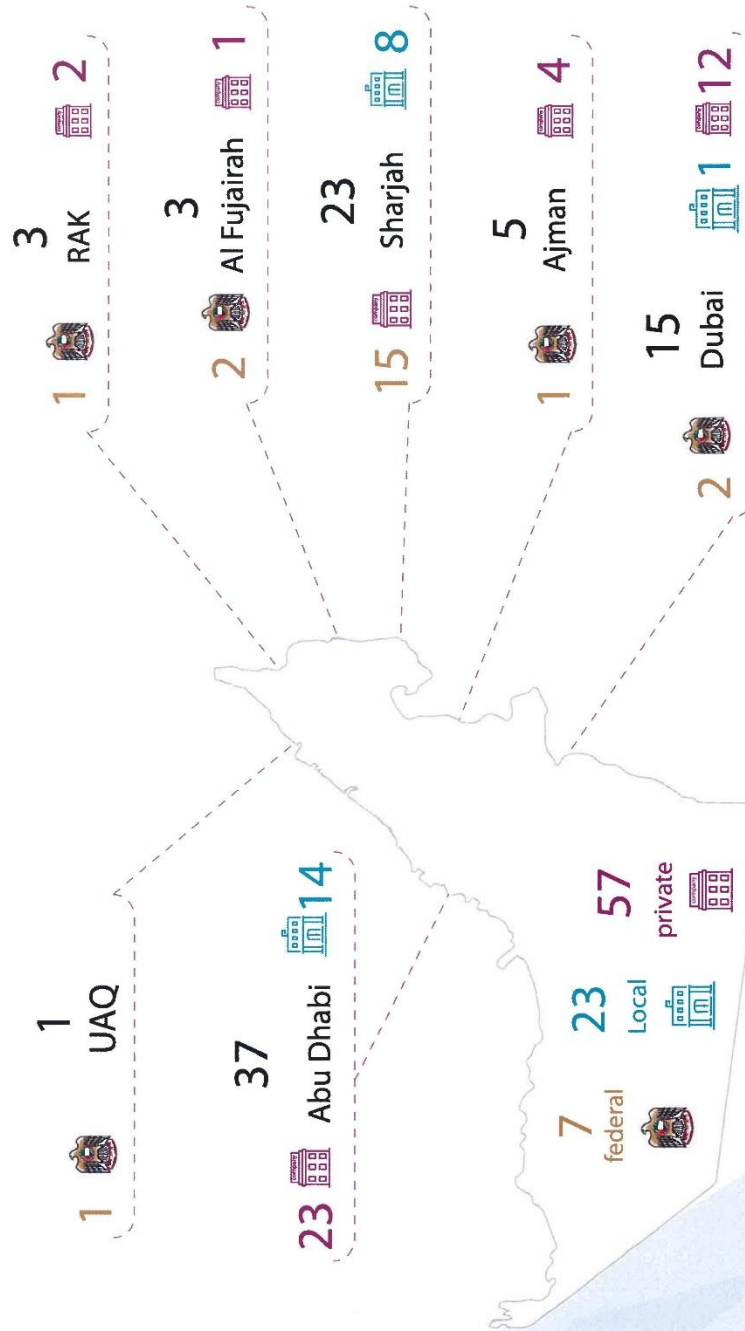
☆ Based on the latest statistic issued in 2016

6

Workers at centers for the rehabilitation

☆ The number of workers in rehabilitation centers for people of determination (2,007)

15
UAQ 🧍13

2 👨

1008
Abu Dhabi 👥821

187 👨

80
RAK 👥69

11 👨

51
Al Fujairah 👥45

6 👨

346
Sharjah 👥310

36 👨

30
Ajman 👥28

2 👨

477
Dubai 👥386

91 👨

335 administrative workers

1,672 technical workers

☆ Based on the latest statistic issued in 2016

7
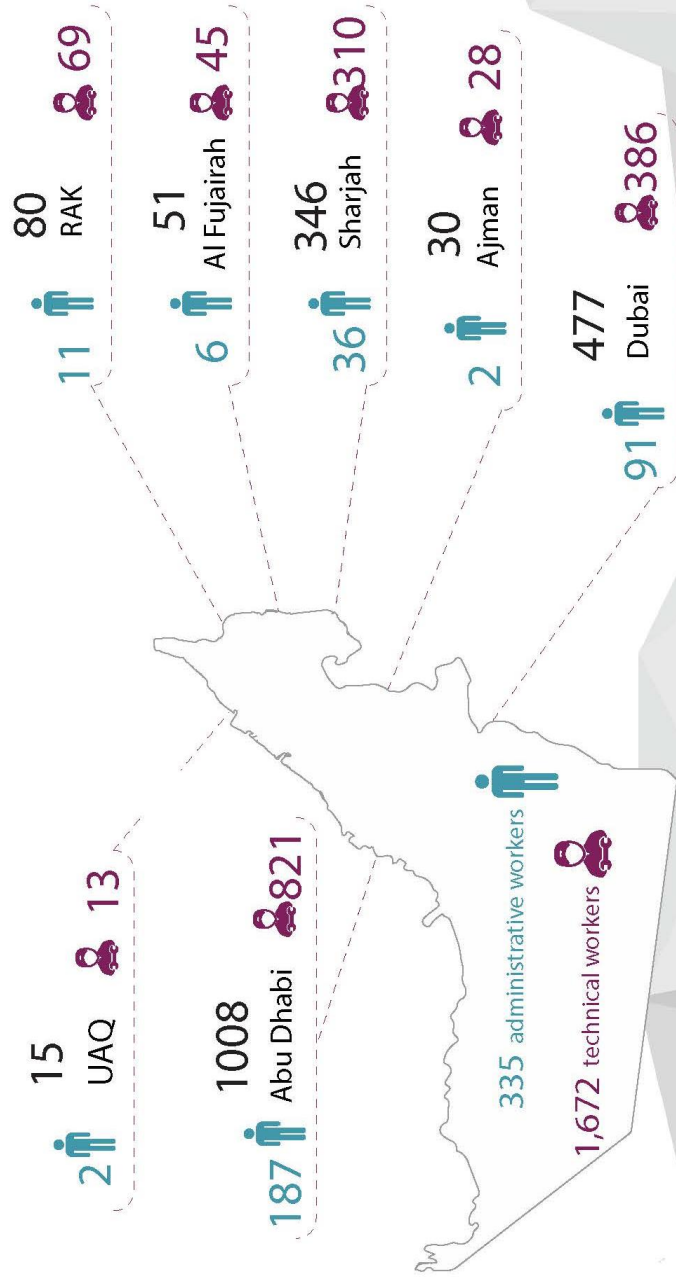
Directive is to Transform the

The Medical Model

- Patient
- An unchanged community
- The disability is the problem of an individual
- Based on a charity method
- Focusing on the disability
- Exclusion
- Differences in abilities perceived as a weakness
- Selection process does not pass through people of determination
- The foundation is the director
- Specialists are more knowledgeable
- Treating people of determination

to a Social Model

- Member of the community
- Developing community
- A disability if the problem of the community
- Based on rights
- Focusing on strengths
- Recognition and integration
- Differences in abilities perceived as a strength
- The right to choose and decision making in the hands of people of determination
- Society is the director
- Respect the diverse knowledge amongst people
- Overcoming barriers in the community, amending policies, and modifying behaviors

Policy

The Vision

An integrated community, free from barriers, which empowers people of determination and guarantees their right to a dignified life

Mission

Empowering people of determination and their families, through setting policies and innovating services that allow them to enjoy a high quality of life

Objectives

- Achieving social inclusion
- Active participation
- Enhancing equal opportunities
- Supporting individuals and their families to perform their roles

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Policy pillars

1. Healthcare and rehabilitation

2. Education

3. Vocational training and employability

4. Vocational training and employability

5. Accessibility

6. Public, cultural and sports life

I Pillar – Healthcare and rehabilitation

1.1 Goal Guaranteeing a comprehensive and high quality healthcare

Initiatives

- Expanding healthcare services and programs to cover all factions of community
- Expanding the scope of services provided by development clinics and ensuring that develop–ment surveys are mandatory
- Developing regular and post–accident rehabilitation programs
- Developing special plans for the elderly of determination
- Providing a set of medical tests for the various stages of pregnancy and postpartum, as a pre–vention from possible disabilities

1.2 Goal Accurate and high quality diagnosis of disabilities

- Investing in research and studies on disabilities, hereditary syndromes and rare diseases that cause disability
- Launching a national program for the early detection and diagnosis of disabilities and delayed development including neo-natal and pre-marital tests
- Standardize diagnosis procedures and measures

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1.3 Goal   Providing information on all people of determination in the UAE

- Launching a national registrar for newborns with disabilities and delayed development
- Establishing a central database for people of determination (all cases in the UAE)

1.4 Goal   Providing specialized medical staff and health specialists in disabilities

- Launching a qualification program for national workers in the domain of early detection of disabilities and delayed development, in addition to training them on the variations causing disabilities and how to prevent them
- Launching training and qualification programs for national workers in the fields of disabilities and supporting treatment services

Stakeholders

- Ministry of Health and Prevention
- Ministry of Community Development
- Local Health Authorities
- Federal, Local and Private Disability Centers
- Schools
- Universities and Higher Education Institutions

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2 Pillar – Education

2.1 Goal Enhancing the inclusion in education (public, vocational and higher education)

Initiatives

- Providing a clear education track for people of determination through all stages
- Redesigning and adapting the curricula to respond to the needs of people of determination
- Providing additional resources, tools and technologies to support the education of people of determination
- Providing treatment support services (speech, functional, behavioral...)
- Empowering and engaging communities and families in educational, entertainment, arts, sports and cultural activities
- Launching awareness campaigns targeting the community and school students on the im-portance of inclusion
- Launching home schooling programs for certain disabilities

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2.2 Goal providing highly qualified teachers and experts in education for people of determination across different learning stages

Initiatives

- Inaugurating specializations in education for people of determination in universities and colleges (such as education in the cases of autism and severe disabilities)
- Ensuring that universities introduce the teachers in the pre-service stage, to the principles of teaching and assessing students with disabilities and learning difficulties
- Launching a training program for Emirati nationls working in the fields of disabilities, including teachers and education specialists

Stakeholders

- Ministry of Education
- Ministry of Community Development
- Local Education Authorities
- Education councils
- Schools
- Federal, Local and Private Disabled Centers
- Universities and higher education institutions
- Associations
- Parents of disabled children

3 Pillar – vocational training and employability

3.1 Goal providing vocational training adapted to different disabilities and levels of severity

Initiatives

- Developing training programs to respond to the requirements of the labor market
- Launching vocational programs for people of determination in collaboration with various public and private organizations

3.2 Goal providing adequate employment opportunities for various types of disabilities and levels of severity

Initiatives

- Elaborating policies to employ people of determination in both the public and private sectors
- Providing a database about people of determination in search of vocational training and employ-ment, possible employers of people of determination Adopting and implement employment support programs in competitive work environments
- Providing a channel of communication between the public and private sectors to support the employment of people of determination
- Establishing partnerships to provide micro-financing and market the products of people of determination

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3.3 Goal providing vocational training adapted to different disabilities and levels of severity

Initiatives

- Providing incentives, rewards, and exemptions to encourage the recruitment of people of determination in the private sector.
- Providing qualifications and vocational training programs
- Training work colleagues and employers to ensure optimal treatment of people of determination
- Adopting an assessment program to evaluate the work environment and its adequacy to people of determination, and accordingly introduce the required changes

Stakeholders

- Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratization
- Ministry of Community Development
- Federal Authority for Government Human Resources
- Ministry of Education
- Federal, Local and Private Disabled Centers
- Zayed Higher Organization for Humanitarian Care
- Community Development Authority - Dubai
- Sharjah City for Humanitarian Services

4 - Pillar – Accessibility

4.1 Goal providing standardized specifications for buildings in the UAE taking into account the needs of people of determination

Initiatives

- Developing national standards and specifications for buildings to reflect the needs of people of determination, elaborate an implementation mechanism with a set of sanctions to penalize violators
- Launching the disabled friendly building award, and the disabled friendly hotels standards

4.2 Goal providing easy access to people of determination to various information, depending on their individual abilities

Initiatives

- Providing information about the services to the disabled and their families in all the emirates; ensuring they are easily accessible (for instance, treatment facilities, types of services, available activities, etc.)
- Making information accessible to people who suffer visual and hearing disabilities using modern technology

4.3 Goal ensuring people of determination have safe and easy access to various places and services

Initiatives

- Improving public transportation for the disabled through the adoption of a set of specifications for various modes of transport
- Introducing changes to public places, services and buildings to facilitate the access of people of determination to them

4.4 Goal allowing people of determination to communicate with service providers as best suited with their abilities

Initiatives

- Launching service-related standards in all of the UAE
- Launching programs to train and license sign language translators
- Training service providers on how to address and communicate with people of determination

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4 / Pillar – Accessibility

4.5 Goal providing easy access for people of determination to their homes and facilitate their day lives

Initiatives

- Developing standards for accessible equipped homes for people of determination and their families, equip current houses

Stakeholders

- Ministry of Infrastructure Development
- Municipalities
- Departments of Transport

- Telecommunications Regulatory Authority
- Sheikh Zayed Housing Program
- Mohammed bin Rashid Housing Establishment

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5 / Pillar – Social protection and family empowerment

5.1 Goal developing social security policies that are adequate for people of determination

Initiatives

- Unifying categorization of disabilities in the UAE
- Increasing the number of registered people of determination for the card through linking it to services (healthcare, education, etc.)
- Linking the card for people of determination to the Emirates ID

5.2 Goal ensuring the respect of the rights of the people of determination and protect them from any exploitation or abuse

Initiatives

- Establishing a hot-line to ensure the complaints people of determination are heard when their rights are violated, or they are victim of exploitation and abuse
- Elaborating policies to limit and prevent any abuse of the disabled, put in place mechanisms to detect disabilities and rehabilitate victims of abuse
- Launching a training program for females of determination with specific training to protect them from exploitation and abuse

continued

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5 / Pillar – Social protection and family empowerment

5.3 Goal making care and rehabilitation services available for severe disabilities

Initiatives

- Launching a mobile unit to deliver various care and rehabilitation services for severe disabilities and their families in their homes

5.4 Goal actively engaging the family in providing rehabilitation services

Initiatives

- Launching a support program for families and care providers (training, consultations, habilita-tion, training on sign language,...etc)
- Certification of all special education specialists, treatment support services, and all relevant fields

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Stakeholders

- Ministry of Community Development
- Ministry of Health & Prevention
- Ministry of Justice
- Ministry of Education
- Ministry of Culture and Knowledge Development
- Ministry of Infrastructure Development
- National Council
- Local Executive Councils
- Emirates Identity Authority
- Zayed Higher Organization for Humanitarian Care

- Community Development Authority - Dubai
- Sharjah City for Humanitarian Services
- Humanitarian Associations
- Associations
- Federal Competitiveness and Statistics Authority
- Statistics Centers

6 / Pillar – Public, cultural and sports life

6.1 Goal integrating people of determination in different cultural and social activities

Initiatives

- Organizing competitions to engage people of determination in various cultural, sports and social activities

6.2 Goal providing services to people of determination is a right and not charity

Initiatives

- Launching awareness campaigns targeting various segments of society to educate them about disabilities

6.3 Goal empowering people of determination to take part in sports activities, local and international competitions

Initiatives

- Launching sports activities that ensure the participation of people of determination
- Expanding the scope of inclusive sports clubs at the national scale

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6.4 Goal adopting the creativity of people of determination and sponsor them in various cultural activities, sports and arts

Initiatives

- Launching a national program to discover talents among the disabled in different areas of sports, arts and culture
- Establishing special arts groups

Stakeholders

- Ministry of Culture and Knowledge Development
- General Authority of Youth and Sports Welfare
- Ministry of Community Development
- Ministry of Infrastructure Development
- Clubs for the people of determination
- Federal, Local and private centers for people of determination

Appendix W

Detailed results of the questionnaire output - opinion

Statistics

		Policies related to Persons with disabilities is available	Procedures related to Persons with disabilities is available	Positive notices about Persons with disabilities' Procedures related to Persons with disabilities is available rights are well distributed across the College.	Rights of Persons with disabilities are included in College handbooks.	College orientation sessions cover provisions for Persons with Disabilities.	Lectures on Persons with Disabilities' rights and equal opportunities are provided on regular bases.
N	Valid	182	182	182	182	182	182
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		3.37	3.43	2.88	3.24	3.07	2.98
Std. Deviation		.881	.888	.900	.775	.898	.873

Frequency Table

Policies related to Persons with disabilities is available

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	8	4.4	4.4	4.4
	Disagree	10	5.5	5.5	9.9
	Neither agree nor disagree	86	47.3	47.3	57.1
	Agree	63	34.6	34.6	91.8
	Strongly agree	15	8.2	8.2	100.0
	Total	182	100.0	100.0	

Procedures related to Persons with disabilities is available

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	7	3.8	3.8	3.8
	Disagree	10	5.5	5.5	9.3
	Neither agree nor disagree	81	44.5	44.5	53.8
	Agree	66	36.3	36.3	90.1
	Strongly agree	18	9.9	9.9	100.0
	Total	182	100.0	100.0	

Positive notices about Persons with disabilities' Procedures related to Persons with disabilities is available rights are well distributed across the College.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	13	7.1	7.1	7.1
	Disagree	42	23.1	23.1	30.2
	Neither agree nor disagree	84	46.2	46.2	76.4
	Agree	39	21.4	21.4	97.8

Rights of Persons with disabilities are included in College handbooks.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	5	2.7	2.7	2.7
	Disagree	10	5.5	5.5	8.2
	Neither agree nor disagree	117	64.3	64.3	72.5
	Agree	37	20.3	20.3	92.9
	Strongly agree	13	7.1	7.1	100.0
	Total	182	100.0	100.0	
	Strongly agree	4	2.2	2.2	100.0
	Total	182	100.0	100.0	

College orientation sessions cover provisions for Persons with Disabilities.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	11	6.0	6.0	6.0
	Disagree	24	13.2	13.2	19.2
	Neither agree nor disagree	98	53.8	53.8	73.1
	Agree	39	21.4	21.4	94.5
	Strongly agree	10	5.5	5.5	100.0
	Total	182	100.0	100.0	

Lectures on Persons with Disabilities' rights and equal opportunities are provided on regular bases.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	9	4.9	4.9	4.9
	Disagree	37	20.3	20.3	25.3
	Neither agree nor disagree	92	50.5	50.5	75.8
	Agree	37	20.3	20.3	96.2
	Strongly agree	7	3.8	3.8	100.0
	Total	182	100.0	100.0	

Frequencies

Statistics

		A guideline for Persons with disabilities accommodations and modifications is available upon request.	Persons with disabilities can request for theiraccommodations easily	College website is accessible by Persons with disabilities.	Classrooms tables are with adjustable height for Persons with disabilities (particularly wheelchair users)	Different computer programmes are available for Persons with Disabilities.	Information about assistive devices (such as mobile hearing aids for deafness and hearing impairment etc.) is available
N	Valid	182	182	182	182	182	182
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		3.23	3.55	3.51	2.87	3.20	3.23
Std. Deviation		.742	.804	.872	.882	.913	.897

Frequency Table

A guideline for Persons with disabilities accommodations and modifications is available upon request.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	4	2.2	2.2	2.2
	Disagree	10	5.5	5.5	7.7
	Neither agree nor disagree	121	66.5	66.5	74.2
	Agree	35	19.2	19.2	93.4
	Strongly agree	12	6.6	6.6	100.0
	Total	182	100.0	100.0	

Persons with disabilities can request for their accommodations easily

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	2	1.1	1.1	1.1
	Disagree	7	3.8	3.8	4.9
	Neither agree nor disagree	85	46.7	46.7	51.6
	Agree	65	35.7	35.7	87.4
	Strongly agree	23	12.6	12.6	100.0
	Total	182	100.0	100.0	

College website is accessible by Persons with disabilities.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	3	1.6	1.6	1.6
	Disagree	11	6.0	6.0	7.7
	Neither agree nor disagree	85	46.7	46.7	54.4
	Agree	57	31.3	31.3	85.7
	Strongly agree	26	14.3	14.3	100.0
	Total	182	100.0	100.0	

Classrooms tables are with adjustable height for Persons with disabilities (particularly wheelchair users)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	12	6.6	6.6	6.6
	Disagree	41	22.5	22.5	29.1
	Neither agree nor disagree	95	52.2	52.2	81.3
	Agree	27	14.8	14.8	96.2
	Strongly agree	7	3.8	3.8	100.0
	Total	182	100.0	100.0	

Different computer programmes are available for Persons with Disabilities.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	10	5.5	5.5	5.5
	Disagree	20	11.0	11.0	16.5
	Neither agree nor disagree	87	47.8	47.8	64.3
	Agree	54	29.7	29.7	94.0
	Strongly agree	11	6.0	6.0	100.0
	Total	182	100.0	100.0	

Information about assistive devices (such as mobile hearing aids for deafness and hearing impairment etc.) is available

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	9	4.9	4.9	4.9
	Disagree	18	9.9	9.9	14.8
	Neither agree nor disagree	90	49.5	49.5	64.3
	Agree	53	29.1	29.1	93.4
	Strongly agree	12	6.6	6.6	100.0
	Total	182	100.0	100.0	

Frequencies

		There is a contact person when it comes to supporting Persons with Disabilities.	Using various equipment and materials to help Persons with Disabilities (including accessible computers, etc.). is quite easy.	Training on how to accommodate Persons with Disabilities is provided regularly	Representatives from specialized service providers are regularly invited to run training sessions related to Persons with Disabilities.
N	Valid	182	182	182	182
	Missing	0	0	0	0
Mean		3.87	3.46	2.84	2.87
Std. Deviation		.801	.812	1.227	1.105

Frequency Table

There is a contact person when it comes to supporting Persons with Disabilities.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	2	1.1	1.1	1.1
	Disagree	5	2.7	2.7	3.8
	Neither agree nor disagree	44	24.2	24.2	28.0
	Agree	94	51.6	51.6	79.7
	Strongly agree	37	20.3	20.3	100.0
	Total	182	100.0	100.0	

Using various equipment and materials to help Persons with Disabilities (including accessible computers, etc.). is quite easy.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	2	1.1	1.1	1.1
	Disagree	13	7.1	7.1	8.2
	Neither agree nor disagree	84	46.2	46.2	54.4
	Agree	65	35.7	35.7	90.1
	Strongly agree	18	9.9	9.9	100.0
	Total	182	100.0	100.0	

Training on how to accommodate Persons with Disabilities is provided regularly

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	31	17.0	17.0	17.0
	Disagree	44	24.2	24.2	41.2
	Neither agree nor disagree	46	25.3	25.3	66.5
	Agree	45	24.7	24.7	91.2
	Strongly agree	16	8.8	8.8	100.0
	Total	182	100.0	100.0	

Representatives from specialized service providers are regularly invited to run training sessions related to Persons with Disabilities.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	26	14.3	14.3	14.3
	Disagree	38	20.9	20.9	35.2
	Neither agree nor disagree	60	33.0	33.0	68.1
	Agree	50	27.5	27.5	95.6
	Strongly agree	8	4.4	4.4	100.0
	Total	182	100.0	100.0	

Frequencies

Frequency Table

Parking spaces for Persons with Disabilities are available

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	1	.5	.5	.5
	Disagree	3	1.6	1.6	2.2
	Neither agree nor disagree	14	7.7	7.7	9.9
	Agree	105	57.7	57.7	67.6
	Strongly agree	59	32.4	32.4	100.0
	Total	182	100.0	100.0	

All the parking spaces for Persons with Disabilities are marked with the international symbol of disability

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	2	1.1	1.1	1.1
	Disagree	2	1.1	1.1	2.2

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Neither agree nor disagree	30	16.5	16.5	18.7
	Agree	97	53.3	53.3	72.0
	Strongly agree	51	28.0	28.0	100.0
	Total	182	100.0	100.0	

Parking spaces are designed to accommodate Persons with Disabilities

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	3	1.6	1.6	1.6
	Disagree	8	4.4	4.4	6.0
	Neither agree nor disagree	52	28.6	28.6	34.6
	Agree	78	42.9	42.9	77.5
	Strongly agree	41	22.5	22.5	100.0
	Total	182	100.0	100.0	

The main reception is accessible for wheelchair users.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	33	18.1	18.1	18.1
	Disagree	32	17.6	17.6	35.7
	Neither agree nor disagree	31	17.0	17.0	52.7
	Agree	52	28.6	28.6	81.3
	Strongly agree	34	18.7	18.7	100.0
	Total	182	100.0	100.0	

Automatic doors are available across the College.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	2	1.1	1.1	1.1
	Disagree	16	8.8	8.8	9.9
	Neither agree nor disagree	23	12.6	12.6	22.5
	Agree	109	59.9	59.9	82.4
	Strongly agree	32	17.6	17.6	100.0
	Total	182	100.0	100.0	

The automatic doors are well spaced across the College.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	3	1.6	1.6	1.6
	Disagree	14	7.7	7.7	9.3
	Neither agree nor disagree	38	20.9	20.9	30.2
	Agree	97	53.3	53.3	83.5
	Strongly agree	30	16.5	16.5	100.0
	Total	182	100.0	100.0	

Handrails are available on both sides of the main entrance.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	11	6.0	6.0	6.0
	Disagree	24	13.2	13.2	19.2
	Neither agree nor disagree	84	46.2	46.2	65.4
	Agree	53	29.1	29.1	94.5
	Strongly agree	10	5.5	5.5	100.0
	Total	182	100.0	100.0	

Ramps for Persons with Disabilities are available

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	3	1.6	1.6	1.6
	Disagree	4	2.2	2.2	3.8
	Neither agree nor disagree	53	29.1	29.1	33.0
	Agree	94	51.6	51.6	84.6
	Strongly agree	28	15.4	15.4	100.0
	Total	182	100.0	100.0	

The location of available ramp(s) are highlighted on the College map.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	5	2.7	2.7	2.7
	Disagree	15	8.2	8.2	11.0
	Neither agree nor disagree	129	70.9	70.9	81.9
	Agree	24	13.2	13.2	95.1

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Strongly agree	9	4.9	4.9	100.0
	Total	182	100.0	100.0	

Handrails are available on both sides for each ramp

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	4	2.2	2.2	2.2
	Disagree	27	14.8	14.8	17.0
	Neither agree nor disagree	99	54.4	54.4	71.4
	Agree	35	19.2	19.2	90.7
	Strongly agree	17	9.3	9.3	100.0
	Total	182	100.0	100.0	

Handrails are available on both sides of the stairs

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	6	3.3	3.3	3.3
	Disagree	21	11.5	11.5	14.8
	Neither agree nor disagree	99	54.4	54.4	69.2
	Agree	40	22.0	22.0	91.2
	Strongly agree	16	8.8	8.8	100.0
	Total	182	100.0	100.0	

College elevators have visual and audible signals to guide Persons with Disabilities

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	45	24.7	24.7	24.7
	Disagree	43	23.6	23.6	48.4
	Neither agree nor disagree	54	29.7	29.7	78.0
	Agree	28	15.4	15.4	93.4
	Strongly agree	12	6.6	6.6	100.0
	Total	182	100.0	100.0	

Accessible restrooms are clearly marked with the international symbol

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	5	2.7	2.7	2.7
	Disagree	14	7.7	7.7	10.4
	Neither agree nor disagree	66	36.3	36.3	46.7
	Agree	69	37.9	37.9	84.6
	Strongly agree	28	15.4	15.4	100.0
	Total	182	100.0	100.0	

Accessible restrooms are highlighted on the College map.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	7	3.8	3.8	3.8
	Disagree	11	6.0	6.0	9.9
	Neither agree nor disagree	104	57.1	57.1	67.0
	Agree	45	24.7	24.7	91.8
	Strongly agree	15	8.2	8.2	100.0
	Total	182	100.0	100.0	

The height of all light switches are appropriate for wheelchair users.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	3	1.6	1.6	1.6
	Disagree	19	10.4	10.4	12.1
	Neither agree nor disagree	109	59.9	59.9	72.0
	Agree	36	19.8	19.8	91.8
	Strongly agree	15	8.2	8.2	100.0
	Total	182	100.0	100.0	

Sufficient lighting in Persons with Disabilities parking area is available

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	4	2.2	2.2	2.2
	Disagree	20	11.0	11.0	13.2
	Neither agree nor disagree	110	60.4	60.4	73.6
	Agree	32	17.6	17.6	91.2
	Strongly agree	16	8.8	8.8	100.0
	Total	182	100.0	100.0	

Enough and appropriate signage with the right directions is available throughout the College

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	16	8.8	8.8	8.8
	Disagree	30	16.5	16.5	25.3
	Neither agree nor disagree	87	47.8	47.8	73.1
	Agree	38	20.9	20.9	94.0
	Strongly agree	11	6.0	6.0	100.0
	Total	182	100.0	100.0	

Signage used through the College uses raised letters and number and/or Braille characters

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	27	14.8	14.8	14.8
	Disagree	28	15.4	15.4	30.2
	Neither agree nor disagree	95	52.2	52.2	82.4
	Agree	25	13.7	13.7	96.2
	Strongly agree	7	3.8	3.8	100.0
	Total	182	100.0	100.0	

Statistics

		All emergency exits are clearly defined and reachable by all	Fire alarms around the College have audio and visual signs.	Evacuation emergency training related to specific disabilities is provided	A list of the response team to contact in case of any emergencies related to Persons with Disabilities is available	The height of all first aid kit are appropriate for wheelchair users
N	Valid	182	182	182	182	182
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		4.01	3.42	3.07	3.27	3.15
Std. Deviation		.669	.893	1.062	.874	.672

All emergency exits are clearly defined and reachable by all

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	2	1.1	1.1	1.1
	Disagree	6	3.3	3.3	4.4
	Neither agree nor disagree	10	5.5	5.5	9.9
	Agree	135	74.2	74.2	84.1
	Strongly agree	29	15.9	15.9	100.0
	Total	182	100.0	100.0	

Fire alarms around the College have audio and visual signs.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	6	3.3	3.3	3.3
	Disagree	14	7.7	7.7	11.0
	Neither agree nor disagree	77	42.3	42.3	53.3
	Agree	67	36.8	36.8	90.1
	Strongly agree	18	9.9	9.9	100.0
	Total	182	100.0	100.0	

Evacuation emergency training related to specific disabilities is provided

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	17	9.3	9.3	9.3
	Disagree	31	17.0	17.0	26.4
	Neither agree nor disagree	70	38.5	38.5	64.8
	Agree	50	27.5	27.5	92.3
	Strongly agree	14	7.7	7.7	100.0
	Total	182	100.0	100.0	

A list of the response team to contact in case of any emergencies related to Persons with Disabilities is available

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	6	3.3	3.3	3.3
	Disagree	23	12.6	12.6	15.9
	Neither agree nor disagree	78	42.9	42.9	58.8
	Agree	65	35.7	35.7	94.5
	Strongly agree	10	5.5	5.5	100.0
	Total	182	100.0	100.0	

The height of all first aid kit are appropriate for wheelchair users

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	5	2.7	2.7	2.7
	Disagree	9	4.9	4.9	7.7
	Neither agree nor disagree	126	69.2	69.2	76.9
	Agree	37	20.3	20.3	97.3
	Strongly agree	5	2.7	2.7	100.0
	Total	182	100.0	100.0	

Appendix X

Detailed results of the questionnaire output - importance of the services

		Policies related to Persons with disabilities is available	Procedures related to Persons with disabilities is available	Positive notices about Persons with disabilities' Procedures related to Persons with disabilities is available rights are well distributed across the College.	Rights of Persons with disabilities are included in College handbooks.	College orientation sessions cover provisions for Persons with Disabilities.	Lectures on Persons with Disabilities' rights and equal opportunities are provided on regular bases.
N	Valid	182	182	182	182	182	182
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		4.53	4.53	4.45	4.49	4.48	4.43
Std. Deviation		.619	.592	.677	.654	.637	.642

Frequency Table

Policies related to Persons with disabilities is available

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat very important	12	6.6	6.6	6.6
	Very important	61	33.5	33.5	40.1
	Extremely important	109	59.9	59.9	100.0
	Total	182	100.0	100.0	

Procedures related to Persons with disabilities is available

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat very important	9	4.9	4.9	4.9
	Very important	68	37.4	37.4	42.3
	Extremely important	105	57.7	57.7	100.0
	Total	182	100.0	100.0	

Positive notices about Persons with disabilities' Procedures related to Persons with disabilities is available rights are well distributed across the College.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat very important	19	10.4	10.4	10.4
	Very important	63	34.6	34.6	45.1
	Extremely important	100	54.9	54.9	100.0
	Total	182	100.0	100.0	

Rights of Persons with disabilities are included in College handbooks.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not so Important	1	.5	.5	.5
	Somewhat very important	13	7.1	7.1	7.7
	Very important	63	34.6	34.6	42.3
	Extremely important	105	57.7	57.7	100.0
	Total	182	100.0	100.0	

College orientation sessions cover provisions for Persons with Disabilities.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not so Important	1	.5	.5	.5
	Somewhat very important	11	6.0	6.0	6.6
	Very important	70	38.5	38.5	45.1
	Extremely important	100	54.9	54.9	100.0
	Total	182	100.0	100.0	

Lectures on Persons with Disabilities' rights and equal opportunities are provided on regular bases.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat very important	15	8.2	8.2	8.2
	Very important	73	40.1	40.1	48.4
	Extremely important	94	51.6	51.6	100.0
	Total	182	100.0	100.0	

Frequencies

Statistics

		A guideline for Persons with disabilities accommodations and modifications is available upon request.	Persons with disabilities can request for their accommodations easily	College website is accessible by Persons with disabilities.	Classrooms tables are with adjustable height for Persons with disabilities (particularly wheelchair users)	Different computer programmes are available for Persons with Disabilities.	Information about assistive devices (such as mobile hearing aids for deafness and hearing impairment etc.) is available
N	Valid	182	182	182	182	182	182
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		4.47	4.49	4.48	4.34	4.42	4.46
Std. Deviation		.637	.637	.628	.760	.667	.645

Frequency Table

A guideline for Persons with disabilities accommodations and modifications is available upon request.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat very important	14	7.7	7.7	7.7
	Very important	68	37.4	37.4	45.1
	Extremely important	100	54.9	54.9	100.0
	Total	182	100.0	100.0	

Persons with disabilities can request for theiraccommodations easily

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat very important	14	7.7	7.7	7.7
	Very important	65	35.7	35.7	43.4
	Extremely important	103	56.6	56.6	100.0
	Total	182	100.0	100.0	

College website is accessible by Persons with disabilities.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat very important	13	7.1	7.1	7.1
	Very important	69	37.9	37.9	45.1
	Extremely important	100	54.9	54.9	100.0
	Total	182	100.0	100.0	

Classrooms tables are with adjustable height for Persons with disabilities (particularly wheelchair users)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not so Important	3	1.6	1.6	1.6
	Somewhat very important	23	12.6	12.6	14.3
	Very important	66	36.3	36.3	50.5
	Extremely important	90	49.5	49.5	100.0
	Total	182	100.0	100.0	

Different computer programmes are available for Persons with Disabilities.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat very important	18	9.9	9.9	9.9
	Very important	69	37.9	37.9	47.8
	Extremely important	95	52.2	52.2	100.0
	Total	182	100.0	100.0	

Information about assistive devices (such as mobile hearing aids for deafness and hearing impairment etc.) is available

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat very important	15	8.2	8.2	8.2
	Very important	68	37.4	37.4	45.6
	Extremely important	99	54.4	54.4	100.0
	Total	182	100.0	100.0	

Frequencies

Statistics

	There is a contact person when it comes to supporting Persons with Disabilities.	Using various equipment and materials to help Persons with Disabilities (including accessible computers, etc.). is quite easy.	Training on how to accommodate Persons with Disabilities is provided regularly	Representatives from specialized service providers are regularly invited to run training sessions related to Persons with Disabilities.
N Valid	182	182	182	182
Missing	0	0	0	0
Mean	4.63	4.52	4.75	4.68
Std. Deviation	.548	.610	.492	.523

Frequency Table

There is a contact person when it comes to supporting Persons with Disabilities.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat very important	6	3.3	3.3	3.3
	Very important	55	30.2	30.2	33.5
	Extremely important	121	66.5	66.5	100.0
	Total	182	100.0	100.0	

Using various equipment and materials to help Persons with Disabilities (including accessible computers, etc.). is quite easy.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat very important	11	6.0	6.0	6.0
	Very important	66	36.3	36.3	42.3
	Extremely important	105	57.7	57.7	100.0
	Total	182	100.0	100.0	

Training on how to accommodate Persons with Disabilities is provided regularly

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat very important	5	2.7	2.7	2.7
	Very important	35	19.2	19.2	22.0
	Extremely important	142	78.0	78.0	100.0
	Total	182	100.0	100.0	

Representatives from specialized service providers are regularly invited to run training sessions related to Persons with Disabilities.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat very important	5	2.7	2.7	2.7
	Very important	48	26.4	26.4	29.1
	Extremely important	129	70.9	70.9	100.0
	Total	182	100.0	100.0	

Frequency Table

Parking spaces for Persons with Disabilities are available

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat very important	5	2.7	2.7	2.7
	Very important	92	50.5	50.5	53.3
	Extremely important	85	46.7	46.7	100.0
	Total	182	100.0	100.0	

All the parking spaces for Persons with Disabilities are marked with the international symbol of disability

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat very important	5	2.7	2.7	2.7
	Very important	94	51.6	51.6	54.4
	Extremely important	83	45.6	45.6	100.0
	Total	182	100.0	100.0	

Parking spaces are designed to accommodate Persons with Disabilities

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat very important	5	2.7	2.7	2.7
	Very important	93	51.1	51.1	53.8
	Extremely important	84	46.2	46.2	100.0
	Total	182	100.0	100.0	

The main reception is accessible for wheelchair users.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat very important	5	2.7	2.7	2.7

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Very important	57	31.3	31.3	34.1
	Extremely important	120	65.9	65.9	100.0
	Total	182	100.0	100.0	

Automatic doors are available across the College.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat very important	5	2.7	2.7	2.7
	Very important	79	43.4	43.4	46.2
	Extremely important	98	53.8	53.8	100.0
	Total	182	100.0	100.0	

The automatic doors are well spaced across the College.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat very important	6	3.3	3.3	3.3
	Very important	77	42.3	42.3	45.6
	Extremely important	99	54.4	54.4	100.0
	Total	182	100.0	100.0	

Handrails are available on both sides of the main entrance.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat very important	4	2.2	2.2	2.2
	Very important	85	46.7	46.7	48.9
	Extremely important	93	51.1	51.1	100.0
	Total	182	100.0	100.0	

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Ramps for Persons with Disabilities are available

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat very important	4	2.2	2.2	2.2
	Very important	69	37.9	37.9	40.1
	Extremely important	109	59.9	59.9	100.0
	Total	182	100.0	100.0	

The location of available ramp(s) are highlighted on the College map.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat very important	4	2.2	2.2	2.2
	Very important	59	32.4	32.4	34.6
	Extremely important	119	65.4	65.4	100.0
	Total	182	100.0	100.0	

Handrails are available on both sides for each ramp

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat very important	9	4.9	4.9	4.9
	Very important	91	50.0	50.0	54.9
	Extremely important	82	45.1	45.1	100.0
	Total	182	100.0	100.0	

Handrails are available on both sides of the stairs

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat very important	9	4.9	4.9	4.9
	Very important	90	49.5	49.5	54.4
	Extremely important	83	45.6	45.6	100.0
	Total	182	100.0	100.0	

College elevators have visual and audible signals to guide Persons with Disabilities

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat very important	4	2.2	2.2	2.2
	Very important	60	33.0	33.0	35.2
	Extremely important	118	64.8	64.8	100.0
	Total	182	100.0	100.0	

Accessible restrooms are clearly marked with the international symbol

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat very important	4	2.2	2.2	2.2
	Very important	72	39.6	39.6	41.8
	Extremely important	106	58.2	58.2	100.0
	Total	182	100.0	100.0	

Accessible restrooms are highlighted on the College map.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat very important	8	4.4	4.4	4.4

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Very important	75	41.2	41.2	45.6
	Extremely important	99	54.4	54.4	100.0
	Total	182	100.0	100.0	

The height of all light switches are appropriate for wheelchair users.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Not so Important	1	.5	.5	.5
	Somewhat very important	11	6.0	6.0	6.6
Valid	Very important	72	39.6	39.6	46.2
	Extremely important	98	53.8	53.8	100.0
	Total	182	100.0	100.0	

Sufficient lighting in Persons with Disabilities parking area is available

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Not so Important	1	.5	.5	.5
	Somewhat very important	8	4.4	4.4	4.9
Valid	Very important	73	40.1	40.1	45.1
	Extremely important	100	54.9	54.9	100.0
	Total	182	100.0	100.0	

Enough and appropriate signage with the right directions is available throughout the College

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat very important	8	4.4	4.4	4.4
	Very important	68	37.4	37.4	41.8

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Extremely important	106	58.2	58.2	100.0
Total	182	100.0	100.0	

Signage used through the College uses raised letters and number and/or Braille characters

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat very important	7	3.8	3.8	3.8
	Very important	65	35.7	35.7	39.6
	Extremely important	110	60.4	60.4	100.0
	Total	182	100.0	100.0	

Frequencies

Statistics		All emergency exits are clearly defined and reachable by all	Fire alarms around the College have audio and visual signs.	Evacuation emergency training related to specific disabilities is provided	A list of the response team to contact in case of any emergencies related to Persons with Disabilities is available	The height of all first aid kit are appropriate for wheelchair users
N	Valid	182	182	182	182	182
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		4.77	4.79	4.77	4.79	4.79
Std. Deviation		.445	.450	.495	.485	.437

Frequency Table

All emergency exits are clearly defined and reachable by all

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat very important	2	1.1	1.1	1.1
	Very important	37	20.3	20.3	21.4
	Extremely important	143	78.6	78.6	100.0
	Total	182	100.0	100.0	

Fire alarms around the College have audio and visual signs.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat very important	3	1.6	1.6	1.6
	Very important	33	18.1	18.1	19.8
	Extremely important	146	80.2	80.2	100.0
	Total	182	100.0	100.0	

Evacuation emergency training related to specific disabilities is provided

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not so Important	2	1.1	1.1	1.1
	Very important	36	19.8	19.8	20.9
	Extremely important	144	79.1	79.1	100.0
	Total	182	100.0	100.0	

A list of the response team to contact in case of any emergencies related to Persons with Disabilities is available

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not so Important	2	1.1	1.1	1.1
	Very important	33	18.1	18.1	19.2
	Extremely important	147	80.8	80.8	100.0
	Total	182	100.0	100.0	

The height of all first aid kit are appropriate for wheelchair users

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat very important	2	1.1	1.1	1.1
	Very important	35	19.2	19.2	20.3
	Extremely important	145	79.7	79.7	100.0
	Total	182	100.0	100.0	