

Managing Online Learning to Support Inclusion During COVID-19 in A Private School in Dubai

إدارة التعلم عبر الإنترنت لدعم الإدماج أثناء COVID-19 في مدرسة خاصة في دبي

by

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**Dissertation submitted in fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of
MASTER OF EDUCATION**

at

The British University in Dubai

November 2021

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ABSTRACT

The study aims to manage the pros and cons of online learning to support inclusion during the COVID-19 crisis at a private school in Dubai in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Qualitative method was chosen by conducting semi-structured interviews. Data was collected from teachers, Special educational needs, and disabilities students (SEND) and the inclusion coordinator. Overall, students with special educational needs and impairments had mixed opinions towards online education, including both positive and negative aspects. The reason for this is that online learning is always a controversial topic. However, In COVID-19, students could not choose between online and traditional teaching because the UAE's ministry of education mandated that all students study distantly. Student disability type, willingness to change and academic institutions' supports all play important roles in the long-term success of online learning. The findings show that online learning had some benefits and drawbacks for SEND students during the Covid-19 pandemic, which must be managed effectively to support the inclusion department in UAE schools. It indicates that most participants agreed that online education is safe during the crisis such as covid-19, saves time and provides an opportunity to learn new technical skills. However, the main disadvantage of online learning was that some students feel isolated in online learning because of the lack of face-to-face interaction between teachers and students and teachers can't monitor students' progress. As a result, they were unable to learn effectively since they were unable to communicate effectively with each other. The main recommendations of the study that students and teachers should be trained on new teaching principles and technologies to be ready for the future whether a crisis occurs or not. Moreover, policymakers should address the challenges of online learning from a new viewpoint to find a solution that accommodates all students and their

needs. Consequently, the online learning experience that took place during the epidemic would be viewed differently by SEND students in various private and public schools. Therefore, it is recommended that the study include a larger sample of SEND pupils from all UAE schools to increase the validity of the findings. A further limitation of the study was the limited number of previous studies. This is in addition to depending solely on interviews due to the UAE's social distance rules.

Keywords: Online learning, Covid-19, Inclusion, management.

نبذة مختصرة

تهدف الدراسة إلى إدارة إيجابيات وسلبيات التعلم عبر الإنترنت أثناء أزمة COVID-19 في مدرسة خاصة في دبي في الإمارات العربية المتحدة (الإمارات العربية المتحدة). تم اختيار الطريقة النوعية من خلال إجراء مقابلات شبه منظمة. تم جمع البيانات من المعلمين والطلاب ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة ومنسق الدمج.

بشكل عام، كان لدى الطلاب ذوي الاحتياجات التعليمية الخاصة والإعاقات آراء مختلفة تجاه التعليم عبر الإنترنت، بما في ذلك الجوانب الإيجابية والسلبية. والسبب في ذلك هو أن التعلم عبر الإنترنت دائماً موضوع مثير للجدل. ومع ذلك، في COVID-19، لا يمكن للطلاب الاختيار بين التدريس عبر الإنترنت والتعليم التقليدي لأن وزارة التربية والتعليم في الإمارات العربية المتحدة فرضت على جميع الطلاب الدراسة عن بُعد.

يلعب كل من نوع إعاقة الطلاب والاستعداد للتغيير ودعم المؤسسات الأكاديمية أدواراً مهمة في نجاح التعلم عبر الإنترنت على المدى الطويل. تظهر النتائج أن التعلم عبر الإنترنت كان له بعض الفوائد والعيوب بالنسبة لطلاب الصعوبات خلال جائحة Covid-19، والتي يجب إدارتها بشكل فعال لدعم قسم الدمج في مدارس الإمارات العربية المتحدة. تشير الدراسة إلى أن معظم المشاركين اتفقوا على أن التعليم عبر الإنترنت آمن أثناء الأزمات مثل covid-19، ويوفر الوقت ويوفر فرصة لتعلم مهارات تقنية جديدة. ومع ذلك، فإن العيب الرئيسي للتعلم عبر الإنترنت هو أن بعض الطلاب يشعرون بالعزلة في التعلم عبر الإنترنت بسبب عدم وجود تفاعل وجهاً لوجه بين المعلمين والطلاب ولا يستطيع المعلمون مراقبة تقدم الطلاب. ونتيجة لذلك، لم يتمكنوا من التعلم بشكل فعال لأنهم لم يتمكنوا من التواصل بشكل فعال مع بعضهم البعض.

التوصيات الرئيسية للدراسة بضرورة تدريب الطلاب والمعلمين على مبادئ وتقنيات التدريس الجديدة ليكونوا مستعدين للمستقبل سواء حدثت أزمة أم لا. علاوة على ذلك، يجب على صانعي السياسات معالجة تحديات التعلم عبر الإنترنت من وجهة نظر جديدة لإيجاد حل يناسب جميع الطلاب واحتياجاتهم. وبالتالي، فإن تجربة التعلم عبر الإنترنت التي حدثت أثناء الوباء سيُنظر إليها بشكل مختلف من قبل طلاب SEND في مختلف المدارس الخاصة والعامة. لذلك من المستحسن أن تشمل الدراسة عينة أكبر من تلاميذ الإرسال من جميع مدارس الإمارات العربية المتحدة لزيادة صحة النتائج. كان القيد الآخر للدراسة هو العدد المحدود للدراسات السابقة. هذا بالإضافة إلى الاعتماد فقط على المقابلات بسبب فرض قواعد المسافة الاجتماعية في الإمارات العربية المتحدة.

Dedication

*I dedicate the completion of my dissertation to my parents, who have always encouraged me to continue my academic journey. I also dedicate this work to my husband, (**Zaidoon Albtoush**), who has been patient, supportive, and a source of encouragement and inspiration. In addition, I dedicate this dissertation to my princess(**kindah**). my beloved sons, and my new baby born (**Awen**), since his smile and his existence inspire me to realize that dreams can come true. Finally, I dedicate my work to my family, particularly my sisters, for their assistance.*

Lana Jami Awed l Al-nawaiseh

Acknowledgements

Above all, I thank God, the Almighty, for granting me with this chance and enabling me with the ability to succeed.

To my advisor, Dr. Christopher Hill

I appreciate your continued support during my master's education. Your passion and willingness to provide feedback made completing this research a pleasure.

To my family

My dear family, your love and patience motivated me to reach this wonderful success. Thank you all for your efforts during my education path.

To my school colleagues and students

your participation in the study made gathering information went smoothly. Thanks a lot for all of you.

To BUID community

Great thanks to BUID staff: Professors, administrators and students for the assistance and support at all times.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

"Humans are not disabled. A person can never be broken. In our built environment, our technologies are broken and disabled. We the people need not accept our limitations but can transcend disability through technological innovation" (Hull 2004).

Online learning is the process of acquiring information with technology and media (Abernathy 1998). In other words, online learning is defined as learning that is supported by technology; learners can access their educational materials through the Internet at any time and in any place. The way society and education are seen changed as a result of technological improvements. The organisation of the 21st century needs a highly developed technologically individual, and the classroom of the 21st century requires the same thing (Brian 2013). During the COVID-19 pandemic, which is the world's current health crisis and also classified as a socio-economic crisis due to its impact on the organisation and life of people (United Nations Development Programme 2020) The United Nations reported that the Covid-19 pandemic caused the world's most significant educational disruption in history, affecting 1.6 billion students in 190 countries (2020). COVID-19 led to the closure of academic institutions, affecting 94 per cent of learners and 99 per cent of students in low and middle-income communities (2020). Therefore, several progressive policies established by the United Nations should be followed by governments to support the global education system:

- 1- Stop the COVID-19 virus from spreading and start preparing to reopen schools: Countries should plan adequately to reopen educational organisations so that the epidemic does not take hold of societies for an indefinite time.

- 2- Protect and coordinate education funding and impacts; since the pandemic affects the economy, governments should recognise and seek solutions to education as one of the highest priority areas.
- 3- Building an effective educational system for efficient and fair development to all student groups as this crisis affected various groups of students to continue their education, including those who live in low-income cities, migrants,
- 4- people with special needs, and those who have been forcefully displaced (2020)

The educational outcomes and the school support are most likely to be lost by these students if governments do not take measures in promoting equity and inclusion in education. Many countries relied on digital pedagogical resources and virtual interactions among students and instructors to provide learning while schools were closed during the coronavirus outbreak(OECD 2020). However, students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) may lack access to such resources and need special attention and continuous support. To deal with the challenges they face, some of the academic institutions have developed an innovative policy to ensure providing inclusive and equitable access to all digital learning tools and better educational environment, to ensure that socio-emotional requirements are satisfied, offering additional services for SEND and ensuring teachers support(OECD 2020).Inclusion, equity, risk management, good leadership, teamwork, risk management, improved collaboration and communication systems should be considered by governments. Accordingly, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) government started implementing rules and new policies to contribute as much as possible to the stability of citizens in all aspects of their lives. In terms of the educational part, the Ministry of Education (MoE) in UAE began providing distance learning education to students in all schools and higher education institutions from March 22, 2020, until the end of the academic year 2019/2020. This decision

demonstrates that the ministry of education's rules is prepared to adopt a new, modern teaching method to continue working during the pandemic. The ministry has taken many measures to ensure that the online learning process has been successfully implemented for schools and students. Some of the followings are: Professional training was offered by over 25,000 public school teachers and managers and over 9,200 private school teachers and administrators (The United Arab Emirates government portal 2020). Instruct private schools to adopt a framework for distance learning to ensure that the learning process's continuity is carried out in compliance with established procedures and plans, enable private schools to use their own system for online education and appoint supervising committees to ensure that distance learning is implemented in private schools, Creation of two additional operational centres to monitor systems of online learning. The centres come with advanced systems and screens, which allow the sector of school programs to keep track of the process of learning and ensure that students and teachers have a good experience with digital services and that communication between them is successful, establishing a professional support line for students, teachers, and parents to address any problems that might arise in the future and homes in the UAE who do not have internet access were given free mobile Internet. Despite the Ministry of Education's measures, the incredible new experience was challenging for everyone and was more difficult for students with special needs and disabilities who required additional assistance and training in the use of electronic platforms, as well as intensive training was needed for their teachers and their parents on the use of various tools based on the students' needs. SEND must have equal learning access to succeed. Students and their parents will benefit from the use of digital technologies and strategies to get much assistance and social interaction. During the pandemic, one out of every four students in special schools stayed at home, and

a comparable percentage of those with health, education and a plan of care was unable to join classes in all schools (Ibrahim 2021).

This paper will examine the SEND experience in a variety category, which include physical disability and learning difficulties during online learning. It will evaluate this group's transition to online learning in the UAE, as well as the benefits and challenges of implementing this mode of study in the time of the COVID-19 crisis.

1.1 Purpose of the study

The study's goal is to manage the benefits and drawbacks of online education to support SEND students in the time of COVID-19 pandemic at a private school in Dubai, (UAE). It explores how education is delivered and prepared in the UAE during pandemics. It explores how a virtual classroom adapts and accommodates SEND in terms of teaching methods and learning process. It provides multiple data on the impact of online education amongst a different group of students with a particular learning difficulty, visually impaired and physically impaired. Moreover, teachers and the learning difficulties specialist are participating in assessing their challenges during the COVID-19 time.

The study is based on the qualitative design method to gain further data from participants because every viewpoint or case belongs to a different group. This study may impact the following education stakeholders: parents, teachers, and organisations of SEND in the UAE to assess the effectiveness of their online education program. So far, only a few studies in the UAE have investigated online learning management to support inclusion in schools. Accordingly, the study aims to manage the pros and cons of online learning to strengthen the inclusion in a private school in the emirate of Dubai in the UAE. and to collect data on online learning effectiveness based on a variety of experiences from various perspectives.

1.2 Background of researcher

My research topic is relevant to my field of work. My work as an academic coordinator demands adapting materials and assignments to support the inclusion department in the school and ensuring that they have an effective transition in the school. When the COVID-19 pandemic broke out in the UAE, all academic institutions instructions were moved from the traditional classroom to virtual classes, and I felt that SEND students had been left behind and faced additional obstacles in continuing their learning. The government used this shift to limit the number of individuals who could become infected with the virus. As a result of my working experience with the inclusion department in my school, I want to highlight a specific challenge that teachers and educational institutions were unaware of. Additionally, I want to learn more about the challenges they face when learning online. So that I may either come up with solutions for it or encourage future research to explore it much further, as individuals with physical impairment and learning difficulties are often left behind.

1.3 Research Questions

A research study is carried out to clarify a set of questions that can be addressed after reviewing the literature. In this study, the main research question is:

- How to manage the challenges and the benefits of online learning to support inclusion in UAE during the COVID-19 pandemic?

To provide answers to the main question, the following questions have been raised are:

- What challenges do the SEND experience in online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic?
- What benefits do the SEND experience in online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic?

- To what extent do the sudden shifting from regular classroom teaching to virtual online delivery affect inclusion in schools?
- What additional support do SEND need for continued online learning?

1.4 Significance of the study

This research will evaluate the impact of online education on inclusion during Covid-19. It will investigate how the UAE's education process works and how ready it is in the case of a pandemic. This research aims to improve the management of SEND's online learning transition, especially during the covid-19 pandemic, and how students and their teachers dealt with the challenges they experienced. Many pros and cons of online learning will be identified that stakeholders should understand and expect to address. The study will help the researcher provide an overview of how SEND is progressing in their online learning and how much support they require.

1.5 The Structure of the Study

There are five chapters in this study as follows:

- Chapter one begins with an introduction and general description of the study, defining the significance and research questions.
- Chapter two includes a review of related literature. It shows up in previous and recent studies that are relevant to the study's subject matter. It strengthens and illustrates the research's findings, as well as explain the research's findings.
- Chapter three outlines the research methodology in which the research will be followed to get the results. It contains information about the type of research, collection methods, study sample, and the targeted area where the researcher will carry out the investigations.
- Chapter four discusses and analyses the gathered data of the study, and it contains the findings of the data collection and responses to the research questions.

- Chapter five is a study conclusion, and it summarises the most important findings and recommendations made based on the research findings.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

This study reviews data from various studies about online learning. Firstly, I clearly defined the meaning of online learning, management, inclusion, and the differences between traditional and online education methods. Then I discussed how education has changed in the UAE, where a great emphasis is placed on inclusion into the school system. Moreover, the COVID-19 crisis and its impacts on education are explained in one section. In addition, online learning in the UAE during COVID-19 was generally described, particularly for SEND. There are essential parts in the literature review about managing the challenges and the benefits of online learning to support inclusion. Finally, I reviewed and analysed three pieces of on learning research over the last two decades.

2.1 Definition of online learning

Technology is widely involved in every aspect of human life, and education has become one of the aspects where online learning is now provided (Kireev, Zhundibayeva & Aktanova 2019). Distance learning, e-learning, virtual learning, web-based learning, and digital learning are all terms used interchangeably with online learning. Because of the variety of terms, there are many meanings of online learning. According to Rapanta et al. (2020) Online learning is defined as internet-mediated learning. A different online learning definition is provided by Chitra and Raj (2018) which is "all educational activities that are carried out by individuals or groups working online or offline, and synchronously or asynchronously via networked or standalone computers and other electronic devices". In contrast, online learning is defined by (Singh & Thurman 2019) as " learning experienced through the internet in an asynchronous environment where students engage with instructors and fellow students at a time of their convenience and do not need to be

co-present online or in a physical space." Another definition of online learning is to be stated when teachers and students communicate at different times in different places to ensure that educational processes are supported (Meshur & Bala 2015). The last definition is taken from the literature by Rodrigues et al. (2019) which indicated that online learning is an "Innovative web-based system based on digital technologies and other forms of educational materials whose primary goal is to provide students with personalised, learner-centred, open, enjoyable and interactive learning environment supporting and enhancing the learning process". For this research, Online learning can be defined as the teaching and learning process between the teacher and learners from various geographical areas through the Internet. It could be synchronous, in which teachers and students work at the same time, or asynchronous, in which teachers and students work at different times, and this works better for adults, who are responsible for their own learning and task completion.

2.2 Definition of management

It is generally a process that plans and controls the coordination of all types of activities and programs. According to Marzano (2003), the good school management is identified as the efficient application of policies and procedures. Impose appropriate penalties for rule and procedure violations. In addition, Develop and maintain positive relationships with students and teachers.

2.3 Definition of Inclusion

Inclusion means that everyone has the right to be valued community members, have jobs and participate in social activities regardless of their health or disability needs. In education, inclusion means that all students, irrespective of their difficulties, are given high-quality education, support, and intervention in age-appropriate regular classrooms in their own city schools that allow them to complete the core curriculum (Alquraini 2012) successfully. The school is supposed to work on

the premise that disabled students have the basic knowledge as regular students. Therefore, all students in their schools can actively participate. This indicates they spend as much time as possible with their peers who do not have disabilities, with the education system being the preferred place for all children (Alquraini & Gut 2012). The key objective is to ensure that all students are accepted, encouraged in their achievements, and supported by regular classroom and special education teachers and parents.

2.4 Differences between online and traditional education

The distinction between traditional and online education is that regular classes occur in ordinary classrooms, while online learning occurs through networking and virtual sessions. The location is one of the most crucial contrasts between online and traditional schooling, which varies based on who attends the courses (Demouy et al. 2016). Learning in a traditional classroom requires being physically surrounded by walls, whiteboards, and desks that face the instructor (Li et al. 2017).

When online education sessions are carried out, there are differences in the interaction between students and teachers in the same classroom using online learning strategies. The students are given digital lectures and evaluations as a task. For students who use online education study, teachers assign different learning tasks according to their abilities, and their knowledge is tracked in an electronic format (Kaplan & Haenlein 2016). Therefore, online education is classified as an approach that focuses on learners and their learning styles (Li et al. 2017). However, in the traditional scenarios, learning focuses more on teachers and books than on different student learning styles (Li et al. 2017). Face-to-face discussions and communications among groups are part of the traditional classes. Learners and instructors interact in daily sessions that do not require the use of technology. On the other hand, the communication and interaction in the online learning courses include discussion boards, email applications, a video calling that are linked to the school

management system (Dockter 2016). The interaction could be less in online learning, as more students are involved in online courses than in regular lessons. Online education might be an innovative solution for students who live far from the school or learners who have physical challenges (Storz 2008). Teaching and learning are offered wherever and whenever the Internet and modern tools are available (Ahmadi, Dileepan & Wheatley 2019). Therefore, most of the students may afford online education because the method of teaching is inexpensive (Zacharias & Yiannis 2017).

Perry and Pilati (2011) states that three primary evidence of the effectiveness of online learning has been found from various studies: a) The results of students who attended online courses were higher than the students who attended the same course face-to-face b) Instruction that combines an online course with face-to-face methods is more effective on students than a face-to-face method c) the success of online courses is based on the ability to accommodate a variety of learning strategies in a single classroom setting.

2.5 Online learning Quality

The quality of online education varies depending on the role. For a teacher, the quality of online education has been chiefly determined by instructional standards and task types. For school administrators, it depends on the way of teaching and learning method is carried out. Educational institutions, faculty members and students are the parties who are interested in quality (Chaney n.d). According to Chaney (n.d.), successful online education has the following characteristics: all administrative parties must provide financial assistance and cooperation, use online learning to get more information, students analysis, provide training to faculty, technological support, special education availability. Researchers have concluded that students benefit from the high quality of online learning because it gives users the ability to work at a pace that suits them while their

advisors provide feedback. When users are stated to relief and have complete access to technology in their own institutes, quality issues in online learning starts arising (Xu and Xu 2019). Thus, educational institutions must be able to offer students with regular access to their home computers or other electronic devices. There is also an effort to decrease screen time in the classes; therefore, institutions offer a proper online learning strategy. To save time for the class teacher and make the session more fruitful, the institutions hold daily lessons and limit students' exposure to screen time. However, concerns with online distance learning's quality have a disadvantage because of the possibility of cheating while using digital technologies in online, open-book exams (Esfijani, 2018). This problem was solved by limiting the amount of time allowed for exams using the Swift Assess program, which is used in some institutions such as government and some private schools in UAE following the ministry's curriculum. Online learning can lead to exam cheating, which is more common in online courses settings than in traditional classrooms. However, quality concerns continue to point to several strategies for reducing online exam cheating (Doush 2020).

Problems with quality can also be linked to the technologies and educational systems that children have at their access at home. Previous research found that only a small percentage of students had access to an internet connection for online classes. Nevertheless, it's becoming extremely normal for students to have high-speed internet access at home to complete all the program's requirements. Students have shifted away from using remote desktops and toward using pads or tablets that are more portable. Thus, the educational option has facilitated the student's ability to work. Due to the market's high demand, online learning platforms and programs are providing students with free access to devices, allowing them to attend their online courses for free (Kurilovas & Vinogradova 2016). To save money on education and transportation costs, most students are enrolling in online distance learning courses. In contrast, providing students with a free platform where they can take

their studies is a generous government effort for them. Online learning quality issues allow students to accomplish their exponential growth targets while also allowing teachers to provide students with unlimited video calling time (Bashir 2016).

2.6 Online learning advantages

Online learning offers a lot of flexibility in terms of time and location (Weidlich & Bastiaens 2018). Consequently, studies showed that few students are drop online courses than traditional classrooms. The students' self-motivation is another component that contributes to the success of online education (Kireev, Zhundibayeva & Aktanova 2019). If the learner is self-motivated to achieve success, they can complete the modules. According to the most recent reports, the number of people registering for online courses increases continuously (Weidlich & Bastiaens 2018). Furthermore, online learning gives the students the convenience of a flexible schedule, allowing them to choose the place and time of their lessons (Vera et al. 2018).

Reduced costs of educational materials, printing documents, transportation fees, and training sessions act as an advantage for some learners (Vera et al. 2018). People with little income, individuals with disabilities, and long-term health difficulties benefit from this point (kan kilinc et al.2020). Students can learn independently when they are learning online (Barclay, Donalds & Osei-Bryson 2018). For slow learners, it might be challenging to follow every piece of information in a regular classroom. Through online learning, they would be able to return to the same content and gain knowledge as learning materials usually are recorded and stored on various platforms used by the institutions.

Additionally, in an online course, every learner has the opportunity to participate in the learning process. Shy or disabled students who do not engage or interact in a traditional classroom may feel better at participating in an online learning environment (Bolliger & Halupa 2018). Different

platforms and apps can help teachers improve student-teacher interaction (Tularam 2018). Therefore, students have more manageable and more frequent access to professors (Tanis 2020). This makes them contact their teachers at any time via emails or discussion boards to understand the topics further. Thus, learners' time might be saved. It reduces the time on travel, commuting, and the time spent moving from one class to the next (Kaplan & Haenlein 2016).

The teaching process moves quickly in traditional classes; Learners are not always given enough time to observe, think and participate. What they are studying is not always understood or absorbed (AlJabri 2020). However, online classes include a lot of written interaction, which allows students to interact with a lot of the material uploaded at their own speed.

2.7 Online learning Challenges

Although online education provides apparent advantages for students in educational institutions, there are still some drawbacks to it. First, online classes have a lower level of social interaction than regular courses (Dumford & Miller 2018). This creates a social distance between students and teachers and among peers, which can lead to feelings of isolation, making the learning process more difficult (Skelcher et al. 2020). Furthermore, online education is mainly tech-based (Almaiah, Al-Khasawneh & Althunibat 2020). For a thriving learning environment, students need suitable devices and internet connections. Online learning could have technical problems that affect the delivery (Vera et al. 2018). Although today's technology is worldwide, internet connectivity still does not exist in some regions of the world.

According to research, many students throughout the world do not have access to technologies that would enable them to participate more productively with their online courses (Ali 2020). If access issues are not addressed, online education may become difficult for students with a variety of disabilities, including learning difficulties, physical impairments, and health issues (Catalano

2014). In addition, student feedback may not be as effective in online learning as in a traditional classroom environment (Tanis 2020). In traditional courses, immediate and productive feedback is provided to the students. This helps the learners to ask about any unclear point of the lesson. But providing the same feedback in a virtual learning environment is more complicated. This could reduce the learners' motivation and engagement. One of the most significant disadvantages of online education is cheating. Online learners can easily cheat (Raines et al. 2011). Regardless of the measures put in place by academic institutions to prevent cheating or allowing other students to take their place on the test. Finally, Online education is usually focused on specific fields (Banday, Ahmed & Jan 2014). In areas that are more theoretical than practical, online learning is often easier and more efficient to implement.

2.8 UAE Education

The United Arab Emirates' educational system consists of both public and private schools, universities, and colleges. The Arabic curriculum is taught in government schools, whereas 15 different curriculums are taught in private schools such as national curriculum from the United States, India, the United Kingdom, Ministry of Education (MoE), Canadian, German, French, International Baccalaureate (IB) etc. (Trines 2021). All children in the UAE are obliged to attend primary and secondary school, which is free of charge in government schools. The primary language of education is Arabic, and English is also emphasised. Public and private higher education are also presented in the UAE.

A lot of efforts were started in UAE to support education to create a generation of well-educated individuals capable of studying at recognised universities and participating in the worldwide market (Embassy of the United Arab Emirates 2020). The ministry of education in the UAE has taken several steps to improve the quality of education in schools. Therefore, Emirati

schools have been established based on good experience and structure implemented by the UAE's leading schools through the application of life skills and knowledge, the integration of appropriate technologies to facilitate learning, and the application of proper curriculum through innovation implementation. (Quality Education in the UAE 2019).

2.9 Inclusion in the UAE

In the UAE SENDS' right in education, jobs and safety is guaranteed by the Federal Law (29/2006). It utilises a social approach to define its rights. Articles from 12 to 15 relate to education and state that equality of chances for students with special needs is ensured in all schools and universities by appropriate accommodations, modifications, training, and teaching processes (Alborno 2017).

The federal legislation has also been mentioned "This law aims to protect the rights of the person with special needs and provide him with all needed services appropriate to his capacities and abilities. His special needs shall not be a reason to refrain the person with special needs from obtaining the said rights and services, especially those related to the special care, social, economic, health, educational, professional, cultural and entertaining services" (Juma 2020). Therefore, education has been a fundamental right for SEND in the UAE and in education and the healthcare system, social services, and entertainment. The move to inclusive education in the UAE develops in the context of a social model of the framework for disability where the provisional rules are implemented within the initiative "School for All." The goal of this initiative is to make resources and educational programs available to students with special needs and disabilities (School for all 2010). All students, regardless of their disability, have the rights to be educated with individuals without disabilities. According to the MoE, regular classrooms are the least restrictive and safest environment for SEND; however, this is not always the right option.

The following are the groups planned in "school for all" by the MoE: Learning disability, physical disability, vision and hearing problems, speech disorder, Autism disease, exclusionary and psychosocial disorder, giftedness (School for al 2010). Efforts to support inclusion education in the UAE are continuous, as the MoE has announced that highly specialised educators are required to help children with disabilities in various fields, such as teachers of special education, counsellors, training organisations, and Shadow teachers.

(AlAbdooli 2018). Inclusion will succeed with the cooperation of all the members of the community.

2.10 Pandemic of covid-19

By the end of 2019, the Coronavirus (later named the COVID-19 pandemic) had extended its reach in China. China made a concerted effort to restrict the infection as much as possible; however, it had been in vain. COVID-19 was classified as a worldwide pandemic by the World Health Organization on January 30, 2020. It has continued to overgrow all over the world. Throughout many countries, new policies and procedures have been established in reducing the spread. By mid-March 2020, more than forty countries had declared the closure of educational institutions (Cheng et al. 2020). Until researchers find a viable treatment or vaccinations for this virus, social distancing was the only way to deal with the issue. As it affects many people around the world, every country has a different approach to education. Governments introduced innovative ways to replace attendance at educational institutions like online education through the Internet and online availability (What is the Impact of Coronavirus on Education2020). Using a free online course was another way, which is available on several platforms for those who are unable to leave their homes. Finally, parental involvement has been an option for parents, particularly for little children. Both

the students and the instructors struggled with this unexpected shift to online learning (Rahiem 2020). They strived to explore out how to handle the sudden change.

2.11 Education in the time of the COVID-19 pandemic

While the Coronavirus continues to cause economic and social problems around the world, education has adapted and evolved. Most academic institutions ensure that the learning and teaching continue while teachers and students are safe (The United Nation 2020). The educational institution in the UAE is also quickly responding to education as almost every organisation in the county is being adopted. Many governments are embracing the use of ICT (information and communication technology) to keep the process of education moving forward.

UNESCO proved that areas, where Internet access is limited are depending on traditional ways for continuing learning, such as educational radio and TV programs, compared to rich countries, which have switched 80 per cent to online learning (The United Nations 2020). Student evaluation was affected by online platform reliability, and most of the countries decided to postpone examinations. However, only a few states have decided to cancel exams, and others ask for alternative evaluation. Distance learning is a challenge for young children, and not all schools are able to deliver virtual early childhood teaching. However, online courses are more flexible in higher education (The United Nations 2020).

2.12 Education in UAE during COVID-19

On March 22, 2020, the government of the United Emirates implemented online learning across all academic institutions (The United Arab Emirates' government portal 2020). As almost everywhere globally, the challenge was unexpected, and UAE's authorities tried to maintain the level of education by starting an online distance learning approach. Therefore, the UAE's ministry of education provided numerous supports for online learning. For example, it offered distance

learning professional training to 25,000 government teachers and administrative employees and 9,200 private school teachers (The United Arab Emirates' government portal 2020). It also helps students and parents solve any problem that may arise through online learning via a technical support line. Moreover, the ministry agreed to work with the telecommunications services to provide students who do not have internet access a free internet package.

The UAE will continue to offer online learning till the end of the year. One month after the new learning method was implemented in UAE, teachers, students, and parents have all had their challenges. Parents and children have been complaining about lengthy hours, many live sessions, and the requirement for assistance during the courses time (Zaman 2020). Lectures were started created by teachers in a simple format and context while they were preparing overnight. Teachers did great work in managing the content of online distance learning from the classes to the group meetings. Students have been taught the course's principles and theories by the teachers (Alfy & David 2017). However, the students' level of attentiveness is limited as they are not familiar with the online tools. Students who cannot usually take the lesson have extra time because some students are vulnerable. Schools should ensure that people with special needs receive more attention and time to counter their losses (Awofeso et al. 2016). Coronavirus continued to spread in the country at the start of September, where educational institutions usually reopen. The government's goal was to keep everyone safe in the school. Therefore, Students' returns to school were subject to different protocols.

Public schools remained to study in the distance till further notification. However, private schools were asked to reopen the schools and to follow the reopening protocols strictly. Entering, pick-up procedures, screenings, school buses, physical distancing regulations were all covered by the protocols. The most significant ones were that masks must always be worn by teachers and students

ages six and over, the school entry and pick up strategy must be followed to minimise crowds, daily sanitisations of all schools' areas, and to keep a 2-metre-distance between student and other students in the class (Protocols for the Reopening of Private Schools in Dubai 2020). the online distance learning method has provided the UAE with the opportunity to expand this high-quality education system. Students may not attend their educational institutions physically, but they are more connected to online distance learning courses. The UAE must adapt its education systems to new modern technologies in the current situation to continue until the end of COVID 19 (Lee et al. 2017).

2.13 Online education and teaching methods for SEND during COVID-19

As most countries around the world were working to reduce COVID-19 spread by urging online education, disabled students faced many obstacles. As a result of the pandemic caused by Covid-19 about 7 million SEND students who receive essential services from the US Department of Individuals with Disability Education Act (IDEA) are removed from their classes. While online learning may be appropriate in some exceptional cases, it can make many obstacles to other special case learners (Choi 2019). Students with special education and disabilities might struggle throughout online learning as there is no adequate support technology, Online connectivity, and appropriate physical assistance (The United Nations 2020).

Distant learning can help students with ADHD who like to walk around in class since it allows them to do so without disturbing their classmates and teachers (Young & Donovan 2020). However, Autistic and cognitive disorder students might find that online learning does not meet their basic needs (Young & Donovan 2020). “Success is less dependent on the student’s disability and more on the approach of the school team and the presence of someone at home with the

student” (Juma 2020). This means that the SEND success throughout online learning is the school community's responsibility and their parents. Teachers must apply appropriate accommodations during online learning to support the needs of learners. According to Tularam and Machisella (2018) “Online education may also align with specific learning style with SEND and increase their academic performance”. Teachers have to use specific strategies for teaching online courses based on the cognitive load theory (CLT), which focuses on human cognition (SAW 2017). It also needs teachers to adopt pedagogical strategies that keep the students focused and interested during the lesson and do not exceed what the pupils are able to grasp within a time. To gain an excellent online learning experience, instructors should know the use of technology and the main thing is to effectively integrate technology into learning strategies as it is complex (Vera et al. 2018). The technology in online learning is sometimes considered as an obstacle for SEND students and the struggles in having an accessible format for specific resources (Coman et al. 2020). Therefore, teachers need to use alternative strategies to give disabled people adequate and equal access to education. "Every teacher is an expert of their content, but they aren't an expert in the online teaching tools" (Juma 2020). So, the teachers who lack IT skills will be suffering from the rapid transition to online education as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, and they need to strengthen their online teaching methods to stay on track.

There are many options for effectively delivering online sessions to SEND, and the most important one is to use the appropriate platform. Instructors might use google meet, Microsoft teams, blackboard, zoom and other platforms during online classes, but they're not all accessible to students (Herburger,2020). Google Docs and slides offer accessible features classified as the best technology for using the braille display, speech-to-text feature, and screen reader applications (Herburger 2020). In addition, for Mathematics courses, the Khan academy educational website is

used to help different groups of disabled students, such as vision impairment, hearing impairment, colour blindness, and animation sensitivity (Herburger,2020). UNESCO has suggested a variety of educational applications for all types of learners, teachers, and schools to use, such as Class Dojo, Google Classroom, and Schoology (Distance learning solutions 2020). Also, implementing a universal design learning strategy could be suitable for all learner's types including SEND pupils (Petretto et al.2020). This strategy could increase the SEND's engagement during online learning.

2.14 Studies on online learning in previous years

In the last 15 years, online education has been a controversial topic. There are various studies in this subchapter that will all discuss the topic of online learning in education. These studies are from three different generations extending from 2000 to 2019, and this demonstrates how the use of e-learning has changed over time.

In 2002, Keller and Cernerud (2002) investigated students' views of online learning. Their main point was the role of teachers in integrating technology into the classroom since students' experience in using technology in 2002 was limited (Keller & Cernerud 2002). One of the survey questions on Keller and Cernerud's research looked at the benefits and drawbacks of online learning in education. The following was the conclusion of considering online learning as an effective learning method "44% of students mention the access of information, 15% of students answered the flexibility of time and place, 14% said that there are no advantages, 11% liked the easy communication between teachers and students and 16% of the students gave miscellaneous reasons" (Juma 2020). In the second question, students list the following drawbacks of online learning: 28% indicated that the platform used in each lesson was inconsistent, 23% had technical difficulties, 7% absence of human interaction, 14% Computer dependency was too much and 28% different answers.

Another study on the pros and cons of online learning compared to traditional education was carried in 2010 in the United States (Company et al. 2010). This research collected data on the effectiveness of online learning from over a thousand educational institutions. The results showed that 82% of US academic institutions offered full time or part-time online classroom courses in 2010. Over 90 % of learners were happy to learn online, but 75 % said it was unsuitable for every subject. Before starting online learning, teachers had extensive training on the integration of technology into their teaching methods. The study also indicated that learners who were motivated by online learning were more receptive to this learning method, and online learning has become more common because of this experience.

Mesghi, Ponomareva &Ugnich (2019) look at the benefits, drawbacks, and need to use online learning in the education system. After the 1990s, online learning became possible through the Internet, and several steps have been taken to develop. This has meant that the learning content management system (LCMS) needs to create a pedagogical design of the levels of learning and technology. According to Mesghi, Ponomareva & Ugnich (2019), Online education is popular today as there are more than 40 million learners who have used this online learning system. In addition, over the past five years, the use of online learning has increased rapidly around the world as it was 9.2%. Still, it now accounts for 52% in China, Malaysia for 41%, Romania for 38%, Poland for 28%, and the Czech Republic for 27% (Juma 2020). Improved accessible features in information technology (IT), social connection, and the high levels of IT safety have significantly impacted the success of online education in 2019 (Mesghi, Ponomareva & Ugnich, 2019). The global growth of inclusive online education and the increased exposure to technology has made e-learning a highly flexible option for disabled students. The reason behind the growth of inclusion education globally is that the number of disabled students has risen to reach about one billion of

the worlds' population. Also, Academic institutions are essential to support inclusion education as this helps SEND students not to become isolated and to provide the key to future income (Meskhi, Ponomareva & Ugnich 2019). Therefore, the researchers advise academic organisations on improving online teaching methods to protect individuals who have physical and health problems from being hindered.

There are significant differences from generations in using online learning; in the early 2000s, research connected the idea of students' acceptance of the technology to the idea that they have some experience in using it. On the other hand, in 2019 and beyond, students appear to accept e-learning in their learning approach due to the enormous dependence on technology in daily life and use younger technology as in pre-school. Students' acceptance of technology is supported by the theory of the technology acceptance model (TAM). It focuses on demonstrating to computer users how they may embrace and apply new technologies. Predicting user technology acceptance decisions was one of the goals of the model. Usually, a Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) is employed in the prediction process. Users' acceptance of a computer system has only two components, as far as acceptance goes: perceived utility and perceived usability. Ibrahim et al. (2017). People are more likely to use technology when it is already in place.

As a result of their age, gender, and other specific differences, the model may have a different impact on their perspective. Many sectors, including education, rely on the technology acceptance model (TAM). The students, and instructors' analytical, determining, and organising skills will be improved by implementing it in the school. It's opened access to information in a classroom. Moreover, differentiating instruction for students with disabilities has been made them more manageable because of it. According to Tony (2019), many schools nowadays could incorporate the Technology Acceptance Model into their operations. The Technology Acceptance Model has

been applied to students with special needs to help them maintain, grow, and improve their capacity. Therefore, students with disabilities have benefited from using the Technology Acceptance Model, particularly those who are better able to participate in class using this model. As Marandu, Makudza and Ngwenya (2019) pointed out, teachers also have the ability to adapt the learning better SEND students. Moreover, using databases in educational contexts has made the Technology Acceptance Model effective for monitoring student progress. Students' needs must be taken into consideration when identifying and teaching-learning objectives and instructional methods. TAM is also used by educators to provide education. It makes it simple for them to pick up new strategies for instructing children especially SEND students. The Technology Acceptance Model places students with special needs in the same classroom as their non-disabled peers for all their schoolwork. As a result, pupils get more knowledge, self-control, and adaptability. Also, teacher productivity increases due to better utilisation of information, which has an impact on student achievement.

2.15 Conclusion

To summarise, the outbreak of Coronavirus has suddenly changed teaching methods from regular schools to virtual classrooms worldwide. This sudden shift has had various effects on the entire school community. In the early 2000s, people's attitude to learning online was negative as compared to 2019 and beyond, where students accept it more. Implementing online learning offers several benefits and drawbacks for all, but it has more impact on inclusion education and educational quality. As outlined in the literature review, the most important benefits of online learning were flexibility on time and location, easy access to school curriculums and online tools. However, technical issues appeared during a lesson, lack of social interaction and problems in the management of inclusion education were the online challenges.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Introduction

The methodology chapter of this study was produced to describe the methodologies and procedures utilised to reach the research questions' responses. It discusses constructivism as a research approach and its relation to research. It also includes a brief description of the study mode, which acts as a descriptive design. After that Qualitative method is a type of data collection instrument implemented in this research. Moreover, it clarifies the method used to get answers to questions on the study and the technique used to get answers to questions on the investigation. There is also a brief explanation of the chosen sample and data analysis. I decided to conduct phone interviews and send Google Meet links to participants to avoid any social connections as the COVID-19 virus spreads. Finally, I detailed how to make agreements, the reliability and validity of research and the ethical considerations.

3.1 Research paradigm

According to petal (2015) the term of research paradigm refers to “the set of shared beliefs and agreements among scientists about how problems should be understood and treated”. For the researchers, a research paradigm is a way of thinking, or a set of thoughts based on study information (Kivunja & Kuyini2017). in this research, the paradigm is constructivism, which focuses mainly on people learning (Constructivism as a paradigm for teaching and learning, 2002). The study is based on a constructivist interpretive paradigm to construct the realities about the managing of online learning to support the students with disabilities from the perspectives of key stakeholders: teachers, students, and the head of the inclusion department. People's beliefs and thoughts on the real issue may change from time to time, and they may be led to new something.

The researcher should create queries, contribute experiences and thoughts to this type of research. The research case here is that students have been asked to move to virtual classes, which they see as a new challenge and then reflect on this. According to Patel (2015) Constructivist research has never accepted a single reality, but it is necessary to explain several facts; therefore, it is more dependent on qualitative methods.

The key study question in this paper is how to manage online learning to support inclusion in schools during COVID-19. Thus, students with special education needs and disabilities reflect on their experiences. As a researcher, I will gain a better understanding of their viewpoints on the COVID-19 situation.

3.2 Research design mode

This research uses a descriptive design approach, answering what, when, where, who, and how questions but not why (Sacred Heart university,2020). Descriptive research identifies the type of research questions that will be investigated, data analysis for the subject and the research strategy (The Association for Educational Communications and Technology,2002). The key question in the study is "how" to manage online learning's advantages and disadvantages to encourage school inclusion. The situation in this research also lies in its current condition during the COVID-19 pandemic in December 2019 and up to the present day. Furthermore, the descriptive mode does have a specific property, allowing only one variable in research, or as in other research approaches, more variables. (The Association for Educational Communications and Technology,2002). Descriptive studies are essential in academic research because they expand our understanding of

what is going on in schools and educational institutions. It's also a helpful information source because it contains a wealth of data that adds crucial suggestions to stakeholders.

3.3 Qualitative approach

The qualitative approach examines the realities of the group life targeted. In other words, how do they perceive and interpret a particular event in their surroundings. According to Patton (1985) "A major strength of the qualitative approach is the depth to which exploration is conducted, and descriptions are written, usually resulting in sufficient details for the reader to grasp the idiosyncrasies of the situation." This method was used by the researcher to achieve and fulfil the research objectives. As Mayers (2000) stated that "The ultimate aim of qualitative research is to offer a perspective of a situation and provide well-written research reports that reflect the researcher's ability to illustrate the corresponding phenomenon".

Objectives in qualitative approaches usually include variation, which means we know the participant; relationships are explained; individual experiences and norms are described (Qualitative Research Methods Overview n.e.). In addition, the researcher performs many administrative tasks in the same target area of research. It allows him to add valuable and fruitful information to his study. In addition, the researcher becomes more involved and acts as a suggestion tool with the participants (McLeod 2019).

3.4 Interview Method

An interview is a discussion between two persons or more in which information is gathered." A research interview involves an interviewer, who coordinates the process of the conversation and asks questions, and an interviewee, who responds to those questions"(Shepherd & Griffiths 2021). Interviews might take place in person or by telephone. The Internet is also becoming more popular as a tool for conducting interviews. One of the most significant methodologies in qualitative

research is the interviewee perspective, which is the greatest option for any descriptive or exploratory study (Wilson & Williams, Hancock 2000). It is an effective method for gathering detailed information on people's views, thoughts, and experiences on a topic (Easwaramoorthy & Zarinpoush 2006). Three types of interviews are conducted: structured, semi-structured or unstructured. The researcher employs closed-end questions and poses a standardised question in a structured interview, and the answers for big respondents can easily be coded. This type of interviewing is ideal for surveys.

On the other hand, Unstructured interviews focus on open-ended questions and may be adjusted based on the participant's response, and questions are subject to no guidance. Here I use the semi-structured interview approach where the answer is a combination of open and closed questions. Semi-structured interviews allow many interviewees to learn more about a variety of topics. This lets the interviewer ask additional questions or clarify if needed. I rely on individual interviews, not groups, as I need to get information from a different perspective. There are a variety types of interview questions that can be used, including a) Direct questions b) Indirect questions: a question that can be hidden within a statement.

c) Structuring questions: a question with specific answers, such as yes or no, true or false d) Follow-up questions: a question asked by the interviewer to dig more into the interviewer's response e) Open-ended questions (probe questions) that encourage deep thinking about a problem f) specifying questions: questions that aim to gather the information that is overlooked in a conversation and is halfway between closed and open styles) Interpreting questions are those that ask the interviewee to make an assumption about something that could have multiple answers, each of these should be backed by evidence (Strategies for Qualitative Interviews, n.d).

In this study, I rely more on probing questions to get a deeper reflection on how distance learning works for SEND students who use different strategies and tools to access their curriculum. Also, two structured questions were asked, the first comparing when learners experienced a sudden transition from traditional to online classrooms the second comparing the overall rates of distance learning.

3.4.1 Interviews through use of video link and telephone

There are many options to conduct interviews, such as video link interviews, telephone, and web-based interviews. In each case, there are advantages and disadvantages to be considered. Face-to-face interviews are the most popular technique; they provide the highest feature of data collection. (Wilson & Williams, Hancock 2000). The second type is telephone and video links, which are used when face-to-face methods are difficult or when the research topics are very sensitive, and they are particularly successful for gathering data. The only difficulty with this style of interview is interpreting facial emotions. This research depends on the telephone and video applications such as Google and zoom meeting as COVID19 makes it difficult to interact with people to keep everyone safe. The researchers recommend that when interviewing students with special educational needs and disabilities, they should use the available feature of the platform and test it before conducting the interview, moreover, when they conduct telephone or video interview, the conversation should be recorded; therefore, the researchers need high quality of the call and agree on a suitable time for the interviewees.

3.4.2 Interview Sample

According to Cohen and Manion, Morrison (2018) “good research not only stands for a good methodology but a suitable sampling strategy that the research uses to get feedback for the research question”. As an interview can be approached in a variety of ways, the requirements for choosing

an answer are also different. In the case of qualitative research, the number of respondents does not matter, so researchers can interview as many people as they need (Wilson & Williams & Hancock, 2000). The researcher can select a limited representative sample in which everyone responds on behalf of a group or a theoretical sample. The samples' number is not that important as the interviewee's ability to provide new information to the study data (Juma 2020). My study sample is made up of a small representative sample from the inclusion department at a private school who all belong into different categories: some have a vision problem, and some have learning difficulties. In addition, I will interview their teachers and the head of the inclusion department who worked with them during the online learning.

3.5 Analysis of the data

As the research is based on semi-structured interviews, which is the only method of collecting information, data analysis is more complicated than studies that use the quantitative method. To make a high-quality qualitative data coding, four steps are required, which is first to first to collect as much information as possible. Next, categorise all similar responses into one code, third is combine the positive and negative information, and the data should be collected in simple points. To get a clear finding, I followed the steps above, so after the interviews, I gathered all responses from all participants, then I grouped every topic separately to identify the benefits and drawbacks from the perspective of different professions. I will focus my study on six key questions, but I will attempt to modify some terms so that specialists and teachers may respond from their own perspectives and experience, which will differ from learners' responses. After receiving the candidates' permission, the interviews mainly were translated and recorded. Clear and simple paragraphs will summarise the findings.

3.6 Research Ethics

The researcher put great emphasis on ethical concerns. First and foremost, the advice of the supervisor was highly valued. He provided the researcher with helpful guidelines. To conduct interviews with the SEND students, instructors, and the head of inclusion for my study, I used the following procedures: First, I informed the school of my research plans, Second, I was requested to fill a consent form for the inclusion department that provides special education and developmental assistance for the SEND students in the school. According to Fouka & Mantzorou (n.d) the Consent form identify as “a person knowingly, voluntarily and intelligently, and clearly and manifestly, gives his consent”. After that, I email students and instructors to get their agreement and virtual signatures to participate in my research study. During COVID-19, it was not allowed to anyone to enter the school physically, therefore, I relied on email as the most effective way of sending and receiving documents explained the study's goal and methodology, including using a video app and telephone conversations to conduct it.

Moreover, I let participants select when they wanted to meet and then asked for their permission to record the session once they agreed. Since most participants were under the age of 18, parental consent was required of them. “The researcher should get approved consent from all participants who will be interviewed, questioned or observed to consider the research as ethical research” (Cohen & Morrison 2018). No harm comes from the study process in any way, neither emotional nor financially. In the case that an interview proved to be detrimental to the participants, they were offered the opportunity to stop participating. The researcher offered confidentiality and anonymity as a way to achieve good findings. Confidentiality occurs when researchers are aware of their research subjects' identities but employ measures to keep that information from being shared with anyone else. So, as a researcher, I ensured that no information about the research would be shared

with a third party in order to maintain the confidentiality of the study and comply with all agreements made between the researcher and participants. A study is considered anonymous if the identity of the participants is kept hidden and no real names are revealed as part of the findings. The participant's anonymity will always be protected; even if the students agree, their identities will not be published.

3.7 limitations of the study

This study has several limitations of challenges to overcome. Because it is done at only one school in the United Arab Emirates, the interview sample size is very small in numbers and locations. It also uses a selective sample and does not use a random distribution; thus, results may vary depending on the participant's experience and circumstances. It was difficult for me to monitor and track the respondents' body language when they were answering the interview questions during the phone interview, but it was much easier to conduct interviews at any time of the day. Second, because the study is based on a qualitative method, it took a long time to select a time and then write all the responses before returning to cooperate on the information. Qualitative techniques use more complicated coding, whereas quantitative approaches use simpler coding. Additionally, the school's permission process for interviewing students and teachers is quite lengthy to obtain access to ask students.

3.8 Timeline

Getting clearance from the school and beginning interviews took approximately two weeks. After that, interviewing candidates took a week, summarising and organising the findings took an extra week. The whole study and collection of data were done in one intensive week.

3.9 Conclusion

Finally, this chapter summarised the research methodology. I used a constructivism paradigm as my research theory since I was mainly interested in understanding participants' thoughts and experiences. Then, I went into depth regarding the research design, stating that I chose a descriptive design to assure a straight answer to my research question. This research relies on the interview approach because the information I needed was qualitative. Chapter 3 has further details on how I conducted the interview, including the semi-structured format I employed, which included a combination of open-ended and closed-ended questions. Due to COVID-19 and to ensure the safety of myself and other interviewees, I decided to conduct the interview via phone and video connection and then analyse the data. After that, I discussed how I gained access to the study while also maintaining its confidentiality. The last limitation that came up throughout my research is listed under the limitation section.

Chapter 4

Findings

Introduction

In this chapter, I will provide the results of a telephone and video interview with students with disabilities, teachers, and the head of the inclusion department from a single private school in Dubai in the United Arab Emirates. Online learning advantages and disadvantages to support inclusion during the COVID-19 crisis were the key research question, and participants were asked six questions to gain information for it. The following are the six interview questions:

- 1) *What was your experience of shifting from traditional classroom teaching to virtual online delivery? What were your first impressions?*
- 2) *Do you perceive that the online course student-instructor interactions met your expectations?*
- 3) *What benefits did you notice?*
- 4) *What challenges did you face at the start?*
- 5) *How did things change over time?*
- 6) *What support was in place, and what additional support do you think you might need for continued online learning/teaching?*

4.1 Question 1: *What was your experience of shifting from traditional classroom teaching to virtual online delivery? What were your first impressions?*

Students' answers: most physically challenged students reported difficulty and challenge when transitioning from the traditional classroom to the online classroom. Because they were not trained to it. According to one student, the stress she experienced from the spread of COVID-19 made things tough for her at first, but after training and discussing her concerns with her

teachers, she became adapted to it. However, one student has issues with her vision stated that online distance learning was better than traditional classroom learning because she was able to focus more and see the screen more clearly than the whiteboard, and she was enthusiastic and delighted to learn through the Internet from the beginning as she felt confident in using different platforms. Another student with a visual impairment says that she couldn't imagine taking online classes, especially her mathematics lessons because she struggled with them during traditional classrooms.

Teachers' answers: Most teachers stated that the unexpected shift to online learning was difficult for them at first because they were unfamiliar with delivering online lessons and did not receive appropriate training. A teacher who worked with a kid who had vision problems reported that the experience was successful due to the appropriate help the student received from his teachers and his parents as well. According to another teacher, the transformation went smoothly since she had regular contact with her pupils and was able to have virtual sessions with them after class time was over. However, she added that she took extra time to make sure students could access resources in many formats.

Head of the inclusion answer: He stated that the shifting to virtual classes was not easy for students who rely on old facilities like printed Braille files or tests on paper, but it was suitable for those who use assistive technology in their studies; additionally, he emphasises on the fact that pupils had a tough time adapting to the shift because the Emirates is a social culture country, and students benefit from the social contact when it is present. However, he believes that the switch to virtual learning was ideal for children with anxiety because they were not assessed or seen in the classroom.

4.2 Question 2: *Do you perceive that the online course student-instructor interactions met your expectations?*

Students' answers: Most participants stated that student-instructor interactions were met their beliefs as teachers provided positive feedback on assignments that helped them become more successful in the online courses. One student stated, "teachers are aware of the differences between their students in terms of our educational difficulties and personal interests. When students have issues with content, they provide helpful feedback and support in our implementation. Another student who has vision issues stated that he could engage and interact effectively in online lessons because he could clearly see the screen, and his teachers provided him with engaging tasks and recourses that matched his abilities.

Teachers' answers: all teachers reported that the student-instructor interactions did meet their expectations as they a knowledgeable about the content and assignments accommodations for the SEND students and more appropriate resources recommended to address the various learning needs of students. One teacher stated that the SEND interaction in online lessons is far superior to traditional classes as she was able to motivate and encourage them through the online activities, and they were able to respond to direct questions without feeling shy in front of their classmates. Another educator stated that she recognised students with learning disabilities who were not participating fully in online group activities and knew how to inspire them to succeed in online courses.

Head of the inclusion's answer:

The head of inclusion stated that "In my point of view, the online course student-instructor interaction for the SEND students hasn't met my expectations as the teacher could not know the accurate levels of the pupils due to the below stated undisputed facts":

1. Since the students with SEND need more direct facilitation to reduce the barriers to learning, distance learning made it very hard for any teacher to reduce such obstacles nor to assure the students with SEND progression academically.
2. To ensure that students with SEND get equal opportunities for learning as peer their peers do, direct learning guarantees the teacher provides those students with the proper accommodations that help fulfil their needs. However, distance learning made it very hard for any teacher to provide the proper accommodations that the students with SEND might need.
3. Determining the students with SEND starting points is the first step in writing their The Individualized Educational Plans (IEP's). Direct learning guarantees (for a degree) accurate assessment data through which the school determine the starting points based on authentic and valid assessment data analyses. However, it became tough to decide on the student's starting points through the online assessment. It made the results unreliable and built the student's IEP based on the online assessment data, resulting in having IEP's that are not personalised to the individual student need(s).
4. distance learning was not effective in providing equal learning opportunities for the students with specific disabilities/disorders such as those with Dysgraphia, Dysorthographia and ADHD.
5. The students with communication and interaction disorders faced unfair learning opportunities through distance learning as they were staying at their homes lonely, and the schools were unable to provide them with the proper behaviour intervention sessions to help in increasing their social relationships and encourage them to cooperate with their classmates and teachers.. Their behaviour intervention plans (BIP's) was not implemented probably due to distance learning.

4.3 Question 3: *What benefits did you notice?*

Students' answers:

- **Save time:** According to most students, online education saves more time studying than spending it on transportation. The movement challenge to arrive at the school causes some students to be late, and one student who had a physical disability stated that online learning requires less time to reach class.
- **Control health problems:** Students with spin problems realise that online learning allows them to attend sessions in a more comfortable learning environment at home. Another student argued that studying online allowed him to have surgery and continue his studies during the long recuperation time. According to a student who walks with a cane, online courses allowed her to take all her medical appointments on time because she had more time to plan.
- **More engaged:** Students with vision problems found that online classes helped them to be more engaged and participate in class more than in normal classroom settings as they can enlarge the screen and understand the details of the lesson; another student added that "I participate more in online courses because I do not feel shy, and no one knows who is answering questions, and I can ask any questions if I do not understand any part of the lesson".
- **Advantages of technical issues:** Using online platforms was difficult for the SEND students, especially visually impaired child because of the various technical challenges that arose, and the numerous shortcuts required. However, it familiarised students with the use of online platforms and apps, allowing them to develop problem-solving abilities that are useful in both technical and non-technical situations. Another benefit that online classes

provide is the availability of class recordings, which serve as an excellent revision resource for students.

- **Other benefits:** A student stated that they felt safe when learning online. Students were also more self-reliant and responsible for their own learning and progress through the course materials.

Teachers' answers:

- **More concentration:** Teachers intimated that student who have attention deficit disorder could focus better on online learning as they don't have the option to chat during class time.
- **Mental health care:** Teachers who work with students with learning disabilities say that remote learning helps them stay learning and reduces their anxiety. Additionally, it provided students with the opportunity to talk about their thoughts with their professors, advisors, and school counsellor. The teacher further said that this applied to all students, not just those in SEND.
- **Safety:** Teachers stated that one of the most significant advantages of online courses is the safety and security of both teachers and students.

Head of the inclusion's answer:

- **Increased independence & responsibility:** Students with physical and learning disabilities gained more independence and commitment due to online teaching since they were encouraged to seek the resources they needed.
- **Improved IT skills:** Despite their disability, SEND students are exposed to various applications, which helps them improve their technological skills.

- **Online access to materials and lectures:** Before the COVID 19 -pandemic, instructors refused to put any recordings of their lectures on google classwork or any platforms because of security concerns. However, during the pandemic, most lectures were recorded and SEND benefited from it since they could go back to them and review what they learned at any time.
- **Increased participation:** Students with visual impairments found that taking lessons online improved their class participation.

4.4 Question4: *What challenges did you face at the start?*

Students' answers:

- **Lack of social interactions:** Students stated that they struggle to build communication skills due to their inability to meet people. Another student stated that "the online learning gives me the impression that I'm watching a video alone, rather being surrounded by peers who share their views and thoughts about the subject." A visually impaired student added, "Instructors can't see me and don't know who I am; although the teacher is aware of the student with vision problems in the class, they still forget that I only hear the lecture and start to write on the board.". Another student with a vision impairment found that, in comparison to traditional classrooms, they did fewer group or pairs activities when they were learning online.
- **Lack of focus:** in online classes, a vision-impaired student said that she has more trouble focusing than she used to and feels like to vomit especially when she focuses more on the screen for a long time. Other students thought that when students communicate with each other while learning online, they were being distracted from the explanations of the lecturers.

- **Technical issues:** Students reported that network issues were the biggest obstacle they experienced during the COVID-19. Many students expressed dissatisfaction with the quality of their internet connection while taking online courses; moreover, if a student has problems attending the session, a significant amount of time is spent while the teacher or technician attempts to resolve the issue.

One SEND learner commented “*Due to a poor internet connection, the class was disrupted, and I was unable to complete it*”. Another one stated, “*The network signal was quite weak, some lessons were inaccessible to me. Some of my tasks were handed in late. I was even late for some of my exams*”.

Teachers’ answers:

- **Check for student understanding:** teachers found it difficult to determine whether pupils understood the topic as many students were not paying attention in class. Additionally, a teacher stated that technology makes it more challenging to monitor kids' facial expressions and body language than it was in the previous school days.
- **Less interaction:** according to some teachers, remote learning reduces teacher-student interaction, making it more difficult for teachers to detect students' areas of weakness in classes. They also stated that distance learning is less engaging when compared to traditional classroom instruction due to lack of interaction, which causes a gap between the expected and actual results of lessons.
- **Miscellaneous:** Teachers agreed that they faced several difficulties in their virtual classes, including a lack of adequate resources, especially for SEND students, technological issues, and a lack of internet access. As a result, they decided to go ahead and spend on new systems, high-speed Internet, and a battery backup system to ensure that online classes

would not be disrupted. All of this was expensive, but it was successful in resolving the issue.

Head of the inclusion's answer:

- **Health challenges:** The head of inclusion stated that the Long-term computer users may get eye strain from staring at a computer screen, adding that *"The completion of an electronic exam by a student with severe low vision was extremely difficult for her, and after a while, tears streamed from her eyes, resulting in her needing more time to complete the exam than usual"*.
- **Less motivated:** He confirmed that the standard assessment is one that not only evaluates the learning of students but also teaches and improves their skills to understand the course content. Authenticity is an important part of such assessments. He stated that assessment was more authentic in the traditional classroom as students have to solve assessments independently, but online assessments make them rely on their families or Google to do so, which reduces students' motivation and efforts to study in comparison to those made prior to the pandemic. Additionally, remote learning allows the student to skip lessons easily.
- **Disorganised:** Students with specific learning issues who take online courses tend to be disorganised, losing files more frequently and struggling to manage their time and meet deadlines.

4.5 Question 5: How did things change over time?

Students' answers: Overall, after trying to overcome the initial difficulties, students with special educational needs and disabilities preferred remote learning methods. According to a student, "when I started online learning it was difficult and frustrating. Now it is satisfying and a wonderful

experience for me”. Another visually - impaired student claimed that remote learning enabled him to use various online portals and web applications, giving him more confidence to continue with online learning in the coming years. he was not alone. Students also seriously considered the possibility of virtual learning in the years following COVID 19. But only two students still prefer face-to-face lessons because it has allowed them to make more progress in their studies than online instruction does have.

Teachers’ answer:

Teachers reported that they had a lot of difficulties teaching online at the beginning of the crisis due to a lack of previous experience. But after receiving training, things changed, and they were able to find solutions to these problems. A teacher added, " schools are eager to open, but the crisis has permanently altered some aspects of learning positively, the future of virtual online courses is bright, so it is reasonable to assume they will become more popular”. Furthermore, teachers expected Internet education to outgrow all other forms of learning globally in the coming years. Students and teachers' communication methods will also likely improve in the future.

Head of the inclusion’s answer:

SEND had never been through something like this before. He agrees that students are adopting diverse assistive technologies to make remote learning successful. He added that *“It was fantastic that students accomplished things they could not have in a traditional classroom setting; however, some students have difficulties because their home environments weren't suitable to online learning, whether it was due to lack of freedom, a lack of a private study space, or simply a culture of distrust”*.

4.6 Question 6: *What support was in place, and what additional support do you think you might need for continued online learning/teaching?*

Students' answers: Students reported that they received daily two extra sessions from their teachers as the school established a system with clear procedures and face-to-face connection with members of the teachers called "Support team" by using google meet supported by emails to their parents to remind them with the timings of the sessions. There are two meetings a day for each student. Students and parents benefit from this routine because it is led by the same staff members each time who is familiar with the child and has previously supported him or her. In return for this help, students requested Now and Next Boards coloured timetables and checklists to better organise their learning.

Teachers' answers: Teachers reinforced what students indicated by offering two sessions to support SEND pupils. The morning sessions are held at the start of the school day and lasting half an hour. During these sessions, teachers help students with any topics in which they require assistance, go over the day's expectations, clarify parent questions as needed, and assign multiple tasks if the students would often complete something else. The midday sessions are held in the middle of the day and have the same staff structure as the morning sessions. The support staff keeps in close contact with the student during the day and is ready to answer any queries. Students are instructed to review or practice basic calculations if time permits (Using google meet, sharing a screen is simple). Teacher suggestions included minimizing the amount of input given to the SEND students, so they don't become distracted and then having the chance to study independently. Additionally, teachers recommended that retrieval practice opportunities be included at the beginning of live or pre-recorded sessions, as well as providing low-risk quizzes that students may mark for themselves and adding retrieval practice opportunities into assessment design.

Head of the inclusion's answer: He noted that the SEND students received strong support and had a routine in their day because their Google sessions were usually followed by them, and they were able to interact with a familiar face and voice who is helpful when it comes to explaining things and using technology. He also mentioned that there was some unexpected support for children who have difficulty reading, having shared the writing on a computer screen allows them to quickly mark syllables as they read. This has proven to be beneficial for some of the students. Secondly, some students (especially those with ADHD or auditory processing disorders) have been able to concentrate more effectively because of the classroom's lack of noise and distractions. After that, the head of inclusions recommended that students with special educational needs (SEND) additional support so that they can benefit from distance learning. This is because many families find it difficult to prepare learning packs that can be sent home via mail or delivery and to start sending physical resources to students' homes that usually help them to better understand the topics in school, such as useful math resources, word mattresses, text strips, posting slopes, fidget toys, and so on.

4.7. Finding Discussion

People adapt to new things over time, just as they adapt to anything else. For the majority of students, teachers, and the head of inclusion, the experience of online learning during the COVID-19 crisis was a completely new one. Overall, online education was a success for students with disabilities and special needs. From the students' and teachers' perceptions the online course instructor -students interaction met their expectations as the teacher was able to know the students' levels and assign tasks and group activities that would keep them engaged and interacting in online courses. Additionally, teachers of SEND students provided them with constructive feedback. However, the head of the inclusion stated that the interaction between teachers and students did

not meet his expectations because teachers were not able to know the true educational level of the student because online exams are not authentic, so IEPs are inaccurate. It is important to design online course interactions to accommodate a variety of learning abilities and encourage both individual and group interactions. According to Vygotsky's sociocultural theory (1978), the concept of "Zone of proximal development" proposes that a student is capable of his current level of performance, but he needs support and social interaction to reach his fullest potential (Vygotsky sociocultural theory, n.d). Vygotsky and other educational experts believe that education's role is to provide educators with activities that are within their ZPD, which encourages and enhances their own learning. So, determining students' abilities is a must for course student-instructor interaction in online learning.

Individuals who have a deep understanding of how to use technology, whether they are students or teachers, are required for a successful shift to e-learning. For SEND, additional knowledge may be required to ensure a successful learning process. There are numerous aspects that affect the decision to study online, including a student's ability, style of learning, surrounding learning environment, self-motivation, and a variety of other considerations. Therefore, studying remotely has both advantages and disadvantages. During COVID-19, students evaluate the benefits and drawbacks of remote learning, and the overwhelming opinion is that it saves time by reducing the need for travel and allowing students with mobility issues to attend back-to-back regular classes. Furthermore, students use online learning as a method of managing their health conditions and staying on track with their visits and physiotherapy treatments because it is accessible from any location. However, in some circumstances, online learning can lead to an increase in health problems. Students with physical disabilities may experience long-term consequences as a result of their inability to move freely in class. Because they may spend more than half their day in the

same seat, students should plan their schedules and incorporate exercise into their daily routines. Time management could also be the key to solving this problem. However, time management was also a source of frustration for some students. Teachers in traditional classrooms have complete control over the entire teaching process. This gives the majority of students a clear direction and assists them in meeting their objectives. In an online learning environment, on the other hand, the learner has more control over the learning process (Barclay& Donalds , Osei-Bryson 2018).

Online learning has helped pupils overcome their shyness or lack of self-confidence in the classroom. The lack of face-to-face interaction and social interaction may harm social people who learn online. In this regard, most pupils, teachers, and community members may benefit from meeting with psychologists or consultants to keep their mental health stable during the COVID-19 crisis. Although online classrooms are plagued by technical difficulties, teachers and students gain new skills and knowledge from using technology and the online platform. Teachers and students agree that online learning is a positive experience because of the availability of appropriate resources and Students' feedback. They describe remote learning as a method of encouraging pupils to pay more attention in class due to the absence of chat and distraction in physical classrooms. However, teachers still struggle to assess students' learning during the lesson, although this can be achieved by administering quizzes or asking questions. The disagreement of online learning arose because some teachers believed that the quality of education would be reduced, while others concluded that the education system's presence is becoming an important fact. During the crisis, the UAE made a strong and clear decision on continued education. For teachers who work with students with special needs at the school, online learning can be either a simple or a difficult experience according to the readiness of the learners. Because everything has been moved on online, physical training was no longer necessary in the COVID-19 crisis. According to the

head of the inclusion, children with difficulties gained more self-sufficient academically but were socially impacted. Academically, students with impairments became more self-sufficient, but socially they suffered. Since online learning could have an impact on students' physical and mental health, pupils with physical disabilities and learning challenges would benefit greatly from the services of qualified counsellors and exercises. It was agreed by teachers and the head of the inclusion that online learning was an excellent cause to learn additional technical skills. All SEND students, as well as their teachers and the SEND specialist, found remote learning to be a positive experience. Individuals regardless of their positions or professions would be better prepared for the future by participating in online education and work. All UAE education systems were truly tested by COVID-19. COVID-19 acted as a true key test for the school's education system and services, and all other educational institutions in the United Arab Emirates. Although online learning is just getting started, it could be accessible and successful if provided with the appropriate services and system modifications. I believe that once the difficulties and challenges are overcome, the educational process will improve in the future.

Chapter 5

Conclusion and Recommendations

Introduction

This chapter is based on the study's findings and discusses the study's significant limitations and recommendations. The study's main goal was to manage the benefits and drawbacks of online education to support children with specific educational needs and disabilities in schools. Learning about the school system from a variety of views, such as students with different disabilities, teachers, and specialist is beneficial. The experience gained was new and effective in terms of saving time, managing health difficulties, and overcoming social challenges. In this chapter, I emphasized on the research's implementation and additional suggestions. In addition, I will discuss the limitations of the research and make recommendations for further research.

5.1 Implication

There are a variety of considerations and elements in this study because it was conducted by SEND with a varied disability, thus it is based on various viewpoints or experiences. In the conclusion, everyone agreed that access to technology and the internet is a prerequisite for virtual learning and expressed gratitude to the government for offering a high quality of the internet while also giving equipment to low-income people. As the Covid-19 crisis began in December 2019, there is just a few researchers who have studied the effects of remote learning on students during the crisis. As a result, this study was started with limited data and recorded the results of new experiences and thoughts as they occurred. I'm still surprised at how determined individuals find creative methods to adapt to changes, particularly in academic institutions.

5.2 Recommendation

The study's findings suggest the following recommendations:

- All learners should be considered when establishing any education policy
- Educational institutions should offer suggestions to stakeholders for overcoming the drawbacks of distance learning to improve the UAE's educational system.
- Students and teachers should be trained on the latest technologies as a priority going forward to ensure that everyone is ready for whatever may arise. When traditional classes resume, it could be used for students with disabilities who need to learn while recovering period or who choose to study from a distance.
- Assist students and their parents in establishing or maintaining home learning routines, such as helping on how to create a learning place at home that will enable the student to focus, such as a peaceful, distraction-free area.
- Consider the teaching principles for students with special needs when planning online courses, such as pre-teach the lesson terminology at the beginning of the class by making word and definition flashcards available to students as a supplement to an online session and encouraging them to practice the words. Additionally, online education should be divided into manageable parts and delivered in little doses.
- Children and their parents should create a timetable that includes check-in times, live courses, and the deadlines of the homework. Allow for short pauses to keep the students focused. Whenever possible, allow the student to choose when and where they study.

- Online learning should be made available to students with special needs

Investigate the accessibility tool's features, such as voice function and translations, and make sure students are aware of how to utilize them. Pupils should have the option to enhance the text size of resources by using simple choices.

- Consider how SEND students can benefit from online learning.

Maintain clarity and simplicity in the instructions. Visual aids and pre-recorded voice instructions could help students remember instructions, or they can be used in combination with textual directions.

- Teaching assistants should be employed to support SEND students in online learning. They might support in many ways, such as teaching crucial terminology in advance, creating learning support resources for students at home, assisting with technical aspects of online learning, such as uploading tasks, participating in live classes to provide help to SEND students if they need, and a regular check-in with parents and students with SEND.

- Psychological support for pupils from an early age in schools should be provided to improve their mental health in the long term. Learners might be better prepared for real-world situations if they combine regular classroom instruction with online learning in the future.

5.3 Research limitation

The study's major limitation is that it was limited to a small number of SEND students, teachers, and the special education head, all of them were from the same school and had the same challenges and experiences. The fact that there was a total of twenty participants did not diminish the impact

of their contributions to the issue. Additional participants might contribute additional situations and viewpoints to the research's conclusions, allowing the findings to be extended to the entire educational system in the United Arab Emirates. The other limitation was that only telephone calls and web video meetings interviews were allowed due to the safety procedures; therefore, alternative methods couldn't be used. Additionally, parents' perspectives on remote learning for their children during the Coronavirus outbreak would be enriched the study if they were involved in the interviews. Other limits of the study include an absence of previous studies specifically, the epidemic of COVID-19 and online learning. Hypothesis formation might be difficult when the topic is new and there aren't many recent studies on the topic to draw from.

5.4 Further research

Online learning and its impact on the inclusion department in a private school during a coronavirus pandemic were examined in this research. But there are still a lot of questions to be answered. For example, it has been two years since COVID-19's remote learning program was implemented. Consequently, it is critical to examine the best practices for managing SEND students' conduct in remote learning. Also, individual staff members such as academic support workers, have become like family to many SEND students in the traditional classroom so what will they do if they don't have these interactions? In addition, the effect on the educational quality of distance learning for students with disabilities. To what extent can COVID-19 or other crisis like situations alter the educational system to better serve students with special needs? Moreover, SEND Pupils often rely on regular habits. What effect would the loss of these routines have on the SEND students? Furthermore, especially from the viewpoint of policy, what are the policy measures for the school system during the time of crisis, and how can all learners be included in this process? During any

crisis, it is necessary to give support to children with special needs who are in primary grades. Therefore, more research may shed light on this.

5.5 Conclusion

Data from interviews with students with special educational needs and disabilities, teachers, and the head of the inclusion department were used to examine the effects of managing online learning during the Covid-19 crisis in the UAE to support the inclusion department in a school. The aim is to determine whether the UAE education system is prepared to deal with SEND students and to ensure that they are included even during the Covid-19 epidemic so that they do not become behind. Students with physical and learning disabilities have unique needs, and this study demonstrates how managing online line learning to meet those needs can have both benefits and drawbacks from a variety of perspectives on SEND education to develop and enhance their educational experience. Online learning is considered the educational future of the whole world. It should be given extra support, especially in such situations. I believe that a successful experience will be achieved by effective collaboration with all stakeholders (administrative, educators, head of the special needs, and SEND learners). Furthermore, when designing online courses, it is critical to consider the views of the inclusion department to make learning successful.

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Appendix

Appendix 1: Consent Form

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Research title: Managing online learning to support inclusion during COVID-19 in a private school in Dubai.

Invitation to participate: My name is Lana Jamil Al -nawaiseh. I am an academic coordinator at a private school in Dubai. I am researching a study about managing online learning to support inclusion during COVID-19, and you are invited to participate. Your participation is entirely up to you.

Purpose of the study: The study's goal is to learn about the online education experiences of students of determination who attend a private school in Dubai, the teachers who taught them, and the head of the inclusion department who assists them. I am interested in knowing about their experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic and the challenges and benefits they face.

Research Methods: Participation consists of one interview that lasts about 15 to 20 minutes. The interview will be recorded, but participants will be given a choice to disagree. There may be additional clarification/follow-up as a process of taking care of the interviewees' choosing and request additional information.

Confidentiality: Throughout the entire process and steps, participants privacy will be protected. Volunteering is required for participation, and the interviewee has the right to end the interview and say no at any time.

Participants will be able to obtain a summary of the results upon request. For any questions or concerns, please contact the interviewer.

Signing Consent Form: Your signature on this Consent Form confirms that you have read and accepted all the information about this research project and that you agree to participate as a participant.

Signature of interviewee

Signature of interviewees' parent

Signature of interviewer

Appendix 2: A sample consent form with a participant's signature (Teacher)

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Research title: Managing online learning to support inclusion during COVID-19 in a private school in Dubai.

Invitation to participate: My name is Lana Jamil Al -nawaiseh. I am an academic coordinator at a private school in Dubai. I am researching a study about managing online learning to support inclusion during COVID-19, and you are invited to participate. Your participation is entirely up to you.

Purpose of the study: The study's goal is to learn about the online education experiences of students of determination who attend a private school in Dubai, the teachers who taught them, and the head of the inclusion department who assists them. I am interested in knowing about their experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic and the challenges and benefits they face.

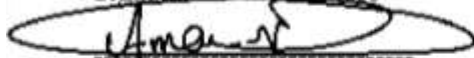
Research Methods: Participation consists of one interview that lasts about 15 to 20 minutes. The interview will be recorded, but participants will be given a choice to disagree. There may be additional clarification/follow-up as a process of taking care of the interviewees' choosing and request additional information.

Confidentiality: Throughout the entire process and steps, participants privacy will be protected. Volunteering is required for participation, and the interviewee has the right to end the interview and say no at any time.


Participants will be able to obtain a summary of the results upon request. For any questions or concerns, please contact the interviewer.

Signing Consent Form: Your signature on this Consent Form confirms that you have read and accepted all the information about this research project and that you agree to participate as a participant.

Signature of interviewee



Signature of interviewer



Appendix 3: A sample consent form with a participant's signature (Head of the inclusion department).

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Research title: Managing online learning to support inclusion during COVID-19 in a private school in Dubai.

Invitation to participate: My name is Lana Jamil Al-nawaiseh. I am an academic coordinator at a private school in Dubai. I am researching a study about managing online learning to support inclusion during COVID-19, and you are invited to participate. Your participation is entirely up to you.

Purpose of the study: The study's goal is to learn about the online education experiences of students of determination who attend a private school in Dubai, the teachers who taught them, and the head of the inclusion department who assists them. I am interested in knowing about their experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic and the challenges and benefits they face.

Research Methods: Participation consists of one interview that lasts about 15 to 20 minutes. The interview will be recorded, but participants will be given a choice to disagree. There may be additional clarification/follow-up as a process of taking care of the interviewees' choosing and request additional information.

Confidentiality: Throughout the entire process and steps, participants privacy will be protected. Volunteering is required for participation, and the interviewee has the right to end the interview and say no at any time.

Participants will be able to obtain a summary of the results upon request. For any questions or concerns, please contact the interviewer.

Signing Consent Form: Your signature on this Consent Form confirms that you have read and accepted all the information about this research project and that you agree to participate as a participant.

Signature of interviewee



Inclusion Department

@hotmail.com

Signature of interviewer



Appendix 4: A sample consent form with a participant's signature (Student)

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Research title: Managing online learning to support inclusion during COVID-19 in a private school in Dubai.

Invitation to participate: My name is Lana Jamil Al -nawaiseh. I am an academic coordinator at a private school in Dubai. I am researching a study about managing online learning to support inclusion during COVID-19, and you are invited to participate. Your participation is entirely up to you.

Purpose of the study: The study's goal is to learn about the online education experiences of students of determination who attend a private school in Dubai, the teachers who taught them, and the head of the inclusion department who assists them. I am interested in knowing about their experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic and the challenges and benefits they face.

Research Methods: Participation consists of one interview that lasts about 15 to 20 minutes. The interview will be recorded, but participants will be given a choice to disagree. There may be additional clarification/follow-up as a process of taking care of the interviewees' choosing and request additional information.

Confidentiality: Throughout the entire process and steps, participants privacy will be protected. Volunteering is required for participation, and the interviewee has the right to end the interview and say no at any time.

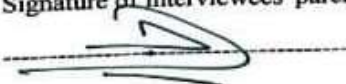
Participants will be able to obtain a summary of the results upon request. For any questions or concerns, please contact the interviewer.

Signing Consent Form: Your signature on this Consent Form confirms that you have read and accepted all the information about this research project and that you agree to participate as a participant.

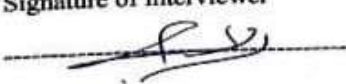
Signature of interviewee



Signature of interviewees' parent



Signature of interviewer



Appendix 4: Interview questions



Interview Questions

Research title: Managing online learning to support inclusion during COVID-19 in a private school in Dubai.

Lana Jamil Al-nawiseh

20197574

- 1) What was your experience of shifting from traditional classroom teaching to virtual online delivery? What were your first impressions?**
- 2) Do you perceive that the online course student-instructor interactions met your expectations?**
- 3) What benefits did you notice?**
- 4) What challenges did you face at the start?**
- 5) How did things change over time?**
- 6) What support was in place and what additional support do you think you might need for continued online learning/teaching?**