

**Teachers' Attitudes Towards Inclusion of Learners with  
Disabilities at American Private Early Childhood Education  
in Dubai: An Investigative Study**

دراسة بحثية حول موقف المعلمين من سياسة دمج طلاب ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة في المدارس

الخاصة (منهج امريكي) في دبي

by

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of the requirements for the degree of  
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## **Abstract**

Inclusion has been defined as an international phenomenon that emphasizes the need to provide Special educational services to learners with Disabilities known as (people of determination in Dubai) within the mainstream classrooms.

The effectiveness of “inclusion” is considered as a common belief among researchers and educator’s dependent on teachers’ roles and attitudes that was evident in various tentative studies over the last decade. Therefore, to be able to create a less restricted environment in classrooms, both general and special educators’ attitudes are considered the main agents for such phenomenon. As such, the researcher aimed in this study to highlight the main challenges facing kindergarten mainstream teachers in three American private schools in Dubai (UAE). These stem from the recent educational reforms towards inclusion by scrutinizing Kindergarten teachers ‘attitudes towards including children with disabilities, their readiness and capability to accommodate children in mainstream classrooms, perceptions towards the issues of inclusive education, and their attitudes towards the admission and provision offered to such students.

The study includes a range of literature reviews that highlights best practices of inclusion and teachers’ attitudes around the world and is designed to rely on a mixed methods-approach. This is done by conducting a survey-questionnaire that was given to regular kindergarten teachers working in three private schools in Dubai, in addition to semi-structured interviews with teachers, and observations of SEND students in mainstream classrooms. An analysis of data collected from three schools indicated that kindergarten teachers held positive attitudes towards inclusion and viewed it as a beneficial practice for all learners in regular classrooms, while others showed negative and neutral attitudes. Hence, the results indicated that successful inclusion relies on important variables such as training, support from administrators and stakeholders to access services, resources and provisions in order to generate positive attitudes to meet their SEND students in the mainstream education setting.

This study ended with further research-based recommendations for future practice in inclusive education by overcoming barriers and challenges to inclusion that negatively influence teachers' attitudes amongst kindergarten teachers at governmental schools.

Key words: American Curriculum – Disability – Inclusion - Inclusive education – Kindergarten - people of determination - private school – SEN - Teachers' attitudes

## نبذة مختصرة

تُعرف سياسة الدمج بأنها ظاهرة دولية تؤكد على ضرورة تقديم خدمات تعليمية خاصة للمتعلمين من ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة والذين عرفوا باصحاب الهمم وذلك ضمن الصفوف النظامية

اعتبرت فعالية سياسة الدمج اعتقاداً شائعاً لدى الباحثين و التربويين وتعتمد هذه الفعالية على أدوار المعلمين ومواقفهم و التي ظهرت في العديد من الدراسات التجريبية والتي نُشرت في السنوات الخمس عشرة الماضية .

وبالتالي ومن أجل خلق بيئة أكثر إنفتاحاً في الصفوف الدراسية تعتبر مواقف المعلمين و المعلمين الذين يعلمون الطلاب من ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة عاملاً أساسياً في هذه السياسة (سياسة الدمج).

ومن هنا فإن الباحث في في هذه الدراسة كان يهدف الى إلقاء الضوء على التحديات الأساسية التي تواجه معلمي الروضات (ممن لا يعلمون ذوي الحاجات الخاصة ) في ثلاث مدارس تتبع المنهاج الأمريكي في دبي (الإمارات العربية المتحدة ) هذه التحديات تتبع من الإصلاحات الأخيرة في النظام التعليمي والتي تهدف الى دمج الطلاب من ذوي الاحتياجات التعليمية الخاصة، كما تلقي هذه الدراسة الضوء على استعداد المعلمين وقدرتهم على استيعاب الأطفال في الصفوف الدراسية العامة ، كما تتبع هذه الدراسة افكار وتصورات المدرسية حول قضايا الدمج في التعليم ومواقفهم حول سياسات القبول والخدمات المقدمة في هذا الاطار .

تتضمن هذه الدراسة العديد من المراجعات للدراسات التي تسلط الضوء على افضل ممارسات الدمج ومواقف المعلمين حول العالم . صُممت هذه الدراسة بالإعتماد على طرق متعددة عن طريق الاعتماد على استبيان اعطي لمعلمات رياض اطفال عاملين في ثلاث مدارس خاصة في دبي ، بالإضافة الى مقابلات شبه منظمة مع معلمين طلاب من ذوي الاحتياجات التعليمية الخاصة في صفوف نظامية عامة .

اظهر تحليل المعلومات التي تم جمعها من ثلاث مدارس ان معلمات رياض الاطفال كان لديهم مواقف إيجابية تجاه سياسة الدمج واعتبروها سياسة مفيدة لكل المتعلمين في الصفوف النظامية في حين اظهر اخرون مواقف سلبية او محايدة .

وبالتالي اظهرت النتائج ان سياسة الدمج الناجحة تعتمد على عدة عوامل مثل التدريب الاضافي ،الدعم من قبل الإدارات والقدرة على الوصول الى الخدمات والموارد من اجل الوصول الى مواقف إيجابية لتلبية إحتياجات طلابهم من ذوي الاحتياجات التعليمية الخاصة ضمن البيئة الصفية العادية .

خلصت الدراسة الى المزيد من التوصيات المستندة الى البحث حول المزيد من الممارسات المستقبلية في مجال سياسة الدمج للتغلب على العوائق والتحديات والتأثير سلباً على مواقف المعلمين في المدارس الحكومية .

كلمات رئيسية : مواقف المعلمين - المنهاج الأمريكي - مدارس خاصة - رياض الاطفال- دمج-اصحاب الهمم-طلاب ذوي

احتياجات تعليمية خاصة.

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## **VI-List of abbreviations**

ADEC: Abu Dhabi Education Council

ASD: Autism Spectrum Disorder

ADHD: Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder.

BUID: British university in Dubai

CRPD: Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

DECDC: Dubai early childhood development center

DS: Down Syndrome

EPSEN: Education for Persons with Special Educational needs

IEP: Individual Educational Plan

KG: Kindergarten

LDPO: Lebanese Disabled People Organization

LSA: learning support assistant

MOE: ministry of education

MSA: Ministry of Social Affairs

NCCA: National Council for Curriculum and Assessment

PMLD: profound and multiple disability

SEND: special educational need and disability

SENCO: special needs coordinator

SERC: Special Education Review Committee

UAE: United Arab Emirates

UN: United Nation

UNESCO: United Nation Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization

UPR: Universal Periodic Review

YAB: Youth Association of the Blind

# 1. Chapter I: Introduction

## 1.1. Overview

Educating children with disabilities, recently known as people with determination in the UAE, is considered an important phenomenon among educators and researchers and has featured frequently on numerous international agendas and conventions. The social justice movement originated the basic principles of the inclusion model, and supporters of inclusion have argued and insisted on educating special needs children in mainstream classrooms with supplementary aids and services (Lipsky & Gartner, 1987). Nevertheless, there was much criticism towards the current implementation of such phenomenon regarding educating Special Education Needs and Development (SEND) students in mainstream classrooms (Lieberman, 1985).

According to the National Policy for Empowering People with Special Needs, people with disabilities or special needs will be recognized as ‘people of determination’ to acknowledge their progress and achievements in various sectors. This is in addition to national initiatives to recognize and mobilize resources to support them. The People of Determination Retreat was held in March 2019 after huge efforts were exerted from several national figures and social specialists, which approved 31 programs and initiatives to promote this category in the society and guarantee their inclusion and integration across all communities in the UAE. The Retreat defined eight areas to recognize and facilitate people of determination as well as their needs, such as education, international representation, sports, labor, quality of life, health, media, service and culture (Government.ae, 2017). The international community has been acknowledged by the UAE in an effort to reform education and has sanctioned the UNESCO “Education for All” program. Specific laws have been issued to provide provisional services for (SEN) and other trivialized pupils . The rights of SEN individuals to be integrated in mainstream classrooms were guaranteed by law, as well as federal and international conventions. In 1979, the Ministry of Education recognized the need for inclusive education and some attempts were made by engaging key stakeholders in collecting data and experimentation of multiple inclusive approaches to impersonate the notion of inclusive education into the national regulatory

frameworks up to 2006. As a result, the UAE officially launched the ‘School for All’ scheme, which outlined a set of official rules for the delivery of programs and services for SEN, in May 2010. This provision was seen as the most practical initiative managed by the MOE to execute Federal Law 29/2006, and as an essential attempt towards including and supporting pupils with determination in the UAE to enjoy full access to education. The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) (UN, 2006) was signed and ratified by the UAE (Gaad, 2011), in addition to the ‘Dubai Inclusive Education Policy Framework’, which is seen as a relevant document that allows an education system that is inclusive for those students with multiple disabilities to promote the UAE’s efforts to adopt the CRPD (2006); in particular, the effort supports ART 24, which covers the rights of inclusive education by providing guidance on the standards and procedures required to establish inclusive education, while also supporting and steering local authorities across Dubai. The acknowledgement of the need for special education was obvious in multiple areas around the globe and not entirely exclusive to the UAE. Inclusion as an international phenomenon is a recent phenomenon and still faces a number of resource, curricula and attitudinal challenges in the UAE (Gaad, 2004a).

## 1.2 Rational Background

Inclusion attribute to the process of providing SEN students in mainstream school environments good quality education where the teachers’ roles and attitudes in mainstream schools are considered essential in the successful implementation of inclusive education (Boer, Pijil & Minnaert, 2011). The UAE is developing a system of inclusive education, as such, over the past few decades’ governments, communities and various organizations have been involved in permanently including SEND students into mainstream classrooms. In 1994, the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Science in Spain, arranged a conference to support special needs at which the UN adopted the ‘Salamanca Statement’ framework. This framework introduces numerous normes and policies in inclusion by shedding light on giving every child the equal right to receive quality education. The framework asks governments to implement specific policies to include SEN students in mainstream classrooms, and, thus, focus on the vocational elements of

inclusive education and enabling all schools, globally, to provide quality provision to children with SEND.

### 1.3. Cultural issues in the UAE context

In Arab countries, the concept of placing SEND students in mainstream schools is a new idea largely as a result of cultural traditions, perceptions, concepts and education policy, which might obstruct inclusive education practices. Many factors can impact this, including the attitudes of teachers.

Alghazo and Gaad (2004) argued in their study that general education teachers in the UAE generally have negative attitudes towards inclusion of SEND students and thus were showing agreement towards including them in a regular classroom, whilst other studies had shown positive attitudes towards inclusion for many reasons". Current research studies claim that the attitudes of teacher are critical to the success of inclusive education programs. The attitudes of teachers towards inclusion can therefore be developed to ensure successful inclusive practices with an education system.

### 1.4. Statement of the Problem

This study will highlight Kindergarten educators' attitudes towards the inclusion and acceptance of placing learners with disabilities in regular education settings, explore their perceptions and readiness towards delivering inclusive education, explore the primary drivers that shape Kindergarten attitudes, moreover spot on issues that can impede inclusion. A literature review discussing the topic of the study is conducted, in addition to a mixed methods approach. This includes a qualitative approach of semi-structured interviews and observations of SEND students in their educational inclusive settings along with a quantitative approach of survey-questionnaires, to explore the factors driving these attitudes and other important issues, such as: admission and provision. The research will be piloted in three American private schools in Dubai, which have programs of inclusion programmes and include SEND students in

mainstream classrooms. The researcher chose Kindergarten teachers taking into consideration the KG phase as the starting point of implementing all programs of education.

### 1.5. Purpose of the Study

Both research, recent literature reviews and empirical studies have shown that teachers' attitudes are essential in proving the effectiveness of inclusion. The researcher aimed to recognize KG teachers' attitudes about educating students with SEND in mainstream classrooms in private schools in Dubai (UAE). Furthermore, this study will define whether these mainstream KG teachers identified themselves as being capable of delivering inclusive education successfully if learners with SEND were to be placed in their classrooms. The skills and tools required to implement effective inclusion, for example curriculum modifications to meet SEND student IEP requirements, using techniques for teaching and identifying students with SEND, to be able to manage students' behavior, their attitudes towards the admission, and the quality of provisions offered to them in order to meet their needs in the education settings were also explored.

Alghazo and Gaad (2004) studied general teachers' attitudes employed by the Ministry of Education and Youth in the UAE), and stated therefore that most of them were not encouraged to implement inclusive education in their classrooms. These findings where of importance to insure the urge for piloting kindergarten teachers in the private sector in the UAE.

### 1.6. Research Questions

The foundation of this study are based on the following research questions, which address variables related to inclusion phenomenon:

1-What are current Kindergarten teachers' attitudes towards including learners with disabilities in mainstream classrooms?

Sub-research questions:

2-Do Kindergarten teachers in private schools perceive themselves knowledgeable in delivering inclusive Education?

3-What are current kindergarten teachers' attitudes towards the admission of learners with disabilities in their mainstream classrooms?

4-What are current kindergarten teachers' attitudes towards the provision offered to learners with disabilities in their mainstream classrooms?

5- What are the challenges and crucial factors behind kindergarten teachers' attitudes?

### 1.7. Significance of the Study

Teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards inclusion remain negative and fearful, despite the broad range of training programs, workshops and trial schemes that have been organised by many institutions. Consequently, this study has personal interest to the author in this field. The research will explore and scrutinise the attitudes of teachers against inclusive education in mainstream classrooms in private schools and will build an understanding of issues and factors that affect teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. This is in addition to other essential points, such as admission policy and the quality provision offered to learners with disabilities.

The author, has been an academic coordinator and KG teacher for 16 years, has made various distinct contributions to inclusion programmes in the special education committee at Dubai International School, in addition to a professional experience with Taaloouf training programme, (2015-2016). Also relevant is the author's role in the inclusion program at the researcher's school initiated seven years ago, in comparison with other organisations, including the Dubai Early Childhood Education Centre. These have formed a considerable and significant tentative of the government of Dubai's community development authority to include up to two SEN students in each KG mainstream classroom. However, it was very difficult for the author to deal with learners of disabilities as a KG teacher.

## 1.8. Definition of key terms in the study

### 1.8.1 Inclusion

Inclusion has been mentioned in education literature in many ways. Booth et al. (2002) described the term inclusion as a wide process that includes school management, learners 'participation and engagement by removing barriers to benefit from quality education.

Mittler (1995) had another definition for the term inclusion that means including SEN students in a neighborhood school which a student would be normally included with special support needed Furthermore, the term 'inclusion' was approached from the perspective of children's rights in the world conference held in Salamanca, Spain in 1994, on special needs education. This was in correlation with the Statement and Framework for Action (UNESCO ,1994, p.6), that was subscribed by ninety-two governments and twenty-five international organizations, and was defined as "accommodating all children in regular mainstream school, insensible of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other condition".

As such, Inclusion impose essential modifications in both content and approaches, in addition to essential structures and strategies, based on a common vision which include all learners from the same appropriate age range by ratifying a conviction that the regular system's responsibility to educate all the learners with SEN. (UNESCO,2015).

### 1.8.2. Mainstream school

Mainstream schools are defined as regular public and private schools in the general education system, which provide accessibility to all SEND students and are opposite to special education or special needs schools, which have segregated school settings for enrolled SEND students.

### 1.8.3. Students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

The “United Arab Emirates Inspection Framework 2015-2016” (Ministry of Education, 2015) outlined the definition of students with SEND as learners that are from different needs and disabilities who need additional provision and support by equally participating in the curriculum.

The most common categories were elaborated in the same document and fall under SEND; including, sensory impairments, such as physical disability, visual and hearing impairment, social-emotional and behavioral needs, general and specific learning disabilities.

#### 1.8.4. Attitude

Attitude generally relates to factors related to affective, cognitive, and behavioral components that correspond to issues related to knowledge of, and predisposition of acts.(Wagner, 1969, p. 7). In the field of psychology, attitude is considered as one important concept that was defined as “like” and “dislike” (Ben, 1970, cited in Supriyanto, 2019)

#### 1.9. Structure of the dissertation

This study is divided into five chapters. This chapter represents the background and the purpose of the study, chapter two will outline range of literature review of publications related to inclusion , a brief summary including best practices of inclusion and teachers’ attitudes around the world. Chapter three includes the research design, methodology and methodological issues raised in the study. Chapter four presents findings from the questionnaires, observations and interviews conducted during the course of the study. Finally, chapter five includes discussions, conclusions and the study end with research-based recommendations for future practice.

## **Chapter II: literature Review**

### 2.1: Introduction

Topics regarding people with disabilities are delicate matters and critical topic in the UAE. Many have witnessed the last few decades to preserve the interests of individuals with disabilities to

access resources that are limited and thus reduce obstacles to inclusion entirely through society (Gaad, 2011). This is to be achieved by using specific terminology mentioned in the Article 1 of UAE Law 14/2009 as a ‘person with special needs’ legislated and changed later to ‘disabled individuals’ whenever it appears; as such, the Ministry of Social Affairs (MSA), was asked to adhere to global standards by participating in ratifying the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Gaad, 2011, p. 74), when the federal law was approved in 2006.

## 2.2. Issues of Identification of children with disabilities in UAE context

Departments for special educational needs were established by the MOE in an organized way in order to deliver good provision for children with disabilities and included both private and public schools. Thus, guidelines, requirements and rules for schools regarding enrolling students with special needs were set. Nonetheless, issues related to identifying SEN students remain inaccurate due to the lack of essential assessments tools, as such that areas of disabilities of many students in both private and public schools are still unidentified, and children are rejected despite the federal law. Issues related to students’ academic progress and behavior can be considered as early signs for the teachers to initiate the identification process through completing a referral form to the SEND department. Essentially, when teachers lack the knowledge to specify the area of concern, a member from the SEND department visits the child to do a series of observations followed by a written report; consequently, the child’s parents are contacted to advise them to take their child to a specialized center to acquire a detailed assessment report that includes a thorough evaluation and statement of the type of disability, in addition to the recommended services by the Special Education Needs Coordinator (SENCO) to fully participate in their education process to be able to meet their needs.

## 2.3. Issues related to provisions, accommodations and modification in the curriculum addressed to students with Disabilities in the UAE

unfortunately, most private schools in UAE that provide special education services charge for the services once a child is identified as special needs to access special education services. Typically, schools pass additional fees to parents that should be free of charge. Because schools are

considered as a part of the community and have to play an important role in children's accommodation through implementing new measures that reflect the effective regulator's drive for diversity within society and all private schools in Dubai, as mentioned in the KHDA's new guidelines (2017) by 2020. Attention towards the curriculum was considered of importance and noted by UAE federal law, therefore, it is critical to understand the advantages and the outcomes on children with mental retardation, mild disabilities and emotional needs.

Educators and researchers in many literature reviews engaged in a long debate about the school system and had encountered numerous challenges and major gaps that primarily progressed due to the government's findings over the last few decades in the UAE. The coherence of the system was analysed by Gaad et al. (2006) who focused on the curriculum as an essential element in the UAE's educational system that included three major parts: curriculum development, delivery, evaluation and feedback. Furthermore, the authors sought to analyse the arrangement in the sub-system education for SEN students and found a major gap in addition to major misalignment in the education system and suggested, therefore, an appropriate deviation towards setting goals instead of textbooks. In addition to that, researchers have declared a lack of a special curriculum that is specially designed and developed for SEN students which is delivered to them as 'para-curriculum' and recognized as deleting lessons and difficult concepts, rather than modifying the content, in an unprofessional process. (Gaad & Arif, 2008). This has recently occurred in many private schools resulting from the issues that are faced by mainstream teachers who lack the chance to participate in discussions about revising the curriculum that caters to the needs of these categories. Therefore, providing an individualized curriculum for SEND students is still considered equivocal among educators who are currently questioning the efficacy and benefit of courses to serve these students. Meanwhile, others believe specialized courses will better provide for them in the presence of an IEP that was perceived to bridge special and general education programs. Nonetheless, the claim is rejected that the IEP is the curriculum.

#### 2.4. Issues related to the admission of learners with disabilities in mainstream classrooms

Students that experience difficulties in learning are usually related to special education as mentioned in the 'index of inclusion' (Ainscow & Booth, 2002). This index provides inlet to education for children with learning disabilities and is considered important for school

improvement that is based on principles of inclusive education through implementing collaborative relationships in schools, taking into consideration each student's individual worth. Moreover, Standard 2 of the Dubai Inclusive Education Policy framework (2017) discussed issues related to admissions, participation and equity and subsequently give the right to SEND students to be included in regular classrooms with their classmates in an adequate educational setting where they can engage, learn and grow. However, to ensure such equality in accessing quality education some requirements are essential among all education providers and policy-makers through providing training in all phases across schools in Dubai, and support for SEND students, such as accommodation and curricular modification in curriculum.

## 2.5. Cultural believes within UAE Gulf Context

Culturally speaking, the discussion of educational provisions offered to children with intellectual disabilities or any form of disabilities is a complicated topic to discuss without highlighting the tenets of each society's traditional life and attitudes. (Gaad, 2004).

Thence, terminologies had evolved in many ways and SEND students are not stigmatized and nominated as *Mongols* or *mentally Syndrome*' replaced the 'Down child' label. Nonetheless, the cultural traditions, including stigma, denial and feelings of guiltiness among families in Arabic countries are seen as key obstacles to early diagnosis and intervention and have caused a major delay in the process of the proper placement of children in regular classrooms. Over and above, based on laws and legislations, children with intellectual disabilities have the right to be included, like all other students, in correlation with social inclusion through shaping societal perceptions of these students (Gaad, 2004).

## 2.6. Theoretical Framework

Inclusion as a philosophy refers to the concept of giving the equal right to all learners to meet their learning needs in regular mainstream schools, wherein such schools should definitely to change their policies to give these students opportunities to learn and develop their skills (Kinsella & Senior, 2008). In other words, inclusion was described as a complicated phenomenon that requires specific change to facilitate teachers' missions to be able to deliver

quality special education in their classrooms (Crow, 2010). Moreover, other researchers found that for 'inclusion' to be successful preparation and training should be provided for new graduate qualified teachers to integrate SEN students in regular mainstream schools effectively (Sharma, Loreman & Forlin, 2012).

the Zone of Proximal Development concept was developed in the 1920's by Vygotsky, which highlights the importance of the teachers' knowledge in addition to the high peers' performance where learning activities are only assimilated within this zone. Slavin (2015, p. 39). This perspective in education was keen to provide learners with tasks that are interesting yet mild in complexity (Roosevelt, 2008).

## 2.7. Definition and concept of Inclusion

Inclusion is defined as an educational practice that requires essential principle of the concept of social justice in advocacy to be able to access equal educational services by ignoring issues related to race, ethnic group, and disability. (Al Zyoudi et al., 2011).

Al Zyoudi (2006) stated that "inclusion" as a phenomenon requires that all learners benefits from the same opportunity and educational environment to learn by integrating them into the regular classroom, and building a strong base on students' abilities to evaluate their performances and not their disabilities. The concept of inclusion gains national and international acceptance and is increasingly implemented in many areas around the world by emphasizing the need to develop curricula and instructions tailored to the capabilities of SEN students. (Ivey & Reincke, 2002).

The concept of 'inclusion' does not see the inclusion into mainstream education of all students, regardless of disability; rather, it argues that the inclusion of severe cases of disabilities would lead to the reduction of effectiveness and efficiency of mainstream education.

In this way, there is a requirement to change the delivery systems of mainstream teaching in order to achieve successful inclusion. This can consequently benefit both regular students and SEN students.

## 2.8. Index for Inclusion

The Index has been used in the UK context, translated in over thirty languages, including Arabic, and had been employed in many school systems around the world, including Europe, Australia, Hong Kong (Nes, 2009), in addition to other countries of the South such as India, South Africa and Brazil, as well as the Middle East (Engelbrecht et al., 2006; Williams, 2003).

Booth and Ainscow (2011) defined inclusion as reducing all the barriers to learning and include participation of SEN that exist in any of the school areas and components: such as culture, policy, and practice for all students including learners with disabilities. These barriers include buildings and physical arrangement, school organization, relationships amongst children and adults, attitudes of teachers and specific techniques to teaching and learning based on appropriate planning.

## 2.9. Inclusion in the UAE

Based on the phenomenon of inclusion, SEN students have been given the chance to learn in mainstream classrooms. Previously, such students were excluded from schools, experienced inequity, and faced a lack of opportunity. Therefore, inclusion is being used frequently by education policymakers, throughout the world as well as in the UAE, as a popular buzzword.

Although the UAE is a new country, it has made significant progress towards inclusion since it was established in the early 1970's. Many UAE laws and regulations have been issued to implement the concept of inclusion within the Emirati private and governmental schools. The Federal Law (29/2006) for The Rights of People with Special Needs, provides the right to education in both public and private schools for all students with all kinds of disabilities; in addition, Federal Law (14/2009) for The Rights of People with Disabilities, followed by the ratification of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (116/2009) were also implemented by the UAE. Then it was "School for All" (2010) for Special Education Programs and Services. UAE policymakers' determination to establish inclusion of SEN students in mainstream classrooms was clearly conveyed by these political commitments.

Over and above, inclusion is high on the agenda of the government, as well as schools across the UAE, which are passionately pursuing the inclusion targets set by the Ministry of Education, the Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA) and the Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC). Nonetheless, subtle inclusion persists when physically including SEN students mainstream classrooms. In fact, such students are excluded emotionally and on a curricular basis. Alborno and Gaad (2014) highlighted the fact of having absence of special curricula in most of UAE schools; instead there exist “para-curricula” for teaching students with SEN as declared by Arif and Gaad (2008).

## 2.10. Inclusive Education’s best practices around the world

### 2.10.1. Inclusion of students with Special Needs and Disabilities in Ireland

According to the National Council for Special Education (NCSE, 2009), the provision of education for SEN students in Irish education was a contentious issue due to the improvement in the development of education for people with disabilities in the 20<sup>th</sup> century until the mid-1950’s where a number of organizations and religious initiatives in establishing schools for these categories were officially recognized by the Department of Education Skills as national schools (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, [NCCA], 1999).

Nonetheless, the segregation of children with SEN was the reason for parents’ dissatisfaction that pushed the Special Education Review Committee to make a number of recommendations and lead to the success of including these children in mainstream classrooms (NCSE, 2010), where possible, with little segregation to access quality education and opportunities based on the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs (EPSEN) Act 2004. A legislative framework was provided by this ACT for inclusive education and affirmed on granting all children with SEN the right to be fully educated among children with the same appropriate age who do not have disabilities.

However, huge accountability lies with the policymakers, school leaders and educators to ensure appropriate educational provisions for SEN children in the mainstream classrooms (NCSE, 2015). Nowadays, there is a strong assertion on fostering inclusive learning environments within

mainstream classrooms that cater for pupils from different diversities (Griffin & Shevlin, 2011).

### 2.10.2. Inclusion of students with Special Needs and Disabilities in the UK

A policy has been written by the government to assure good inclusive education in the UK with regard to education provision for SEND to reduce discrimination and remove barriers to access education in mainstream classrooms. Compared to the UAE's SEN system, the SEN system in England is far more researched because it caters more for SEN students in terms of solving their problems in mainstream classrooms. The Education Act 1996 cited in Gaad (1998) stated that a child has "special educational needs" if:

- 1- learning difficulty signs are identified by teachers which needs urgent support for special educational provision.
- 2- Disability which either hinders or prevent the student from using educational provisions for children of the same age range in schools among local education authority areas.
- 3- If the child is below the age of five and would be considered in need of special educational provision usually belongs to paragraph (a) or (b) (Education Act 1996, Part IV, Chapter I, section 312 (2)).

The 'Report of the Committee of Enquiry into the Education of Handicapped Children and Young People' chaired by Dame Mary Warnock, was published in 1978 established the principle of the term "learning difficulty", assuming that 'assigning children to a category of handicap was not an adequate description of their needs'. The major reason why Warnock abolished categories were summarized by Farrell (1997). It was proposed by the Committee that a continuum of special educational services should exist, from consultation provided to the mainstream teacher to full-time placement in a special class or school, and accessible to all SEN students.

### 2.10.3. Inclusion of students with Special Needs and Disabilities in Finland

Inclusion as a concept in Finland was founded after a series of commendatory strategies constituted by some issued related to the equity's agenda which aimed to prevent exclusion

across Finnish system entirely. Primary schools in Finland witnessed noticeable progress that was separated into four successful phases prior the introduction of the standardized comprehensive education system. Such significant development was demonstrated by the rise of vocational education in Finland. After the independence of Finland in 1917, built upon the practice of providing education to all citizens, a policy was written to include all parts of the country as a result of the intensive efforts to arise education's quality. Provisions for all school-aged children became obligatory after the issue of the decree in 1988 due to the extensive effort made by the Organization of Provision (OoP) that granted the rights of all learners to benefit from inclusive education. The OoP highlighted essential points such as: a school's leadership is a prominent element of establishing an effective inclusive education system, that is more accommodating and a school culture where diversity is positively perceived.

#### 2.10.4. Inclusion of students with Special Needs and Disabilities in Spain

As in other countries, Spain had added to the norms of inclusion in the nineties. The inclusion movement has contributed to improving the responsibilities of the general education teachers to increase the inclusion of SEN students (LISM, 1982; LOGSE, 1990; LOE, 2006), and carried out numerous educational reforms to create a bright transformation in the educational system. Preliminary changes had arrived early in the seventies with PL 14/1970, and recognized special education as a part of the educational system although SEN students were still attending school in segregated settings until their rights were fully recognized in the publication of PL13/1982 *Law of Social Integration of Disabled People* (LISMI, 1982) that promoted people with disabilities to be integrated in all the dimensions of their (society, school, and work).

#### 2.10.5. Inclusion of students with Special Needs and Disabilities in Asia

In fact, inclusion practices are not restrictive to civilized countries. There are various examples of a successful inclusive practices and provisions for SEN students in poor Asian countries, like Nepal which initiated the inclusion of children with mild to moderate disabilities in mainstream primary education based on a policy to conserve their right to access education (Lynch, 1994). Moreover, Malaysia, China, Sri Lanka, Korea, Nepal, Thailand and Indonesia have implemented

Individual Learning Programs in classrooms to place students with Intellectual Disabilities

Furthermore, India improved the budget for students by more than 5 times in the Five-Year Plan (1991-1995) with moderate learning difficulties and therefore supported a noticeable national development program to include SEN students into mainstream schools (Gaad, 2004).

#### 2.10.6. Inclusion of students with special needs and Disabilities in Lebanon

In the Middle East, most governments have promoted social justice by providing appropriate initiatives and laws, yet these were insufficient to be implemented (Oweini & El Zein, 2014). It was oblivious in Lebanon where most SEN students, including children with ASD disorder who were abide to access mainstream schools (Lakkis & Thomas, 2003). However, the Lebanese law 220, approved in May 2002, stated that “all individuals with disabilities should be guaranteed equal educational opportunities in mainstream settings”, schools are not legally mandated to accept SEND students or to for their individual needs within regular mainstream schools (Khochen & Radford, 2012). Issues related to the placement, delivery and the extent of inclusion provided for learners are still not compulsory and schools should be obliged to follow on. It was noticeable in the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) report *Lebanon: Mid-term Implementation Assessment in 2013*, that SEN students did not show any remarkable progress in their regular mainstream schools due to the lack of national integration plans and strategies for these individuals in the Lebanese educational system. The Lebanese Disabled People ‘Organizations (LDPO) and Youth Association of the Blind (YAB) stated that individuals with disabilities in the public educational systems have not the proper access to education although the Lebanese government signed the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2007. (UPR, 2013)”. In fact, Lebanon has failed to ratify the Convention and its protocol, and laps to reinforce the establishment of equal access for people with disabilities as mentioned in Article 24 (European Commission, 2014).

#### 2.10.7. Inclusion of students with special needs and disabilities in Egypt

In Egypt, inclusion of SEN students in mainstream schools is considered a new phenomenon. In fact, there were noteworthy efforts exerted by non-governmental organizations (NGO’s), with

the cooperation from the MOE, to integrate some SEN students in general mainstream classrooms in selected schools as part of pilot projects. In a comparative study, based on 2004/2005, data had shown that the number of included children was not more than 190 students in three Egyptians governorates, whilst in 2007 only 229 SEN students were enrolled in 17 special education classrooms across seven governorates (i.e., Cairo, Alexandria, Menoufiya, Sharqiya, Damietta, South Sinai, and Matrouh). Saliiently, there were 495 hearing impaired students who were partially included in 27 mainstream classrooms in two governorates (i.e., Cairo and Dagahliya). However, according to the Ministry of Education (2007), special education schools remained a prevalent model for educating SEN students in Egypt. The huge number of SEN students who remained excluded from accessing quality education, was a reason that pushed the Ministry of Education to reveal a five-year strategic plan (2007-2012) mainly to achieve two primary goals:

First, to include 10% of students with mild disabilities in mainstream classrooms by 2012 throughout 259 districts across the country.

Second, to provide SEN children both quality and equal educational services to smoothly include them in inclusive classrooms by offering teacher training, modifications to curricula, and an evaluation system. As a result, a professional development program was established in 2010 to train 29,280 teachers and 981 school psychologists based in mainstream schools. The Ministry of Education investigated in an initial inclusion study issues related to the attitudes of teachers, principals, and school psychologists towards inclusion at the elementary school level. The results revealed that only 11% of general education teachers and 10% of special education teachers who accepted the idea of including SEND students in general education classrooms in Egyptian schools. The percentage obtained from the study was based on teachers' main concern that related to the lack of educational personnel who were prepared to deliver inclusive education (Kafafi, 2004). As a result, it was proposed by the Ministry of Education to provide a training program for 488 teachers to work with SEND students (Gheryani, 2006).

## 2.11. Teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education in the UAE and other countries

### 2.11.1. Introduction

A successful inclusive education program is largely defined and based on teachers' readiness and attitudes to work in educational settings (Treder et al., 2000). The following are the essential points obtained from investigations in regular mainstream classrooms accompanied with academic and social benefits to students with exceptional needs. The first point is related to subject content organization in curricula material and teachers' interaction with students. Followed by the experience of educational environment, teacher characteristics, in addition to the nature of the classroom that influences the progress of students with disabilities. Teachers, therefore, need to be ready and well trained for successful inclusive education's implementation that is typically based on awareness programs and training them to promote positive interaction (Federico et al., 1999).

### 2.11.2. Teachers' attitudes towards inclusion of students with disabilities in mainstream classrooms in Iraq

Results driven from a survey conducted by Al Kindi et al. (2012) showed that Iraqi teachers still hold some negative views of SEN students where most of the respondents proposed to put students with Down Syndrome in special schools (80.3%). This was because in their opinion, mixing them with others in regular mainstream classrooms would have negative impacts on their colleagues in school (70.5%). Culturally, in teachers' perspectives, placing students with DS in special schools would be better solution to protect them from violence rather than including them in regular mainstream schools.

### 2.11.3. Teachers' attitudes towards Inclusion of students with Disabilities in Jordan

Inclusion generates more challenges as an international phenomenon, and collaborative efforts to have its philosophy recognized among the whole community including the child with SEN and his family, both general and special early childhood teachers and principals. Findings from a comparative study had revealed, in general, teachers' attitudes towards socio-emotional

elements of inclusion were positive in Jordan based on teachers' goals and values with respect to values such as 'equity' achieved in a quality inclusive classroom. In their opinion, inclusion is a philosophy that reflects hope yet to be successfully achievable, more efforts are needed to be able to bridge the gap between theory and practice that are technically shaped by economic factors, in particular in countries like the UAE and Jordan. In fact, this can be achievable through improving services, more investments and physical environments of the classrooms to enhance the academic elements of inclusive education; in particular, more training is required for early childhood teachers to prepare them for delivering inclusive educational services. This shed the lights on the importance of institutions of higher education's role in offering more courses about inclusion practices, in addition to policymakers' roles in revising and editing curricula. consequently, special education teachers and administrators should be more enthusiastic towards professional development and continuously provide on-the-job training for general education teachers of early childhood stages (Humaidi et al., 2012). Brownell and Pajeras (1999) assumed that teacher's effectiveness and beliefs for teaching students with SEN play essential role in their attitudes and knowledge in educating students in regular classrooms based on effective implementation of inclusive programs that requires more knowledge and awareness in teaching strategies and instructions from general education teachers to educate students with exceptional needs in inclusive settings.

#### 2.11.4. Teachers' attitudes towards inclusion of students with Disabilities in mainstream classrooms in the UAE

Teachers' positive attitudes with regards to including SEND students in regular mainstream classroom could be the key to a successful inclusion (Cochran, 1988). Yet, factors which influence these attitudes need to be closely examined. In other words, attitude was defined by Cagney (2009) as the "feeling or way of thinking a person has about something or someone, which ultimately affects his/her behaviour towards that person." The last 20 years witnessed various literature reviews regarding teachers' attitudes regarding inclusion that ranged from positive to negative. Avradimis and Norwich (2002) explored in a literature review basic drivers

that directly or indirectly impact the attitudes of teachers regarding inclusion. Literature reviews revealed that teachers' attitudes are strongly influenced by basic conditions and variables related to type of disabilities, teachers and educational environmental variables. Some of them are considered demographic variables, such as years of experience, age, grade level taught, gender, teachers' beliefs and training. The variables affirm that teachers' attitudes play a significant role in adopting and implementing the inclusion philosophy. Quantitative and qualitative research designs and Likert-type inventories were used by the authors to examine teachers' attitudes and concluded that teachers mainstream schools generally hold positive views of inclusion. However, the literature review conducted here did not provide evidence supporting this. There was an important literature review in the same field conducted by Dukmak (2013) who noted the key need for teachers to have positive attitudes regarding including SEN students in mainstream classrooms. This was done by selecting all government primary schools in the UAE and identifying basic factors that impact teachers' attitudes: such as years of experience, gender and type of disabilities. The quantitative method as well as statistical analyses were used by the author to investigate the research assumptions and define outcomes. Therefore, to examine the impact of placing SEND students and different teachers' views ANOVA and Tukey Post Hoc tests were used by the author.

Findings from the literature were incorporated and included two major results: the majority of teachers held positive attitudes towards inclusive education, in particular male teachers, in addition to teachers' years of experience that was so beneficial. Dukmak (2013) stated that "these teachers promote a positive appreciation of the diversity of individuals and remove barriers to learning, and when teachers show positive attitudes, they provide a more secure environment wherein the classroom is seen as a shelter." Similarities were found in the literature reviews of Emam and Mohamad (2011) and Avradimis and Norwich (2002) who utilised the mixed method approach using both Opinions Relevant to Integration of students with disabilities (ORI) and therefore analysed two major factors: the association between the self-worth of teachers and how they perceive inclusion. Data was gathered from respondents, which included 71 preschool teachers and 95 primary teachers using a random stratified survey and analysis

showed that most teachers with more experience had positive views of inclusion, whilst those with less experience reflected negative attitudes.

#### 2.11.5. Teachers' attitudes towards Inclusion of students with Disabilities in mainstream classrooms in England and USA

A study conducted in the USA to examine the drivers behind mainstream teacher attitudes towards inclusive education demonstrated a strong relationship between the professional development and attitudes of teachers (Walker, 2012).

Daane, Beirne-Smith, and Latham (2000) stated that “teachers perceive themselves as unprepared for inclusive education because they lack appropriate training in this area.” In fact, increased teachers' training was linked to attitudes that were more positive towards the inclusion of SEN students, whereas a lack of training was associated with negative attitudes (Van Reusen, Shoho, & Barker, 2000). Moreover, mainstream teachers' attitudes in England (81 primary and secondary school teachers were examined by Avradimis, Bayliss and Burden (2010). The study demonstrated positive attitudes among teachers with professional development acquired through universities who had the ability to implement inclusive education and fulfil SEN student IEP requirements.

#### 2.12. Summary of the chapter

A majority of the literature highlighted more positive attitudes towards inclusion. Notably, this depends on a number of key variables. However, misunderstanding the concept of inclusion, in addition to acceptance and readiness, has resulted in most teachers in mainstream schools in Dubai not contributing fully to the phenomenon. Based on this, examining the factors that drive these attitudes is essential in answering to the (RQ5) in chapter 5.

### **3. Chapter III: Methodology**

#### 3.1. Introduction

The researcher presented consent letters from BUID to the principals of the three targeted schools to conduct interviews (Appendix 4), observations and the survey to collect data about “teacher’s attitudes towards the inclusion of learners with Disabilities in mainstream classrooms” (RQ1) adopting a number of research methods. This chapter details the research methodology of the study (Appendix 7) and a timeline (Appendix 8) and consists of these steps:

- 1- Identifying the research sites (3 private schools in Dubai).
- 2- Research design
- 3- Sampling group (participants of the study)
- 4- Instruments tools used to collect data: the researcher will triangulate Data by referring to; semi-structured interview approach with kindergarten teachers at private schools, survey-questionnaire, in addition to observations of SEND in their educational inclusive settings.
- 5- Data analysis: to represent the researcher’s work in gathering and summarizing the data .
- 6- Limitation and challenges
- 7- Role of researcher as a main part in the qualitative and quantitative approach
- 8- Validity and reliability of data collected
- 9- Issues related to ethics consideration

### 3.2. Research Sites

To collect data from selected schools a consent letter from the university was requested by the researcher to conduct the pilot of the study in the three regular mainstream private schools in Dubai after an email had been sent to the principals of the two schools and another one was sent to the SENCO at the third school. Furthermore, all the schools are located in Dubai and implement American curriculum and have been implementing inclusive education in their school policies. All of the designated schools have their own individual vision, mission and values. However, as every school in the UAE now follows a merged vision, mission and values regarding inclusive education according to the Federal law 2006. Consequently, the selection processes of each school works to provide credible data to meet the purpose of the study (chapter 1.5). School A is where the researcher has worked as an academic coordinator and KG teacher for more than 16 years, the researcher selected schools B and C for having in common many factors, such as curriculum, mission and vision towards inclusive education; moreover, they have similar types of disabilities, in addition to the availability of access to conduct the study.

#### 3.2.1. Background Information about the schools in the study

	<b>Location</b>	<b>Curriculum</b>	<b>Largest Nationality of the students</b>	<b>Number of SEND students</b>	<b>Number of teachers /Nationalities</b>	<b>Type of disabilities</b>	<b>Age Group</b>
School A	Dubai/Garhood	US	Expatriate and Emirati	85	142/ Arab	ASD/DS/speech Delay/ cerebral palsy/Dyslexia/ learning disabilities/	4___ 17 years
School B	Dubai/Al Quz	US	Emirati	65	133/Lebanese	ASD/DS/speech Delay/cerebral palsy/Dyslexia/ADHD	4___ 18 Years
School C	Dubai/Al Mamzar	US	Emirati	34	128/Jordan	ASD/DS/speech Delay/cerebral palsy/Dyslexia/ADHD	4___ 18 Years

Table 1: Represent information about 3 schools based on KHDA inspection report 2018-2019

### 3.3. Research Design of the study

This study explores teachers' attitudes towards inclusion of learners with disabilities in mainstream classrooms at three private schools in Dubai. A mixed method will be used to undertake the research with greater validity and reliability. In order to investigate KG teachers' attitudes regarding the inclusion of SEN students in early childhood a triangulation design is adopted; therefore, will provide strong evidence of the drivers and obstacles that shape the success of mainstream inclusion of SEND students. According to Creswell (2008, p.577) the triangulation of data means to, "simultaneously collect both quantitative and qualitative data, merge the data and use the result to understand a research problem". However, researcher's skills and competency are critical to the feasibility and reliability of the mixed method approach to collecting and analysing data.

Furthermore, Gomm et al. (2000) admitted that collecting data from several sources is considered a key strength since by examining many sources the researcher will be able to in - depth scrutinise and examine to get informations and evidences that will beneficially help in elaborating the research questions of the study.

Semi-structured interviews will be used as part of the qualitative approach, with respondents being selected from three American private schools that have enrolled SEND students and run inclusion programs. These interviews will be used to encourage respondents to report their views and permit the researcher to establish a greater understanding of the subject. This will be combined with a quantitative approach of open-ended questionnaires. This will be done by closely exploring and analysing the drivers and obstacles that shape the attitudes of teachers towards inclusion, in addition to in-class observations for SEND students in mainstream classrooms.

### 3.4. Participants of the study

The respondents include KG teachers in three private schools in Dubai that run inclusion programs, have enrolled fulltime SEN students in mainstream classrooms, and who work colleagues and a learning support assistant. In addition, the teachers selected are in charge of regular classrooms that include at least one SEN student. KG has been selected as the researcher believes that this is the essential beginning of the process of implementing a curriculum or programme and therefore, their attitudes towards inclusion is fundamental. The researcher will survey Kindergarten teachers (n= 30) and will interview 25 teachers from the selected schools to ensure proportional representation of each school.

### 3.5. Data collection /Instruments Tools

In this study the researcher aimed to triangulate data from different sources and used semi-structured interviews, survey-questionnaires (Bennett et al., 1998) using Google Doc to collect data (Appendix 10), literature reviews in addition to an observation template sheet to record SEN students' observation (Appendix 3). Hanson et al. (2005) defined the mixed methods as a range of methods that integrate and analyses data driven from both qualitative and quantitative data to understand research problems. In other words, Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) affirmed that mixed methods is a chain of progress and procedures that help in collecting and analyzing data for one study depending on the performance. Furthermore, mixed method was considered as extensive and popular by most researchers .(Katsirikou & Skiadas, 2010).

#### 3.5.1. Interviews

The aim of an “Interview” is to introduce the topic of the study so others can answer the question (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). As an interview is not a normal conversation involving two individuals it is a way to collect data collection following a program to interview all respondents in the selected schools because scheduling is a fast way to gather the required data (McNeill & Chapman, 2005). Semi-structured interviews were used in this research because they are flexible (Drever, 1995). Consequently, the interviewer can include or remove questions, and therefore get in-depth data for the study, while the anonymity of the participation in the interview was granted.

### 3.5.1.1. Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted in qualitative manner (Robins, 2002). The first interview type used by the researcher was semi-structured (Creswell, 2009) because it allowed participants to speak freely and reflect upon their experiences and attitudes. Notes were taken at the same time (Callison, 2003). This method was adopted to interview 25 KG teachers from the defined schools; the semi-structured interview protocol form included nine questions, all semi-structured interviews lasted up to 35 minutes and occurred in face-to-face (Appendix 1).

### 3.5.2. Questionnaire

The researcher aimed to survey teachers to closely examine their attitudes towards inclusion of learners with disabilities in mainstream classrooms by using a questionnaire that is considered an important and flexible tool to gather different data (Walliman, 2010) and where all data can be collected (McNeill & Chapman, 2005). Furthermore, this method used to collect data regarding this investigation included questions related to the research question (chapter 1, section 1.6).

This study questionnaire includes two parts; the first includes questions related to demographic information of the teachers in the study, such as gender, years of experiences, training, type of disabilities in their classrooms. The second section includes 15 open-ended questions using the Likert-scale (Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree) that was used since 1932 and published by Resis Likert (Brace, 2008). In addition, qualitative questions were asked that related to teachers' needs in terms of training in order to include children with SEND in their mainstream classrooms.

### 3.5.3. Observations

The researcher aimed to use another qualitative tool such as 'observation' that is defined as "The systematic description of events, behaviours, and artefacts in the social setting chosen for study" (Marshall & Rossman, 1989 p.79) to gather data about students with SEND in their regular classrooms. This was done to obtain a clear idea about their progress in the educational settings

and examine the quality of support and provision offered to them, the quality of education provided to them.

The observed children with different types of disabilities (DS/Dyslexia/mild learning disability) are included in KG1/KG2 mainstream classrooms. Pseudonyms will be used for ethical considerations.

<b>Name of the students</b>	<b>Type of Disability</b>	<b>Class</b>
1- Yusuf	Dyslexia and Dysgraphia	KG2 A
2- Elma	Down Syndrome	KG1E
3- Alia	Mild learning disability	KG2 E

Table 2: Distribution of SEND students in kindergarten mainstream classrooms from schools A & B

### 3.6. Data Analysis

Data analysis means to collate and summarize information (Creswell, 2012). The researcher used multiple tools in this study to gather data from the selected schools. Collected data was organized in the framework of the study following a specific sequence. First, the results obtained from questionnaires were analyzed using the Google Doc program. Second, the Data gathered by interviewing KG teachers were collated using the MS Word program and analyzed to organize all data recorded by the researcher. To ensure consistency throughout the interviewing process, an interview guide (Appendix) was developed. While the researcher was seeking a greater understanding of the research problem, interview questions were continuously revised throughout the data collection process, in line with the emergent design nature of qualitative research (Creswell, 2014). Interviews were audiotaped after participants' approval and then transcribed. During the interviews, the main focus of the researcher was on gaining an understanding of the participants for the purpose of the study. The potential outcome of this study was to reach a deep understanding of teachers' attitudes towards inclusion in early childhood while considering the qualitative research strategies (Creswell, 2007-2014). Third, the observation data of three included SEND students were written on the MS Word program after obtaining the approval of the KG principal and the parents of the children.

### 3.7. Limitation and Challenges

This study encountered the following major limitations:

- Language barrier: the first challenge for this study was the questionnaire and interview questions that were all written in English while the research participants' first language was Arabic and their English as a second language was not that proficient except the subject teachers (English, Math and Science). The researcher had to translate the questions in the interview guide with a request sent to the KG principal of the schools in the study where the author currently works.
- Availability issues: since the researcher started to collect all data, the issue of time and the availability of teachers to interview them individually was a major challenge specially when it comes to schedule the interviews.
- The availability of special needs students during events (e.g., Morning Assembly, end of term celebrations, and sickness for observation purposes was also limited.
- The time limit and deadline of the study's submission: the researcher faced big challenges in scheduling the interviews with KG teachers in the selected schools (B & C), because of the schools' timing during the holy month.
- Gender: since most of the KG teachers are female, results obtained from questionnaires will be restricted to one gender and will create a lack of information about male teachers' attitudes towards Inclusion in early childhood.
- Teachers may not complete the survey questionnaires: which will lead to a restricted number of participants and less insights to teachers' attitudes towards the phenomenon of inclusion in private schools.

### 3.8. The role of the researcher

Punch (1998) admitted that the researcher can begin as a member of a group and then can become a more objective observer during the study, when the researcher decides to conduct the study and starts the research by entering the field, it is then time to learn and explore and investigate the study focus research question: What are current kindergarten teachers' attitudes

towards the inclusion of learners with Disabilities in mainstream classroom? It is essential for the researcher to be very careful that all principals and teachers at the research sites did understand the main purpose of this study and that data will be collected based on their responses and observations of SEND students in their respective classes. To conduct this study, with the permission from the general principal and KG principal, the researcher started the study by following a framework (Appendix) to interview all participants starting from beginning of May 2019, which took two weeks for the survey, three weeks for interviewing KG teachers (mainly core subjects music and PE teachers since SEN students in selected schools do not attend Arabic, Islamic and social studies periods), and one week for SEN students observations; notes were taken for research purpose (Palaiologou, 2012).

### 3.9. Validity and Reliability

According to Zohrabi (2013) “researchers need to consider both validity and reliability before and after collecting any data”. To evaluate the quality of research and whether findings match the research purpose, data validity is particularly relevant (Robson, 2002). Bell (1999) viewed the “Reliability” as an essential requirement for any research to find data, whether it is similar results or no. Furthermore, different methods of data collection were used (interviews, reviewing documentation (IEP), observations and questionnaires) to gather all data. Therefore, data triangulation can be used to increase the study’s validity. Most importantly, this researcher recorded all data thoroughly (e.g., observations, interview notes, and documents).

### 3.10. Ethics

To ensure that the research is conducted ethically, the researcher followed a framework for the study and a series of steps. This study was undertaken in line with the ethical guidelines of the British University in Dubai (BUID). To conduct this study, the researcher needed a permission letter from BUID.

This study’s primary aim was to assess current KG teachers’ attitudes towards inclusion of learners with Disabilities in regular mainstream classroom at American private schools in Dubai; then to investigate issues related to teachers’ perceptions towards inclusive education, issues

related to their attitudes related to admissions, provisions, in addition to examining main factors behind such attitudes. As such, this dissertation will be available in the BUID library in both hard and soft copy form, with alignment with university's guidelines and adherence to the educational intent of undertaking this research for the completion of a Master's Degree in Education, special and inclusive education. The anonymity of the participants was respected during data analysis, as a result, the researcher followed an objective approach to submit and narrate their experiences irrespective of any inclination or bias as a researcher and notwithstanding of the procession of contradictory perspectives as well as issues related to referencing and citing of others' works. The survey's findings are analysed in the next chapter.

#### **4. Chapter IV: Findings from the research of the study**

This chapter will be separated into three main parts and it is constituted of research findings obtained from survey-questionnaire (4.1), summaries of the qualitative data derived from 27 teachers (based on the number of KG teachers in the three selected research site schools), semi-structured interviews with teachers (4.2), and the last section will include findings gathered from SEND students class observations in different educational settings (4.3).

##### 4.1. Findings from questionnaires

This section will include information gathered from the questionnaire that is divided into two main sections:

4.1.1 Section 1: Demographic Information's about KG teachers in the study from three selected schools, and

4.1.2 Section 2: KG Teachers' attitudes and perceptions towards the inclusion of learners with disabilities in kindergarten mainstream classrooms.

#### 4.1.1. Section 1: Demographic Information's of participants in the study

Participants in the study were asked to provide general demographic information about gender, subjects taught, grade levels, years of teaching experience, qualification and training on teaching students with SEND, in addition to information related to the type of trainings they had received and their durations. Lastly, KG teachers were asked to identify the type of disability/SEN they have in their classrooms.

##### 4.1.1.1. Gender

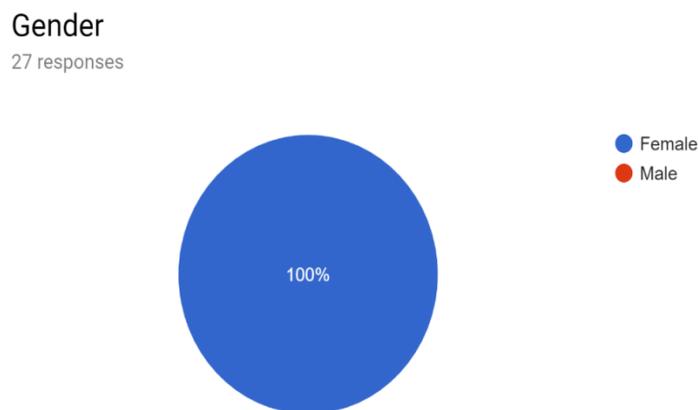


Figure 1: Shows that all responses in the study were obtained from females, as the majority of the kindergarten teachers are females in the selected schools.

##### 4.1.1.2. Subject taught

### Subject Taught

27 responses

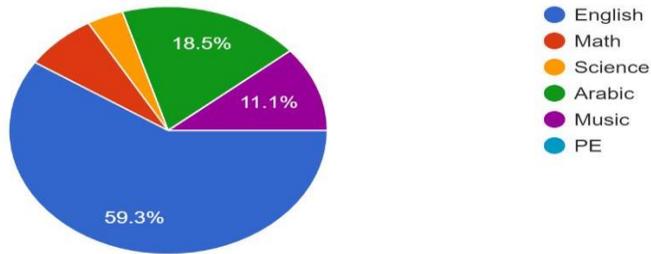


Figure 2: Shows that the majority of KG teachers were teaching English as a subject in addition to other subjects, such as Math, science, Arabic music and PE

#### 4.1.1.3. Grade level

### Grade Level

27 responses

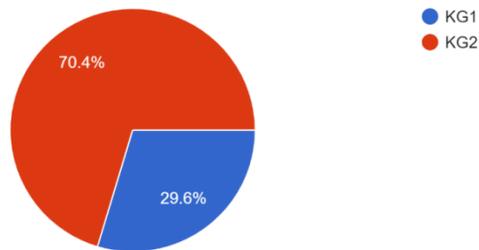


Figure 3: Indicates that the highest responses in the questionnaire were provided by KG2 teachers

#### 4.1.1.4. Years of experience

**Total Years of Experience:**

27 responses

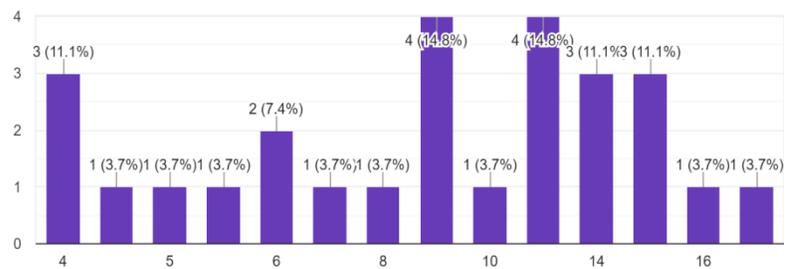


Figure 4: Illustrates the teachers’ total years of experiences that vary between four to 20 years, with the majority of respondents indicating that they had 10 to 16 years of experience. Only one teacher had 20 years of experience.

4.1.1.5. Students with Disabilities in regular classes taught by regular mainstream teachers

**I have taught learners with disabilities in regular class for**

29 responses

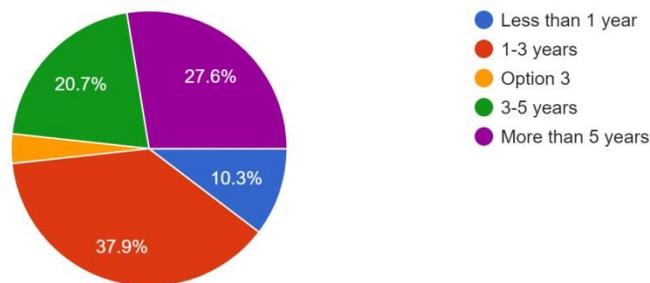


Figure 5: Shows that the majority of teachers taught students with disabilities within a period of one to three years, respectively, whilst the percentages (3-5 years - 5 years and above) were equal among teachers who taught student with disabilities in their classrooms.

4.1.1.6. Regular mainstream teachers’ highest degrees

Highest Degree:  
27 responses

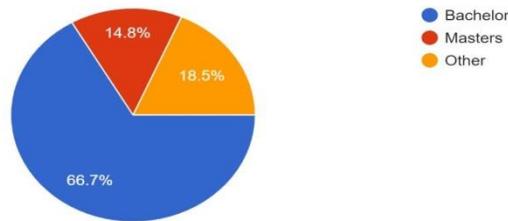


Figure 6: Illustrates that the majority of KG teachers in mainstream schools (66.7%) are Bachelor degree holders, while 18.5% were teaching diploma holders and 14.8% of them are Masters’ degree holders.

4.1.1.7. Regular mainstream teachers’ trainings on teaching students with disabilities in their classes

Trainings on teaching learners with disabilities in mainstream classroom:

29 responses

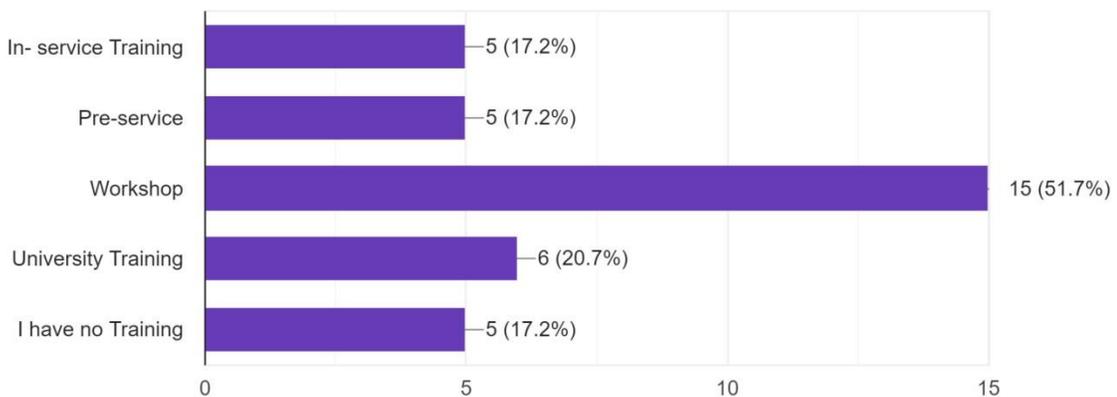


Figure 7: Data had shown that the majority of teachers received workshops (55.6%), whereas others had shown low percentage (18.5%) in terms of having in-service training and others who did not have any training in teaching students of determinations, while very few of them received pre-service training (11.1%).

4.1.1.8. Types of training done by the regular mainstream teachers in the study

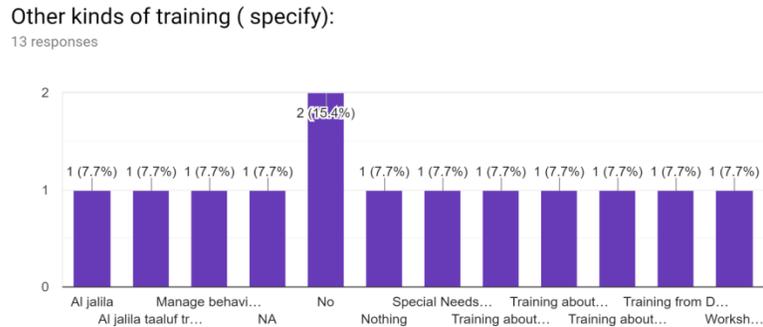


Figure 8: Data show that the majority of training received by teachers who had three to five years’ experience and are Bachelor’s and Master’s Degree holders were considered as professional development, such as, Al Jalila program, wherein others training were held by the Community Development Authority, Early Childhood Development Center) and training on managing behavioral problems in classrooms.

4.1.1.9. Duration of trainings done by regular mainstream teachers

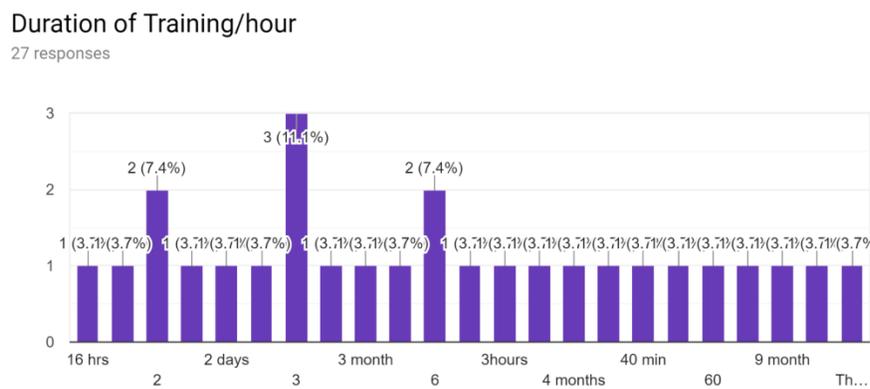


Figure 9: Data show that the duration of in-service trainings varies between three hours to two days only and was about Dyslexia, while others trainings’ durations varied between three hours

to 16 hours (workshops, university training, pre-service trainings (six hours on differentiation), in addition to Al Jalila program that was held for a duration of nine months.

4.1.1.10. Type of disability and SEN in regular mainstream classrooms

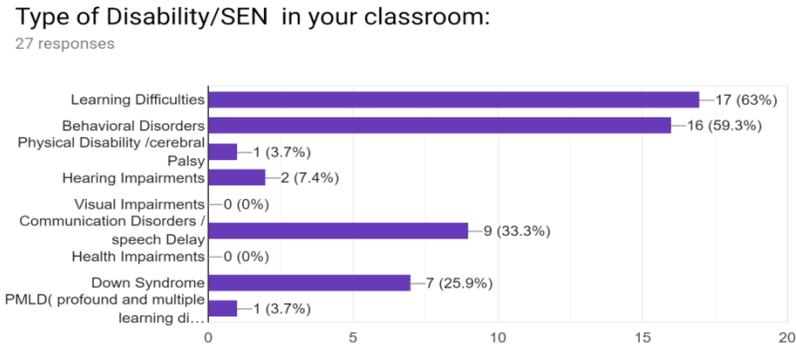
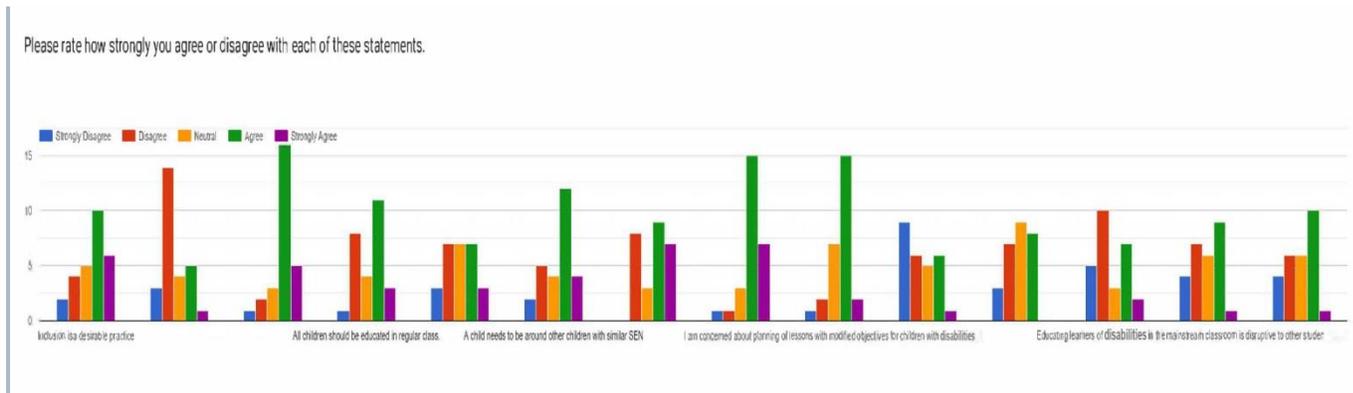


Figure 10: Indicated that the majority of disabilities in classrooms were related to learning difficulties (63%) and behavioural problems (59.3%), compared to other disabilities such as communication disorders/speech delay (33.3%), and Down syndrome (25.9%).

4.2. Section 2: KG teachers’ attitudes and perceptions towards the inclusion of learners with disabilities in kindergarten mainstream classrooms.

Participants in the study were asked to answer 15 questions related to the teacher’s attitudes, perceptions, issues related to provisions and admissions.

### 4.2.1. Survey chart



### 4.2.2. Survey's Data Results

Responses from the participants were based on 5 Likert-scale

Strongly Disagree
Disagree
Neutral
Agree
Strongly Agree

1- Inclusion is a desirable practice	2-Inclusion could overburden and impact negatively the mainstream education teachers
7%	11%
15%	52%
19%	15%
37%	19%
22%	4%

Table 1: The findings from the survey showed that all the mainstream teachers surveyed had positive attitude towards Inclusion as a practice (37%), and the majority of them (52%) disagreed that mainstream teachers would be overburdened negatively by work if the SEN students had to be included in their classrooms.

3-Inclusive Education can provide academic improvement to both learners with and without disabilities.	4-All learners with disabilities should be educated in regular mainstream classroom.	5-The curriculum of the mainstream classroom does not match the needs of learners with Disabilities
4%	4%	11%
7%	30%	26%
11%	15%	16%
59%	41%	36%
19%	10%	11%

Table 2: The results from survey indicated that the majority of mainstream teachers (59%) held positive opinion that inclusive education provides academic progress and improvement for all students in the classroom and that all children should be educated and included in regular class, however, results varied between disagree and agree (26%-36%) that the curriculum do not match the SEND's needs in their classrooms.

6- A student needs to be around other children with similar Disabilities	7-Inclusion is beneficial to learners with severe disabilities
7%	0%
19%	30%
15%	11%
44%	33%
15%	26%

Table 3: Findings from the questionnaire had shown that there is strong agreement among teachers towards including a SEND student with other syllables with similar special educational needs (44%) in same classroom, whilst the percentage related to inclusion's impact on student with severe disability in classroom still confused among teachers who agreed and disagreed (30%-33%, respectively).

8- Most learners with the following SEN (regardless of their level of their disabilities) can be educated in the mainstream classroom.	
Learning Difficulties	Behavioral Disorders

0%	0%
81%	52%
11%	22%
7%	15%
0%	11%

Table 4

Physical Disability /cerebral Palsy	Hearing Impairments
-------------------------------------	---------------------

0%	0%
15%	22%
19%	30%
59 %	44%
7%	4%

Table 5

Visual Impairments	Communication Disorders
--------------------	-------------------------

0%	0%
22%	63%
30%	22%
48%	11%

0%	4%
----	----

Table 6

Health Impairments	Down Syndrome	Profound and multiple learning difficulties-PMLD)
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4%	4%	26%
48%	25%	33%
26%	15%	17%
15%	47%	15%
7%	9%	9%

Table 7

Tables 4-7: Findings from the survey indicated that teachers held positive attitudes towards including children with SEND, however their attitudes were based on the type of disability itself. The majority of surveyed teachers showed high acceptance of including children with (cerebral palsy 59%, DS 47%, hearing impairment 44%, visual impairment 48%) in their regular mainstream classroom, whilst others disagreed and had negative attitudes towards including SEND with other types of disability such as (learning difficulties 81%, behavioural 52%, communication disorders 63%, health impairment 48%, and PMLD 33%, particularly). These high percentages were based on that the majority of disabilities in classrooms were related to learning difficulties (63%) and behavioural problems (59.3%), communication disorders/speech delay (33.3%), and Down Syndrome (25.9%) where teachers perceived themselves unqualified and lack the knowledge to teach these categories in their classrooms and as a result, recommended more training.

9-I am concerned about planning of lessons with modified objectives and needed instructional adaptations and strategies for children with disabilities	10- I have received training from the Head of Inclusion /SENCO on how to design an IEP for learners with disabilities
--	---

4%	33%
7%	42%
26%	10%
56%	11%
7%	4%

Table 8

11-I am concerned about the admission policy of including learners with Disabilities in my classroom	12- I am receiving good quality support from the Head of inclusion/SENCO on how to deal with learners with disabilities in my classroom
26%	19%
33%	37%
30%	11%
11%	26%
0%	7%

Table 9

Tables 8 and 9: Results had shown that regular mainstream teachers as Bachelor and Master's degree holders with a significant experience of teaching perceived themselves concerned about planning of lessons with appropriate modified objectives in addition to instructional adaptations and strategies for learners with disabilities in their regular classrooms, however they disagreed on many points related to admissions, trainings on designing IEP and support provided from SENCO and the head of of inclusion in providing specific instructional strategies for planning a lesson for SEND students.

13- Educating learners with disabilities in the mainstream classroom is disruptive to other students.	14-The quality of provisions offered to learners with disabilities are beneficial and match their needs
15%	15%
26%	37 %
22%	22%
33%	22%
4%	4%

Table 10: findings had revealed negative attitudes towards the quality of provisions offered to SEND and the majority agreed that educating them in regular classrooms is disruptive to other students (33%), mainly due to the absence of the experience in dealing with SEND students

#### 4.2.3. Qualitative question within the Survey-questionnaire

What are your needs in term of training in order to include children with SEND in your class?
Additional workshops and role playing
Cases of SEND... and how to work with
Counseling and Guidance
Training on curriculum adaptation
More workshops
Adapting the activities to their abilities
How to deal with SEN students
Training about SEN and how to deal with them
Training to deal with them
Training to design IEP goals
How to deal with severe autism, severe down syndrome and ADHD
All information and details about how to deal with children with SEND
Design IEP for learners
More training courses
Differentiated activities for SEND
Modifying lesson objective for the specific disability
Learning difficulties
How to design an IEP and how to write smart objectives
More workshop
How to treat them and the ways to teach them

To be supplied with special activities
Training to deal with Sen students
kindergarten teachers should be given specific training sessions on: 1- SMART planning or designing the IEPs. 2- Dealing with the requirements of SEND students in the mainstream classrooms. 3- How to observe progress and significant impact of the implementation of the IEPs.
A special musical instrument that suites send students
How to prepare an effective IEP
Training how to design an IEP
Training about learning disabilities such as dyslexia

Table 11: shows a qualitative question related to specific type of trainings recommended by surveyed KG teachers in order to include children with SEND in their regular mainstream classrooms. The majority of them insisted on the urge of having training related to:

Training on curriculum adaptation and differentiated activities, training about how to deal with SEND in classrooms, training on designing IEP, and training on learning difficulties, such as Dyslexia.

#### 4.3. Interviews

The research interview is considered as the main research method (Creswell, 2007). The researcher collected Data from participants of the study through conducting semi-structured interviews that allow freedom for participants to be able to elaborate on topics of interest to him/her without compromising. (Bryman, 2004, p. 321). The main focus of the researcher during interviews, was on gaining understanding of the participants KG teachers in three private schools (attitudes towards inclusion of learners with disabilities in mainstream classroom (RQ1), teachers' perceptions towards delivering inclusive education (RQ2), teachers' attitudes towards provision (RQ3), teachers' attitudes towards the admission (RQ4), and finally factors for successful inclusion, challenges and barriers (RQ5).

### 4.3.1. Interpreting Interviews

#### 4.3.1.1. Overview

In general, the concept of inclusion was defined by most of the teachers in the study as ‘interesting’. However, inclusion of students with SEN was perceived by teachers as ‘feasible yet with loads of work’. While other teachers perceived that inclusion requires lot of support from school administrators, parents and fellow teachers. Very few groups of teachers also declared that *“Inclusion is a good and achievable philosophy because SEN students don’t show progress”*.

#### 4.3.1.2. Issues related to resources and provisions

The majority of teachers when asked about provisions offered to SEN students in classrooms agreed on the lack of specific resources provided for them and assumed that most of provisions and related resources were provided by parents outside the school. Wherefore, school administrators should have special budget for ‘Inclusion program’ specially for assessment tests.

All 25 respondents perceived that provision of related services is advantageous as it supports them in working with SEN students. All respondents also reported that training involved in working with SEN students in mainstream classrooms would be educationally beneficial and helpful for them. The majority of teachers had received staff development programs for 2 days at the beginning of the new academic year. Most of KG teachers declared the lack of pre-service training but stated that the little trainings once in few years they had received was primarily given by their school which these teachers insisted were very little.

A KG2 teacher from school B declared *“I didn’t receive any trainings in special education as the special education teachers do, I am a regular classroom teacher, with the class’ loads and paper work to be filled within short period of planning, I felt myself unqualified to teach these students, I believe that all kindergarten students should do entrance exam before they are enrolled in the school and schools stakeholders and policy-makers should concise a specific budgets to provide adequate provisions to these students”*

#### 4.3.1.3. Issues related to curriculum implementation and instructional strategies

Respondents reported negative attitudes towards educating SEND students in terms of delivering the curriculum and providing necessary modifications within the classroom and meeting the needs of all students were declared, A KG teacher with nine years of teaching experience from school B commented: *“I am willing to plan instructional strategies and modify specific areas in the curriculum if I receive support and training from the SEND department, nonetheless it would become very difficult to teach SEND students in my classroom”*.

Some aspects of inclusion were positively taken into consideration, however, most of them recognized some challenging factors to inclusion of students with SEN that impose oppression on both teachers and students, specifically in managing behavior and issues related to discipline in class, despite their nominal training, all the interviewed teachers reported classroom problems such as having to deal with one student with SEN with behavior and intellectual disability, and reflected a challenging factor that evolve anguishes on the teacher in managing behavior.

Two Kindergarten teachers commented from school B:

*“Although Inclusion is a beneficial practice, however it will be very hectic, I will be exhausted yet, on the other hand it would be rewarding.” They added: “In our opinion these students would not benefit that much from inclusion as it is expected.”*

The majority of KG teachers in the selected schools shared same viewpoints that special education teachers are specialized and received training that could be beneficial to the students with SEN. Some other teachers’ comments were:

*“these children with SEN can be placed in our classroom, yet in my opinion they would only benefit from a special educator and not just by being in our class.” “I am not eligible to teach a child with special needs; he/she should be sent to a specialist who is specialized in these things.”*

#### 4.3.1.4. Issues related to IEP

There is a vivid clear mis-knowledge among the interviewed teachers about issues related individual educational plan (IEP) and reported they were responsible of making study plans for these students by themselves without the contribution of the SEND department. Two teachers from KG1 claimed: *“The IEP objectives and goals should be designed and termly reviewed by both teacher and Head of inclusion, not only teachers.”*

#### 4.3.1.5. Areas of need to effectively work with students with special needs and disabilities

Areas of need in working with students with SEND in mainstream classrooms were illustrated from the interviews in samples taken from direct teachers' quotes.

##### 4.3.1.5.1. Support

Support from the administrators is needed as indicated from the majority of the KG mainstream teachers particularly when it comes to understanding SEND case and type of disability, likewise, more resources related to instructional material and appropriate supplies and resources (sensory room, assistive devices, manipulatives for math, specific programs for smartboard), alternative tests, modified and differentiated sheets, IEP for learners with exceptional needs, hiring new specialist who help in proper diagnosis, and more funds to be invested in special needs. According to interviewed teachers, including students with SEND will not be successful without the support from administrators and special educators, external supports from centers and therapists with necessary services.

##### 4.3.1.5.2. Type of Trainings needed

Most KG teachers also reported having some types of in-service training, whilst, the majority of them reported that they had received training through staff development programs, they added: *“trainings in working with students with SEND would be necessary and beneficial particularly such as”*:

- 1- Training for learning about the characteristics of students with special needs and disabilities
- 2- Training in designing IEP and implementing IEP objectives.
- 3- Training that address students with dyslexia and specific ways for teaching students with learning difficulties.
- 4- Professional development workshops to educate teachers on common SEND cases and strategies to deal with different types of disability in classrooms.

#### 4.3.1.5.3. Issues related to SEND students' assessments

Some KG teachers insisted on having direct contact with the SEND department to be involved in preparing materials related to curriculum and para-curriculum, the majority of them insisted on their needs to have more trainings regarding curriculum modifications, in the process of designing differentiated tests and assessing student's progress and attainments, designing checklists for the purpose of daily observation, and adjusting class requirements to be able to accommodate these students in regular classrooms.

#### 4.3.1.5.4. Reduced class size and extended time

All KG teachers in the study declared that working with SEN student in the class is hard, especially that classes are small in size and condensed with 24 students. In addition, approximately most teachers indicated the need to have extended time for planning and collaborations with their peers-teachers. Furthermore, teachers declared that they need reduced class loads if they will implement individualized instructions to meet and cater for the needs of students with special needs. Moreover, they suggested to have a specialist to work in the KG section only to be able to help and support teachers in planning and following up with the SEN students.

#### 4.3.1.5.5. Reflections from teachers' quotes and their attitudes towards the inclusion experience in their mainstream classroom.

A KG2 teacher from school A responded to questions addressed to her during the semi-structured interviews, she is mainly against inclusion as she believes that *“these students should be kept in special school where teachers demonstrated high level of performance because they are well trained, furthermore, in my opinion Inclusion is a big load in term of preparing materials and activities”*.

She added: *“It is hectic to prepare activities every week for my SEN student, I can’t manage having a SEN student with 23 students in a small class, he needs a shadow teacher with him, and furthermore, I don’t perceive myself capable because I am not trained to deal with SEN students.”* When the researcher asked her about challenges she is facing in her classroom, she admitted: *“one main challenge is the lack of support from the school and parents, lack of training that help me in writing objective in the IEP plan, and the workload that doesn’t let me dedicate enough time for the SEN student in my class.”*

A KG2 teacher from school B claimed *“I am against Inclusion as it is so stressful, specially that my SEN student needs special care, special guided instructions, and I am not receiving support from the head of inclusion to provide me with appropriate activities that match her needs.”*

A KG1 teacher from school A said: *“in my opinion, Inclusion is beneficial to enhance social and emotional skills among students and SEN because they will learn how to collaborate, although I am not experienced in teaching these students, I found my experience with my SEND students fruitful, however I need more support from the SEND department about strategies on how to deal with Down syndrome students and how to modify my weekly plans to match the objectives in the IEP.”*

A KG2 Arabic teacher from school B reflected upon her own experience with a child with Down Syndrome who was included in her class last year. When I interviewed her she had shown great positivity towards Inclusion and described it *“as beneficial for all students in the class but depends on the severity of the disability, because it helps in enhancing the interactions between peers, accepting others, reinforce the values such as: tolerance, cooperation, friendship. Yet, my*

*only concern about inclusion is the lack of support given to teachers by school and specialists, trainings, lack of materials, resources, and availability of shadow teachers.”*

Three KG teachers of varying years of teaching experience (five to nine years) from school C debated the positive elements of including SEND students in their classrooms. Their beliefs were defined by the rewards of being challenged as a teacher.

#### 4.4. Class observations

It is anticipated by the researcher's observation to find out teachers' knowledge and perceptions towards delivering Inclusive education (RQ2), and analyzing issues related to provisions (RQ4) offered to these categories in regular classrooms. After receiving the approvals from parents and KG principals to access data and documents, such as: IEP/Kids First report/sample of the SEND students work, the observations were administered in different learning settings. While observing the SEND students, the researcher took into considerations many points targeting specific skills such as; work habit, behavior, social interactions with peers, participation and involvement in learning activities, type of accommodation, resources used, modification of the learning outcomes according to objectives mentioned in the IEP. All class observation notes were written on an MS Word document (Appendix 3) created by the researcher.

Observation 1: Yusuf a child with Dyslexia

Observation 2: Elma a girl with Down Syndrome

Observation 3: Alia a girl with mild learning disability

Observation 1: Yusuf a child with Dyslexia

*Definition*

American Psychiatric Association (1994) describes Dyslexia as “a difficulty in reading characterized by a phonological processing disorder impairment, despite cognitive abilities and intelligence”.

#### *Child's profile*

Yusuf is a five years old included in a KG2 A class which includes 24 students at an American Curriculum private school in Dubai where the researcher currently works as a KG academic coordinator and teacher. He is so shy and unconfident. He struggles socially and academically, in addition to some reading impairment signs, he was referred by the inclusion team to the head of inclusion and was diagnosed as having Dyslexia. The researcher visited him in different educational settings.

#### *Summary of class observation*

Yusuf has shown great potential and participated with enthusiasm with his buddy in the most periods attended by the researcher (Math, Art, Science and English). Yusuf has shown good signs of social interaction and behavior with his peer that was evident during the collaborations learning time when he and his peers were asked to do craft activities. Furthermore, the researcher noticed signs of self-awareness of his needs and appropriate learning style when he knew his need and asked for a sensory cushion during the writing task that constitute the biggest challenge for him too. In other hand, he has shown great potential in using reading Apps on the IPAD downloaded by the class teacher (for reading and writing). It was remarkable by the researcher that Yusuf is an avid reader with great participation skills who enjoys science hands on activity about sun and its effect on earth, based on the observation in the Math period, Yusuf has shown great ability in solving some questions on the interactive math smartboard game, however, signs of struggling in solving written task where evident notwithstanding the assistance of his reading buddy.

-Type of support and provisions: LSA /pull out sessions - social advisor

-Findings from class observations in different educational settings

1- Various effective and beneficial techniques, strategies and assistive devices apps which were proven to allow for students' improvement (Madeira et al., 2015) were used by the teacher to help Yusuf attain his great potential in his inclusive settings, including visuals reading relevant key words, flash cards for alphabet writing, CVC words, rhyming words, word wall for sight words, smart board for reading platform A to Z, sensory cushion, key vocabulary and dyslexia friendly font.

2- The teacher used many instructional strategies to enable language lessons for Yusuf to make it less tenuous for him, in particular for writing support, planning templates, Map, Venn Diagram, Compare-Contrast table, concept maps to group and develop ideas and other core subjects ([www.readwritethink.org](http://www.readwritethink.org)).

3- Intervention and accommodations were well-designed by the teachers to aid a child with dyslexia in mainstream classrooms and evident for the researcher, and considered thereby as the most beneficial, in particular as Yusuf often faces significant challenges in the classroom when it comes to retaining and recalling of verbal instructions and information in oral task when reading.

4- Additional classroom's accommodations were observed in most of the settings visited by the observer and include a child seating plan (first row always), modified spelling and reading program (on an IPAD, MYON READING PROGRAM) were provided by the researcher, and a word bank for writing. Moreover, Yusuf was given frequent time outs, given break-up instructions, and avoidance of writing from the board.

5- One key criticism was the lack of altered materials regarding sheets and printed materials (classwork, homework and charts) in a dyslexia-friendly font. The IEP includes some strategies related to Dysgraphia as suggested by the therapists.

## Observation 2: Elma, a girl with Down Syndrome

- Definition

English physician Dr. John Langdon Down was the one who named Down syndrome. The characteristic features of Trisomy 21 were discovered 1866. The pupil with Down Syndrome was described by the Down Syndrome Association of Michigan (2016) being friendly sociable and have interest to be included in community through accessing education services.

#### - Child's profile

Elma is a girl with DS, she is four years old and placed in a regular classroom in KG1E (22 students), accompanied with a shadow teacher from 8am till 1:00pm. Although Elma has much key strength, she is sociable and well-liked by her classmates, good listener to instructions and follows school rules; however her main needs are especially recognized in specific areas such as: fine motor skills, mild speech delay and some difficulties in literacy and reading.

#### - Summary of class observations

The researcher observed Elma the little adorable girl for two consecutive days during the core subject periods (English/Math/Science and LSA). Elma's progress within the lesson was evidently clear to the researcher specially during the English period where she has shown good recognition of letters taken, cvc words mentioned in her IEP goal (mat-cat) and sight words given with few help of the shadow teacher and her buddy on the mat, yet she has shown difficulty in following story sequence, she tried to escape when it was time for writing task. Attending the Math period, the researcher noticed good social interaction skills, full engagement during pair share activities, counting and recognition of numbers skills, yet slight mis grasping of math concept taught. Hands on science – planting activity was a clear evidence of Elma's sense of collaboration and enthusiasm towards scientific experiments, she was fully engaged and happy. Following Elma to the LSA room, Elma was relaxed and motivated and had shown great progress in her fine motor skills that is shown through her pencil grip when she was doing her writing tasks.

#### - Type of support and provisions

Some provisions were given to Elma to enhance fine motor skills using specific manipulative during her pull out sessions for additional support in core subjects with the LSA that suit the child's needs, level, concerns and interest as mentioned in the Index for Inclusion (2002), Kids First center.

- Findings from class observations in different educational settings

1- the author observed Elma in 4 different educational settings: English /Math/Science/LSA ,it was evident that strategies were adopted by the KG teacher who referred to Elma's IEP in the three core areas, yet some gaps were remarkable regarding teachers' knowledge about altering the curriculum, in designing appropriate learning activities that match the students' level in relation to the goals in the IEP. However, the teacher gratified by minimizing the task without any modifications in the lesson plan objectives and outcomes to match the girl's needs. Regarding the classroom environment, the girl seemed relaxed and engaged.

### Observation 3: Alia, a girl with mild learning disability

- Definition

Intellectual disability is described by noticeable limitations in issues related to fundamental factors such as reasoning and functioning in specific learning areas such as communications, problem solving, judgement and interactions in life skills and it is measured by IQ. In the normal case a person's IQ is usually 90 to 110, however, in the case of intellectual disability the IQ is 60 and below (Psychiatry.org, 2018).

- Child's profile

Alia is an enthusiastic and happy girl, yet needs encouragement and self-confidence to be able to deal with her peers in the classroom. Some areas of needs are that she has short attention span, and some weaknesses in fine motor skills Likewise, any child with Intellectual Disability, Alia finds difficulties in the four mains areas: taking, saving, retrieving and using information. She is

currently placed in a mainstream school at an American curriculum private school in Dubai in a KG2 class constituted of 25 students, and diagnosed as a child with mild learning difficulties.

- Summary of the class observations

The researcher started to visit Alia for two days in a row according to a schedule in four different settings. The teacher assigned a place for her on the mat with a buddy for more support during collaborative work that reflects Alia's social-emotional skills among her peers, she was so happy, and extremely engaged in learning activities related to phonological awareness, such as blending cvc words, letters and their sounds as mentioned in the IEP. While observing her, the researcher distinguished some weakness in terms of writing skills that comprised the biggest challenges for her in both English and Math. Following her to the Math period, Alia seemed to be happily engaged with her peers during counting and smart board active learning games about addition, Alia showed signs of misunderstanding for math concepts that was so abstract and complicated for her as mentioned in the IEP, as a result, she could not accomplish her task for lack of some instructional strategies given by the teacher. Time for learning about seasons in Science, she was given specific role to perform in a role play about seasons. According to her IEP, Alia has to identify two weather words and two weather tools and match them, however, the teacher did not simplify her task, the concept was so hard, materials used were so confusing for a child with ID, she consequently was unable to accomplish her task.

- Types of support and provisions

Specialists from Kids First are in charge to provide her with appropriate intervention /school counsellor/SEND team/her shadow teacher/her parents and the LSA.

- Findings from class observations in different education settings.

1- Term 1 IEP was completely done by the SENCO with little intervention from the subject teachers, who lacked some techniques and experience in developing differentiated activities and resources to deliver the lesson to her, especially in Math subject where Alia has major difficulty

in performing and understanding math's concept because of mathematical terminology used by the teacher.

2- The researcher noticed that despite of Alia's area of needs in literacy and reading skills, objective in Term 1 included in the IEP was the same as per reading and writing skill and tasks compared to her peers and the type of differentiation was only in reducing the amount of lines in the book without modifying its content. Moreover, some misalignment between the curriculum (NGSS) and the IEP's goal were seen by the researcher during the class' observation.

#### 4.5. Summary of chapter

In this chapter , the researcher aimed to get the most of Data's findings to get accurate insights into teachers' attitudes towards including learners with disabilities in regular mainstream classroom and barriers to successful inclusion by using multiple tools in the methodology such as class observations for SEND students to get sympathetic apprehension on admission and provisions , semi- structured interviews with teachers from 3 private schools in the study , in addition to survey -questionnaire for in depth analysis of their perceptions towards delivering inclusive education and obtain as a result responses to the research questions of the study. Findings had revealed the urge of improvements in many areas that will be discussed in the following chapter.

## **5. Chapter V: Discussion, conclusion and recommendations**

### 5.1. Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher will take the readers and fellow researchers into a journey of investigations and exploration of many areas where analysis of findings obtained from the study will lead to discussions that will help in the improvement through fulfilling many gaps related to best practices in the field of an international phenomenon called “inclusive education” and thereby, accentuating on educators’ roles in classrooms, their attitudes towards delivering inclusive education and their perceptions which will constitute the significance of the study (chapter1), and consequently guide the study to pertain answers to the research questions, highlight on challenges and cultural issues within Gulf context, and finally draw the attention on some recommendations and further researches.

### 5.2. Discussions of the Findings

RQ1: What are current Kindergarten teachers’ attitudes towards including learners with disabilities in mainstream classroom?

Thirty KG teachers from three different American private schools in Dubai were surveyed, all teachers responded to the survey-questionnaire. In addition to semi-structured interviews with 25 teachers who have SEND student in their mainstream regular classrooms.

The findings from the survey revealed that all the regular teachers that were surveyed reported positive attitude towards Inclusion as a practice, and the majority of them disagreed that mainstream teachers would be negatively overburdened by work if the SEND students had to be placed in their classrooms. For instance, the majority of mainstream teachers held positive opinion that inclusive education provides academic progress and improvement for all students in the classroom and that all children should receive quality inclusive education in regular class; however, results varied between strongly disagree and disagree about curriculum’s content if it matches the SEND students’ needs in their classrooms. Further, there was strong agreement

among teachers towards including a SEN student with other syllables in classroom because its useful and beneficial for them. Moreover, teachers showed positive attitudes towards including children with SEND, but their attitudes were obtained from their opinions in dealing with the type of disability. The majority of surveyed teachers showed high acceptance of including children with (cerebral palsy, Down Syndrome, hearing and visual impairment) in their regular mainstream classroom, whilst others disagreed and had negative attitudes towards including SEND with other types of disability such as (learning difficulties, behavioural disorders, communication disorders, health impairment, and PMLD). Findings from semi-structured interviews attested some teachers' reflections, opinions and attitudes towards inclusion and issues related to provisions, trainings, curriculum and support needed in regular classrooms. It was crystal clear from teachers' responses in the survey that KG teachers held positive attitude towards Inclusion as a philosophy taking into consideration many factors and variables, and that was what researchers have depicted over the last decades in many debates about the status of inclusion as a crucial phenomenon, however, the effectiveness of such phenomena is related consequently to teachers' attitudes and perspectives towards any programme that are of importance when determining the concept of inclusion. (Cochran, 1998). In other words, Anati (2012) declared that the attitudes of teachers regarding inclusion of students with disabilities have been described as essential determinants in inclusive education.

RQ 2: Do Kindergarten teachers in private schools perceive themselves knowledgeable in delivering inclusive education?

Majority of Kindergarten teachers in the study defined "inclusion" as 'though-provoking', desirable phenomenon, and 'favorable yet with loads of work'. Whilst others perceived that inclusion comprise huge support from school's leaders, parents and educators because it overburdens them. Very few groups of teachers also declared that inclusive education is a good philosophy, but it can be achieved easily because SEND students do not show progress".

Findings from semi-structured interviews teachers' reflection towards perceiving themselves knowledgeable of delivering inclusive education revealed that Kindergarten teachers' main concerns were related to essential factors such as: issues related to IEP, support, training,

appropriate assessments and evaluation, class size, modification in the lesson plan objectives, teaching strategies, and curriculums that doesn't match their SEND student's needs.

Furthermore, results from the questionnaire had shown that teachers perceived themselves concerned about planning of lessons with appropriate modified objectives in addition to instructional adaptations and strategies for learners with disabilities (currently named as learners with determination in UAE) in their regular classrooms, yet more support and guidance from the Head of Inclusion/SENCO are needed.

Over and above, findings from class observations to SEND students in their educational mainstream settings revealed to the researcher some essential points that will constitute a corner stone towards evaluating if not criticising teachers' readiness and perceptions towards delivering inclusive education.

1- Various effective and beneficial techniques, strategies and assistive devices apps which were proven to allow for students' improvement (Madeira et al., 2015), were used by the teacher to help SEN student achieves his great potential and progress in his inclusive settings.

2- The teacher used many instructional strategies to facilitate language lesson to make it less tenuous for SEN students.

3- The types of accommodation were well planned to facilitate the inclusion of a child with dyslexia in mainstream classrooms were evident for the researcher.

4- the lack of altered materials regarding sheets and printed materials (classwork, homework and charts) are not in a dyslexia friendly font were an essential point to criticize.

5- Varieties of class' accommodations were evident by the observer in most of the settings), modified spelling and reading program ,in addition to aassistive technology that refers to all devices whether high tech devices or low tech devices which could be used to aid children's development and learning (Edyburn, 2006; Judge et al., 2008).

6- It was evident that strategies were adopted by the KG teacher according to the child's IEP in the three major areas, yet some gaps were remarkable regarding teachers' knowledge about altering the curriculum, in designing appropriate learning activities that match the students' level in relation to the goals in the IEP. However, the teacher gratified by minimizing the task without any modifications in the lesson plan objectives and outcomes to match the girl's needs. Regarding the classroom environment, the girl seemed relaxed and engaged.

7- The IEP was completely written by the SENCO with little contribution from the subject teachers who lacked some techniques and experience in developing differentiated activities and resources to deliver the lesson to her, especially in Math where the student's main need is in performing and understanding math concepts because of mathematical terminology used by the teacher.

8- The researcher noticed that despite of the SEN's needs in literacy and reading skills, objective included in the IEP was the same as per reading and writing skill and tasks compared to SEN student peer .Moreover, some misalignment between the curriculum (NGSS) and the IEP's goal.

In conclusion, the researcher noticed some gaps and lack of knowledge in term of delivering effective inclusive education strategies and techniques to learners of determination despite the efforts given from KG teachers, yet more trainings and supports are needed to be able to deliver good inclusive education.

Sub RQ3: What are current KG teachers' attitudes towards the admission of learners with disabilities in their mainstream classroom?

It was noticed that there are some disagreement on the admission policy among KG teachers and the majority claimed that there were not concerned about it in their schools, neither aware of their contents , in addition to that , although their positive attitudes towards inclusion that does not overburden them as shown in the results of the survey (52%) in general and the rights of SEND students to be placed in regular classrooms, these children are placed in their regular classrooms without being informed or prepared for such crucial procedure. However, according to Dubai Inclusive Education Policy Framework (2017), in the context of educating children who

remain excluded from schools are most often children with special education need and disability. Many efforts were employed worldwide to support these children precisely ‘Salamanca framework’ (1992), ‘school for all initiative’, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) (UN 2006), which was signed and ratified by the UAE. As such, stakeholders, admin should invest in fostering appropriate inclusive education environment by securing sustainability for the progressive development of attitudes and beliefs, and aid in the development of advocacy to reduce stigma, sensitize and raise awareness among educators about the experience with SEND students and provide them will full support and guidance.

Sub RQ 4: What are current KG teachers’ attitudes towards the provision offered to learners with disabilities bin their mainstream classroom?

Brownell et al. (1999) and Barnett et al. (1998) assumed that efforts exerted in inclusive education are basically referred to the support given by administration, appropriate material, in addition to personnel resources”. As such, if inclusion of students with SEND will be implemented successfully, parents’ involvement, teachers, students, key community members in planning are needed in school systems.

Findings from the questionnaire revealed negative attitudes towards the quality of provisions offered to SEND. The majority of teachers showed high agreements on the lack of specific materials provided for them and assumed that most of provisions and related resources were provided by parents outside the school. Wherefore, the school’s administrators should have special budget for the inclusion especially for assessment tests.

Likewise, findings from semi-structured interviews with all 25 respondents perceived the delivery of related services and provisions as advantageous as it supports them in assisting SEND students. All respondents also viewed training that provides strategies about dealing with SEND students in the classroom as profitable for them and educationally valuable for the students. Most respondents had completed two-day staff training programs at the start of the new academic year. Furthermore, most teachers declared very limited or no pre-service training, however, they did state that the limited amount of training they had received was mostly in-

service and provided by their schools; this was perceived as being insufficient by the respondents.

Adding up, the researcher's main concern from the class observation was to get an insight to the quality of the provision offered to SEND in their mainstream classrooms and how the accommodation and modifications played essential role in their progress in relation to the 'School for All' initiative's on the provision that is characterized by highlighting important points, such as:

- 1- Trainings and staff development.
- 2- Issues related to school's building that are beneficial for placement, accommodations, resources and assessments tools.
- 3- Support from centers that provides services and therapies.
- 4- Technology devices.
- 5- Community awareness.

Although most of the 'school for all initiative' components are found, findings from this small limited study had revealed that the most of type of provisions were unpretentious and limited (Kids First/school counselor/SEND team, shadow, pulling out by the LSA, limited assistive devices in classrooms, IEP that needs to be more developed, few in-service training, most of children do not have a shadow teacher due to unaffordable fees, issues related to community awareness were unobservable and barely implemented), which will highlight on the urge needs of more support from the stakeholders and administration as mentioned in Dubai Inclusive Education Policy Framework's (standard 9) about targeting resourcing to ensure that:

- 1- The support for inclusive education is effective.
- 2- Private schools allocate an appropriate budget for inclusive education.
- 3- Educational facilities comply with Dubai Universal Accessibility code by enhancing on an accessible appropriate physical environment such as learning centers and schools.
- 4- Regular and reasonable fees to access quality education, especially for SEND who experience severe and multiple profound disabilities.

In addition to the Index of Inclusion (2011) that embrace a wide range of inclusion, and is not restricted to provide educational provisions for SEN students. In terms of delivering the curriculum, providing necessary modifications within the classroom and meeting the needs of all students with SEN within regular classroom settings.

Sub RQ5: What are the challenges and crucial factors behind Kindergarten Teachers' Attitudes?

The implementation of an inclusive policy will be successful depending mainly on teachers being positive about it". (Avradimis, Bayliss & Burden, 2000). However, the availability of inclusive practices to everybody, everywhere and all the time is the newest challenge and can be achievable if it is delivered continuously with noticeable progress through focusing on the efforts and establishing fully inclusive schooling. (Ferguson, 2008). More positive attitudes towards inclusion were demonstrated in literature reviews the last few decades which witnessed a range of studies that mainly depends on some essential variables. Nevertheless, the concept of inclusion remains misunderstood and abstract for most teachers, as well as acceptance and readiness to contribute in the inclusion process within regular mainstream schools in the UAE continue to be unapparent.

Students and teachers 'attitudes towards placing SEN students in mainstream schools were surveyed by many authors. Findings from surveys revealed that the teachers generally had positive attitudes towards inclusive education. Nevertheless, these attitudes are largely shaped by two main variables that contributed to the success of any inclusion programme which are: the severity of a child's special needs and teacher training.

Emam and Mohamad (2011) explored the impact of the experiences of teachers had on their feelings of self-worth and perceptions, finding that more experienced teachers in the inclusive classroom are more confident and held more positive perceptions regarding inclusion rather than teachers with less experience.

Several studies have revealed that issues related to teachers' training were considered as important factor that affects teachers' attitudes and acceptance of inclusion. In another words, teachers who received professional training and workshops, tend to be more positive about

inclusion practices, whilst, other teachers without support reflected negative attitudes that was obvious when Avradimis and Norwich (2002) argued that a teacher's knowledge of SEN students, and pre- and in-service training are critical in the improvement of teachers' attitudes towards implementing an inclusive policy. Furthermore, experiences and trainings done by the teachers should comprise enough opportunities to cooperation among colleagues who are probing inclusion's practices and participate in activities that implement specific teaching styles at workshops and in-service programs .(Gaad & Khan, 2007). Issues related the severity of children's disability were a discussion point in a study conducted by Dukmak (2013) who found that the specific disabilities of a student could affect teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education.

In addition to Alghazo and Gaad (2004) demonstrated in their research in the UAE teachers' involvement with people concealing physical disabilities than other types of special needs including both visual and hearing impairment, behavioural or intellectual disability. As such the researcher examined in depth and compared between literature reviews and specific yet critical aspects of needs in dealing with students with SEN in mainstream classrooms that were illustrated from semi-structured interviews and questionnaire and found similarities that shed the light on important challenges that KG teachers are currently facing at the private schools in Dubai especially factors related to some fundamental points, such as:

- 1- Kinds of support for SEN students.
- 2- Issues related to cultural beliefs and values.
- 3- Resources, therapists and centres' external support.
- 4- Issues related to budget, physical structure and accessibility.
- 5- Programs and curricula for Inclusion, modifications in curriculum and accommodation that suit and meet SEN students.
- 6- Time management, planning and reduced class size.
- 7- The nature and severity of disabilities.
- 8- Teaching experience.
- 9- Lack of support from the Head of Inclusion/SENCO
- 10- The lack of in-service training and workshops and their necessity in any inclusion program.

### 5.3. Conclusion

Conclusion drawn from Data gathered from questionnaire and semi-structured interviews had revealed that kindergarten teachers held some positive attitudes towards inclusion of students with SEND as a desirable and beneficial practice for all children where they can improve academically in the classroom and believed that inclusion would never encumber them in their mainstream classrooms. Furthermore, they expressed their willingness to make needed instructional changes in strategies and planning lessons for their SEND students; however, they had negative attitudes towards the severity and degree of some disabilities and showed their disagreement towards including SEND students with:

- 1- Learning difficulties (81%) where the majority of this type of disability (63%) is dominant in KG classrooms according to Data driven from survey.
- 2- Behavioral problems (52%) due to the high percentage of students in classrooms indicated (59.3%).
- 3- Communication disorder/ASD/speech delays (63%), wherein 33.3% of children existed in classrooms).
- 4- PMLD (48%) within their classroom that included 33% of this type,

Whilst, they held positive attitudes towards other types of disabilities, such as: Physical Disabilities (59%), hearing impairment (44%), and visual impairment (48%) according to data from the survey. These acted as the main reason that they require more efforts, challenges and stress in thinking and practices in the absence of the adequate and insufficient training to prepare them for such experience. All teachers in the research study articulated their feelings and reflections through the semi-structured interviews and insisted on the importance and urgency of reducing the size of classes, providing more resources and support services, and training in special education as mentioned previously. When the respondents reflect positive attitudes, it is thought important in order to implement successful inclusive programs by offering successful teaching opportunities, and addressing the areas of needs (Treder et al., 2000). Lieberman (1990)

stated in Al Ghazo and Gaad (2004), if the need for changing is not seen by individuals, the task will become more difficult .In addition to that if Inclusion will be successful then current criterias related to schools' systems, policies, curriculum's provision, teaching methodologies and governors' roles, must undergo a long process of change taking into consideration cultural beliefs in the UAE context.

#### 5.4. Recommendations

According to Standard 7 in the Dubai Inclusive Education Policy Framework (2017), all relevant authorities are asked to provide training to teachers at all levels from K-12 to increase their awareness about different types of disabilities and issues related to identification especially in case of invisible disabilities, instructional accommodations, training on how to use assistive technologies for different type of disability.

The majority of KG teachers perceived in their interviews and questionnaire that training in working with SEN students was required and would be particularly beneficial.

For that, it is essential to highlight some recommendations, such as:

##### 1- Effective in-service trainings and workshops

As the majority of training received by teachers who had three to five years' experience and have Bachelor's and Master's Degree holders were considered as professional development, such as: Al Jalila program, wherein other training was held by (Community Development Authority, Early Childhood Development Center), and training on managing behavioral problems in classrooms. The duration of in-service trainings wasn't enough since it varies between three hours to two days only and was about (Dyslexia), while other training durations varied between three hours to 16 hours (workshops, university training, pre-service trainings of six hours on differentiation).

##### 2- Training for learning about the characteristics of students with special needs.

##### 3- Training in designing IEP and implementing IEP objectives.

- 4- Training related to learners with dyslexia and specific teaching techniques of students with learning difficulties and behavioral disorders.
- 5- Educate teachers on common SEN cases and strategies to deal with type of disability.
- 6- Training in preparing materials related to curriculum and Para-curriculum, curriculum modification, testing and assessing student's progress, designing checklists for the purpose of daily observation, and adjusting class requirements to enable the accommodation of these categories in regular classrooms.
- 7- Extended time and reduction of class' size.
- 8- Reduced class loads if they will implement individualized instruction to cater for the needs of students with special needs.
- 9- Hire a specialist to work in the KG only to be able to help and support regular teachers in planning and following up the SEND students.
- 10- Good quality support and guidance from the head of inclusion/SENCO.
- 11- Good uses of Social media and technology to spread more awareness among the community such as the staff, and parents through fostering a culture of inclusion in private schools by developing advocacy and communication plans to raise awareness and reduce stigma on issues related to inclusion, track and measure impacts on attitudes and beliefs (Dubai Inclusive Education Policy Framework, Standard 7, 2017).
- 12- University programs and schools would be beneficial and effective to cater for these needs, if they are willing to assist in applying inclusive programs for SEN students.
- 13- The need of a policy considering types and severity of disability particularly when teachers held negative attitudes towards including them since they will have negative impact on children.

## 5.5. Further research

The last few decades witnessed several misconceptions about adopting inclusion as an approach at both education system, school and policy levels that was considered till nowadays crucial challenges in the changing process to require in depth-incorporation for the concept on 'Inclusion' as a guiding system. These misconceptions are mainly related to inclusion's implementation as a process that socially needs changes in attitudes, and was considered as complicated, theoretical and costly among educators and policymakers.

The positivity of teachers in their attitudes towards inclusion strongly relies on their experience with pupils with special educational needs mainly perceived as "challenging". Factors such as teachers' education, the appropriate support in the classroom, class' dimensions and workload influenced teachers' attitudes in recent years. In several studies, it has been shown that the major barrier to inclusion were teachers being negative , parents specially when it comes to the introduction of inclusion as an essential guide in different areas that will definitely have major impacts on teachers' attitudes. In other words, these changes in attitudes will provoke eloquent changes in role and behavior. According to the 'Inclusive Schools and Community Support Programmes of UNESCO', the first successful example of inclusive schooling was in Burkina Faso through the "Inclusive schools and project" participated to tackle the problem of education community support programmes" of children with special educational needs, who were stigmatized for a long period of time, in addition to changing attitudes towards these children. Furthermore, a universal movement towards adopting inclusive education for all learners with SEND in regular mainstream schools is obviously evident, mainly in the UAE which is gearing towards such adoption by calling them people of determination as a reflection of their strengths of characters, their courage and their perseverance; this is noticeably stated in his Highness Sheikh Mohammad Bin Rashed Al Maktoom word where he described :Determination, strategy and vision for the future as real resources in the quest for excellence and success

Furthermore, in a review of 27 literatures including 5,471 teachers found that most of teachers predominately held positive attitudes towards inclusive education in many countries such as; Australia, US, Lebanon, India, Spain, Serbia, while other's attitudes varied between negative specially in Turkey, Korea, Tanzania. In addition, Gaad and Khan (2017) identified in their study

that their teachers held negative attitudes towards including student with disabilities in regular classrooms, whilst others held neutral attitudes based on multiple variables that found to be influential, such as: teachers' educational degree background, training and type of disability (Supriyanto, 2019).

As such, the researcher, in this small restricted investigative study and of personal interest as an teacher for SEND students in Kindergarten Private American school in Dubai aimed to scrutinize KG teachers' attitudes towards inclusion of learners with disabilities in mainstream classrooms (RQ1), their perceptions towards delivering inclusive education (RQ2), their attitudes towards admission (RQ3), provision (RQ4), and finally challenges and main factors behind such attitudes (RQ5) in early childhood by adopting specific methodology to triangulate data (semi-structured interviews, survey-questionnaire and observations) to be able to gather answers to the research questions of the study. Some limitations and challenges related to language barriers, scheduling the interviews with teachers in the three private schools, teachers may not log-in to complete the survey-questionnaire, and issues related to gender consideration, especially the absence of male teachers in KG confronted the researcher during the study.

The researcher aims for further research-based recommendations for future practices of "Inclusion programs" to examine KG teachers' attitudes and the challenges they might encounter in governmental schools, and hopes that this study will pave the path for fellow researchers in the field of inclusive education.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Semi-structured interview protocol teachers' interview template.



### **Teachers Attitudes Towards Inclusion of learners with Disabilities at American Private Early Childhood Education in Dubai: An Investigative Study**

Teachers Attitudes Towards Inclusion in Early Childhood:  
Semi-Structured Interview Protocol Teachers' Interview

#### **Section 1: Interview Demographics information and introduction**

Interview's date:

Interview's site:

Interviewer:

Interviewee/participant:

Interview's duration: from to

Interview's language: \_\_\_\_\_

Explaining the purpose of the study: \_\_\_\_\_

Interview's Duration: \_\_\_\_\_

This study was designed for educational purposes as part of fulfilling the requirements of a Master's degree in Inclusive and Special Education at British university in Dubai. The interview will take between 30-35 min to be completed, participant will have the right to withdraw at any time from the interview, finally, participants will be informed that all answers provided are completely anonymous and confidential.

## **Section 2: Semi-structured -Interview Questions**

- 1-Give me background information about yourself
- 2- How do you describe your experience with Inclusive Education at your school? do you find inclusion a good practice?
- 3- Do you perceive yourself capable and knowledgeable in delivering inclusive education?
- 4- Do you find the provisions offered to SEND students beneficial and match their needs and could help in their progress?
- 5- Are you concerned about the admission policy of these SEND students at your school?
- 6- In your opinion, what are the factors that enable a successful inclusion at your school?
- 7 -In your experience, what are the challenges you have faced with SEND students in your class?
- 8- What specific kinds of training do you think might be helpful to teachers to better prepared them to implement inclusion in the regular mainstream classroom?
- 9- Do you have any suggestions and recommendations for the school to improve in the field of inclusion?

### **Section 3:** wrap-up

A thank you note and end the interview.

### **Section 4:** Supportive documents such as:

-lesson plan with modification for SEND students

- IEP

-kids first report

## **Appendix 2: Samples from kindergarten teachers' semi-structured interview responses**



### **Interview :1**

#### **Part 1: Demographics informations**

Interview's date: 23/5/2019

Interview's site: school A( private school in Dubai-Garhood)

Interviewer: The researcher

Interviewee/participant: KG2 teacher

Interview's duration: from: 10:00 Am to 10:35 Am

Interview's language: Arabic/English

Explaining the purpose of the study: 5 min

Interview's Duration: 35 min

#### **Part 2: Semi-structured -Interview Questions**

1-Give me background information about yourself

-I am an English teacher; I've been teaching KG2 since 14 years.

2- How do you describe your experience with Inclusive Education at your school? do you find inclusion a good practice?

-In my opinion, Inclusion is beneficial to enhance social and emotional skills among students and SEN because they will learn how to collaborate, although I am not experienced in teaching SEN students, I found my experience with Abdulla fruitful.

3- Do you perceive yourself capable and knowledgeable in delivering inclusive education?

-Although Inclusion is a good practice, yet I need more support from the SEND department about strategies on how to deal with Down syndrome students and how to modify my weekly plans to match the objectives in the IEP.

4- Do you find the provisions offered to SEND students beneficial and match their needs and could help in their progress?

-In some case only, many SEN students don't get their individualized needs.

5- Are you concerned about the admission policy of these SEND students at your school?

-Yes, yet students need to be assessed properly if the school is ready to accept them.

6- In your opinion, what are the factors that enable a successful inclusion at your school?

-Good support from the department, help from specialist and external centres.

7 -In your experience, what are the challenges you have faced with SEND students in your class?

-lack of specific devices and resources, number of students in class, parents can't afford hiring a shadow teacher.

8- What specific kinds of training do you think might be helpful to teachers to better prepared them to implement inclusion in the regular mainstream classroom?

\_ Training on designing IEP, lesson plan modifications, strategies to deal with children with Autism.

9- Do you have any suggestions and recommendations for the school to improve in the field of inclusion?

\_ To hire an SEN specialist for the kindergarten only.

## **Interview :2**



### **Part 1: Demographics informations**

Interview's date: 23/5/2019

Interview's site: school A ( private American school in Dubai- Garhood)

Interviewer: The researcher

Interviewee/participant: KG1 teacher

Interview's duration: from 11:30 Am to 12:05 Pm

Interview's language: Math& Science

Explaining the purpose of the study: 5min

Interview's Duration: 35 min

### **Part 2: Semi-structured -Interview Questions**

1-Give me background information about yourself

-I teach KG1 (Eng -Math-Science) since 4 years

2- How do you describe your experience with Inclusive Education at your school? do you find inclusion a good practice?

“I am against Inclusion as it is so stressful, specially that my SEN student need special care, and special guided instruction.

3- Do you perceive yourself capable and knowledgeable in delivering inclusive education?

- I find Inclusion as a complicated practice because I need more guidance and support from the SEND department to provide me with appropriate activities that matches my students’ needs.”

4- Do you find the provisions offered to SEND students beneficial and match their needs and could help in their progress?

-In my opinion, SEN students need support, appropriate intervention and a para- curriculum to be able to progress in their educational settings.

5- Are you concerned about the admission policy of these SEND students at your school?

-Not really, in many cases SEN students are placed in classrooms without teachers being informed about their cases.

6- In your opinion, what are the factors that enable a successful inclusion at your school?

-Training, workshops, specific external support and support from the SEND department.

7 -In your experience, what are the challenges you have faced with SEND students in your class?

-I had many challenges, especially in planning and preparing activities that matches the objectives in the IEP plan, and time management.

8- What specific kinds of training do you think might be helpful to teachers to better prepared them to implement inclusion in the regular mainstream classroom?

-Definitely, teachers need training in dealing with cases such as: ASD, DS and behavioral disorders.

9- Do you have any suggestions and recommendations for the school to improve in the field of inclusion?

-To improve in the field of inclusion, schools must set specific budgets for external trainings and resources for classrooms.

### **Interview :3**



#### **Part 1: Demographics informations**

Interview's date: 27-5-2019

Interview's site: school A ( private American school in Dubai- Al Quz)

Interviewer: The researcher

Interviewee/participant: KG2 teacher

Interview's duration: from 12:30 Pm to 12:35 Pm

Interview's language: English

Explaining the purpose of the study: 5min

Interview's Duration: 35 min

#### **Part 2: Semi-structured -Interview Questions**

1-Give me background information about yourself

-I am a KG2 teacher, I teach Science and Math subject, I have 6 years' experience.

2- How do you describe your experience with Inclusive Education at your school? do you find inclusion a good practice?

- In my opinion Inclusion is a big load in term of preparing materials and activities”. these students should be kept in special school where teachers demonstrate high level of performance because they are well trained.”

3- Do you perceive yourself capable and knowledgeable in delivering inclusive education?

-It is hectic to prepare activities every week for SEN, I can't manage with 23 students and an SEN student in a small class, furthermore, I don't perceive myself capable because I am not trained to deal with SEN students.” “one main challenge is the lack of support from the school and parents, lack of training that help me in writing objective in the IEP plan and the workload that doesn't let me dedicate enough time for the SEN student in my class.”4- Do you find the provisions offered to SEND students beneficial and match their needs and could help in their progress?

-The provision provided to SEN students are limited and needs improvement.

5- Are you concerned about the admission policy of these SEND students at your school?

-Yes, but we need to be more involved and informed about updated policies regarding SEND students.

6- In your opinion, what are the factors that enable a successful inclusion at your school?

-Good support from specialist and Inclusion team, reduce class sizes, more resources.

7 -In your experience, what are the challenges you have faced with SEND students in your class?

-time management, behavioural issues in the class, and planning.

8- What specific kinds of training do you think might be helpful to teachers to better prepared them to implement inclusion in the regular mainstream classroom?

- More workshops in implementing IEP, and planning differentiated activities, class management specially if there is a student with behavioural disorder.

9- Do you have any suggestions and recommendations for the school to improve in the field of inclusion?

-sharing experiences with other teachers in other schools in the field of special educations and practices.

## **Interview 4**



### **Part 1: Demographics informations**

Interview's date: 27/5/2019

Interview's site: school B( private American school in Dubai-Al Quz)

Interviewer: The researcher

Interviewee/participant: KG1 teacher

Interview's duration: from 9:45 Am to 10:15 Am

Interview's language: English-Math-Science

Explaining the purpose of the study: 5min

Interview's Duration: 35 min

### **Part 2: Semi-structured -Interview Questions**

1-Give me background information about yourself

-I teach KG1 English, Math and Science subjects.

2- How do you describe your experience with Inclusive Education at your school? do you find inclusion a good practice?

“Although Inclusion is a good practice, however it will be very exhausting, I will be drained but on the other hand it would be rewarding.” “I don’t think these students would benefit that much from inclusion as it is expected.” “We can have these children in our classroom, but these children would only benefit from a special educator and not just by being in our class.”

3- Do you perceive yourself capable and knowledgeable in delivering inclusive education?

“I am not the right person to teach a child with special needs, he should be sent to a specialist who is specialized in these things.” “It would become very difficult to provide special attention to disabled children in a classroom where you have 24 students, particularly so in the kindergarten school”.

4- Do you find the provisions offered to SEND students beneficial and match their needs and could help in their progress?

-Provisions needs to be improved, more resources are needed in classrooms, and more supports from therapists are needed.

5- Are you concerned about the admission policy of these SEND students at your school?

-I need to be more involved in the SEN policy implementation as I find that teacher lack knowledge about the cases in her class.

6- In your opinion, what are the factors that enable a successful inclusion at your school

-there are many factors enabling successful inclusion practices in classrooms such as having good resources and external supports.

7 -In your experience, what are the challenges you have faced with SEND students in your class?

-lack of support, lack of trainings in dealing with Sen students in classrooms.

8- What specific kinds of training do you think might be helpful to teachers to better prepared them to implement inclusion in the regular mainstream classroom?

-training to deal with Dyslexic children, trainings in dealing with SEN students.

9- Do you have any suggestions and recommendations for the school to improve in the field of inclusion?

-Yes, policymakers and stakeholders should provide schools with specific budgets.

## **Interview 5**



### **Part 1: Demographics informations**

Interview's date: 28/5/2019

Interview's site: school C ( private American school in Dubai-Al Mamzar )

Interviewer: the researcher

Interviewee/participant: KG2

Interview's duration: from 8:30 Am to 9:00 Pm

Interview's language: Eng.-Math- Science

Explaining the purpose of the study: 5min

Interview's Duration: 35 min

### **Part 2: Semi-structured -Interview Questions**

1-Give me background information about yourself

-I am a KG2 teacher, I teach English, Math and Science since 14 years.

2- How do you describe your experience with Inclusive Education at your school? do you find inclusion a good practice?

-Inclusion is a good practice for it gives SEN students the right to be educated in mainstream classroom, my experience was good however it had some challenges.

3- Do you perceive yourself capable and knowledgeable in delivering inclusive education?

-I have no training in special education as the special education teachers do, I am a regular classroom teacher, with the class' loads and paper work to be filled within short period of planning, I felt myself unqualified to teach these students.”

4- Do you find the provisions offered to SEND students beneficial and match their needs and could help in their progress?

-Sen children need more support and follow up, they need more resources that help them progress, however, for some reasons, I found that the provision offered to them is insufficient and need to be improved.

5- Are you concerned about the admission policy of these SEND students at your school?

-I believe that all kindergarten students should sit for an entrance exam before they are enrolled in the school

6- In your opinion, what are the factors that enable a successful inclusion at your school?

-Guidance and support from the SEND department and external centers- proper IEP created by specialist, proper diagnosis, dedicate time, support the staff in addition to special supplies in classrooms.

7 -In your experience, what are the challenges you have faced with SEND students in your class?

-Difficulty in planning differentiated activities, the workload that doesn't allow teachers to dedicate time for planning.

8- What specific kinds of training do you think might be helpful to teachers to better prepared them to implement inclusion in the regular mainstream classroom?

9- Do you have any suggestions and recommendations for the school to improve in the field of inclusion?

-Educate teachers on common SEN cases, support teachers with classrooms strategies.

## **Interview 6**



### **Part 1: Demographics informations**

Interview's date: 30/5/2019

Interview's site: school C ( private American school in Dubai-Al Mamzar)

Interviewer: The researcher

Interviewee/participant: KG1 teacher

Interview's duration: from 9:00 Am to 9:30 Am

Interview's language: English

Explaining the purpose of the study: 5 min

Interview's Duration: 35 min

### **Part 2: Semi-structured -Interview Questions**

1-Give me background information about yourself

-I have bachelor degree in Early Childhood Education, teach Math for KG1 students, I have 9 years of experience.

2- How do you describe your experience with Inclusive Education at your school? do you find inclusion a good practice?

-Our school focus on inclusive Education where children with different abilities, skills are included in our education program, I personally find inclusion beneficial and useful for SEND students.

3- Do you perceive yourself capable and knowledgeable in delivering inclusive education?

-Yes since I took many trainings and modules at university that help me use many strategies in my classroom.

4- Do you find the provisions offered to SEND students beneficial and match their needs and could help in their progress?

-The provision in my school should be more improved in term of support and class accommodation for SEND students.

5- Are you concerned about the admission policy of these SEND students at your school?

-Yes, our schools accept all children with disabilities according to the law that obliges all schools to include all SEN students in mainstream classrooms.

6- In your opinion, what are the factors that enable a successful inclusion at your school?

-focusing and taking into consideration all children's needs.

7 -In your experience, what are the challenges you have faced with SEND students in your class?

-Difficulties in delivering concepts to them, planning, dealing with behavioral issues in class.

8- What specific kinds of training do you think might be helpful to teachers to better prepared them to implement inclusion in the regular mainstream classroom?

-first of all teachers need training about inclusive education, how to design IEP goals, and how to modify lesson objectives.

9- Do you have any suggestions and recommendations for the school to improve in the field of inclusion?

-In my opinion, schools should provide termly trainings and courses for teachers in order to prepare them for inclusive Education and therefore set appropriate budget for inclusion.

## Appendix 3: Students' observations recording template



### Student's Observations recording template

#### Section 1: Child profile 1

Name of the child: Yusuf ( pseudo name)

Age : 5 years

Class /section: KG2 A

Type of disability: Dyslexia and Dysgraphia

Observer name: (the researcher

#### 1-Observations in educational settings

Yusuf has shown great potential and participated with enthusiasm with his buddy in the most periods attended by the researcher (Math, Art, Science and English). Yusuf has shown good signs of social interaction and behavior with his peer that was evident during the collaborations learning time when he and his peers were asked to do craft activities. Further, the researcher noticed signs of self-awareness of his needs and appropriate learning style when he knew his need and asked for a sensory cushion during the writing task that constitute the biggest challenge for him too. In other hand, he has shown great potential in using reading Apps on the IPAD downloaded by the class teacher (for reading and writing). It was remarkable by the researcher that Yusuf is an avid reader with great participation skills who enjoys science hands on activity about sun and its effect on earth, Based on the observation in the Math period, Yusuf has shown

great ability in solving some questions on the interactive math smartboard game, yet signs of struggling in solving written task where evident despite his reading buddy's assistance.

## 2- IEP/ Type of Provision / accommodation/modification in curriculum

(LSA / pull out sessions- social advisor)

Various effective and beneficial techniques, strategies and assistive devices apps which were proven to allow for students' improvement ((Madeira et al.2015), were used by the teacher to help Yusuf achieve his great potential in his inclusive settings, including visuals reading key words related to the theme, alphabet writing flash cards, word wall for sight words, CVC words, rhyming words, key vocabulary, sensory cushion, smartboard for reading platform A to Z, and dyslexia friendly font.

- The teacher used many instructional strategies to facilitate language lesson for Yusuf to make it less tenuous for him, especially in core subjects such as: writing support, planning templates, Map, Venn Diagram, Compare-Contrast table, concept maps to group and develop ideas ([www.readwritethink.org](http://www.readwritethink.org))..

- The type of accommodations were well-designed to help a child with dyslexia in mainstream classrooms and evident for the researcher, and considered thereby as the most beneficial especially because Yusuf usually faces severe challenges in classrooms when it comes to retaining and recalling of verbal instructions and information in oral recounting content when reading.

## 3- Observer's comments

One main point to be criticized is the lack of altered materials regarding sheets and printed materials (classwork, homework and charts) are not in a dyslexia friendly font. The IEP includes some strategies related to Dysgraphia as suggested by the therapists, Further classroom

accommodations were observed by the researcher in most of the settings visited, including a child seating plan (first row always), the teacher provided him with modified spelling and reading program (on an IPAD, MYON READING PROGRAM), and a word bank for writing. Moreover, Yusuf had the opportunity to have frequent time out, break up instructions, and writing from the board was avoided too.

## Child profile 2



### Student's Observations recording template

Name of the child: Elma

Age: 4

Class /section: KG1 E

Type of disability: Down syndrome

Observer name: The researcher

Duration of the observation: 35 min

1-observations in educational settings

The researcher observed Elma the little adorable girl for 2 consecutive days in the core subject

English/Math/Science and LSA Elma's progress within the lesson was evidently clear to the researcher specially during the English period where she has shown good recognition of letters taken, cvc words mentioned in her IEP goal ( mat- cat )and sight words given with few help of the shadow teacher and her buddy on the mat, yet she has shown difficulty in following story

sequence , she tried to escape when it was time for writing task. Attending the Math period , the researcher noticed good social interaction skills , full engagement during pair share activities ,counting and recognition of numbers skills, yet slight mis-grasping of math concept taught. Hands on science – planting activity was a clear evidence of Elma’s sense of collaboration and enthusiasm towards scientific experiments, she was fully engaged and happy. Following Elma to the LSA room, was so relaxed and cooperative with the shadow teacher and the LSA; who claimed that she is progressing in terms of fine motor skills and he is capable with a little help to hold the pencil with a pencil.

## 2- IEP/ Type of Provision / accommodation/modification in curriculum

Some provisions were given to Elma to improve her fine motor skills using specific materials by pulling her out for additional support in English and Math with the LSA that suit the child’s needs, level, concerns and interest as mentioned in the Index for Inclusion (2002), Kids first center

## 3- Observer’s Comments:

During this author’s class observations in different settings: English /Math/Science /ISA it was evident that strategies were adopted by the KG teacher based on the child’s IEP in the three core areas, yet some gaps were remarkable regarding teachers’ knowledge about altering the curriculum, in designing appropriate learning activities that match the students’ level in relation to the goals in the IEP. However, the teacher gratified by minimizing the task without any modifications in the lesson plan objectives and outcomes to match the girl’s needs. Regarding the classroom environment, the girl seemed relaxed and engaged.

## Child profile 3



## Student’s Observations recording template

Name of the child: Alia (pseudoname)

Age: 5 years

Class /section: KG2 E

Type of disability: Mild learning disability

Observer name: (the researcher)

Duration of the observation: 35 min

### 1- Observations in educational setting

The researcher started to visit Alia for 2 days in a row according to a schedule in 4 different settings. The teacher assigned a place for her on the mat with a buddy for more support during collaborative work that's reflects Alia's social-emotional skills among her peers, so happy, so engaged and extremely engaged in learning activities related to phonological awareness (such as blending cvc words, letters and their sounds as mentioned in the IEP. While observing her, the researcher distinguished some weakness in term of writing skills that comprise the biggest challenges for her in both English. Following her to the Math period, Alia seemed to be happily engaged with her peers during counting and smartboard active learning games about addition, Alia showed signs of misunderstanding for math concepts that was so abstract and complicated for her as mentioned in the IEP, as a result, she couldn't accomplish her task for lack of some instructional strategies given by the teacher. Time for learning about seasons in Science, she was given specific role to perform in a role play about seasons. According to her IEP, Alia has to identify 2 weather words and 2 weather tools and match them, however, the teacher didn't simplify her task, the concept was so hard, materials used were so confusing for a child with ID, she consequently was unable to accomplish her task. The music period was a source of excitement for Alia who was so engaged by singing, clapping and trying to follow her friends when they were practicing for the morning assembly, yet she found difficulties in following the rhythm of the songs.

### 2- IEP/ Type of Provision / accommodation/modification in curriculum

She is supported by specialist from KIDS FIRST/school counsellor/ SEND team /her shadow teacher /Her parents who are so supportive and cooperative / LSA at school.

1- Term 1 IEP was totally done by the SENCO with little intervention from the subject teacher who lacked some techniques and experience in developing differentiated activities and resources to deliver the lesson to her, specially in Math where Alia has difficulty in performing and understanding math concept because of mathematical terminology used by the teacher.

### 3- Observer's comments

The researcher noticed that despite of Alia 'area of needs in literacy and reading skills, objective in Term 1 included in the IEP was the same as per reading and writing skill and tasks compared to her peers and the differentiation was only in reducing the amount of lines in the book rather than the content itself, Moreover, some misalignment between the curriculum (NGSS) and the IEP's goal

## Appendix 4: Consent letter sent to schools to conduct interviews

12/5/2019

### **To whom it may concern**

This is to certify that Mrs Mirna Fakih with Student ID number 20172976 is a registered part-time student in the Master of Education offered by The British University in Dubai since September 2017.

Mrs. Fakih is currently collecting data for her research (Teachers Attitudes Towards Inclusion of Learners with Disabilities in American Private Early childhood in Dubai: An Investigative study)

She is required to gather data through conducting surveys that will help her in writing the final research. Your permission to conduct her research in your organization is hereby requested. Further support provided to her in this regard will be highly appreciated.

Any information given will be used solely for academic purposes.

This letter is issued on Mrs. Fakih's request.

Yours sincerely,



**Dr. Amer Alaya**  
**Head of Student Administration**

## Appendix 5: Consent letter to conduct survey- questionnaire

12/5/2019

### To whom it may concern

This is to certify that Mrs. Mirna Fakih with Student ID number 20172976 is a registered part-time student in the Master of Education offered by The British

University in Dubai since September 2017.

Mrs. Fakih is currently collecting data for her research (Teachers Attitudes Toward Inclusion of Learners with Disabilities in American Private Early childhood in Dubai: An Investigative study)

She is required to gather data through conducting surveys that will help her in writing the final research. Your permission to conduct her research in your organization is hereby requested. Further support provided to her in this regard will be highly appreciated.

Any information given will be used solely for academic purposes.

This letter is issued on Mrs Fakih's request.

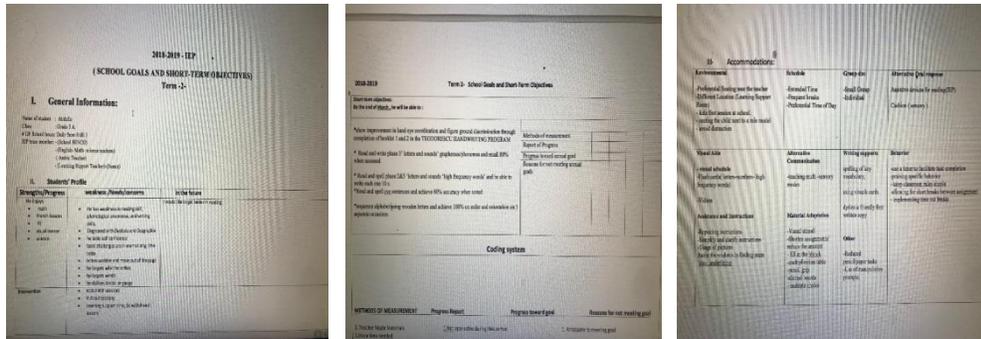
Yours sincerely,


**Dr. Amer Alaya**  
**Head of Student Administration**

## Appendix 6: sample of SEN students' document gathered from observation

### 1- Sample of the IEP



## Appendix 7: Framework of the study

The framework of the study consists of these steps:

1-Identifying the research sites (3 private schools in Dubai).

2- Research design

3- Sampling group (participants of the study): describing the participants from the three selected American private schools.

4- Instruments Tools used to collect data: the researcher will triangulate Data by referring to; semi- structured interview approach with kindergarten teachers at 3 private schools, survey-questionnaire, in addition to observations of SEN in their educational inclusive settings to gather informations about the provisions provided to SEN students.

5-Data Analysis, how the researcher put all information together and summarized the data in this study.

6-limitation and challenges: to explain different limitations and challenges that influence this study while collecting the data.

7- Role of researcher as a main part in the qualitative and quantitative approach

8-validity and reliability of data collected

9-Issues related to Ethics consideration

## Appendix 8: Timeline of the Study

<b>Key Objectives</b>	<b>Weeks</b>
Consent letter to conduct survey and interviews sent to BUID university	3 days
Consent letters sent to schools in the study	3 days
Interviews with Kindergarten teachers at selected schools	3 weeks
Class observations for SEND students	1 week
Questionnaire sent to KG teachers at schools to be filled online	2 weeks
Literature Review	3 weeks
Methodology & questionnaire Construction	1 week
Data Collection	2 weeks
Data Analysis & Interpretation of findings	2 weeks
Writing and editing of chapters	2 weeks

## Appendix 9: SEN students' observations schedule



Student Name	School	Class	Duration
Elma	C	KG1E	35 min
Yusuf	B	KG2 A	45 min
Alia	B	KG2 E	45 min

## Appendix 10: Survey-Questionnaire form



### **Teachers Attitudes Towards Inclusion of learners with Disabilities at American Private Early Childhood Education in Dubai: An Investigative Study**

Dear teachers:

I am conducting a survey to investigate Kindergarten mainstream teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education. The aim of investigation are regular school Kindergarten teachers and their attitudes is at least one student with special educational needs learning in their regular classes. The information you provide will be helpful for me to understand your attitudes toward inclusive education and practical difficulties implementing inclusive education in practice, and beneficial for providing more effective support system of inclusive education for all learners with disabilities in future. Please help me by completing and returning the questionnaire. These individual questionnaires will be kept confidential and anonymous. Thank you for your cooperation!

#### **Section 1**

##### **Part :1 Teacher's Background ( pls put (x) on the line below)**

**1-Gender:** Male: \_\_\_\_\_

Female: \_\_\_\_\_

##### **2- Subject Taught:**

English: \_\_\_\_\_ Math: \_\_\_\_\_ Science: \_\_\_\_\_ Arabic: \_\_\_\_\_ Music: \_\_\_\_\_ PE: \_\_\_\_\_

3- **Grade level:** KG1: \_\_\_\_\_

KG2 : \_\_\_\_\_

4- **Total Years of Experiences:** \_\_\_\_\_

5- **I have taught students with disabilities in regular class for :**

Less than 1 year

1~3 years

3~5 years

more than 5 years

6- **Highest Degree:** Bachelor: \_\_\_\_\_ Masters: \_\_\_\_\_ other : \_\_\_\_\_

7 - **Trainings on teaching students with disabilities in mainstream classroom:**

a- In- service Training: \_\_\_\_\_

b- Pre-service: \_\_\_\_\_

c- Workshop: \_\_\_\_\_

d- University Training: \_\_\_\_\_

e- I have no Training: \_\_\_\_\_

f- Other kinds of training (specify): \_\_\_\_\_

g- Duration of Training/hour: \_\_\_\_\_

h- What are your needs in term of training in order to include children with SEND in your class? \_\_\_\_\_

8- **Type of Disability/SEN in your classroom:**

1	Learning Difficulties	
2	Behavioral Disorders	
3	Physical Disability /cerebral Palsy	
4	Hearing Impairments	
5	Visual Impairments	
6	Communication Disorders /speech Delay	

7	Health Impairments	
8	Down Syndrome	
9	PMLD( profound and multiple learning difficulties)	

-Please tick ( x) in the column that best describes your agreement/disagreement with the following statements.

### Section 2

#### **Part 2: Teachers' Attitudes and perceptions Towards the inclusion of learners of**

#### **Determination in KG mainstream classroom .**

	Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	Inclusion is a desirable practice					
2	Inclusion could overburden and impact negatively the mainstream education teachers					
3	Inclusive Education					
4	All children should be educated in regular class.					
5	The curriculum of the mainstream classroom does not match the needs of learners with disabilities					

<b>6</b>	A student needs to be around other children with similar disabilities					
<b>7</b>	Inclusion is beneficial to learners with severe disabilities					
<b>8</b>	I am willing to make needed instructional adaptations and strategies for my SEN student					
<b>9</b>	I am concerned about planning of lessons with modified objectives for children with Disabilities					
<b>10</b>	I have received training from the Head of Inclusion /SENCO on how to design an IEP for learners with Disabilities					
<b>11</b>	I am concerned about the admission policy of including learners with Disabilities in my classroom					
<b>12</b>	I am receiving good quality support from the Head of inclusion/SENCO on how to deal with children with disabilities in my classroom					
<b>13</b>	Educating learners with disabilities in the mainstream classroom is disruptive to					

	other students.					
<b>14</b>	The quality of provisions offered to learners with disabilities is beneficial and match their needs					
<b>15</b>	Most learners with the following SEN (regardless of their level of their disabilities) can be educated in the mainstream classroom.					
	Learning Difficulties					
	Behavioral Disorders					
	Physical Disability /cerebral Palsy					
	Hearing Impairments					
	Visual Impairments					
	Communication Disorders					
	Health Impairments					
	Down Syndrome					
	PMLD( profound and multiple learning difficulties)					