



An Exploratory Study on – Parent’s Perspective on Shadow Teachers in Mainstream School

دراسة استكشافية حول منظور الوالدين حول معلمي الظل في المدرسة العادية

by

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Abstract

The provision of appropriate assistance to students with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND) is an essential component to inclusive education; it implies that these students will have the opportunity to receive quality education and can reach their maximum potential. To ensure that students with special educational needs are integrated in the mainstream, schools often seek and avail the services of shadow teachers. These provisions are imperative for schools to fulfil their responsibility of providing support.

Additionally, in the context of Dubai, the responsibility of employing a shadow teacher for their child rests on the parents. By conducting in-depth semi-structured interviews with eight parents, this qualitative phenomenological study aims to explore and understand the experiences of parents of children with SEND in relation to the provision of shadow teachers. The themes from this study will provide insight into the experiences of parents during their personal journey that comprised of challenges and factors that contributed to their success, as well as their recommendations for improving the provision of shadow teachers. The results obtained from this research, which represent the perspectives of parents, might influence policies and practices regarding inclusive education as a whole, and the provision of shadow teachers specifically.

Keywords: inclusive education, SEND, mainstream, shadow teachers, paraeducators, parents

خلاصة

ويمثل تقديم المساعدة المناسبة للطلاب ذوي الاحتياجات التعليمية الخاصة أو ذوي الإعاقة عنصراً أساسياً في التعليم الشامل ؛ وهذا يعني أن هؤلاء الطلاب ستتاح لهم الفرصة لتلقي تعليم جيد ويمكنهم الوصول إلى أقصى إمكاناتهم. ولضمان إدماج الطلاب ذوي الاحتياجات التعليمية الخاصة في التيار العام، كثيراً ما تسعى المدارس إلى الحصول على خدمات معلمي الظل والاستفادة منها. هذه الأحكام ضرورية للمدارس للوفاء بها.

بالإضافة إلى ذلك، في سياق دبي، تقع مسؤولية توظيف مدرس ظل لأطفالهم على عاتق الوالدين. من خلال إجراء مقابلات شبه منظمة متعمقة مع ثمانية من الآباء والأمهات، تهدف هذه الدراسة الظاهرية النوعية إلى استكشاف وفهم تجارب آباء الأطفال المصابين فيما يتعلق بتوفير معلمي الظل. ستوفر الموضوعات من هذه الدراسة نظرة ثاقبة لتجارب الآباء خلال رحلتهم الشخصية التي تتكون من التحديات، والعوامل التي ساهمت في نجاحهم، فضلاً عن توصياتهم لتحسين توفير معلمي الظل. قد تؤثر النتائج التي تم الحصول عليها من هذا البحث، والتي تمثل وجهات نظر الآباء، على السياسات والممارسات المتعلقة بالتعليم الشامل ككل، وتوفير معلمي الظل على وجه التحديد.

الكلمات الرئيسية: التعليم الشامل، التيار الرئيسي، معلمو الظل، المعلمون ، أولياء الامور

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Research Problem

As policymakers in the field of education endeavour to modify and enhance provisions for children with special needs and learning concerns, numerous nations have adopted models that advocate for the implementation of paraprofessional support in schools. These individuals are recognised by the school administration as paraeducators, special needs assistants, learning support assistants, or shadow teachers. They operate under the guidance of teachers, who delegate tasks and provide direction in a suitable manner so as to facilitate students' participation in academic pursuits and extracurricular activities (Giangreco, Doyle, & Suter, 2014).

Implementation of a strategy that requires the participation of adult experts in classrooms is contingent on a number of economic and social factors. In developed economies, the capacity to provide funding for the hiring of additional personnel is a determinant in the implementation of teacher assistant programmes (International Monetary Fund 2018; Streeck and Thelan 2005). The concept of universal education has been practiced and promoted in Europe and North America for quite some time, whereas the inclusion of children with disabilities has only become a priority in underdeveloped and developing regions worldwide within the last few years. As stated by Barton and Armstrong (2007), the professional development and progression of support staff are contingent upon the specific responsibilities delegated to them by individual institutions and administrations. It is imperative that the institution recognises the critical role that Learning Support Assistants play in promoting the integration of children with SEN. The existing body of research on the positive impacts of these facilities is limited. (2010, Giangreco).

Inclusive education is the practice of enabling quality education to children , irrespective of their needs and disabilities , in a manner that enables them to be educated with proper guidance, together with the other children. In today's contemporary and forward-thinking educational system, inclusive education refers to the practice of providing education to all children, regardless of their educational requirements, in a way that allows them to learn together with the necessary support (O'Connor, 2006). In the past, the youngster would often be stigmatised and accused of being slow or sluggish. The child was held responsible for not being able to concentrate. The essence of the aforementioned notion lies in recognising and comprehending the necessity to modify or shape the educational system or environment in order to facilitate the child's access to education. This signifies a shift from the perspective of perceiving disability via a medical lens to a perspective that emphasises social and rights-based aspects, as outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD, 2006). In order to attain an education that includes all students, it is necessary to thoroughly and completely revamp the education system. It is imperative to address the needs and prioritise full access to high-quality education. This process entails the development and execution of policies, allocation of funds, training, and the recruitment of appropriate school personnel (UNESCO 2009).

In 2010, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) both signed and ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD, 2006). The UAE has made a strong commitment to promote and improve the education system by implementing inclusive education in all schools. The country is required to provide evidence and report on the actions taken to ensure compliance with these standards. In 2014, the "Protection of Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the Emirate of Dubai" acknowledges the inherent right and entitlement of

individuals with disabilities to unrestricted access to inclusive education, free from prejudice. Any instances of discrimination can result in penalties under this law. The Dubai Disability Strategy 2020 introduced rules pertaining to five primary areas: inclusive health, inclusive education, accessible employment, universal design, and social protection.

The existence of a robust legislative framework has facilitated the advancement and growth of special education for children with specific need. Schools are not permitted to refuse admission to a kid with special educational needs or a disability (SEND). The inclusion of Learning Support Assistants to cater to the requirements of these pupils is vital and indispensable for mainstream schools. In accordance with the guidelines and directives published by the School Inspection Supplement (KHDA 2017), inclusive education is to be implemented in every private school in Dubai. It has been specifically advised that the term "shadow teacher" not be applied to the individuals employed to provide special education for children. It is expected that they be addressed in a professionally as "learning support assistants" (LSA). The directives indicates that the education authority recognises and accepts the LSA's vital and essential role in the implementation of school provisions for children. It also specifies the parents' responsibility to ensure effective implementation of inclusive practices and provisions. The support and guidance of the LSA are pivotal to the children's successful integration into the mainstream environment. (Giangreco et al., 1999; French & Chopra, 1999).

According to Bennett, Lee, and Lueke (1998), each parent possesses a distinct concept and an unique independent viewpoint regarding inclusion of their ward, as compared to the perspective of the experts in the field. Parents possess a multitude of aspirations and ambitions that ought to be duly acknowledged and not deemed unattainable. Counselling parents is

essential, and they must be informed of facts and expectations in a transparent manner. When a child is assigned an LSA, the parents is informed of the candidate's credentials and experience. Additionally, the employment process should involve parental consent and be financially feasible. The viewpoint of the parents is examined and assessed, given the distinctive nature of their journey with their child of determination.

The primary objective of this study is to address the paucity of data and knowledge regarding the integration and functioning of students with disabilities into mainstream , it intends to assist and influence the mainstreaming and incorporation of students with disabilities in the policy and inclusive educational practices across all Dubai institutions.

1.2 Purpose of Study

This study's main objective is to investigate and comprehend the various unique experiences and perspectives of the guardians / parents of students with special needs. Their experience with the provisions of LSA in the mainstream school to ensure learning and social interactions among the school is vital to understand the success factors of LSA services. The challenges each parent has faced and the recommendations or suggestions they recommend will guide and enhance the over all academic integration of children. When policies, strategies and suitable practices are put into place, these views shape the implementation of it in schools. According to Creswell 2014, by utilising a phenomenological research design and qualitative approach , the study hopes to recognise and comprehend the experiences shared by a group of parents' with regard to LSA provision (Creswell 2014).

1.3 Research Questions

The purpose of this research is to examine the perspectives and first-hand accounts of parents, the following questions will help gather further insight:

Main Question:

- What is the parental experience with Learning Support Assistant Services in mainstream classrooms for students with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND) ?

Subsequent questions:

- In what manner do parents of children with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND) characterise and elaborate on their interactions with mainstream institutions that offer LSA services ?
- What difficulties arise as a result of these experiences?
- What positive and successful outcomes result from the experiences that parents consider to be favourable to the effective implementation of learning support assistants?
- What suggestions and recommendations can be adopted to improve the manner in which learning support assistants services are provided in mainstream schools ?

1.4 Definition of Key Terms

The purpose of this section is to ensure that individuals who access and read the dissertation will have a comparable understanding of the concept and meaning of a specific term that is referenced in this work.

1.4.1 Mainstream School

Mainstream schools are public or private institutions that adhere to the general education system and have a state-approved curriculum. These schools provide quality education to students that seek admission to the school and is accessible to all children. (Butt 2016) Special needs or special education institutions are distinct from mainstream schools in

that they provide specialised support for students who have a particular disability. Students are admitted in accordance with their concerns and provided with therapy. The environment and setting are different from those of regular educational institutions because students are attended to individually or as small groups.

1.4.2 People of Determination or Students of Determination

The UAE has established the disability classification categories that comprise the unified national classification for "People of Determination" (POD) or "Students of Determination" (SOD). POD is the new abbreviation for persons with disabilities (PWD) in the UAE. A thorough definition of pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) can be found in the "United Arab Emirates Inspection Framework 2015-2016" (Ministry of Education 2015). "Educational needs that differ from those of the majority of students and result from the impact of a recognised disorder or disability" are the defining characteristics of these pupils.

In order for these students to participate in the curriculum, they require supplementary assistance; the institution's infrastructure must also be flexible and considerate of the students. Eleven forms of disabilities as defined by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) are incorporated into the common categories. In order to standardise the evaluation of the needs of persons with disabilities, coordination and collaboration among the pertinent authorities are improved as a consequence of the classification. To begin with, the classification encompasses neurodevelopmental disorders, including intellectual disabilities, social -communication disorders such as autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and Asperger's Syndrome, Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, and specific learning disorders. Individuals with physical disabilities, psycho-emotional disorders and sensory impairments (specifically visual and auditory impairments) comprise the

second category (Cabinet Decree 2018). This classification pertains to developmental delays observed in children below the age of five across the globe, wherein the presence of intellectual disabilities during early childhood cannot be assessed and determined.

1.4.3 Provisions for SEN

The modifications and services provided in both regular schools and special education institutions are referred to as "special education needs provisions." It is flexible and can accommodate an individual or a small group of students, according to the requirement. The provisions made, in an educational institution to facilitate academic advancement, effective learning, and social engagement among peers and students with special educational needs (SEN), encompassing extracurricular activities, sports, and academic progress, collectively contribute to the gains and progress of a school in integrating SEN students into a positive environment. The provisions made for students with special needs are founded upon the guidance and assistance of experts and professionals in the respective field. Mandatory Provisions such as individual educational plans (IEP), modifications, accommodations, and curriculum planning are specifically to be addressed in schools and these have been included by the Ministry of Education (2015).

1.4.4 Community Service Provider

In the field of education, the term "community service provider" pertains to both public and private organisations, facilities, and clinics that offer a wide range of services to students and families who have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). The services provided encompass diagnostic testing and evaluation, speech and language therapy intervention and rehabilitation, occupational therapy, physical therapy, Applied behavioural Analysis , specialised instruction - remedial teaching, counselling, and consultation.

1.4.5 Shadow Teacher - Learning Support Assistant (LSA)

The term "shadow teacher" is currently not preferred; these individuals are alternatively referred to as Learning Support Assistants (LSAs). A Learning Support Assistant is a specialist who is responsible for guiding and aiding students in a mainstream school who need additional assistance and inclusion. They are assigned to an instructor in the class and must fulfil a set of responsibilities as directed by the SENCO in order to enhance the well-being of the child under their care. Prior to being employed for a child, individuals must possess the necessary qualifications and expertise. The school authorities, Inclusion Department and parents assist with the employment and reimbursement as per the LSA contract. However, the school and the Inclusion department collectively have the responsibility to supervise the work of the Learning Support Assistant (LSA).

The LSA provides support to the child in care in developing and promoting academic skills, behaviour, interpersonal abilities, and self-help skills. The LSA's primary responsibility is to ensure the safety of children and establish a pleasant and nurturing atmosphere for learning and overall skill development. The Learning Support Assistant is part of the Inclusion department, and an essential representative of the IEP team. They are committed to the welfare of the children. The topic will be further elaborated in Section (2.2) of the literature review.

1.5 Dissertation Structure

The dissertation will commence with an introductory section that provides contextual information about the research problem and highlights its importance. It will also identify the research questions, clarify the goal of the study and its scope, and define important terms related to the research.

The second section of the study is the literature review, which serves to highlight the importance of the research problem. It also helps to guide and enlighten the research questions by identifying and examining relevant literature. The following part will provide a detailed explanation of the research methodology. The fourth portion will present the findings from the study. Next, the fifth section will analyse and interpret these findings with respect to literature. Finally, the conclusion will offer a summary of the work, identify the constraints, discuss the significance, and propose directions for future investigation.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This research is a preliminary exploratory inquiry. The purpose of conducting a literature review is to ascertain the importance of the research problem, provide guidance and information for the research questions, and establish a benchmark against which the prospective findings of this study can be assessed for consistency or inconsistency with the literature (Creswell 2014).

There is very few limited resources available as research study and literature for the term Shadow teacher or Learning support assistant. Diverse terminologies are employed globally to refer to and determine the job profile associated with the work of paraprofessionals who assist students with special needs in mainstream schools. For example, in Canada, the term "educational assistant" is utilised (Hoyano, Woodyard & Diane Koch 2012). In the United States, terms such as "paraprofessional," "paraeducator," "teacher aide," "Learning Support Assistant (LSA)," "educational technician," and "instructional assistant" have been coined. The term "support teachers" is frequently employed in the Italian context (Devecchi et al. 2012).

It has been observed that as the terminology used in literature changes, likewise does the obligations and responsibilities that individuals in the academic field. Alborz et al. (2009) raised this concern regarding the definition of the term and the specific responsibility of the individuals who provide guidance to students in a regular classroom. Throughout the literature review, the term "paraeducator" will be employed to denote the position of an individual responsible for providing support to students with SEND who are enrolled in regular educational institutions.

The literature review can be classified into three distinct categories. The initial segment will examine the meaning and application of the term "paraeducator" in relation to responsibilities and implementation, qualities, education and training, ability, recruitment, and employment. The experiences of parents of children with SEND with regard to the incorporation of LSA will be discussed in the second section. In conclusion, this paper will examine important recommendations and aspects to be taken into account regarding the provision of efficient and successful paraeducators, as supported by research.

2.2 Paraeducators

2.2.1 Role of Paraeducators

There has been a global uproar regarding the integration of children with special needs into mainstream educational settings alongside their typically developing peers. Advocates within the educational system endeavour to ensure that these students have equitable access to academic opportunities and prospects. A right-based perspective on disability, according to the UNCRPD (2006), is conducive to any beneficial transformation.

Multiple worldwide data sources indicate that the proportion of students with special educational needs attending regular mainstream schools has increased: 50% - United Kingdom (Department of Education, 2011); 89.1% - Australia (ABS, 2013); and 95% - United States (National Centre for Education Statistics, 2011).

As the main educators are responsible for instructing and guiding the entire class, they are not only ill-equipped to address the concerns of students with special needs but also inadequately trained to deal with the teaching techniques and patterns that cater to these students. Therefore, in order to bridge the gap and provide support, educational systems employ paraeducators to provide instruction and guidance to students with special needs. This

practice has indeed proven to be beneficial and has adversely increased the demand and immediate need of paraeducators in schools across countries (Abbott, McConkey & Dobbins 2011, Butt 2016, Devecchi et al. 2012, Blatchford et al. 2009, Webster et al. 2010).

According to Butt (2016), the demand for paraeducators in Australia experienced a substantial surge from 2000 to 2011. Presently, the number of paraeducators stands at 80,4000, and this figure continues to rise (DEEWR 2012).

The demand for paraeducators has increased by threefold in the United Kingdom (Blatchford et al. 2010; Webster 2010). Since 2007, the number of paraeducators in the United States has increased; by 2014, that number will have quadrupled (Bureau of Labour Statistics, 2014). The data presented indicates a surge in reliance and demand for paraeducators within the past few years. Additionally, parents contribute to the rise in these numbers, as they hold the general education teachers accountable for the academic development and success of their children diagnosed with special needs as compared to their peers. Educational institutions and teachers have an obligation to fulfil the requirements and provide explanations regarding the child's lack of progression through the years they have been enrolled and studying at the institution. Even school administration is answerable and held accountable.

As discussed by a number of authors, the role of a paraeducator in the classroom with a child who has special needs is distinct from that of a teacher. Giangreco (2009) proposes that the guidance provided by paraeducators serves as an additional component to the educational strategy of the teacher. It functions as a supplement to the education that is provided, not as a replacement. It ought to function as an extension to the instructor's teaching rather than an alternative to it. The class teacher should assume complete responsibility and accountability for instructing and cultivating the skills being taught, while also ensuring that all students

receive a high-quality education that caters to their individual learning styles. According to Devecchi et al. (2012), the primary responsibility of an educator is to modify instruction, engage students with special educational needs (SEN) in the learning process, and subsequently oversee the work of paraeducators.

Ideally, the teacher ought to be supervising the paraeducator's instruction. However, as we examine the implementation of paraeducator services and provisions in a traditional school setting, we can see that, as Webster et al. (2011) assert, the paraeducators are assuming the responsibility of providing direct instruction and guidance for the development of skills. The main teachers focus on providing education to the rest of the class and often tend to neglect to render the necessary support required for the children who have concerns. As a result, the responsibility of monitoring and enhancing the academic progress of the SEND students is inadvertently assigned to the paraeducators.

As the severity or complexity of the students' requirements and the demands placed on their behaviour escalate, educators ultimately offer less support. It has been stated by Devecchi et al. (2012) that paraeducators are left to work independently with students who have SEND.

The findings of the literature will establish that paraeducators serve as the principal and sole instructors for students with special needs, while the teacher's role in their education is significantly diminished and rendered non-viable.

Giangreco (2010) raises concerns regarding the permissibility of paraeducators working with children who exhibit significant needs, if they do not have the necessary qualifications and training to meet those demands. In contrast, certified teachers who adhere to the state-mandated educational standards are primarily concerned with instructing students who are capable of making progress and possess average to advanced intellectual capacity and not

towards the students with SEND. This according to him apply to “double standards” Giangreco (2003).

A comprehensive study conducted in the United Kingdom by Blatchford et al. (2009) on the Deployment and Impact of Support Staff (DISS) was examined by Webster et al. (2011). The study's objective was to determine the effect of support staff, including paraeducators, on the performance of students. Positively, it was observed that the involvement of a paraeducator significantly assisted with skill development, behaviour modification, workload reduction for teachers, and emotional mentoring of students. However, academic progress was significantly impacted. Webster and Blatchford (2013, 2014) conducted a study which revealed that the teaching methods utilised by paraeducators operating without supervision and guidance were of lower quality in comparison to the methodologies, techniques, and strategies implemented by teachers instructing students in a traditional classroom setting.

These statements raise concerns regarding the suitability of paraeducators leading the provision of support for students with SEND and calls for teachers to deliver high-quality instruction that takes into account the intricate needs of students with SEND (Webster 2014).

2.2.2 Characteristics

According to Butt (2016), Paraeducators are "unqualified" personnel who are entrusted with the responsibility of providing guidance and assistance to students with SEND. This has been demonstrated to be precise on numerous instances. In several parts of the world, the recruitment of para-educators does not correspond with their credentials or training, according to Devecchi and Rouse (2010). Cockroft and Atkinson (2015) asserts that unaccredited individuals with limited experience working with children who have special needs are employed often, some individuals volunteers at a centre and gain knowledge through

observation rather than formal education. Additionally, mothers who have dealt with children with complex needs are occasionally taken into account. Regrettably, the overall preference is wrongly given for individuals who exhibit a pleasant demeanour, possess patience, and are generally motivated to work, even in the absence of legal educational requirements.

In the UAE, As stated in the KHDA's DIRECTIVES AND GUIDELINES FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION, the learning support assistant's provision must adhere to the guidelines. It specifies that the LSA must be a professionally trained individual and that the institution must facilitate training through additional courses or conduct in-house training to enhance the learning experience. The LSA is an essential component of the IEP and must be well-informed and knowledgeable about the student's classroom functioning. These high standards of performance are unfortunately not specified and followed around the world.

2.2.3 Supervision, Readiness, and Training

Students with special educational needs have complex requirements and needs that must be addressed meticulously, tIn order to accomplish this, paraeducators who are qualified to implement appropriate strategies and techniques that promote progress and skill development are required.

The role of paraeducators must be regarded with careful consideration, given that the services provided have an impact on the children. Regrettably, research indicates that paraeducators who are employed to provide service lack the requisite credentials and training (Giangreco, Broer & Edelman 2001).

This is also validated in the research of Butt (2016), paraeducators who provide support to students in the classroom do not participate in feedback sessions, curriculum preparation, or planning alongside the teachers. As a result, their contribution in the delivering of correct

assessments or instruction are not considered . This negatively impacts the implementation of a structured plan for the child as a whole.

2.2.4 Retention and Recruitment of Paraeducators

Paraeducators receive low scale wages or remuneration; there are no opportunities for advancement and growth in their careers. Despite the significance of the work, it is not regarded as a reputable occupation, and the job requirements are occasionally misrepresented; as a result, incidents occur if the individual is untrained in managing children with severe behavioural characteristics. These factors present a difficulty for the institution in terms of recruiting and retaining paraeducators.

According to (Butt 2016), Australian educational institutions employ paraeducators to provide additional support to students with special needs; the government subsidises the funds in accordance with the requirements of the schools.

2.3 Parental Perspectives

The research literature concerning the perspectives of parents regarding the inclusion of students with special needs is currently limited. The observation is even more limited when it specifies the parental perspective concerning the services of paraeducators for students with special educational needs in a mainstream school.

A literature review conducted by Giangreco, Suter, and Doyle (2010) spanned the years 2000 to 2007, The analysis revealed a surge in research pertaining to paraeducators operating within an inclusive environment within those years. This emphasises the importance of this subject matter. The research examined the viewpoints of school personnel who have direct contact with the paraeducators, including administrators, principals, teachers, and inclusion teachers (Blatchford et al. 2009, Webster et al. 2010, Butt 2016). some studies investigated the

perspectives of the paraeducators themselves (Breton 2010, Cockroft & Atkinson 2015, Lacey 2001, Patterson 2006). Additional studies sought to obtain the viewpoints of students who are diagnosed with special needs (Tews & Lupart 2008; Broer, Doyle & Giangreco 2005). There has been evidences from very limited resources and study regarding the perspective of parents on paraeducators support in a mainstream school , the section will attempt to mention the relevant findings in the literature. In every professional setting, a team operates most effectively through collaborative efforts. Similarly , the performance and productivity of paraeducators, in the integration of students into the mainstream setting , is optimised through collaborative efforts by three key members of the school community namely the educators, guardians/parents, and paraeducators. (Developcchi et al. 2012).

Encouragement and motivation, as well as parental appreciation for the paraeducators' work with the children, go a long way towards making them feel valued and respected, which in turn enables them to function efficiently (Chopra et al. 2004). Sometimes when Parents lack of empathy and their expectations for commitment are more, working with children who exhibit severe difficulties and behavioural concerns , can be a daunting task and challenge for paraeducators . Blaming for the lack of progress in a child deters paraeducators from working efficiently and asserts a lot of pressure on them. (Devecchi at al 2012).

A study was conducted by French and Chopra (1999) to examine the employment, job profile, function, and responsibilities of paraeducators. The research was based on the perspectives of mothers of children with SEND who were receiving assistance from paraeducators in mainstream schools. It summarised that , One of the four roles identified by the study for paraeducators was that of a connector, parents perceive paraeducators as an intermediary between themselves and the school. This is achieved through various means such

as maintaining a logbook, telephone, almanac, emails, and other communication channels. The paraeducators informed the parents of events and provided updates on their child's performance. They were accessible and open to suggestions, the mothers did not have similar experiences with the teachers, this report was noted in the study of Bennett et al. (1997), Chopra & French (2004), and Marks et al. (1999)

Parents were generally content with the social interaction the children with Special needs, had with their peers under the supervision and guidance of the paraeducators. The child seeks acknowledgement from the paraeducators, when they are interacting, playing or talking to their friends, generally children's interaction with their peers are hindered when paraeducators tend to correct or amend their communication skills for example if they are impulsive, they are encouraged to wait and listen. The educators involvement in teaching and interaction is also reduced when there is an additional person with child.

The second role is as a "team member," in which parents view paraeducators as members of the inclusion team who contribute equally to the implementation of the individualised education plan. Parents are concerned when paraeducators are not involved in the assessment, planning, and curriculum modification processes, There is a clear lack of information and communication at times between the teacher and paraeducator. There are evidences that the service rendered is not valued and respected often by the school authorities and they are not considered as a team member.

The third role is "instructor", as a member of the inclusion team, the paraeducators facilitate the provision of instruction, modifications, and accommodations that the child needs to acquire knowledge and access the curriculum. There were reservations pertaining to the effectiveness and consistency of the strategies, techniques, and behaviour management

employed by the paraeducator without the intervention and supervisor of a teacher who possesses expertise in the inclusion of children.

The fourth role is to function as a "provider of physical care." In certain instances, paraeducators were also responsible for ensuring the child's personal space and appropriate lavatory usage, in addition to safeguarding the child. Parents were concerned about the child safety and dignity and whether the paraeducators were counselled and trained in this aspect. The research and study summarised with challenges mainly three of them. First was the lack of training of the paraeducators and provisions of latest ideas and concepts in terms of behaviour management. Educational institutions receiving government funding that employed paraeducators for children with special needs offered inadequate compensation, which resulted in short tenures and subsequent requests for improved remuneration packages.

The majority of the paraeducators, according to the perspectives of the parents, were optimistic, visibly delighted working with the child and had developed a close bond with the children. There was mutual respect and commitment between the parents and paraeducators. They valued the paraeducators work delivered in terms of teaching , social and behaviour management. With respect to the UAE , Gaad (2004) documented that parents were worried and upset when children reported mild taunting or teasing by their peers . Alborn & Gaad (2014) noted that parents were sceptical about the academic skills and progress of the child at school , also about the credentials and training of the teacher delivering the lessons in the mainstream .

2.4 Recommendations for Implementing Effective Practice

In order to raise the standard of services, provision, quality, and training, as well as to enhance effective practices, this section will attempt to provide recommendations established and based on research and studies.

2.4.1 Differentiating Roles and Enhancing Capabilities

To ensure the provision of high-quality education, the research conducted provides with vital recommendations that , teachers should serve as the SEN child's primary instructors; and they should maintain careful oversight and supervision of paraeducators who work with students who have special educational needs (Webster et al. 2011; Blatchford et al. 2009). Additionally, they assert that in order to further develop their expertise, educators should be provided with sufficient training in the fields of pedagogical studies and inclusion.

2.4.2 Paraeducator Model

Giangreco, Broer, and Edelman (2001) observed that the teacher's engagement with a student with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) decreases when a paraeducator is assigned to that student, but it increases when the paraeducator is assigned to the entire classroom. The success of application of a classroom-based model involves the assignment of a paraeducator to a specific class or group of children, with the teacher providing oversight, guidance, and instruction on appropriate teaching methodologies to the paraeducators. The SEN students thus reduce seeking continues attention, become independent and gain self-confidence (Lacey 2011). Butt (2016) was in favour of the use of the model called "Teacher Assistant as Facilitator" (TAAF) Model. As per this model the current practice of assigning a single child to the paraeducator when the teacher addresses the whole class and delivers instruction is reversed . The teacher applies differentiated teaching techniques and

assigns tasks to the class as per their different learning styles. By assisting the teacher in providing aid to the entire class, the paraeducator enables the teacher to focus on providing support specifically for the child with special needs. . In this manner, the framework accentuates the assistance provided by the teacher to the child who requires guidance the most.

2.4.3 Collaboration and Multidisciplinary Assistance

A collaborative team effort is suggested by Devecchi et al. (2012) in order to provide services that are tailored to the requirements and strengths of the students. The inclusion department personnel, teachers, counsellors, coordinators, supervisors, paraeducators, parents, and the principal must comprise the team. A comprehensive multidisciplinary team consisting educators and specialists collaborates to enhance the quality and overall effectiveness of provisions. A collaborative team effort is suggested by Devecchi et al. (2012) in order to provide services that are tailored to the requirements and strengths of the students. The inclusion department personnel, teachers, counsellors, coordinators, supervisors, paraeducators, parents, and the principal must comprise the team. A comprehensive multidisciplinary team comprising educators and specialists collaborates to enhance the quality and overall effectiveness of provisions.

2.4.4 Qualifications for Paraeducators and their Professional Development

The implementation of "competency-based qualification standards" is necessary to accurately assess and select candidates based on their abilities as paraeducators. In the United Kingdom, "nationally recognised and accredited training programme" for paraeducators has been suggested by the UK DfEE (1999)

Given the existing body of literature, which indicates that paraeducators possess inadequate training and credentials to effectively attend to the requirements of children with

special needs. According to Breton (2010), in order for paraeducators to obtain accreditation and further their knowledge and professional development, training must be delivered in-house or any procuring agencies to provide adequate credentials.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The study aims to explore the perspective of parents with children diagnosed with special needs in respect to the provision of shadow teachers or Learning support assistants. This section gathers information on the research framework and methodology selected to achieve this objective. The present study utilises a qualitative research methodology grounded in a constructivist paradigm. The initial segment delineates the attributes that define qualitative research designs as a whole, with a specific emphasis on the phenomenological design, while also explicating the justification for opting for this particular design.

The data collection procedures are described in the second section, which discusses the adoption of semi-structured interviews as the research method implemented in this study.

In the third section, data interpretation and analysis by employing the methodology utilised by Moutakas (1994) to examine the data in this research is elaborated upon. The fourth and final section discusses validity and reliability. Finally, the final section addresses the ethical considerations prevalent during the entire research process.

3.2 Qualitative Research Design

The UAE government enforces mandatory inclusion for students with special needs in mainstream education and promotes equal rights to education for all throughout the emirates, in accordance with its directives and guidelines. Concurrently, the need for provisions of shadow teachers in Dubai institutions has increased over time. The involvement of parents in the recruitment and retention of shadow instructors is equally important as that of the school administration.

The literature review highlights that the implementation of shadow teacher provision in Dubai and the perspectives of parents regarding the management of this initiative in schools have produced negligible outcomes. The dearth of research on this subject provides justification for undertaking an investigation, understanding, and exploration on this matter, taking into account all of the diverse perspectives of those involved. Hence, in regard to the research problem and related questions outlined in this study, qualitative research would be the most appropriate strategy (Cresswell, 2009, p. 39). This is supported by the following statement: "We conduct qualitative research because a problem or issue needs to be explored" and "we also conduct qualitative research because we require a complex, detailed understanding of the issue."

In addition, Creswell (2007) discusses a functional description of qualitative research that prioritises the research process and methodology. This definition emphasises how the researcher initiates the investigation by establishing it within a framework of philosophical assumptions, beliefs, or worldviews, with the objective of examining the research problem from the perspectives of the participants.

Creswell further elaborates on the definition of qualitative research by identifying its main characteristics: the progressive nature of the research design, which he terms "emergent design," the collection of data in a natural setting through personal interaction with participants, the inductive methodology for data analysis, and the composition of the final report based on the opinions and viewpoints of participants, the self-reflection of the researcher, the comprehensive interpretation of the research problem by detailing the sources of data and perspectives, taking into account all the factors that attribute towards the research

problem. In conclusion, Creswell describes the final objective of qualitative research as either a supplement to the existing body of literature or as trigger to initiate action.

The research design has been based on Moustakas' (1997) transcendental phenomenology. Phenomenology is utilised in accordance with Kvale (1996, p. 52), which defines it as "the study of social phenomena from the personal point of view of the participants, explaining their experiences of the world with the fundamental belief that their assumptions are significant and relevant." Phenomenology, according to Moustakas (1997), enables the individual experiencing the situation to provide an explanation of the experience, characterise how they interpreted it, and comprehend the phenomenon's fundamental relationship. In this research study, the phenomenon is the provision of shadow teachers in respect to the experiences of parents and taking into account their perspectives in relation to the provision. Principal aspects are "what" and "how" parents experienced the phenomenon, and we will investigate the essence of the participants' unique, complex experiences with this phenomenon. It is interesting to note the common experiences of the parents of students with special needs in regard to the provision of shadow teachers, these elements will assist in significantly developing the policies and practices.

The primary focus is on analysing the concept of "experienced meanings" and offering an explanation of the "essence of their experiences" regarding a social phenomenon. As a result, the objective of employing phenomenology as a research design is fulfilled, as we gather and examine the perspective of parents regarding the provisions of shadow teachers in the mainstream school. These perspectives are derived from the parents' personal experiences with their children in an inclusive educational environment. Phenomenology, as proposed by Kvale (1996), renders the "invisible visible."

Phenomenological research stems from psychology and philosophy (Creswell, 2007) in which the transcendental perspective is based on Moustakas' model (1994) and the hermeneutical approach is based on van Manen's model (1990). This research opts , Moustakas' transcendental phenomenology as it provides a methodical framework for the analysis of data and its interpretation; As the researcher , it was challenging to bifurcate self interpretations. By selecting transcendental phenomenology, I acknowledge the philosophical foundations that support phenomenological inquiry—the integration of personal perceptions and objective realities with the intent of researchers "bracketing out" their own perspectives and experiences to the best of their ability feasible (Creswell 2007). Furthermore, I endeavoured to replicate the particular research design and methodology across the various facets of the investigation. The proposed research is framed within the theoretical frameworks of social constructivism and transformative worldview.

Social constructivism depends on complete dependence on perspectives presented by participants with regard to a particular subject or circumstance. The researcher then interprets the participant-reported findings; this interpretation is influenced by the researcher's personal experience and background; thus, qualitative research is interpretive in nature. The constructivist perspective is evident in the method of phenomenology, wherein participants recount their personal experiences (Moustakas, 1994). The research was also influenced by the transformative framework. Indeed, as asserted by Denzin and Lincoln (2005), qualitative research yields social transformation and impact. The subsequent sections will provide a more detailed explanation of how the fundamental attributes of transcendental phenomenology and qualitative research as a whole influenced the design of this study.

3.3 Function of the Researcher

Qualitative research is characterised by its interpretative nature and requires the researcher to engage in direct interaction with participants; as such, the researcher's role as the primary data collector is constrained by a number of ethical and personal considerations that influence the research process (Creswell, 2014). Although I have chosen transcendental phenomenology over the Van Man hermeneutical approach as my research design, I am mindful of the fact that "bracketing out" is a position that is seldom perfectly achieved, as stated by Moutakas (1997). In this section, I would wholeheartedly like to express, reflect and acknowledge as a researcher, the preconceived notions, convictions, background informations and professional experience as a researcher and state the influence of these interpretations in this study.

With regard to my professional background and work experiences, I have been primarily engaged in the following: advocating for the rights of children with special needs, facilitating their integration into mainstream education, fostering a healthy social life, ensuring their equal participation in programmes, trips, and competitions, and securing employment opportunities and college admissions; and assisting them in selecting the most suitable career path.

My enriched experiences have been transformative; I have been granted the privilege of liaising with centres that offer psychological assessment and rehabilitation for students. Parents have received appropriate guidance and counselling, and they have been assured of the availability of shadow teachers who are trained under the supervision of the inclusion department. Throughout their voyage, their struggles and perspectives, I have been able to acknowledge and support them ; they are not alone; we are all in this together.

The one to one interactions with the parent and close networking with the therapists , motivated shadow teachers, dedicated and understanding school management all form numerous focus groups and the engagement with various stakeholders have provided me with valuable insights and reinforced my views concerning the research problem. Theoretically , these close encounters could shape my thoughts. and preferences for a particular theme or findings, thus the evidences are to be reexamined multiple times to support the findings. The one to one interactions with the parent and close networking with the therapists , motivated shadow teachers, dedicated and understanding school management all form numerous focus groups and the engagement with various stakeholders have provided me with valuable insights and reinforced my views concerning the research problem. Theoretically , these close encounters could shape my thoughts. and preferences for a particular theme or findings, thus the evidences are to be reexamined multiple times to support the findings.

While I maintain strong relationships with the school, parents, and shadow teachers, I wish to clarify that this study is entirely for educational purposes and primarily to be completed as part of a thesis for my Master's degree. To prevent any discrepancy, it is important to note that this research is not in any way related to my professional obligations or tasks. To further ensure that the data collection process remained secure, I took measures to exclude any direct relationships with the participants I chose.

3.4 Data Collection Procedures

This section asserts the importance of collecting information to answer the research questions that are being probed. In accordance with the phenomenological research design, interviews are identified as the main research method in phenomenology (Creswell 2007).

The participants were asked questions conducted as a semi structured interview and data was obtained in this manner.

According to Bryman (2004, p. 321), semi-structured interview permits “a level of structure without compromising the participants’ freedom to speak on topics significant to them”.

Several interrelated steps and stages were considered in the data collection phase. The initial step, is establishing a rapport with the participants and seeking their permission. To prevent discrepancies, the ethical considerations are taken into account and strictly adhered to, the purpose of the study is transparently communicated, and the fact that it does not pertain to my professional responsibilities is acknowledged. In accordance with the principle that phenomenological investigation is effectively carried out by studying individuals , who has experience of being interviewed and able to explain themselves clearly and describe themselves willing (Polkinghorne, 1989). The second step is the selection of participants who are apt for the research and can be recruited based on a purposeful sampling strategy. Creswell (2007, 2014) defines purposeful sampling as deliberate selection of participants who will provide guidance to the researcher and throw light on the research problem in the study. The researcher is able to gain understanding of the underlying phenomenon and address the research questions.

Within this framework a criterion sampling technique was utilised to choose participants who have all experienced the phenomenon; To ensure the accuracy of the results, the following criteria were applied: (a) parents of children with special educational needs and disabilities attending a mainstream school in Dubai; (b) students who had involvement with shadow teachers' services in their schools and (c) parents who had personal experience with

interacting with and receiving support from shadow teachers, minimum one academic year of experience is preferable.

The selection of the parents ensured a collective experience that is consistent with the phenomenological research design approach. However, due to the varied nationalities of the participants, students of different ages and types of disabilities who are enrolled in mainstream schools, and the diverse population demographics and inclusive school practices in Dubai that involve the employment of shadow teachers, various schools have different recruitment procedures for shadow teachers.

A challenge was in generating common themes, but it also enhanced in producing a complex anticipated description of the phenomenon taking into consideration the specificity of the Dubai context. The participants who were approached were all parents of children with diverse challenges, representing various age groups and schools. Although they did not know one another personally, they possessed extensive experience working with shadow teachers and were well-versed in the regulations, policies, and guidelines of Dubai's schools. A factor that was shared among the participants was their nationality.

According to Creswell (2014) and Polkinghorne (1989), the sample size or optimal number of participants for a phenomenology study is 5 to 25. I have aimed at a sample size of 8 participants (parents of 8 children with SEND from the age of 5 till 14 receiving shadow teachers provision in mainstream schools); both fathers and mothers participated in the interviews. To encourage greater participation and ensure that each participant was at ease, they were given the freedom to select the date, time and place of the interview, whether onsite or online ,what was convenient for them. Prior to commencing the interview procedure, I anticipated the potential challenges associated with the qualitative interviewing process .

Especially, the process of phrasing interview questions in a manner that generates specific responses from participants and is directional, as suggested by Suoninen and Jokinen (2005) and the issue of unbalanced power distribution between the interviewer and the interviewee outlined by Kvale (2006).

With parental approval, documents to validate the provision of shadow teachers in a mainstream such as shadow teachers resume, shadow teacher contract between parents and school, these records were collected as an additional form of data for document analysis validation strategy.

One of the anticipated limitations of this research approach is that participants' responses may be influenced by the researcher's presence and direct interaction. If the participants do not know the researcher, they may feel anxious revealing personal information to an unfamiliar person. If the researcher is not articulate and seem resultant or nervous to provide detailed information, then the data will be inadequate and substandard. By the implementation of ethical protocols it ensures confidentiality and anonymity in accordance with the preference of the interviewee. These concerns can be diminished through implementation of semi-structured interviews employing open ended interview questions , developing a good rapport between the interviewer and interviewee, an informal atmosphere which is relaxed and motivates sincere conversations. Refer to 'Appendix A' for the participants profile and details of the interviews.

3.5 Data Recording Methods

An Parents' interview guide (Appendix B) will be maintained to ensure uniformity in the interviewing process and facilitate data collection. According to Creswell (2014) and Kvale (1996), it must consist of the following components:

- A heading containing essential interview information (date – duration – interview language – interview location – interviewee...)
- An introductory section to establish rapport with the participant, explain the purpose of the study, and obtain consent for the study and their signature. (refer to Appendix C - for parent's consent form)
- Investigation seeking background information about the participant and his/her child.
- Five open-ended specific interview questions, formulated from the research questions. The first two questions: (What is your experience with shadow teachers' provision? How do you describe your experience with the shadow teachers' provision across the different stages you have been through?). Will guide in data collection by constructing a narrative description (the "what") and a structural description (the "how") regarding the participants' experiences with shadow instructors' provision (Creswell 2007).
- The remaining questions will probe for specifics regarding the experiences recounted by the participants. If participants are unable to express themselves clearly, follow-up questions and probes will be employed to rephrase the target question.
- A concluding statement expressing gratitude and recognition for the participant's involvement.
- A sample of LSA / Shadow teacher contract , as part of the documents that will be collected for analysis. – (Appendix D).

Interviews will be recorded after seeking approval and transcription will be done for the analysis of raw data. There could be a need to do a pilot interview guide to refine the questions and improve the interviewing procedures.

A comprehensive understanding of the experiences of parents with SEND regarding the provision of shadow teachers is a potential outcome of the study. This understanding ought to include an in-depth description of the parents' interactions. The data analysis and interpretation in this research will be conducted using a two-tiered approach that combines the general qualitative data analysis strategy with the specific methodology employed in the phenomenological study. An inductive methodology will be utilised to derive more general categories from the specific details extracted from the raw data (Creswell, 2014).

3.6 Data Analysis and Interpretation

A comprehensive understanding of the experiences of parents with SEND regarding the provision of shadow teachers is a potential outcome of this research.

- The first stage is description of the researchers personal experience of the phenomenon through a process called “epoche” or “bracketing” , the preconceived notions regarding the phenomenon must be suspended and the description of the participants experiences must be focused on. Data analysis in transcendental phenomenology , has a significant concern which is referred to by Moustakas (1994) as the process of “bracketing” or “epoche”, which relates to suspending all researcher-generated interpretations and conclusions in order to concentrate on the experiences of the participants.

- verbatim transcription of recordings and typing of all field notes to ensure data is organised and prepared for analysis (Appendix E) – I repeatedly listened to the interview immediately following its conclusion and frequently prior to another interview. As a result, I

was able to employ probes in future interviews that were not initially incorporated into the interview procedure. These probes reflect the evolving design of the qualitative study.

- Conducting multiple reviews and readings of the transcripts in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the interviews before their analysis. The themes were formulated by making notes while reviewing the transcripts.

- Highlighting "significant statements" or key quotations from participants containing explanations of their experiences with shadow teachers' provision, this phase is described by Moustakas (1994) as "horizontalization of the data". The important statements were noted and the process of winnowing the data was performed to eliminate irrelevant data but the meaningful information (Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2012).

- The process of organising the meaningful statements into clusters of information in order to produce themes is known as "meaning units" (Moustakas 1994), here the participants experience and the specific circumstances is considered. This process in qualitative research is termed "categorization" or "coding" by Creswell (2007), the data procured is reduced and assigned themes. According to Creswell, qualitative research can include a range of five to seven themes. In regard to the codes utilised in this phase, emergent codes derived from participant accounts will be employed in place of previously determined codes. Additionally, when applicable, "in vivo" codes, which consist of the participants' precise words, will be employed.

- Writing a "textural description" that describes "what" the participants experienced with the provision of shadow teachers are noted. The direct quotes of the participants are mentioned here.

- “Structural description” (Moustakas 1994), gives an account of the experience encountered by the participant in respect to the setting and the factors that influenced it.
- As a final stage, writing a description of the key main meaning of the experience shared by all participants referred to as “the essence” of the phenomenon (Moustakas 1994).

The data analysis and interpretation in this investigation, which seeks to comprehend the information, will advance along two levels: by combining the general qualitative data analysis approach with the phenomenological study, and by employing an inductive methodology that proceeds from the specific details present in the raw data to more general categories (Creswell 2014). It can be observed that there will be alignment between data collection, data analysis and findings.

3.7 Strategies for Validation of the Findings

Creswell and Miller (2000) identify validity as a benefit of qualitative research. Validity involves assessing the accuracy and credibility of the findings from the perspectives of the participants, the researcher, and the reader. To achieve this, the authors suggest employing various strategies.

Data Triangulation: interview process: Seeking the permission of the participants during the interview, the shadow teachers documents such as resumes, contracts signed by shadow teachers and schools / parent, reports from schools etc , was obtained, document analysis as one triangulation strategy.

(Refer to Appendix A for the Profile of participants, Appendix B for Parents’ Interview Protocol, Appendix C for Parents’ Consent Form, Appendix D for sample of LSA contract, Appendix E for Transcription of Interview - Participant 1 to Participant 8)

- Member checking: In accordance with the interview protocol, I have requested that participants participate in a follow-up phone interview where they can offer their opinions on the primary findings derived from the interview subsequent to my completion of analysis and interpretation. Furthermore, in accordance with their endorsement, correspondence has been established and verification of the results has been concluded.

- Report the findings through the usage of detailed and comprehensive descriptions supported by participant quotations.

- As a researcher I have been mindful of the influence of my personal background and experience on data interpretations and the general biases I might harbour.

- Themes were consistently substantiated with evidence in the form of participant quotations and literal statements.

- For the purpose of determining the reliability of this study I have thoroughly reviewed and verified the interview transcripts for any transcription errors, as recommended by Gibbs (2007). Furthermore, the research reliability was strengthened by a continuous comparison and verification process between the emerging codes and the data, which served to ensure that the definitions of the codes were valid and in alignment.

Gibbs (2007) addresses the generalization in qualitative research, by stating that the objective of qualitative research is not to generalize findings. The significance of qualitative research lies in the unique descriptions and themes that emerge from the experiences of

specific participants. The study seeks to focus on the uniqueness of parents' experiences with respect to the provision of shadow teacher for their child with SEND in a mainstream school.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

In accordance with the principles and guidelines established by the American Psychological Association (2010) and Mertens & Ginsberg (2009), a vigilant awareness of ethical considerations was maintained during the research process, particularly in regard to the obligation of safeguarding the rights of participants. Kvale (2007) specifically identifies interviewing as a "moral" inquiry. It is the duty and responsibility of the researcher to safeguard these rights.

Prior to commencing the research, it was imperative that I, as a registered student at the British University in Dubai, I reviewed the codes of ethics concerning the research conduct, and obtained necessary approvals from the university for the research proposal. Participants were contacted and provided with extensive clarification regarding the objective of the study and their participation level to obtain their verbal consent, approval was sought from the participants, the purpose of the study was informed. They were given the freedom to select the date, time, and location of the interview, whether they preferred online or onsite, all participants sought online interviews.

In accordance with the Sarantakos (2005) guidelines, a consent form was formulated for the research participation prior to the start of the study. Priority was to obtain their informed consent based on their understanding of the study's purpose and ensuring that participants are not at risk by participating in this study, without pressuring them to sign the consent form. As the researcher I ensured that, I adhered to the interview protocol, avoid leading questions, respecting the cultural context and refraining from sharing personal opinions or experiences,

these were in respect to the requirement of "bracketing," which is essential for constructing the meaning . (Moustakas 1994). Participants' privacy and anonymity was protected during data analysis. Being a researcher I followed clear usage of objective and plain language and always adhered to the three APA (2010) guidelines for impartial language regarding the appropriate use of language, sensitivity to labels, and acknowledgment of study participants. The participants were thanked and informed about how the transcripts and information will be used and that under no circumstances will the participants feel exploited.

Adhering to the university's requirements and to fulfil the educational objective for doing this research, for the completion of a Master's degree in Education, with a focus on special and inclusive education, copies of the dissertation will be made available in the library as both physical copies and in a digital database. Regarding data storage, the recordings of interviews and the transcripts of data will be retained and archived for a duration of 5 years, as stated by the American Psychological Association (APA, 2010).

Chapter 4: Findings

The study on parents experience with regards to shadow teachers provision and how they experience this phenomenon , will be discussed in this section based on the interviews with parents. The section will provide the analysis of the interviews' transcriptions, the findings from it will be categorised into themes and sub-themes.

The term, Learning Support Assistant is used by the schools to address the shadow teachers. But the parents still address them as Shadow Teachers, some say the LSA as short form. The word "shadow teacher" will be consistently used throughout the findings section, as it is the preferred term among participants and most families. After identifying and describing the themes, this section will conclude by providing a comprehensive description of the parents' experience. This will be done by making links between the different themes, which is the main outcome of phenomenology. Ultimately, this will help answer the research questions. Prior to delving into the findings obtained from the participants, and in accordance with the practice of 'bracketing out' that is integral to transcendental phenomenology (Moustakas 1997), I will commence by expressing my perspective and interpretation of the provision of shadow teachers.

4.1 Researcher Perspective

With a diverse professional career encompassing work with children who have special needs, I strongly advocate for student inclusion. Reforms must be implemented in policies and systems, and the perception of special needs students as liabilities must be altered.

The parents with special needs children and the child themselves must overcome numerous obstacles in order to enrol in academic institutions. Following the government inspections, educational institutions are adjusting their methodologies. The urgency to find

shadow teachers has resulted from the fact that the school cannot deny admission to the children and the teachers lack the necessary resources to manage them, hence shadow teachers are employed to manage and cater to the SEN child. During the hiring and employment phase , a screening process must be conducted to assess the educational background and qualifications of shadow teachers who seek to be potential mentors for the children , this should be done before they are permitted to work with children. By taking their responsibilities seriously, schools and its stake holders accordingly, must amend the policies, provisions, and regulations. and ease the burden of the admissions process for the students and parents; no child should be left behind.

4.2 Participant Findings

The table presents the themes and sub-themes that emerged from the parental interview , the following is based on the analysis of the data using the interview transcriptions which had important statements made by the participants.

Table 1

Subthemes and Central Themes

Themes	Sub Themes
Theme 1: Roles and Responsibilities of shadow teachers as perceived by Parents	a) Shadow Teacher is necessary b) Understanding what is the role of shadow teacher
Theme 2: The experience of parents regarding the employment of shadow instructors	a) Various employment circumstances and administrative concerns b) Uncertainty regarding the suitability of the shadow teacher selection: "Is it the correct decision?" c) Cost-effectiveness and financial strain d) Retention and turn over

Theme 3: Impact of Shadow Teacher	e) Shadow attributes that are significant to parents a) Respect, Value and acknowledgement b) Inclusion Support c) Protector Role d) "Being a Mediator" between the parents and the school
Theme 4: Parental Recommendations based on experience	e) Dependence and Overreliance f) Language and culture a) The regulatory framework governing the position of shadow teacher b) Training for shadow educators c) Government Aid d) Accountability of schools

4.2.1 Theme 1: Roles and Responsibilities of Shadow Teachers as perceived by Parents

This theme highlights how the parents were introduced to the idea of a shadow teacher for their ward and how they understood and experienced her role.

a) Shadow Teacher is Necessary

Parents spoke about the reasons as to why they had to employ a shadow teacher for their ward. All of them said that the child faced issues in class and was not able to settle hence the school requested for shadow teacher. Admission issues were not informed as they got enrolled without any concerns.

P1 : “But then three months into KG 1, the school enrichment resource center, they called me and said that it seems that He is facing some issues. The second term the school suggested to keep a shadow teacher”.

P2: “So the counselor called me and said that we have to be vigilant and take some action, he is sleeping in class sometimes whole day. So when we asked whats the remedy they suggested that we keep a shadow teacher.”

P3: “So they suggested me to go for an assessment and I took him in the KG 2. I think that was around five and a half years. So they ruled out that no major issues with him and he can go to a normal school. But their recommendation was to have a shadow teacher to support in his learning, to assist him in reading, writing and support him in any kind of issues in school.”

P4: “Like she was stubborn. We tried working with her at home but still no improvement. I knew my child has a problem and when they told school wants a shadow teacher. I was ready for it. I knew what shadow teacher was from another friend so I was aware. Actually happy that she will get help.”

P5: “My child was still in ground zero, she didn't know the alphabets completely of English and neither of Arabic nor of Hindi. Then even with math, she struggled. She didn't know the numbers and she struggled with every subject. That's when shadow teacher was suggested for her from school, to help adjust in class as she was simply going not studying anything.”

P6: “After grade one, there were some behavioral challenges with him. So all those school teachers were telling, it's difficult for them to manage among 30 students in the class, so better to provide a shadow teacher. That's how we started thinking about a shadow. We thought, okay, let him get proper behavioral management in class.”

P7: “Then in KG 1, the teachers called us, they told that he is not sitting at one place and he keep on disturbing the class. Then they said that we need to check with inclusion team, at that point we were also surprised, then we have taken him to one of the psychologist and during the sessions with the psychologist he confirmed that it is a case of ADHD, Attention deficits hyperactivity. Then he asked us to take him to speech therapy and also to occupational

therapy which currently is going through from last two years now. Immediately after the assessment I got a call that we need to keep a shadow teacher.”

P8: “Slowly school said better to do an assessment, we did reluctantly a psychological assessment and we were told he has developmental delay. After few weeks, school suggested a shadow teacher to be with him to help him be part of the class otherwise he was simply sitting in a corner, I thought it was a good suggestion.”

Few parents were aware about their child’s difficulty and was prepared to receive the recommendation from school, they believed that shadow teacher would be a good suggestion.

P4: “Like she was stubborn. We tried working with her at home but still no improvement. I knew my child has a problem and when they told school wants a shadow teacher. I was ready for it. I knew what shadow teacher was from another friend so I was aware. Actually happy that she will get help.”

P2: “So the counselor called me and said that we have to be vigilant and take some action, he is sleeping in class sometimes whole day. So when we asked what the remedy they suggested that we keep a shadow teacher.”

b) Understanding What is the Role of Shadow Teacher

Multiple viewpoints were observed among parents regarding their initial opinion about the services of a shadow teacher and their awareness about the shadow teachers responsibilities towards their children.

From the transcripts we can observe that parents had various reasons to be convinced for a role of shadow teacher, their support, and their expectations were different. I have given sub headings so the reasons mentioned by the parents.

Safety Concerns

P1: “ I didn't care about the studies at all initially, even now or so the first thing I was relieved of was my child's safety. That's where we actually thought of keeping the shadow teacher. I myself had my own struggle also between the family and the school. Because the family is not ready to accept many things and the school is also pushing me to keep a shadow teacher. So I myself had the experience of him once running away from an assembly or something, some gathering happening in the stage area of the school and he was missing. I didn't come to know but later on I came to know that he was between the buses, parked buses. So it took some time for them to find him out. So if the buses started or anything it would have been a very fatal thing. So that is what I thought of, I didn't mind about the academics or anything. So safety was the most important thing.”

Academic Support

P2: “ Provision like shadow teachers give help for children for 8 hours at school. Now at that time she is always with him, helping him stay awake and make him do academics. He was very lazy to writing also, writing also was bad at that time. So she also make help him to do the writing and also everything I think it is a great support for him at that time.”

P4: “Basically for academic support not behavioral. My daughter doesn't have much behavioral issues, very minimal, like it is negligible I can say. But yeah, for academic support we had to keep shadow teacher for her.”

Exam support

P3: “The syllabus is big in the CBSC schools, so he cannot do the same syllabus. He has to have the modified syllabus and he need to have support doing the exams to write and

heneed to have more time to write the exam paper. Teachers said shadow teacher will sit with him and guide for exams.”

Emotional support and Academic support

P5: “Shadow teacher has helped her a lot. She helped her complete all the work. She assisted her in and out like anything. If my child had any problem, she stood by her. And not only that, a kid who didn't know a single Alphabet in English, neither in Hindi or in Arabic, or a single number in math, slowly with shadow teachers guidance she learnt of the letters. She was very moody then. She was taking medicines as well. It was difficult me to handle her. But her shadow teacher took care of everything, even from the homework, even to the test, everything was taken care of.”

Academic support

P4: “Basically for academic support not behavioral. My daughter doesn't have much behavioral issues. Very minimal. Like it is negligible I can say. But yeah, for academic support we had to keep shadow teacher for her.”

Classroom compliance, behaviour and academic support

P8: “We wanted our child to participate in school activities, she made lots of flashcards and brought many stickers to motivate him. He was crying so the playground was given to him as a reward. He could go after , he is does a task without crying, this made him happy. They used the timer system also. He knew the routine slowly and how he has to behave. It took some time but it worked out well. He wouldn't touch his tiffin box initially, then shadow teacher started forming a play date like with other kids and motivated him to share his snacks and make new friends.”

Classroom compliance and integration

P7: “When we started with shadow teacher because what we understand that the kids like my son require some type of a special attention. In the class there is a ratio between teacher and child, so yes my child needs more attention so then we agreed. Shadow teacher is a person who helps him listen and be part of the class.”

Classroom compliance, behaviour and academic support

P8: “We wanted our child to participate in school activities, she made lots of flashcards and brought many stickers to motivate him. He was crying so the playground was given to him as a reward. He could go after , he is does a task without crying, this made him happy. They used the timer system also. He knew the routine slowly and how he has to behave. It took some time but it worked out well. He wouldn’t touch his tiffin box initially, then shadow teacher started forming a play date like with other kids and motivated him to share his snacks and make new friends.”

4.2.2 Theme 2: The Experience of Parents Regarding th Employment of Shadow Instructors

This theme pertains to the employment procedure that parents undergo in order to hire a shadow teacher and is highly specific to the context of Dubai.

a) Various Employment Circumstances and Administrative Concerns

Parents have mentioned about the contracts school, parents and shadow teacher signs. Most of the parents with school support had a good and easy experience but three parents mentioned that they had a difficult time. Sometimes the shadow teachers don’t comply to the contracts and there is discrepancy in what is delievered and what is expected.

P2 : “We have a contract signed by the school and parents ,the shadow teacher salary and how many months are written in it. I have to pay for the full year, all holidays and also when my child is sick and doesn’t go to school, I have to pay the shadow teacher because that’s the school policy and it is written in the contract. One way it’s a way of affirming the shadow teachers presence but for parents it’s a loss money wise.”

P4: “ One drawback I found is , the shadow teacher whom we recruit, they'll just consider this as a stop gap arrangement. Once they get better things they'll move. And maybe the salaries are less so maybe because of that. But once we don't have a strong contract to hold them or it is not like that even though there is any contract , you just can't hold them because this is job which needs lots of love, care, dedication towards the child. So when you are made up your mind that no there is another opportunity which is more far appealing than this, then we can't hold that person that happened to me now, like shadow teacher recently left during the December vacation. She left then I hired one just before starting. One day before she told me that she's got a better opportunity and she can't join. So I had to again start the search process and I had to finalize a person in three days. There is no strong contract within the school also. And again, even the contract is there also. You can't bind them because this is not a job with labour contract or something.”

P6: “ The school didn’t help in finding a shadow, so I started asking around and putting in paper advertisements. The ones who called us were too expensive so we didn't go for a professional shadow, We just got an educated lady with no experience of teaching special kids, she was taking tuitions for children before. The school didn’t have any problem in keeping her, they didn’t have any screening process to know who is good and bad. The contract was just between the parent and shadow teacher, school was not involved .”

Three parents mentioned above , that the contracts were not in tandem to their expectations and the role of the shadow teacher changed from person to person, The expected the school to comply and support. Some were very happy with the process of hiring where as others had concerns.

P1 : “Actually I totally trusted the Authorities at ERC or enrichment resource center. Whatever they were telling and taking decisions I totally accepted it. I never questioned it. I never wanted to know the background of the teachers or I didn't care about it. I totally trusted the department and the contracts they made, frnakly me and my husband never even read it. So they were appointing.They were telling how much I should pay also and I thought that shadow teachers work is monitored . I never asked why you didn't do that, why you can't do this. No, I totally trusted the shadow teacher and who was guided obviously.I was never disappointed by trusting them.”

P3: “Actually I am not able to identify and hire a good shadow teacher on my own. There is no common platform where you identify shadow teacher to hire. Right.I have to depend on the send department, where they are from, the known contacts or who are there in the previous contacts. They help me in identifying the shadow teacher. We signed the contract and I only think I could bear the cost.”

P5: “School has a protocol so when there is a child that teacher suggests the needs counselling or SEN support. With the superviosr, class teacher , parents and inclusiun department, they all have a meeting and sign a contract. There is an open door policy where everything is told before hand, what all will be the assitance given. We are new to the situation and having to give extra therpay at home , extra payment for shadow teacher, all that is difficult to undertstand. An empathetic school and helpful teachers I feel is needed. Give

parents time to adjust. We trust in the school for help and we trust in the contract signed by all.”

Parents were content and grateful for the support in hiring shadow teacher for the students. They trusted that a contract was binding and was formulated to have an organized setting in a mainstream school. From the above comments its can be deciphered that to hire a shadow teacher is a tedious process, parents don't know what to do , they need help. There must be a clear process in schools to implement the employment in a proper sequence. Schools must overlook the entire employment of individuals who ensure the safety and skill development of the children.

b) Uncertainty Regarding the Suitability of the Shadow Teacher Selection: "Is it the correct decision?"

Regardless of the hiring situations, some parents expressed reservations about the appropriateness of the shadow they selected. They were sceptical about the work they do with their child within the class.

P6: “ I couldn't provide for my child a profesional shadow teacher as it was expensive, the school was insisting to keep due to behavioural issues. We kept a lady who was nice but unfortunately I wasn't convinced , what if they will say they will help him but they wont do anything, I don't have any proof, the school also to get help for their teachers they will keep quiet only. I requested once if I can stand outside the class and observe him but school refused. Somehow in my mind I was very doubtful if the shadow teacher was correct for him. Maybe due to lack of guidance and help, the shadow teacher wasn't able to support him in class. She ended up going behind him always, not allowing him to do anything even not making him

open his own tiffin box or take his own pencil box. This was hindering his progress and making him very dependant.”

P3: “ Yeah, actually for parents where they're not exposed to these kind of things. Because in our time, it's not normal to have a shadow teacher because for me, first time I have this experience only with my son, the overall academic experience which I have or in my society I do not know. There is something called shadow teacher and what is their role and all, I am not sure. This part of the world only I get experience. There should be a kind of shadow teacher who works with the child in the class and the school have to bear their cost. It becomes normally a burden for the parent to accommodate the shadow teacher along with their normal school expenses. So they face some kind of mental pressure, one with the child because of their behavior or their abilities and now with keeping an extra person.”

P7: “ First thing is that you have to be very careful when selecting shadow teachers because currently there are many teachers, we are not sure if they are qualified or for a shadow teacher what the course they have done. From my side, we are lucky that we got a very qualified teacher.”

c) Cost-Effectiveness and Financial Strain

A prevalent responsibility that weighs on all parents is the financial remuneration for the shadow teacher . The findings revealed that within schools the figures fluctuate substantially. There is no oversight or regulation from any governing body. According to the survey participants few disclosed their payment amounts, the figures reported were AED 2500, 3000, 3500, 6000 each month. The findings also indicated that the shadow compensation was associated with the educational and qualification background, with more experiences the

amount charged by shadow teacher increases , if the person hiring is individually without school intervention and if a school's assists in hiring then the amount is more or less standard.

P1: "And the cost of keeping a shadow teacher right now for 12 days in a month is 6,000, we are paying 1500 dirhams for 3 days in a week."

P2: "the cost of keeping a shadow teacher is a problem for us because we are paying for the school and again, this additional fees is a lot of expense, we pay AED 2500 for a month."

P3: "It becomes normally a burden for the parent to accommodate the shadow teacher along with their school expenses. So parents face some kind of mental pressure, one is because of the child behaviour or their abilities , next is the payment in the month.

P4: "and for us parents also it's a burden for payment. When it comes to payment because we are paying the full school fee, everything, whatever the school fees is we pay without concession, the activity fees and everything. A to Z, we pay just like the other kids. And also upon that we have to pay the shadow teacher fee also, which is 3500 Dhs. School said because she has done some courses in special education and because of her experience we have to pay this much, we had another option of Dhs 2500 but she doesn't have that much qualification. We choose the person with qualifications. So that is also a drawback where we can't afford, though the shadow teacher deserve more also, we can't stretch too much on the salary part."

P5: " But one drawback If you ask me, it would be the financing because shelling up both for the tuition fee and for the shadow teacher additional 3000 AED , it wasn't easily feasible though we managed it. Some things we had to sacrifice to be able to pay all this. That's the only negative."

P6: “ Yeah, the prime factor is the cost only because first we were afraid. Teachers are asking for shadow, how in a middle family, financially it was not at all affordable because already we are spending a lot for his rehabilitation program. So again, school fees we have to pay then in addition to that, paying a shadow was the most challenging thing for us. But anyway, for the child future we thought of spending that amount but when it is not serving the purpose, then it was making us upset, but now approximately Dhs 3200 I am paying in a month and it is fulfilling all our requirements. It is worth actually.”

Parents commented that were burdened with the cost but they had to commit because their child’s education depended on it and they want them to be integrated into the community just like everyone.

d) Retention and Turn Over

Parents always had concerns whether the shadow teacher will not commit to their role and come during school days to assist the child, this scenario is even after verbal commitment and contract.

P4: “ Yeah, one thing is that shadow teachers have to be hired through school only. Though the fees is charged from parents, they should be enrolled with the school, right now the problem is liability for the shadow teacher. So that will help us renumerize better to the LSA. So even the LSA is happy and there will be no retention problem for the parents.”

P5: “ That happened to me this year , a shadow teacher recently left during the December vacation. She left then I hired one just before the term was starting. Just one day before she told me that she's got a better opportunity and she can't join. So I had to again start the search process and had to finalize a person in three days. There is no strong contract within

the school also. And again, even if the contract is there also, you can't bind them because this is not a job with labour contract or something. They have to do it out of love and affection.”

Parents expressed their helplessness when a shadow teacher abruptly departs without giving them time to look for another person, forcing them to begin the process anew.

e) Shadow Teacher Attributes that are Significant to Parents

Parents unanimously mentioned that the main attribute they were looking for in shadow teachers was being compassionate, caring and dedicated. Someone who would treat their children well and who would create a comfortable and secure environment. Some parents mentioned that the safety of the child was prime not academics, the mental health and social interaction mattered to them the most. A shadow teacher as per parents should be accessible and for these reasons parents did not consider educational competence or experience as a criteria for selecting a shadow teacher.

P8: “ We were very happy with the progress, she used to make worksheets for him separately to do as he wasn't able to do worksheets of the school. She was very dedicated and genuinely wanted my child to progress. We had to pay a lot for the service but seeing the benefits we were happy to do that. Therapy classes he goes in the evening but there he doesn't cooperate much. So I feel he likes the teacher that's why he is doing in school.”

P7: “ What she's sending us feedback daily is in a very detailed way from morning 07:00 am till 01:00 pm and she's not even mentioning only in terms of academic but also at a very personal level, because to handle such kids is not very easy, so this communication is better. So you need more of a personal touch, actually. So shadow teacher is not only a teacher or a guide, sometimes you have to be very strict, you have to manage in a very tactful manner. So I think this journey was definitely a successful one in terms of the improvement for the child.”

P5: “ Shadow teacher has helped her a lot. She helped her complete all the work. She assisted her in and out like anything. If she had any problem, she stood by her. My child was taken well care of with the studies, whatever it is, if she had any problem, if she faced any problem, Shadow teacher made sure that she let me know if she's undergoing any kind of stress, whatever it is. She made sure my child was happy.”

P2: “The thing is the kids has to like the shadow teachers. The main thing is my shadow teacher is very corporate and she is very lovable to my child and he also likes her very much so that it works for him.”

P8: “ We wanted our child to participate in school activities, she made lots of flashcards and brought many stickers to motivate him. He was crying so going to the playground was given to him as a reward. He could go there after he does a task without crying, this made him happy. They used the timer system also. He knew the routine slowly and how he has to behave. It took some time but it worked out well. He wouldn't touch his tiffin box initially, then shadow teacher started forming a play date like with other kids and motivated him to share his snacks and make new friends. She really treated him like her own child.”

P1: “ I totally trusted the shadow teacher, who was guided by the SEN department obviously. She used to give us feedback about his day, even if he had done something not acceptable she would write it in such a manner that we wouldn't feel bad actually. She was very careful she wouldn't upset us with her words or actions. This I am very grateful for her, always a sincere feedback was given but without hurting our feelings. And in the end she would say, I will take care don't worry. This gave me lot of assurance.”

Parents mentioned that shadow teachers who understood the hardship of the parents were considered as an asset. They were grateful for their help.

P4: “Actually this year in the school we have to hire personally , the parent has to hire, school informed. So based on the education background of the CV’s I got I had to choose, I liked a person because she has done her BA course and she has done major is mathematics. So based on her education qualification that is the main thing that I recruited her. And also it's helping in improving my daughters maths actually.”

P8: “The school supported me a lot, the send me the credentials of 2 teachers and asked me to go through them. They were very open minded and requested to come to attend the interview. We were part of the hiring but actually we didn’t do much , after speaking to them we decided on one person who was younger and had done ABA. School also preferred the same person.”

Educational qualifications were important for the parents, having credentials to teach and mentor students were considered as important attributes of a shadow teacher.

4.2.3 Theme 3: Impact of Shadow Teacher

This theme analyses the viewpoints of the parents concerning the impact of the shadow teacher on the inclusion of their children. It explores all of the responsibilities the shadow teacher has accomplished on to facilitate the child's inclusion, as well as any drawbacks that have arisen from their experience with the shadow teacher.

a) Respect, Value and Acknowledgement

Most parents expressed gratitude and valued the shadow teachers commitment, they acknowledged the shadow teacher’s role and contribution in the inclusion journey of their child.

P1: “ I totally trusted the shadow teacher and who was guided obviously.”

P2: “ We also get only positive experience from the shadow teachers. We also get better improvement from this LSA. Even in the behavior also or even in the academic session also they're getting better.”

P3: “He improved a lot with the help of shadow teachers.”

P5: “We as parents are really happy with that provision of shadow teacher. Wonderful.”

P6: “This lady had a good educational background. She was very caring and dedicated , also very hardworking.”

P7: “ At this moment, as a parent, we are lucky because we got this teacher and it was working fine for us.”

b) Inclusion Support

Most parents highlighted the significant impact of the shadow in promoting inclusion, facilitating social interaction with peers, and enhancing communication with both peers and teachers. This was the main area of contribution in inclusion recognised by parents.

P4: “The shadow teachers exact role at school was that, she'll be sitting with my child. During class, if she has any attention issues or her attention becomes weak, that time she constantly prompts her to focus in the class . She also prompts her to complete her work. As I told you before, the remedial sessions, she also gives remedial sessions. She's with her during the exempted periods. So this is how she is accommodating. She gives feedback about whatever happened in the class, daily feedback she gives, and also a weekly consolidated feedback, like her performance, her behavior and what she has to improve on.”

P3: “Shadow teacher helped us in understanding the child's progress in their growth, their necessities, and the update on the daily basis what is happening in the class. So it help us

to help us identify and resolve the issues and to take him to the next level of his behavior or his progress. They play a very key role in the child progress.”

P6: “She is very well equipped with teaching techniques benefitting my child. She's managing very well, making my child independent academically, so he is progressing well. The present shadow is doing good, meaning academic wise, socially etc. She is trying to make him do things independently. She maintains a book where she writes everything. Good communication between parents, school and shadow teacher is there. Now I feel that I wish that I could have got her earlier. It would have been better.”

P7: “ We are lucky that we got a very qualified teacher and she is very prompt, our shadow teacher is very proactive and she is very good in terms of anticipating what my child needs in advance and whatever the preparation required she is ready with it, because the children are already slow, she makes sure work is completed. So that speed she is already managing. So I was very happy.”

P8: “ We wanted our child to participate in school activities, she made lots of flashcards and brought many stickers to motivate him. He was crying so the playground was given to him as a reward. He could go after , he is does a task without crying, this made him happy. They used the timer system also. He knew the routine slowly and how he has to behave. It took some time but it worked out well. He wouldn't touch his tiffin box initially, then shadow teacher started forming a play date like with other kids and motivated him to share his snacks and make new friends. She really treated him like her own child. Also she used to send lots of videos and pictures to us so we could see. But before all this we had asked permission from the school and an agreement that we won't send it to anyone else. We were very happy with

the progress , she used to make worksheets for him separately to do as he wasn't able to worksheets of the school. She was very dedicated and genuinely wanted my child to progress.”

P1: “Definitely, in the early years, shadow teacher has made it possible for him to be part of the school and class activities, I remember for annual day , I wanted him to participate but he couldn't understand the instructions or have the patience to follow instructions, it was a dance routine. She made sure she recorded the song and dance , then trained him daily. He learned it and on the annual day performed independently, I was crying that day, she made it happen for us, that was the first experience for me in terms of inclusion and how important it is to have a person for my son. She has taught many things in the school and then writing the notes for him and then giving a daily report of what happens in the class in each period.”

Majority of parent's acknowledged how the shadow teacher advocated their child's participation in class and with her peers. This confirms that the role of shadow teacher in terms of inclusion is very important.

c) **Protector Role**

A key finding is that multiple parents have expressed that the presence of the shadow teacher in school ensures the safety and emotional well-being of their children.

P1: “ There are many people who think that he is autistic, He also understands this word now. He watches YouTube, he understands the things. He thinks also maybe he is like that. Very recently one child called him that word in the bus. My son said to me, see this child is calling me like this. Autistic! He informed the next day to his shadow teacher and she made sure that she report it to the bus supervisor and the other child was counseled by the teacher. I was happy that he appraoched her that's because he trusted her and knew that she will protect

him but actually he is getting support from everywhere. Now I am thinking, let there be a shadow teacher, even in Grade 7, that way my son will be protected.”

P6: “ One teacher thought he can’t study anything so used to tell the shadow teacher let him color or draw or take him out for walk during classtime. This made me very upset. The shadow teacher refused and told the teacher that he will do the lessons but in simpler form. This made me happy that the shadow teacher stood up for him and explained to the teacher that he can do it.”

Parents were glad that there was someone with their child to stand up for them during a difficult situation, this gave them comfort and relief that their ward is in the right hands.

d) Being a Mediator between the Parents and the School

Parents reported that there was daily interactions with shadows to monitor their child's academic and social progress. There was a communication book which was considered as a means of communication. Parents appreciated the connection that the shadow establishes between them and the school.

P3: “Shadow teacher is very much required for this kind of children because they cannot expressively say anything to parents what is happening in the class. This is my experience, I don't know about the other children in general. So unless they said what happened in the class, you cannot understand what is happening. So shadow teacher plays a key role in understanding the child's progress is their growth, their necessities, and the update on the daily basis what is happening in the class through the communication book. So it help us to help us identify and resolve the issues and to take him to the next level of his behavior or his progress. They play a very key role in the child’s progress.”

P8: “Also she used to send lots of videos and pictures to us so we could see.”

P7: “ Before keeping a shadow teacher, earlier when the child was going to school, we don't know what all he was doing, he is running around all the time the teachers told us. There was some type of miscommunication which was happening between us and the school. Now with the shadow teacher, it's really a good bridge. We know the condition of the child and the shadow teacher is monitoring each and every activity. It's like a balance between the teacher and the SEN department and the parents and even the student itself. So the type of the feedback, what she's sending us daily is in a very detailed way.”

e) **Dependence and Overreliance**

Parents were aware of the shadow teachers importance but they also mentioned that the children were getting too comfortable with having the shadow teachers around them to help and guide them always.

P4: “ My child knows addition, subtraction, division, fractions , she's does multiplication, everything she knows. But even like for example, two plus two, she has a habit of looking at LSA face. This dependency has been created. She's not confident. Here at home or whenever we go out, she's accompanied by us, her parents, and at school she's accompanied by LSA. So that is where I feel like that impact is there. Even for a small thing, she'll look at her face and she'll seek the permission. Now she's ten years old, so I somewhere I feel that she should come out of that.”

P6: “ We just got an educated lady as shadow teacher but with no experience of teaching special kids. From Grade 2 , she was accompanying him, from that shadow teacher experience, I felt like my child was being more dependent on that shadow teacher. Without her prompt he was not able to do anything. So the teachers also, after sometime, they also felt the

same, but that weaning process, being independent from the shadow teacher was a very difficult phase for us at that time.”

P3: “ Shadow teachers they help us in the child's progress during their academics or any other personal needs of the child. However, what I feel that the child is getting used to shadow teachers help. That's where I feel that they have to be independent at some point of time. That is my personal experience, especially with my son. So he does not want to have a shadow teacher, but at the same time he's not able to do it independently. I feel we need to have a balance.”

f) Language and Culture

All the shadow teachers employed by the participants were from Indian origin. Parents spoke commonly about their desire to have shadow teachers converse to their child only in English as they were suggested by many that its better that the child is familiar with one language. So the language preferred by all parents were english.

P7: “ Since in UAE the medium of teaching is most of the time in English, I don't believe that it can be a challenge, even though we speak our local language in our house. But at the same time, we also started to use English as a common language while we are communicating to the child.”

Few parents informed that for male children they preferred if options were there to employee male shadow teachers as the children felt more at ease with male teachers. Based on culture there were no comments or uneasiness about it.

P1: “ He himself likes male teachers. One of his english teacher last year was a male teacher and he keeps on asking why this year he is not teaching and he is telling that in 8th Grade can you request that he will be the english teacher? So there is something about boys

are liking male teachers and especially that person who is understanding his condition and he is very cordial with my child. So that's also why my child likes male teachers.”

P3: “When the child is growing up, especially for a male child, it will be good to have a male shadow teacher, When I say male, why? I'm saying is because he see's his mother at home, he see teachers, they are very soft in nature. But I saw him in other places where I used to take him to therapies and all, where there are male instructors, he connects with them quickly and is scared at the same time.”

4.2.4 Theme 4: Parental Recommendations based on Experience

Parents who have experienced shadow teachers service for over a year have provided valuable advice and suggestions to solve the inadequacies they encountered during the process and enhance the effectiveness of shadow teachers' work.

a) The Regulatory framework governing the position of shadow teacher

Parents requested if the school authorities could formulate or call for measures to regulate the employment of shadow teachers.

These measures include:

- Screening Methods:

Parents were concerned that there is no system for weaning off shadow teacher even after the child has improved.

P2: “ Before Grade 1 and Grade 2 , if you employ a LSA teacher, it will benefit the child, but keeping a shadow teacher for many years, I don't think that's necessary, children wouldn't need it. So there should be a screening process where the child once employed with a shadow is screened every year and if required , then only keep the shadow for the next year.

Now the parents have to suggest and request to wean off the shadow , there is no initiation from school.

- Teachers Involvement is Necessary and Crucial

Parents commented that teachers commitment towards special needs children was limited because there was no supervision or accountability of the teachers by the school management.

P5: In a way it's good that school is providing with such an option for the kids who really needs help. But I would say all the parties should be on the same page because though our class teacher highlighted to us about this issue my child had , I would say unfortunately the teacher wasn't on the same page with us. She didn't teach the child personally. The shadow teacher handled her completely under the supervision of the SEN department.

- Hiring Process

Parents spoke of the difficulties to procure the right kind of teachers for their ward. Every school must have a database for the parents to seek shadow teachers or else the school must provide and not leave it as the responsibility of parents.

P3: “Actually I am not able to identify and hire a good shadow teacher on my own. There is no common platform where you identify shadow teacher to hire. I have to depend on the SEN department, regarding where the shadow teachers are from, they have a few known contacts . They help me in identifying the shadow teacher.”

P4: “ Shadow teachers have to be hired through school only. Though the fees can be charged from parents, they should be enrolled with the school, right now the problem is no liability for the shadow teacher. This will help us parents pay better to the LSA and even the

LSA will be happy. And there will be no retention problem for the parents. This one thing if school can do, it will be very helpful for parents.”

- Option of sharing of shadow teachers within school grades:

Parents suggested that , the child when they come to higher grades feel uneasy having an adult sitting with them so its ideal if a shadow teacher is shared among the children.

P4: “School should allow one shadow to take care of two or three kids . Children who have very less behavioral issues, they can they club up in the same section of class, for example; if in Grade 5 , there are two or three special needs kids and they all have no behavioral issues, only the academic support needed, then they should club those kids and make them sit in one section and a shadow teacher is assigned for all of them and not just one. This will reduce the interdependence on shadow teachers too. The child is also being monitored and at the same time the child is not conscious that there is one teacher sitting with them continuously.”

b) Training for parents:

P7: “ Term wise there was training for mothers and fathers seperately from school. I need a balance between school and house. I want to know how to handle my child and which method is best as I am aware traditional ways are not apt for my child.”

- Creating awareness among parents:

P8: “I would like the school to mention that the special education service is available during the orientation itself, give checklist in the school, clinic, paediatrician , so we will check it ourselves. Give solutions also. I wish I didn’t pamper him much.”

- Training for shadow educators

Parents mentioned the importance of shadow teachers' trainings and they highlighted on the "quality" of the trainings and its benefits for the needs of students with SEND. They requested for school to oversee whether the teacher is acquiring training in timely interventions or not.

P7: "I was lucky I got admission and a good teacher in Kindergarten, but now I am worried about one thing, he will go to Grade 1, Grade 2 and higher grades, if the same shadow teacher continues with him, is she qualified to handle the academic needs. I am not in a position to ask the shadow teacher if she is updating herself in this field. So many new theories and techniques have been established."

P5: "I was happy to know that the school ensures that shadow teachers are trained in special needs courses and is aware of ways to handle my child."

P8: "I selected the shadow teacher based on her experience and qualifications, the resume showed that she had done ABA."

c) **Government Aid**

Parents commented on the importance of government intervention in the provision of shadow teachers and in guiding awareness among parents.

P7: "From government side, if there a campaign or an awareness day done online where parents can attend and take personal guidance it would be helpful. Here awareness days are there but when we approach a clinic the consultation itself is payable. If schools can liaison with clinics and have therapies after school hours that will be good, I don't have a car so taking him to good therapy places is difficult. I take him in the nearest available place for occupational therapy. Also if there are free programs for skill development like to study a

dance or music class not for one or 2 days but a course for the kids to do, I feel a lot of financial burden will be eased from parents.”

d) Accountability

P8: “I would like the school to mention that the special education service is available during the orientation itself. We parents think its fine, our kids will improve in due course of time, from nursery onwards this should be mandatory. We as parents feel we lost time, there should be more articles in newspaper and radio talk show, more brochures etc telling people how to identify. First of all parents think that their child is not like that , it’s difficult to accept , better to give checklist in the school, clinic, paediatrician , so we will check it ourselves. Give solutions also. I wish I didn’t pamper him much. He was our first born after 5 years and we spoilt him lots. I think we parents were not ready to raise a child, when elders say also we didn’t listen. I feel a famous or big entity should tell to all parents and not just within families. 5 years back if someone told my child has delay I would be angry but now I help other fathers and I give good advice.”

P7: “ School should monitor the shadow teacher and give us timely feedback. Credentials must be shared and a contract formed.”

- The Time Frame should be Monitored by School Management:

P7: “In UAE, in terms of challenges, cost is really a big challenge and also the duration the school asks us to keep the shadow teacher. Once we enroll the child with a shadow teacher then we wont be able to wean the shadow teacher from the student.”

P5:” The level of training and supervision received by the shadow teachers should be monitored by the SEN department and there should be an incharge of send departments who

takes care of their activities in the school campus, how they're doing with the child and what they're doing.”

- Parents were Requesting Assistance from School in Regulating the Subject

Notes for the SEN Child in a Mainstream Class.

P1: “ I feel that the shadow teachers as they go to higher grades, the notes and all that are sent by the teachers through the teams nowadays are elaborate and lengthy, they should guide in condensing it in an easy and simpler form for the kids to understand and study. I myself, inspite of having a shadow teacher find it difficult to teach my child during exams. What I try to do is that I write notes, and make the important points for him to remember. I try to make it very simple. Because of my nature, I will not tell the shadow also to do that job. So if the schools make it mandatory to provide simple set of notes for kids to assess and study , the shadow teacher can alongside make just the main points and give, it will be helpful.”

The themes and sub-themes identified and described above highlights the various perspectives of parents with regard to their experience with shadow teachers’ provision in a mainstream school. We can observe the results of these experiences as the success elements , challenges they encountered and recommendations given. The following description synthesises the information and delivers the core “essence” of this experience. All the parents shared a common trait: their steadfast dedication to enrolling their children in a regular school and ensuring they have full access to education. Although the parents did not encounter much rejection throughout the admission process for their children in kindergarten, they faced a hurdle in keeping their children engaged in their classes. In order to ensure that their children remained enrolled in school, their only option was to provide shadow teachers who could offer intellectual, behavioural, and social support.

While striving to implement educational intervention for the youngsters, they also observed notable advancements in their children's progress. All parents expressed their enthusiasm and gratitude towards the shadow instructors and the services they provide. Despite facing challenges, the parents have observed that the pupils have achieved higher grades and improved competency levels, which were first considered unattainable. This progress was made possible by the assistance of the school, shadow instructors, and family participation. Each child possesses distinct characteristic traits and potential. Through combined efforts, we can shape them into resilient, responsible, and capable persons.

Chapter 5: Discussions

The major objective of this study was to investigate and comprehend the experiences of parents of children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) about the provision of shadow teachers in regular schools in Dubai. It can be observed that employment of the shadow educators , contracts, remuneration and training facilities are hugely impacted by the Dubai context. The data received from the parental experiences based on their experiences and perspectives align with findings in the existing literature on paraeducators support. Certain themes that arose from the language, gender and cultural aspect is purely linked to the inclusive education in the Dubai setting. This section delivers a description of the aspects.

This study verified that the employing of shadow teachers is a commonly utilised successful approach by schools to fulfil their responsibility of including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) within the framework of inclusive education. This finding aligns with previous research conducted by Abbott, McConkey, and Dobbins (2011), Devecchi et al. (2012), Blatchford et al. (2009)

In Dubai the parents face the responsibility of procuring , hiring and financing the position of paraeducators to provide support for their children in the mainstream school. This has created immense challenges both emotionally and financially for parents especially those who are from single member working families, these aspects are unique and pertain to the emirates of Dubai. Where as, globally, the main accountability for employing and funding paraeducators is with the government and educational institutions.

During the parental interviews, a prominent issue that was consistently emphasised by all participants was the financial stress they experience and the irregularity in the employment

process. Each institution has its own unique set of procedures and operations. Parents also have concerns about the suitability and safety of their decision when it comes to providing shadow teachers. Parents are hesitant to hire an unfamiliar individual as they lack any references or guidance in the selection process, thereby requiring them to place trust in the person. The accreditation of paraeducators relies solely on trust. Resumes are shared with prospective parents through various outlets such as social media and word of mouth. Parents must choose paraeducators who are affordable for them, as there is no system in place to accommodate the specific requirements. Parents rarely acquire reliable paraeducators that are beneficial for their child when they hire them directly. Parents find it reassuring when the educators are selected from the school database, as these educators come highly rated by their educators.

There is a noticeable change in the trend of paraeducators' profession, as an increasing number of schools in Dubai are now advertising their need for paraeducators. Moreover, this study revealed another facet of the matter with the retention and turnover of employees. This study builds upon earlier research that has examined the problem of paraeducators' retention and turnover (Giangreco, Suter & Doyle 2010), and specifically emphasises the psychological stress experienced by parents. The challenge of finding a substitute shadow teacher for their child at short notice is compounded by the additional cost involved.

Ultimately, the shift in responsibility for choosing shadow teachers resulted in a distinct parent-shadow teacher dynamic that had not been previously addressed in the existing research. Shadow teachers in Dubai have the main responsibility of offering academic assistance, facilitating social interaction, and managing the behaviour of students with special

educational needs (SEND). This aligns with the findings of Webster et al. (2011) in the literature.

The role of the shadow teacher differs from that of the educators in the classroom. The parents emphasised that shadow teachers assume full responsibility for the students, resulting in a limited role for the regular teachers. Literature has highlighted the fact that when a child is assigned to a shadow teacher, the class teacher tends to disregard or delegate complete responsibility to that individual, which is not beneficial for the child. The teacher must diligently monitor and supervise the shadow teacher and mainly delegate work at all times. Gaad's (2004b) research findings indicate that parents express concern about their children being bullied at school. During interviews, some parents provided specific examples of bullying incidents and highlighted how having a shadow teacher ensures the safety of their children and prevents them from being subjected to bullying. Moreover, this study has revealed that a significant proportion of parents acknowledge and value the contribution of shadow teachers in facilitating the integration of their children. The sympathetic and considerate nature of shadow instructors is seen to be a crucial element in their successful connection with students, which is consistent with the findings of Chopra et al. (2004).

However parents mentioned the preference of male teachers when boys proceed to higher grades. they had a more better preference to having male shadow teachers assist them than ladies. but the parents also highlighted the dearth of male shadow teachers in this field. Furthermore, the literature emphasises the importance of teamwork, collaboration, and communication among parents, teachers, and paraeducators to ensure an excellent educational experience.

In conjunction with the elements stated earlier, the literature additionally reinforces the significance of teamwork, collaboration, and communication among parents, teachers, and paraeducators in ensuring a successful experience. The suggestions put up by parents were unique to the circumstances of Dubai, taking into consideration the distinct job circumstances of shadow teachers.

This study analysed individuals who had all experienced the same occurrence, specifically the provision of shadow teachers. The objective was to get insight into the nature of their experience, identify the elements attributing to their success, understand the challenges that they face, and generate recommendations based on their experiences. Although most findings from this study aligned with existing literature, the distinct cultural environment in Dubai and the transfer of the responsibility of recruiting shadow teachers to parents resulted in the emergence of new themes primarily related to additional difficulties faced by parents.

The results of this study provide insights on the accountability of the education system and regulatory authorities.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

The study aimed to understand the viewpoints of parents regarding the inclusion of shadow teachers in regular schools. The results were obtained through the analysis of interviews with parents. The study included a sample of 8 parents of students with SEND. However, the findings of the study are not comprehensive enough to encompass all elements and experiences. The objective of this study, utilising the phenomenology research approach, is not to make generalisations about the findings, but rather to accurately depict the essential characteristics of the experience of a particular set of parents who have received shadow teachers' provision.

This study is bound by some limitations:

According to Creswell (2009), qualitative research should not be considered as a replacement for quantitative investigation. The study is definitely suitable for future research that involves a quantitative investigation.

Additionally, it would be advantageous to visit schools or perform classroom observations that involve a student with special needs who is accompanied by a shadow teacher. This would allow for the incorporation of additional observations and insights regarding the class teacher and shadow teacher responsibilities and duties. Furthermore, conducting a comprehensive review of the perspectives of all stakeholders, such as shadow teachers, class teachers, coordinators, senior leadership teams, and students with special educational needs and disabilities, will help create a more unified and thorough understanding and assessment of the situation.

The primary objective of our study was to analyse the experiences of parents and their perspectives. Although there is still ample need for further exploration, our study has enhanced our comprehension of this subject. Although Dubai has clearly stated directives and principles that are included in every inspection, there remains an ambiguity regarding the consistency among all institutions. The study executed among a specific group of parents has provided valuable insights to be taken into account. However, expanding the poll to a larger community will likely provide even more impressive conclusions. There are significant ethical, accountability, and reliability considerations that are of utmost importance and cannot be ignored. If schools prioritise addressing these gaps and implementing necessary changes, they can significantly impact the inclusion policy and attain success at the foundational level. Parents and students who have experienced challenges can find it profound and enable them to be more successfully assimilated.

Presently, in Dubai, the enrollment or retention of a student with special needs in a school is contingent upon the availability of a shadow teacher. The future of inclusion will be promising if general education teachers have the necessary skills to effectively handle all students in the classroom. It is necessary to implement differentiation and high-quality teaching approaches. It is necessary to establish regulations in the employment and retention process that will assist parents in finding and hiring shadow teachers who are properly prepared and competent to mentor their children. Schools must have peer evaluation systems in which teachers can observe each other's classrooms and validate their teaching methods.

Finally, alleviating the financial strain on parents by offering alternatives and choices in the manner of giving shadow teachers. This research study has the potential to stimulate a reassessment of the provision of shadow teachers and the notion of inclusion in Dubai. The

study also seeks to understand and promote awareness in order to ensure that pedagogical modifications by instructors are effectively applied and improved to enhance student learning and provide additional resources. Having supportive parents is a crucial element.

According to Wise (2009) “Literacy is, in reality, the cornerstone of student achievement, for any student, in any grade”

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Appendices

Appendix A

**Table for participants' profile and the details of the interviews':
Table 2**

Participants

Initial of Participant's Identification	Participant's Profile and child's profile	Details of the Interview (Duration – Setting)
P1	An Indian mother of a boy with ADHD, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder aged 13 years old included in a private mainstream school, Sharjah following, CBSE Indian curriculum in grade 7 with the support of a shadow teacher who is employed by the parents. The parents were given support and assistance while hiring a suitable candidate for the child by the school inclusion department. Mother experienced dealing with 3 shadow teachers, all employed by the parent (without visa) based on contracts between Inclusion department, school, and parent. First shadow teacher supported the child	Duration of Interview- 70 minutes Setting – Online Parent contract with LSA submitted.

for 3 years, KG 1, KG 2, Gr 1. Second shadow teacher supported the child for 1 year in Gr 2. 2 years child was at home during covid, doing online classes alone without support but hardly used to attend classes. Same teacher who supported the child in Gr 2 was reinstated in Gr 5. In Gr 7, another shadow teacher has been appointed now for 3 days a week.

P2	An Indian mother of a boy of 9 years diagnosed with severe epilepsy, on medications for 2 years. Child is studying in an Indian school having CBSE curriculum. In grade 2, the teacher noticed that he used to be drowsy in class, would not write, read, or learn. Assessment was done to reveal child to be dyslexic, because of which shadow teacher was appointed by the parent in Gr 3, with the support of the inclusion department and a contract with the shadow teacher. Mother has experience with dealing with one shadow teacher in Gr 3. Child discontinued shadow teacher when he changed school after covid. He shifted to British curriculum	Duration of Interview- 55 minutes Setting – Online
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where content as per mother was easier for him.

P3	An Indian father of a 11.5-year-old boy diagnosed with ADHD, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder at the age of 5 years. Child is in Gr 4. Going to Gr 5 next month, he is enrolled in an Indian school having CBSE curriculum. The current school he is in, is his second school. Father has experience with 2 shadow teachers who has mentored his child over the years. KG2 - one shadow teacher who was hired without visa, by the parents themselves. Gr 1, Gr 4 – second shadow teacher employed without visa, by the father. The inclusion department helped in hiring the shadow teacher. Gr 2, Gr 3 – child attended online classes during covid without help but he couldn't concentrate.	Duration of Interview- 60 minutes Setting – Online
P4	An Indian mother of a 10-year-old girl diagnosed with Autism, she was in KG1 when she was assessed which led to the school requesting for a	Duration of Interview- 70 minutes

	shadow teacher. Child is currently attending Gr 4 in a British curriculum school where she has been exempted from languages. Mother has experience with 4 shadow teachers. KG1, KG2 – one shadow teacher for 2 years, hired (without visa) by parent with the help of inclusion department. Gr 1, Gr 2 – child did online classes during covid. Gr 3 – child changed school and shadow teacher was hired (without visa) by parent without any help from inclusion department. Gr 4 – the shadow teacher hired left without any information, so parent was distressed and after searching a lot got a person to help her daughter in class, so 2 shadows in this Grade.	Setting – Online
P5	An Indian mother of a 11-year-old girl with rare form of epilepsy causing the child to have difficulties in reading writing concentrating etc. Child was diagnosed in KG 1, while studying in an Indian school having CBSE curriculum. Currently child is studying in British curriculum in gr 6 without help as she has improved. Mother has	Duration of Interview- 65 minutes Setting – Online

experience with one shadow teacher. Gr 2 – one shadow teacher for 1 year, hired, (without visa) by parent with the help of inclusion department. Currently child has no shadow teacher and is doing well in school as informed by the mother.

P6	An Indian mother of a child diagnosed with hemiplegia; he is 10.5 years old studying in Gr 3 in an Indian school having CBSE curriculum. Child required shadow teacher assistance to go to school due to his physical requirements. This is his second school. Mother has experience with 3 shadow teachers. Kg 2 – one shadow hired by parents without visa worked with him in the first school without assistance from inclusion department. Gr 1- one shadow teacher hired by parents without visa worked with him in the first school, without assistance from inclusion department. Gr 2 – one shadow teacher hired by parents without assistance from inclusion department. Gr 3 – shadow teacher hired by parent without visa by the assistance of the inclusion department.	Duration of Interview- 50 minutes Setting – Online
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P7	An Indian father of a child diagnosed with ADHD; he is 5 years old studying in KG 2, in an Indian school having CBSE curriculum. Child required shadow teacher assistance from KG 1 due to his hyperactivity in class. Father has experience with 1 shadow teacher. Kg 1, KG 2– one shadow hired by parents without visa worked with him for 2 years.	Duration of Interview- 50 minutes Setting – Online
P8	An Indian father of a child diagnosed with developmental delay; he is 5 years old studying in KG 2, in an Indian school having CBSE curriculum. Child required shadow teacher assistance from KG 1 as he was crying continuously and refused to participate in class. Father has experience with 1 shadow teacher. Kg 1, KG 2– one shadow hired by parents without visa worked with him for 2 years.	Duration of Interview- 60 minutes Setting – Online

Appendix B

Parents' Interview Protocol

Section 1: Interview Demographics and Introduction

Interview date:

Interview site:

Interviewer:

Participant:

Relationship to child:

Interview duration:

Interview language

Explaining the study purpose:

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this study that aims at exploring and understanding the parents' views on shadow teachers' provision in the mainstream schools. This study is for educational purposes as part of fulfilling the requirements of a master's degree in Inclusive and Special Education.

The interview should take 1 hour to complete.

(Ask if the participant agrees on the use of an audio-recorder during the interview to enable accurate transcription of the interview and hence accurate analysis. And assure the participant that all answers provided are completely

anonymous and confidential. Also, mention to participant if they would like to have a copy of the transcription of the interview, for their reference.)

Informed consent form:

Explain the content of the form and facilitate signature (if approved by participant)

Section 2: Interview Questions

1. Could you give me some background about yourself, your child and his/her journey in general and in school in particular? (Ice-breaking question)

Probe: child age, diagnosis, main needs, schooling history and current schooling status, different provisions offered to the child including shadow teacher provisions (number of shadows throughout the child schooling experience and how long each shadow stayed with the child...). If the participant started to elaborate and talk freely about his/her experience with shadow teachers' provision, allow the time required.

2. What is your experience with shadow teacher's provision?

Probe: What made you to keep a shadow teacher?

3. How do you describe your experience with the shadow teacher provision across the different stages you have been through?

Probe: if positive experience, ask why? if negative experience, ask why? What factors/situations influenced your experience with shadow teachers' provision? How does the shadow teacher contribute to the inclusive education of your child? (Role of the shadow)

4. In your experience, what are the factors that enabled a successful experience with shadow teachers' provisions?

5. In your experience, what are the challenges you have faced with shadow teachers' provision?

Probes for question 4 and 5: In the case where participant was not articulate and did not elaborate on specific details, elicit participant's views on the following aspects:

- *the hiring or recruitment process*
- *the cost of hiring a shadow teacher*
- *shadow teacher's educational background, skills set, experience, age*
- *School collaboration and support*
- *the extent and the level of training and supervision received by LSA*
- *other external providers*
- *Does the gender factor of the shadow pose any challenges?*

- *Language of the child and the language provided by the shadow teacher?*

6. Do you have any suggestions and recommendations to improve shadow teachers' practice in Dubai schools?

7. Do you have any other comments?

Section 3: Wrap - Up

A thank you note and end the interview. Explanation of next steps:

- follow-up phone interview to check the accuracy of the findings from the interview.
- sharing the major findings after the thesis completion

Section 4: Any supportive documents

Log of any documentation provided to be used as document analysis strategy.

Appendix C

Parents' Consent Form for Participation in a Research Study

An Exploratory Study on Shadow Teachers' Provision in mainstream schools in Sharjah :

Parents' Perspectives

Introduction:

My name is Asha Mathew and I'm conducting a research study on " Shadow Teachers' Provision in Mainstream Schools , from the Perspectives of Parents", as a requisite component of the dissertation that I will be submitting to the British University in Dubai in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements of a Master's Degree of Education in Special and Inclusive Education by the mid of March 2024.

You are humbly requested to participate in this study, being a parent of a child diagnosed with special educational needs or disability and has had or is currently having a shadow teacher working with your child. Before agreeing to participate in this research study, it is important that you read the information in this research consent form so you are aware of relevant details about the study and your participation. This research consent form provides in a written format an explanation about the study and the requirements of your participation and that is only if you choose to participate.

Please be informed that you are not bound to any legal obligations nor waiving any legal rights by signing this informed consent form. Your signature and consent solely means that you have received the explanation and information needed about this research study, and that you agree to participate in this study.

You will obtain a copy of this form.

Purpose of the research:

This research study aims at exploring and understanding the parents' views about shadow teachers' provision in mainstream school , including a description of their experience with shadow teacher (s), the potential factors that contribute to a successful provision, the potential challenges that parents might have faced throughout the process, their views on how shadow teaching contributes towards their child's inclusive education and what recommendations parents would like to put forward to facilitate the improvement in the practice of shadow teachers provision and implementation in schools. Please be informed that, as part of this research study, I will be interviewing 8 participants who are parents of students with special educational needs or disability who had one or several shadow teachers working with their child in mainstream schools.

Participation level and Guarantee that participant can withdraw at any time

Participation in this study is voluntary. And you can withdraw at any time you choose without stating the reasons.

If you agree to participate, you will take part in the following activities:

1. An interview (online / in person) of maximum one-hour duration that will take the format of a conversation around the following key questions included in an interview guide:
 - Can you please give me some background about yourself, your child and his/her milestones and academic journey in general and at school in particular?
 - What is the reason for you to get a shadow teacher for your ward ?
 - How do you describe your experience with the shadow teacher provision across the different stages you have been through?

- In your opinion, what are the factors that enabled a successful experience with shadow teachers' provisions?
- With your experience, what are the challenges faced with shadow teachers' provision?
- Having made the decision to facilitate a Shadow teacher for your ward, how does the shadow teacher contribute to the inclusive education of your child?
- Do you have any suggestions and recommendations to improve shadow teachers' practice in schools?

2. With your consent, the interview will be recorded so the information you mention during the interview is accurately captured and analyzed at a later stage.
3. If you wish, you can have a copy of the transcription of the interview.
4. Following the data analysis and interpretation, you will be contacted via phone to have your confirmation on the findings.
5. As per your interest the major findings and conclusions of the study can be shared with you after the dissertation completion and necessary university approvals.

Risks of the study

There are no probable risks in participation for the study. However, in the event you experience any uncomfortable situation while communicating specific details or you might experience fatigue at any stage of the interview, You have the right to interrupt the interview or withdraw from the study at any point of time.

Benefits of the study

Please be informed that there will be no direct or immediate benefits from being in this study.

However, we hope that this study will shed the light on the views of parents on shadow teachers' provision and would contribute towards an improvement of shadow teacher's practice.

Confidentiality

Be assured that all information will be treated with confidentiality and anonymity.

There will be no mentioning of identifying information and pseudonyms will be used in reporting quotes and findings from the interview. The interview's information, transcriptions and the recordings will be stored in a password-protected laptop. Access to this information will only be done by the researcher and will be deleted after dissertation completion.

Contacts

In the case where you have any further questions or queries, you may contact:

- Asha Mathew (the researcher), email: ashandreandrew@gmail.com or mobile number: +971 50 6979269
- Professor Eman Gaad, Dean, Faculty of Education, The British University in Dubai, the Dissertation advisor and supervisor, email: eman.gaad@buid.ac.ae or Tel: +971 4 279 1400 Ext: 436

Date:

Signature of Parents:

Father -

Mother -

Appendix D

SHADOW TEACHER CONTRACT

To avail the LSA / Shadow Teacher Services the parent must submit the Comprehensive Psychological Assessment of the child. Once verified, the school will permit Shadow Teacher Assistance for the student.

The Role of the Learning Support Assistant / Shadow Teacher

- Shadow teaching is a professional service offered to the school and family to better manage the needs of students. The shadow teachers are employed by the parents to guide and assist their ward at the school premises.
- The shadow teacher supports the student in several ways, including filling in the gaps that exist in the learning process, helping the student build self-confidence, promoting interaction in the classroom, and ensuring the student stays focused in class.
- The recommended shadow teacher will be knowledgeable in the specific needs of the child and able to support the child in an inclusive environment.
- The parents benefit because they have daily communication with the appointed person. Additionally, the parents have a sense of safety and security for their child.

The student benefits from the shadow teacher because

- Communication between the shadow teacher, the classroom teacher and the parents are essential when striving for success.
- The student follows regular classroom instruction and interaction with his/her peers.

- The student learns to build on his/her strengths and not his/her weaknesses.
- The student receives educational enrichment.
- The shadow teacher helps provide the students with continuity in their classes and instils responsibility, fosters independence, and encourages learning in their student.
- To help the student build self-confidence as well as to promote positive interaction in the classroom by helping the student focus on important concepts, and over all help the student to develop academic and social skills.

The duties of the Shadow Teacher

- a. Maintains 2 books for communication:
 - Communication Book for Parents
 - Communication Book for Sen department
- b. Day to day activities and work done will be mentioned in both books. It must be daily signed by the parents and shadow teachers.

Every child is unique; therefore, the approach and teaching methods and techniques used by each shadow teacher with each specific student will differ.

Remuneration Procedure:

(Parents will be responsible for the remuneration for Learning Support Assistant provided)

1. The Shadow teacher monthly remuneration will be AED _____ (words and in numbers)

2. The salary will reach the Shadow Teacher by money transfer to their bank account, on or before the first day of the month.
3. Payment will not be applicable for July and August. (summer vacation).
4. In the event the school is functioning for only a few days into a new month, as per ministry regulations, the shadow teacher service will be considered as an entire month.
5. Due to unavoidable situations the shadow teacher is unable to come to school, the student refrains from attending the same.
6. Shadow teacher services once approved, cannot be terminated without permission.

Consent from Parent

I, _____ Parent of _____, Grade _____,
hereby agree and willing abide by the following instructions/ information given
above.

Name:

Mob No:

Submitted: 1. Assessment Report of the Child – Yes / No

Signature:

Date:

Appendix E

Parents Interview Transcription:

Participant 1:

Section 1:

Interview Information

Interview Date:	15 – 02 - 24		
Interview Site:	TEAMS		
Interviewer:	MS. Asha Mathew		
Participant:	P1	Relationship to the	Mother
		Child:	
Interview Duration:	70 minutes		
Language:	English		

Section 2: Interview transcription

Researcher:

Welcome to the study. I'll be asking you a few questions. There are seven questions.

So, let's start with the first question.

Participant: Yes.

Researcher:

Could you give me some background about yourself, your child, and his journey in general and school in particular?

Participant: When he joined in school, we didn't realize that he had some difficulties, Of course he was little bit hyperactive. But that time I also didn't understand what is the meaning of being hyperactive and all. But then he couldn't be controlled by us most of the time running around. He couldn't go to places. There were some difficulties. But we thought that just like any other child who is very naughty, and all will settle down after some time. But then three months into kg one, the school enrichment resource centre, they called me and said that it seems that he is facing some issues. They are also not clear what it is, they doubt certain things. But then it has to be diagnosed. So that's how I took him to a child psychologist, a registered person working in a hospital in Trivandrum. So she saw the child, spoke with the child and came up with the conclusion that he belongs to the ADHD category. So that was her conclusion. And then she said that some therapies could help. So that's how I went to a therapist couple who were running a centre in Trivandrum. But I wasn't so satisfied with it. The earlier decision was to continue in Kerala for about six months and then come here. But I didn't want that because I had an elder child also who has to continue in the school. So, we came back. He continued with the same school.

The second term the school suggested to keep a shadow teacher. So, the ERC department only selected. Though we were paying for it. The ERC department only selected the shadow teacher. And she continued till the grade two. From kg one to grade two. Then in grade three another teacher took over. And grade four was a time when it was a lockdown time. The corona year. Everything went online. So he was at home. He didn't get a proper assistance at home. I, being a teacher, I also couldn't give proper attention because I have to go on with my classes. And he was left alone unless his father is there. He was left

alone. So, it was his decision to attend or not attend classes online. So, a lot of loss of learning happened.

It was a real thing that pulled back all the efforts we had done till then. So even in grade five also, it was hybrid learning. At that time, the school refused to keep the shadow teacher telling that she's a person outside the school staff. But then on my request, later on, the authorities allowed and she joined. So in grade five also, after some time, only towards the end of the year, ma'am was with him. And when he moved to the senior wing in grade 6, one request from my son's side was that he didn't want shadow teacher. I think by that time, he started realizing that it is making him a little bit different from other children. He didn't want to have that embarrassment. So, he started realizing that something was different. That is why somebody is sitting with him. So, he requested I don't want. So, this was one thing that he wanted.

The inclusion department in the senior wing, they also said that if he is asking for such a thing, then why don't we try? But to a great extent, it didn't work out. And for the reason that he was not organized, he wasn't prepared for it. The weaning part didn't happen. Only the online days had a lot of effect on him and he couldn't take care of himself in the class, like keeping the books or writing or anything, he wasn't trained for it. So grade six, it went on like that. We were also feeling like it was soon after the COVID days expenses where we were really bothered about it. And it was not easy to get a shadow teacher in our expenses. And the school also did not force let us try this way, we thought. But in grade seven, right from the beginning, we decided to keep a shadow teacher for two days and is still continuing. Okay, two days per week. So eight days she will be coming for him in a month.

Even this shadow teacher also, though he is very respectful of the lady, he is not so happy with her presence in the class. He's already into that stage where he is having that embarrassment. But he doesn't mind going to the inclusion department, Because he receives help in the exam and in learning. Not that much, but he needs them. He understands that he needs them. So, not so willingly, he keeps the shadow teacher. But slowly and slowly. Earlier, it was very difficult. The moment he sees her, he will go away from her and sit in another corner in the class. So like that, but slowly, slowly. He just recently told when he goes to grade eight also, this teacher won't be there or what? Somewhere he started receiving help also. He requires help even if he says that I don't need a shadow teacher anymore, he needs to be trained. So that is what is happening right now. But in between they are also allowing him to be alone like that.

Researcher:

So, what is his current age? Ma'am?

Participant: He turned 13 years in December.

Researcher:

So, now he's in 7th standard ?

Participant: Yes.

Researcher:

And he's always been in CBSE school?

Participant: Always, in the same school.

Researcher:

So what is your experience with shadow teacher's provision? Like how do you describe your experience with the shadow teachers provision across the different stages you have been through?

Participant: It has been a positive experience, I didn't care about the studies at all initially, even now or so the first thing I was relieved of was his safety. That's where we actually thought of keeping the shadow teacher. I myself had my own struggle also between the family and the school. Because the family is not ready to accept many things and the school is also pushing me to keep a shadow teacher. So I myself had the experience of him once running away from an assembly or something, some gathering happening in the stage area of the school and he was missing. I didn't come to know but later on I came to know that he was between the buses, parked buses.

So it took some time for them to find him out. So if the buses started or anything it would have been a very fatal thing. So that is where I thought of. I didn't mind about the academics or anything. So safety was the most important thing. And one more thing, I being a teacher, I know how the teachers take on such a child so I don't want a complaint from any teachers or any teachers feeling that oh, this child is like this. So someone is there to take care of him in the class. This was the initial thought. All the academics part was secondary only for me. But now it has changed that he is totally on his own, that part of being safe. And I don't have any such thoughts in my mind.

He's always in a safe zone like over the years that has changed. He can manage on his own. Everything. He can go anywhere in the school, come back and all those things. We are not

worried. He is also very sensible in that way about his safety and security. That is not an issue now. Now the part is academics, academic wise, how we can improve. That's it.

Researcher :

So it is more of a positive experience having a shadow experience.

Participant: Always positive experience. I told no, we also have constraints with money. It's not possible for us to keep a shadow teacher every day. He also doesn't want. Yes, he wants himself to be independent. He doesn't know how to become independent. That's the only thing. We just want to be just like other children. But only that he's struggling to become like that.

Researcher:

So, two days is of great help, correct?

Participant: Not much but that's what I can afford also.

Researcher:

And have you had any negative experience with any shadow teacher?

Participant: No, not so far. Nothing.

Researcher:

Now how does the shadow teacher contribute to the inclusive education of your child?

Like the role of the shadow teacher?

Participant: Definitely. In the early years, shadow teacher I think may have taught many things there in the school and then written the notes for him and then giving a daily report of what happens in the class in each period. A book was maintained throughout primary. But is not there right now. I'm also not expecting it. I'm expecting they are also telling Ankit to write which he is not doing.

Researcher:

So, in your experience, what are the factors that enabled a successful experience with shadow teacher provision? is it in the hiring and the recruitment process or the shadow teacher's educational background, the school collaboration support?

Participant: I totally trusted while in primary, I trusted the Authorities at ERC or enrichment resource center. Whatever they were telling and taking decisions I totally accepted it. I never questioned it. I never wanted to know the background of the teachers or I didn't care about it. I totally trusted the department. So they were appointing. They were telling how much I should pay also and I thought that shadow teachers work is monitored . I never asked why you didn't do that, why you can't do this. No, I totally trusted the shadow teacher and who was guided obviously.

Researcher:

So, in your experience, what are the challenges you have faced with shadow teachers provision?

Participant: In between of course mostly these shadow diseases were hired by the inclusion department. But then I was not involved in the process. But there were one or two times they have given me the numbers to call. I tried also. But then later on it ended up

with whom they suggested I totally trusted. Now the lady who is with him was earlier a member of child department. She resigned and went and then later she joined as a shadow teacher. And the cost of keeping right now we are paying 1500 dirhams for eight days.

Researcher:

So, have you felt that as a challenge, like every time paying the shadow teacher is a difficulty?

Participant: It's a challenge but then a lot of changes also with my son's fees. When my eldest son, of course we are paying for his university fees but then for my younger son the fees is waived off. Being only child of mine studying there and so this doesn't seem to be difficult with us. 1500 aed is affordable and though we had initial days of in fact those times it was much before the difficult times, okay. I mean difficult times was a difficult time for everyone in Corona those period. So before that he was taken for therapy for two and a half years. So that was really expensive process. Like for 45 minutes they were taking 200 aed and he had to go through eight therapies a week. So monthly you can imagine around 6000 it will be. And we were paying the shadow teacher also and that was 1500, it was 2500 up to 2800 we paid. So it was a very expensive and challenging time. And very recently in grade six also I took him for therapy on suggestion from department because he had a difficulty with anger management. So we took him for therapy and center only told that it is enough for him and we stopped it because the center only told that he had enough and he is quite okay now.

Researcher:

And does the gender factor of the shadow pose any challenge?

Participant: I don't know. Till now I always thought that ladies would have having more patience with the child though it is not required now he is manageable. He himself likes male teachers. One of his english teacher last year was a male teacher and he keeps on asking why this year he is not teaching and he is telling that in 8th grade can you request that he will be the English teacher? So there is something about know the boys are liking male teachers and especially that person who is understanding his condition and he is very cordial with my child. So that's also. Maybe he likes it.

Researcher:

So, what about the language of the child and the language of the shadow teacher?

Have you felt it like if they are both having similar native languages have you felt it's better? Or is it okay that if they know English it is enough?

Participant: He is more comfortable with english language. He doesn't understand native language much. He started understanding now but he cannot speak. This was for one reason that we focused on one language. He had speech problems and the speech therapist recommended that you better talk to him in one language so that he will be sure of. So that is one reason. But he's comfortable with the English speaking. So, it is not an issue because the shadow teacher also speaks English.

Researcher:

Do you have any suggestions or recommendations to improve the shadow teachers practice in schools?

Participant: I'm not at all an expertise with it. But then I feel that the shadow teachers as they go to higher levels of course the notes and all are sent by the teachers through the

teams nowadays. And it is very elaborate. I myself, in spite of having a shadow teacher also and even in my busy schedule towards the exam, what I try to do is that I write notes, I try to make it very simple. Just instead of writing one sentence, one keyword like that. So, I try to change it. Because of my nature, I will not tell the shadow also to do that job. So, if the shadow teacher can alongside make just the main points and give, it will be helpful.

Researcher:

Do you have any other comments?

Participant: The thing I felt is that He is labelled, okay. He's branded as a child who is going to department . Other children are also aware of, you know, all the children who are going to this room or enrolled in it. They are branded as having some problem. Yes, he is ADHD and he had difficulties. So, we had to face the issue by finding a solution. So, in that attempt, he has become branded and everybody knows, the teachers know and the children knows definitely in the bus also. But many people think that he is autistic, he also understands this word so very much now. He watches YouTube. He understands the things. He thinks also maybe I'm also like that. Because very recently one child called him like that in the bus. See, this child is calling me like this. Autistic. But he is getting support from everywhere. Let there be a shadow teacher, whatever. But then my son will be protected. Anyways, I have benefited only with the shadow teachings.

Researcher:

Do you have any other comments, ma'am?

Participant: This is all I have to say.

Researcher: So, thank you so much for participating in the study.

Participant 2

Section 1: Interview Information

Interview Date:	08 – 02 - 24		
Interview Site:	TEAMS		
Interviewer:	Ms. Asha Mathew		
Participant:	P2	Relationship to the	Mother
		Child:	
Interview Duration:	55 minutes		
Language:	English		

Section 2: Interview transcription

Researcher:

Good morning ma'am. Welcome to the study. I'll be asking you a few questions today and you have any doubts or questions you can just ask me and we can discuss it. So firstly could you give me some background about yourself, your child and his journey in general and school in particular?

Participant: I am mother of a nine year old boy. He had a problem in studies mainly. He had a focus problem and some learning problems also he had in the school. The teachers always complain. He is always sleepy in the class and sometimes dizziness was there particularly he has taken medication for epilepsy. From two years onwards he has taken the medication. After a while we stopped the medicine and again he got back the epilepsy back, so we started medication again. He had many health problems.

At that time of Covid , he was lagging at school when online classes were held. He was very sleepy during online classes and he was sleepy when the school started on site also. The problem was he was not used to any schedule or a routine . When the school started he had to go early morning and he had to take the medication before leaving. Then the teachers told me that we can take the medication at school. But after the medication he feels sleepy at school particularly during class time . So, the counselor called me and told that we as parents have to take some action, and that no one can sleep in the class , he has to attend the class properly. So, we decided that we will assign a shadow teacher for him in the class. This helped him a lot because she used to keep him awake.

Researcher:

So now, ma'am, how old is he now?

Participant: Now he is nine years old , he is in Grade 4.

Researcher:

So, has he changed his school in between?

Participant: Yeah, he could not remember the materials taught in Indian school, so we changed to British curriculum.

Researcher:

So how many shadow teachers has he had?

Participant: He had only one. She is taking tuition for him like a special educator now online.

Researcher:

What is your experience with shadow teachers?

Participant: Provision like shadow teachers give help to children for 8 hours at school.

Now at that time she is always with him, helping him stay awake and make him do academics. He was very lazy to do writing also, writing also was bad at that time. So, she helps him to do the writing. This is a great support for him at that time.

Researcher:

So how do you describe your experience with the shadow teacher provision across the different stages you have been through?

Participant: The thing is that the kids have to like the shadow teachers. The main thing is shadow teacher is very corporate, and that she is very lovable to the children and he also liked her very much so it works for him.

Researcher:

So how does the shadow teacher contribute to the inclusive education of your child? what was the role of the shadow?

Participant: I think for his spellings and academics we don't know how to teach him like that. Now when hearing the word sounds, he can write the spellings. Now he can memorize, and he can write. So that helps for the comprehension for essay writing. Spelling is very poor for my kid at the first time. Shadow teacher helped a lot and the department was giving the parent and her training for that.

Researcher:

So, in your experience, what are the factors that enable a successful experience with providing a shadow teacher? Like is it the recruitment, the hiring of the shadow teacher or the cost of hiring a shadow teacher or shadow teacher's educational qualifications?

Participant: Education qualification. Yeah, they have to know how to teach the child. That is important. But the first thing is how to cooperate with the kid or have a good patience level. That's the main thing.

Researcher:

So, in your experience, what are the challenges you have faced with shadow teacher provision?

Participant: The cost of keeping a shadow teacher is a problem for us because everyone is paying for the school and again, these Additional Fees is a problem. If the school provision was there for the shadow teacher, it was great. Some schools are providing the LSA for the students, they are sharing the LSA also.

Researcher:

And what was about the school collaboration and support and about hiring a shadow teacher? Did the school support you or did you have to find a shadow alone?

Participant: Yeah, always the school counsellors always support us.

Researcher:

And does the gender factor of the shadow pose any challenge?

Participant: We kept a lady only. I think the female teachers will be more well suited.

Researcher:

So, what about the language of the child and the language of the shadow teacher?

Participant: Kids know English very well, everyone talks at home only in English.

Researcher:

So, do you have any suggestions or recommendations to improve the shadow teachers practice in Dubai schools?

Participant: The main provisions, I think the school has to provide the LSA's. I'm suggesting that they can give like English and Math, they can share the teacher. Now the teacher can go to the english class and math , other subjects they can study alone. Don't need shadows for eight hour period. I'm suggesting they need only one or two, period. Now, every parent cannot accommodate the LSA. It's a true fact.

Researcher:

So, if he is keeping a shadow teacher full time, what are the disadvantages you feel that will come?

Participant: Because always they are depending on the shadow teacher, sometimes they also feel now I have something special. Everyone is doing it independently. Why can't I do it independently?

Researcher:

Do you have any other comments regarding the shadow teacher provision? How it is going on in the schools? What can you suggest further?

Participant: Before grade 1 and grade 2, if you put LSA teacher, it will benefit for the kid. Sure. Assured. So, like many years, they wouldn't need it.

Researcher:

So overall it is a positive experience for you?

Participant: Yeah. We also get only positive experiences from the shadow teachers. We also get better improvement from this LSA. Even in the behaviour also or even in the academic session also they're getting better.

Researcher:

Thank you, ma'am, for your participation. Do you want to add anything or tell anything?

Participant: Nothing, that's all.

Researcher:

So, thank you so much for participating in the study. All the suggestions that you've given I think are very helpful.

Participant 3

Section 1: Interview Information

Interview Date:	11 - 02 - 24		
Interview Site:	Zoom - Online		
Interviewer:	Ms. Asha Mathew		
Participant:	P3	Relationship to the	Father
		Child:	
Interview Duration:	60 minutes		
Language:	English		

Section 2: Interview transcription

Researcher:

Welcome to the study, as I mentioned, there are seven questions, let me start with the first one. Could you give me some background information about yourself, your child and his journey in general and school in particular?

Participant: I am a father of three children and this is regarding my elder son. Teachers had identified few suspicions, about his intellectual abilities, especially at the age of four years in the nursery. He was not able to properly communicate with his peers and they said he's not very normal with his friends or his classmates and it is very difficult to identify at this stage.

Then the second observation was that he was not normal. He was not able to write properly, he was not able to speak. He was not able to have a proper eye contact with the teachers. So, they suggested me to go for an assessment and I took him in the KG 2. I think that was around five and a half years. So they ruled out that no major issues with him and he can go to a normal school. But their recommendation was to have a shadow teacher to support in his learning, to assist him in reading, writing and support him to any kind of issues.

He was not having many other issues, only in the writing and reading was having a problem in the mathematics also. So, we continue to have till grade four the shadow teacher. He was studying with the shadow teacher. Shadow teacher was very much helpful. They tried to help him to repeat the topics and revise the same topic. The main teacher said in the class it was necessary to have the shadow teacher for these kind of kids.

Researcher:

So, what is his current age now?

Participant: He's eleven and a half years.

Researcher:

So, is he having any communication difficulties right now?

Participant: No, he do not have any communication difficulty. He improved a lot with the help of shadow teachers. But When you compare with his same-age child, there is one and a half year, two years gap is there in terms of identifying the major issues. The subject, the syllabus is big in the CBSE, so he cannot do the same syllabus. He has to have the

modified syllabus and he need to have support doing the exams to write and he need to have more time to write the exam paper.

Researcher:

In the CBSE syllabus, how long has he been studying?

Participant: He is studying from the kg one CBSE curriculum only. But recently I have changed him to the British Curriculum, from grade five.

Researcher:

So how many shadow teachers did he have?

Participant: Three teachers as of now, shadow teachers.

Researcher:

They have been staying one full year with him, right?

Participant: Yes

Researcher:

So, what is your experience with shadow teacher's provision?

Participant: It is very much required for this kind of children because they cannot expressively say what to parents is happening in the class. This is my experience. I don't know about the other children in general. So, unless they said what happened in the class, you cannot understand what is happening. So shadow teacher plays a key role in understanding the child's progress is their growth, their necessities, and the update on a

daily basis what is happening in the class. So, it help us to help us identify and resolve the issues and to take him to the next level of his behaviour or his progress. They plays a very key role in the child progress.

Researcher:

How do you describe your experience with the shadow teacher provision across the different stages you have been through?

Participant: They help us in the child's progress during their academics or any other personal needs of the child. However, what I feel that the child is get used to shadow teachers help. That's where I feel that they have to be independent at some point of time. That is my personal experience, especially with my son. So, he does not want to have a shadow teacher, but at the same time he's not able to do it independently. I feel we need to have a balance. So, you need to have the on and off support sometimes you need to have the shadow teacher. Sometimes you should make him to do independently without shadow teacher.

Researcher:

So, in your experience, what are the factors that enabled a successful experience with shadow teachers provision?

Participant: Yeah, actually for a parents where they're not exposed to these kind of things. Because in our time, it's not normal to have a shadow teacher because for me, first time I have this experience only with my son, the overall academic experience which I have or in my society I do not know. There is something called shadow teacher and what is their role and all, but I am not sure. This part of the world only I get experience. There should be a

kind of shadow teacher who works with the child in the Class and the school have to bear their cost. It becomes normally a burden for the parent to accommodate the shadow teacher along with their normal school expenses. Right. So, they face some kind of mental pressure, one with the child because of their behaviour or their abilities and all.

Researcher:

In your experience, what are the challenges you have faced with shadow teacher provision?

Participant: Actually, I am not able to identify and hire a good shadow teacher on my own. There is no common platform where you identify shadow teachers to hire. Right. I have to depend on the send department, where they're from, the known contacts or who are there in the previous contacts. They help me in identifying the shadow teacher. I only think I could bear the only cost.

Researcher:

Shadow teacher's educational background skill set, what about the school collaboration and support?

Participant: It is very good. In fact, it's very good. My experience only with the school, the head of the SEN department, helped me a lot to identify the shadow teacher, who are properly qualified teacher and who is suitable for the child as per their difficulties, what they are having.

So, without their support, it is not possible to get it on your own.

Researcher:

So, does the gender factor of the shadow pose any challenge?**Participant:** When the child is growing up, especially for a male child, it will be good to have a male shadow teacher. When I say male, I'm saying he see mother at home, he see teachers. They are very soft. But I saw him in other places where I used to take him to therapies and all. Where there are male instructors, he connects with them quickly.

Researcher:

And what about the language of the child and the language provided by the shadow teacher?

Participant: He speaks in English only and the shadow teacher also. In general, he is good in the understanding, the language is good in communication. He's good in expressing things, whether it is related to the subject or interrelated to general social behaviour. And we prefer English because, Eventually, child has to go and mingle. With the common platform either in the school or in the college or outside the society. So, language is not a barrier.

Researcher:

And regarding the shadow teachers educational background, would you have any preference, their skill set, or age?

Participant: I am not very much particular about the skill set and age. I think they need to have the special training. Definitely. It is not normal for everyone. There is a special skill, to how to deal with these kind of children when there is a difficulties. They need to have special trainings.

Researcher:

So, do you have any suggestions or recommendations to improve the shadow teacher's practice in the schools?

Participant: Yes, definitely, in the sense they must go for a special training. Definitely. But each child is unique. Each child has their own difficulties. But shadow teachers has to understand the child. And I think so for everyone. It is not easy to understand the child. I think in there they need to have a special skills or special training or understanding the child's psychological behavior and his emotional challenges. Even now I'm facing difficulty with my child to understand what is his need. Sometimes he's very good in communication, very good in behaviour. Sometimes suddenly he changes his attitude. So, it's not so easy.

Researcher:

Any recommendation for the schools, what they can do for the shadow teacher provision? Any suggestions that you would want to provide?

Participant: Yes, you need to have the proper assessment of the child. You need to progressively monitor and as I said that the child eventually should be an independent in academics as well as the social behaviour, emotion. Full time you wouldn't need like partially we can keep shadow.

There are provisions where you don't need a full-time shadow teacher for a particular child. There are schools which provides partially also when the child is not having much difficulty, they put one shadow teacher for two or three children and share their cost. It helps the parents also to bear the cost as well.

Researcher:

Do you have any other comments regarding the shadow teachers provision? What can be done? Anything else?

Participant: Shadow teacher, first of all, schools has to see how we can be without shadow teacher. If teachers can manage alone. That is one thing. I see that most of the schools is not having that provision where they may have very less staff in the schools. So, they might increase the number of shadow teacher and then if they want they can charge to the parents the extra amount. I think you can have more in school staff then share the cost.

Researcher:

So overall, what is your feedback about having a shadow teacher?

Participant: Yes, Definitely good. We must have the shadow teachers because the kids need support. We cannot leave them with normal class. Shadow teacher plays a very good role, as per my experience.

Researcher:

Thank you so much, sir, for your time and for participating in the study.

Participant: Thank you very much, ma'am.

Participant 4

Section 1: Interview Information

Interview Date:	29 – 01 - 24	
Interview Site:	Zoom	
Interviewer:	Ms. Asha Mathew	
Participant:	P4	Relationship to the Mother
		Child:
Interview Duration:	70 minutes	
Language:	English	

Section 2: Interview transcription

Researcher:

Welcome to the study. Now we will start asking you a few questions. Could you give me some background about yourself, your child and her journey in general and school in particular?

Participant: I am mother of ten year child, who was diagnosed with mild autism and speech delay. Now she is in grade four. She started a schooling in Indian school, she studied for three years and then I shifted her to the other school because of the proximity, because the school is near to my place and she's going to school with the support of LSA even in, also every passing year I can see a lot of improvement in her in the areas of speech understanding, and like general understanding.

Researcher:

How many shadow teachers has she had?

Participant: From the time she started in Kg 1 to Grade 1, she had two shadow teachers. One worked for two years and one more for one year. And here in the new school, she's having two shadow teachers. After joining here she's been with one year with one teacher and another year with one more teacher.

Researcher:

Okay, so how many years she has had shadow teacher help?

Participant: Totally. It's like she is now under the supervision of four shadow teachers. Like from the start of her schooling.

Researcher:

She's in which grade?

Participant: Now she's in Grade 4, so from the start in between there was Covid. So, there was a two year distance learning. During that time there was no shadow teacher for her. The rest, whatever the schooling she did onsite there were four shadow teachers total.

Researcher:

So, what is your experience with the shadow teacher's provision? Like what made you keep a shadow teacher?

Participant: First, thing is mainly basically for academic support not behavioural. My daughter doesn't have much behavioural issues. Very minimal. Like it is negligible I can say. But yeah, for academic support we had to keep shadow teacher for her.

Researcher:

So how do you describe your experience with the shadow teacher provisions across the different stages you have been through?

Participant: After having a shadow teacher there are two sides also. One thing is first let me tell the positive side. As you know there will be some. She has exemption on languages and all. So, during those periods, she's engaged in a better way.

During remedial sessions, she's been taken through the other, whatever the subjects, whatever she's having. So, the LSA will work on those subjects with her, make her study or whatever the homework or anything is there. Like she'll support on that. And also she'll interact with her to improve the communication. And all this way she is engaged very well. And also, since LSA is there with her always, it is like she's up to date now.

Like whatever the studies and everything. Yes, there is negative part also for everything, even a small thing, though now she knows addition, subtraction, division, fractions she's doing and everything, multiplication, everything she knows. But now, whatever. Even like for example, two plus two, she has a habit of looking at LSA face.

This dependency has created. So, this is where she's not confident. Here at home or whenever we go out, she's accompanied by parents, and at school she's accompanied by LSA. So that is where I feel like that impact is there. Even for a small thing, she'll look at her face and she'll seek permission. Now she's ten years old, so I somewhere feel that she should come out of that.

Researcher:

So how does the shadow teacher contribute to the inclusive education of your child?

Participant: I'll tell you what is the role at school, the class, she'll be sitting with my child. And during the class, if she has attention deficit issues, also in between, her attention becomes weak. That time she constantly means, she prompts her to focus in the class and everything. And she also prompts her to complete her work. And also, as I told you before, the remedial sessions, she also gives remedial sessions. And also she's with her during the exempted periods. So this is how she is accommodating. And also she gives whatever happened in the class, the feedback to the parents, daily feedback she gives, and also a weekly consolidated feedback. Like, how was my daughter's performance? How was her behavior in the class? What did she grasp where she has to improve and everything?

Researcher:

This constant feedback she'll be giving to you, is it in a written format or she tells you, it's a written format?

Participant: Yes, she writes it in the daily log.

Researcher:

So, in your experience, what are the factors that enabled a successful experience with shadow teacher provision?

Participant: This year in the school we have to hire personally, the parent has to hire. So based on her education background like she has done her BA course and she has done major in mathematics. So based on her education qualification that is the main thing that I recruited her. And also it's helping in improving my daughter's maths actually.

Researcher:

So, with the school collaboration and support was it provided in terms of hiring the shadow teacher?

Participant: No, in this school we have to take care of the hiring, hiring process and all means we are shortlisting and then finally they'll just have an interview with them. Once we shortlist them school will have an interview, then they'll get them on board. But in previous school, the Hod used to support in hiring, like finding the right candidate and hiring and also we didn't have to bother on that here but in the school we have to. Different schools have different rules.

Researcher:

So, does the gender factor of the shadow teacher pose any significance to you?

Participant: Yes, for me yes. It is important. It has to be a lady itself because I have a girl child and considering the security of her and also the patience level I feel the ladies do best. I would never prefer a male teacher for her.

Researcher:

In your experience, what are the challenges you have faced with the shadow teachers' provision?

Participant: One drawback I found is, the shadow teacher whom we recruit, they'll just consider this as a stop-gap arrangement. Once they get better things they'll move. And maybe the salaries are less so maybe because of that. But once we don't have a strong contract to hold them or it is not like that even though there is any contract, you just can't hold them because this is job which needs lots of love, care, and dedication towards the child. So, when you are made up your mind that no there is another opportunity which is

more far appealing than this, then we can't hold that person that happened to me now, like shadow teacher recently left during the December vacation. She left then I hired one just before starting.

One day before she told me that she's got a better opportunity and she can't join. So, I had to again start the search process and I had to finalize a person in three days. There is no strong contract within the school also. And again, even the contract is there also. You can't bind them because this is not a job with labour contract or something. They have to do it out of love and affection. So this is a drawback I found, and for us parents also it's a burden for payment.

When it comes to payment because we are paying the full school fee, everything, whatever the school fees, the activity fees and everything. A to Z, we pay just like the other kids. And also upon that we have to pay the shadow teacher fee also. So, that is also a drawback where we can't afford, though the shadow teacher deserves more also, we can't stretch too much on the salary part.

Researcher:

Then what about the language of the child and the language provided by the shadow teacher?

Participant: She speaks in English and even my daughter speaks in English. The LSA converses in English. So there is no challenge with each other. And that is the main criteria also, while looking for LSA, that the language also we check what is comfortable for the child and also the extent and level of training and supervision received by the shadow teachers. There is a department that send department and there is in charge of send

departments who takes care of their activities in the school campus, how they're doing with the child and what they're doing.

Researcher:

Do you have any suggestions or recommendations to improve shadow teacher's practice in Dubai schools?

Participant: Yeah, one thing is that shadow teachers have to be hired through school only. Though the fees is charged from parents, they should be enrolled with the school, right now the problem is liability for the shadow teacher. So that will help us know remunerize better to the LSA. So even the LSA is happy. And there will be no retention problem for the parents. So, this is the one thing if they can do, it will be very helpful for parents.

Researcher:

That is a good suggestion. Do you have any other comments?

Participant: Everything regarding to except this retention problem. Always it's been a good experience, those who have come till now really, supported my daughter well and she's improving. And, also one more suggestion I can give also, school should allow one shadow to take care of two, three kids. Such kids, those who have very less behavioural issues, they can club up in the same section of class. Like for example, if there is a grade five, there will be two or three special needs kids. If they all have no behavioural issues, only the academic support needed, then they should club those kids and make them sit in one section. So that will also make the child feel not more dependent on the LSA. That will make them independent. The child is also being monitored and at the same time the child is not felt that there is one teacher.

That is also one more suggestion I would like to give if KHDA will take it. Also, parents have a problem of money, because schools require LSA support for special needs child, Without LSA support, they'll not get admission because of that parents are waiting, they don't take child to school in Kg 1, kg 2, directly they will go for the admission during grade one. Just to save money. I've seen many parents doing this. Because already parents with these kids, they have to spend on therapies also outside.

Researcher:

Overall, how would you say your experience was? Ma'am.

Participant: It's been positive. It's good. It's going good as of now. I am personally very grateful.

Researcher:

Thank you so much for participating in this study. It has been very enlightening to know a lot of factors that can be taken care of.

Thank you, ma'am.

Participant 5

Section 1: Interview Information

Interview Date:	22 – 02 - 24	
Interview Site:	Zoom - Online	
Interviewer:	Ms. Asha Mathew	
Participant:	P5	Relationship to the Mother
		Child:
Interview Duration:	65 minutes	
Language:	English	

Section 2: Interview transcription

Researcher:

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this study that aims to explore and understanding the parent's view on shadow teachers' provision in the mainstream schools. My first question is, could you give me some background about yourself, your child, and his or her journey in general and in school in particular?

Participant: Good morning, I am a mother of a child, a girl who was identified with a neurological disorder. It was something called Rasmussen's Encephalitis. When she was in kg one, this was identified during her second term. And because of that, she missed most entire second term of kg one. Is it because of that, I don't know or whether she has a disability in studies, which we didn't identify till kg two.

Researcher:

And this was identified later?

Participant: Yeah, this was identified while she was in grade two. Her class teacher itself told us about her disability and we were told to approach the Inclusion department, there they guided us and explained about her difficulties.

She struggled a lot, especially with the languages, because even though she was in grade two then, by the time classmates, they have studied three different languages, like Hindi, Arabic and English. She was still in ground zero, she didn't know the alphabets completely of English and neither of Arabic or of Hindi. Then even with math, she struggled. She didn't know the numbers and she struggled with every subject. That's when shadow teacher was suggested for her. She improved a lot thanks to her help. But my daughter was always crying because she wanted to sleep in class and the teacher was making her do work, she used to complain that she isn't going to school. Later we admitted her in O-level school, first we approached the O-level schools in Dubai, and there, unfortunately, the admissions were denied to her, they never called back after doing assessment for her. The one school said they were willing to give the admission, but on certain undertaking that if she didn't perform that she may have to repeat the grade, which we agreed to. But we didn't get the exemption from Arabic.

Researcher:

What is your experience with shadow teacher's provision?

Participant: To be frank, my shadow teacher, she has helped me a lot because this situation which I was ignorant about, I wasn't either my husband being her parents, we were ignorant about her situation. Though she was growing in front of our eyes, we didn't realize that she has a learning disability.

Once this was highlighted to us by her class teacher, of course, again with the advice of Inclusion head, we agreed for a shadow teacher. And this shadow teacher has helped her a lot. She helped her complete all the work. She assisted her in and out like anything. If my daughter had any problem, she stood by her. And not only that, but a kid also who didn't know a single Alphabet in English, neither in Hindi or in Arabic, or a single number in math, slowly with shadow teachers guidance she learnt of the letters. Of course, yes, I would say I'm at fault because at that time I was working.

I'm not supposed to confess it, I didn't time to take care of her, especially with the studies because it was difficult for me to handle her. She was very moody then. She was taking medicines as well. She was very moody after coming back from office by seeing all this, even I used to flare up. It was difficult me to handle her. But her shadow teacher took care of everything, even from the homework, even to the test, everything was taken care of. We as a parent was really happy with that provision of shadow teacher.

Researcher:

How do you describe your experience with the shadow teacher provision across the different stages you have been through? What factors influenced your experience?

Participant: For us, the weightage would be for the positive factors because my child was taken well care of with the studies, whatever it is, if she had any problem, if she faced any problem, Shadow teacher made sure that she let me know if she's undergoing any kind of stress, whatever it is. But one drawback If you ask me, it would be the financing because shelling up both for the tuition fee and for the shadow teacher, it wasn't easily feasible though we managed it. That's the only negative, I would say.

Researcher:

In your experience, what are the factors that enabled a successful experience with shadow teachers' provision?

Participant: In a way it's good that school is providing with such an option for the kids who really needs help. But I would say all the parties should be on the same page because though our class teacher highlighted to us about this issue, I would say unfortunately the teacher wasn't on the same page. She didn't teach the child personally. The shadow teacher handled her completely under the supervision of the SEN department.

Researcher:

In your experience, what are the challenges you have faced with shadow teacher provision?

Participant: Shadow teachers' provision, I'm not an expert to comment, but as a parent, what I would suggest is it would be better if schools could find a person for the child. The teacher should have the right kind of educational background.

Researcher:

Did the language of the child and the language provided by the shadow, did it matter to you?

Participant: Luckily, they both are from our place, so I didn't have much of a problem, to be frank. But if the teacher would have been from a different place, I don't know how my child would have adapted to it. But then I didn't have any problem regarding language or anything because by then she was kind of fluent in English.

Researcher:

Do you have any suggestions and recommendations to improve shadow teacher's practice in Dubai schools?

Participant: It would be better if qualified teachers were appointed for it because I know that. It would be better if they're educationally qualified rather than taking any random person for it.

Researcher:

Do you have any other comments?

Participant: Yeah, I think the school should have a protocol so when there is a child that teacher suggests the needs counselling or SEN support. With the supervisor, class teacher, parents and inclusion department, they all must have a meeting. There should an open-door policy where everything is told beforehand, what all will be the assistance given. We are new to the situation and having to give extra therapy at home, extra payment for shadow teacher, all that is difficult to understand. An empathetic school and helpful teachers I feel is needed. Give parents time to adjust.

Researcher:

Thank you so much for cooperating with us for the study.

Participant: Thank you

Participant 6

Section 1: Interview Information

Interview Date:	21 – 02 - 24		
Interview Site:	TEAMS - Online		
Interviewer:	Ms. Asha Mathew		
Participant:	P6	Relationship to the	Mother
		Child:	
Interview Duration:	50 minutes		
Language:	English		

Section 2: Interview transcription

Researcher:

Thank you for agreeing to take part in the study, which aims at exploring and understanding the parent's views on shadow teachers provision in mainstream schools. Your first question is. Could you give me some background about yourself, your child, and his or her journey in general and in school in particular?

Participant: Thank you for inviting me for an interview. Regarding me, my professional background is in engineering. But after my child is born, because of his issues. I have to take care of him. I left my career. I started thinking about my child. Doing his physio, all those therapists. Then actually regarding him, I can tell he's now ten and a half years old. And in the uterus itself he had a hemorrhage in the brain. So as a result his right side is weak. He is Hemiplegic, he has got seizure issues also and for the seizures he is taking regular medications now he is going to a normal school.

I started a rehabilitation program from the year one then around two years he started walking independently at Two and a half years, at that age I joined a rehabilitation center in Sharjah there I also joined as the administrator. So, I thought of enrolling him there and together we will be spending morning hours. By that opportunity I got to know more about the field of rehabilitation. I attended many events and met many parents. From the beginning, my child is taking regular physiotherapy, Occupational therapy sessions so now he has improved a lot. Only the problematic thing was the seizures but by God's grace, with all the medications and continuous follow up the seizures are controlled now for around three years and now he is at mainstream school with a shadow teacher support. Actually, after he turned 5 years he started going to regular school but a small one, till grade 3 he studied there he had a shadow teacher from grade 1, in the school the teachers were having concerns in handling him, even the shadow teacher did not know how to handle him. He was going there just for a school atmosphere there was no academic benefit. In grade 4 he got admission in another school, there tha shadow teacher and school has put in a lot of effort and I can see a lot of changes in him.

Researcher:

What is your experience with shadow teachers provision, what made you to keep a shadow teacher?

Participant: After grade one, there were some behavioral challenges with him. So, all those school teachers were telling, it's difficult for them to manage among 30 students in the class, so better to provide a shadow teacher. That's how we started thinking about a shadow. We thought, okay, let him get proper behavioral management in class. The school didn't help in finding a shadow, so I started asking around and putting in paper advertisements. The ones who called us were too expensive so we didn't go for a

professional shadow, We just got an educated lady with no experience of teaching special kids. From the grade two, she was accompanying him, from that shadow teacher experience, I felt like my child was being more dependent on that shadow teacher. Without her prompt or something, he was not able to do anything.

So, the teachers also, after sometime, they also felt the same. But that weaning process, being independent from the shadow teacher was a very difficult phase for us that time. In grade four, we changed the shadow, this lady had a good educational background. She was very caring and dedicated also very hardworking. But she didn't know the tips and tricks to handle my child in a particular challenging situation. We changed her and hired the present shadow. She is very well equipped with teaching techniques benefitting my child. She's managing very well, making my child independent academically, so he is progressing well. So, these are the experiences I got from three different shadows, the first two were teachers taking tuition for the other kids, actually, the school SEN team wasn't that equipped also in the previous school. Now he is settled.

Researcher:

How do you describe your experience with the shadow teacher provision across the different stages you have been through?

Participant: So, during that previous school, and the first shadow, I couldn't provide for my child a professional one as it was expensive, the school was insisting on keeping due to behavioural issues. We kept a nice lady but unfortunately due to lack of guidance and help, she ended up going behind him always, not allowing him to do anything even not making him open his own tiffin box or take his own pencil box. This was hindering his progress and making him very dependant. Second one was also a nice person but not able to show

any child progress. The present shadow is doing good, Like different stages means academic wise, socially etc. She is maximum trying to make him do things independently. She maintains a book where she writes everything. So good communication between parents, school and shadow teachers is there. Now I feel that I wish that I could have got her earlier. It would have been better.

Researcher:

In your experience, what are the factors that enabled a successful experience with shadow teachers provision?

Participant: Good communication is very important. At the time of hiring, they will say yes, they can do it but after a week they get tired and don't show much interest. My child is not handicapped he has a problem, they are feeling pity and sad for him. Teachers also do this when I see that, I feel bad, he is a regular boy with some concerns. Mentally he is very sharp learning, reading is different from mental capacity of child. I don't want teachers looking at him with pity. One teacher thought he can't study anything so used to tell the shadow teacher let him color or draw. This made me very upset. Or take him out for walk during class. The school needs to have a strong inclusion department. There should be monitoring and checking always, also training. The reason why I couldn't provide professional people who knows the ways to handle him is because of money problems. We all come to UAE to survive and for better life, I used to feel bad that I can't support my child. When our financial situation got better I could change school and get more help that carers to him. This new shadow teacher has done many courses in special needs so she knows and tells me also how to work with him

Researcher:

In your experience, what are the challenges you have faced with shadow teachers' provision?

Participant: Yeah, the prime factor is the cost only because first we were afraid. Teachers are asking for a shadow, so how in a middle family, financially it was not at all affordable because already we are spending a lot for his rehabilitation program. So again, school fees we have to pay then in addition to that, paying a Shadow was the most challenging thing for us. But anyway, for the child's future we thought of spending that amount. But when it is not serving the purpose, then it was making us upset, but now approximately 3200 I am paying in a month and is fulfilling all our requirements. It is worth actually. So, the cost is the main thing we faced.

Another thing is finding a suitable person as a shadow teacher. Like first one and second one was they were okay, they were so dedicated. But they were not the right candidates for my son. Maybe they could have managed some other kids very well. I don't know, but for my son they were not the right person. So, that identifying the right candidate we were facing very difficult. Actually, that is one issue that identifying the right candidate school. Helped this time in getting this candidate for.

Researcher:

So, do you have any suggestions and recommendations to improve shadow teachers practice in Dubai?

Participant: All Schools must be able to support the parents in hiring the children and not leave it to them, I had many sleepless nights thinking of where I will find a suitable person, later I settled for whoever I got. This is also possible when everyone in school, like class teacher, SEN department and parents can speak freely. In some schools they don't listen.

Also sharing of shadows must be allowed so a good teacher can provide assistance to atleast 2 or 3 children. My son doesn't need help during some classes, so it's a waste of time simply sitting next to him. Another suggestion is sending the shadows for training. We can pay half and the school can pay half. If that training is done then there is some use in hiring people who are professionally trained.

Researcher:

Do you have any other comments?

Participant: If the government is giving some courses to shadow teachers, free of charge, and some grooming sessions for the shadows, as how it should be in a classroom. That will be helpful.

Researcher:

Thank you so much for cooperating for this interview.

Participant 7

Section 1: Interview Information

Interview Date:	19 – 02 - 24	
Interview Site:	TEAMS - Online	
Interviewer:	Ms. Asha Mathew	
Participant:	P7	Relationship to the Child: Father
Interview Duration:	50 minutes	
Language:	English	

Section 2: Interview transcription

Researcher:

Thank you so much sir for agreeing to be a part of our study. Could you give me some background about yourself, your child, and their journey in general and in school in particular?

Participant: Good evening, I am staying in UAE for the last 20 years. My son, who is a second child my elder is daughter she is in 7th grade now. My son when he was born he was like any normal child. During his growth from the first year he used to keep on running that was a fun thing for him to do we thought. It was quite normal we thought because it was a corona period, at the same age like my other friends kids they are not very much into speech they are not talking at all and then we thought that it is normal, So we just waited for two years, then we enrolled him in a kg when he was three years old.

Then in kg the teachers called us they told that he is not sitting at one place and he keep on disturbing the class. Then they said that we need to check with inclusion team, at that point we were also surprised, then we have taken him to one of the psychologists and during the sessions with the psychologist he confirmed that it is a case of attention deficits hyperactivity syndrome.

Then he asked us to take him to speech therapy and also to occupational therapy which currently is going through from last two years now. Immediately after the assessment I got a call that we need to keep a shadow teacher. So we were not aware what was shadow teacher. Then they explained us that this shadow teacher concept used to support the child to help them to pick up the academic and social aspects actually so we agreed for the shadow teacher and over a period of time we so that he is improving.

Earlier he was not able to speak and he was not able to concentrate but now he is in kg 2 and his academics has improved and come in par with the class. Speech is not developing as required but is better than before.

Researcher:

What is your experience with shadow teachers' provision?

Participant: See as when we started with shadow teacher because what we understand that the kids like my son require some type of a special attention. In the class there is a ratio between teacher and child, so yes my child needs more attention so then we agreed.

Shadow teacher is a person who helps him listen and be part of the class, but I wanted the teacher to include him in everything and not exclude him, I had this doubt and was upset when he was sitting with shadow teacher and the rest of the class is in the playground with the teachers and their friends.

My son doesn't know how to behave sometimes he will hit very hard that is because he can't speak very well and doesn't have patience like other children, he is very impulsive. Shadow teacher is very good, they make sure he does things alone. He likes her and also is scared of her. He will not run when she is there, he does not like to hold the pencil, he bought personal gadgets to help him write. He is a very fussy eater, so she brings food from home to make him eat and teach him to have good manners, say politely, wish teachers etc.

Researcher:

How is your experience with the shadow teacher provision across the different stages you have been through?

Participant: I'm being very specific in terms of UAE where we are sending the kids with paying these hefty school fees and all. So it's definitely an additional burden to us actually. But since we don't have opportunity and most of the schools are pushing this cost to parents, so cost wise, I was little bit not say happy, but it's like additional cost for us in terms of education. But when we started with shadow teacher, in terms of the support what shadow teacher is giving, first thing is that you have to be very careful when selecting shadow teachers because currently there are many teachers, we are not sure if they are qualified or for a shadow teacher what the course they have done. There are many cases which I have heard that just to do some type of work people become shadow teachers. So that should not be there. From my side, we are lucky that we got a very qualified teacher and then she was very prompt. There are two types of shadow teacher. One is that some teachers just follow what the main teacher is saying. It's backward thinking. But for us, luckily our shadow teacher is very proactive and she was very good in terms of

anticipating what my child needs in advance and whatever the preparation required because they are already slow, she makes sure its ready.

So that speed she is already managing. So I was very happy. Before keeping a shadow teacher, earlier when the child was going to school, we don't know what all he was doing, he is running around. There was some type of miscommunication which was happening between us and the school. Now with the shadow teacher, it's really a good bridge. We know the condition of the child and the shadow teacher is monitoring each and every activity. And it's like a balance between the teacher and the SEN department and the parents and even the student itself.

So, the type of feedback, what she's sending us daily is in a very detailed way from morning 07:00 till 01:00 and she's not even, mentioning only in terms of academic, also at a very personal level, because to handle such kids is not very easy, so this communication is better. So, you need more of a personal touch, actually. So not only a teacher or a guide or sometimes you have to be very strict, you have to manage. So, I think this journey was quite, I can say, definitely a successful one in terms of the improvement for the child, actually. But again, as I told you, it depends upon the teacher.

So, we have to be very careful in selecting the teacher. But at this moment, as a parent, we are just lucky because we got this teacher and it was working fine for us. But there should be something for parents to understand how to select teacher or there should be some type of, I cannot say, a program, but school and government should have something. Overall journey for us particularly is very good. Actually.

Researcher:

In your experience, what are the factors that enabled a successful experience with shadow teacher provisions?

Participant: I think it is important to have a very open type of communication between school, shadow teacher and the parents. For me the full support of school was the best part. The teachers explained to me the problems and the solutions. Term wise there was training for mothers and fathers separately. I need a balance between school and house. Many of my friends are not so lucky, we parents are seeing only two children at home, school has thousands of kids with them, what is not a problem for them is a big issue for us parents. School should monitor the shadow teacher and give us timely feedback. Credentials must be shared and a contract formed. We have all this for our shadow. If we were to search for one I would not be able to get an ideal person personally.

Researcher:

In your experience, what are the challenges you have faced with shadow teacher provision, was there any challenges?

Participant: In UAE I told that in terms of challenges, cost is really a big challenge and also the duration the school asks us to keep the shadow teacher. Once we enrol the child with a person then we won't be able to wean the shadow teacher from the student. In smaller classes behaviour issues, in bigger classes its academic support like that also a problem is there and teachers have so much work they don't want to take additional burden. I faced this problem, I hear first good comments during meetings and then when I ask can we wean off the help, teachers will say no. That transparency is not there and I am bound to support my child because he is already labelled. It is a double-sided sword.

Researcher:

Did the gender of the shadow teacher become a challenge?

Participant: No, never

Researcher:

Was the language of the child and the language provided by the shadow? Was it a challenge?

Participant: No. Since in UAE majority the medium is English, I don't believe that can be a challenge, even though we speak our local language in her house. But at the same time, we also started to use English as a common language while we are communicating to child.

Researcher:

Do you have any suggestions and recommendations to improve shadow teachers' practice in Dubai schools?

Participant: The first thing, definitely what I think is the admission of the child is the first problem here, I was lucky I got admission and a good teacher, but now I am worried about one thing, he will go to grade 1 and grade 2 higher grades is the same shadow teacher qualified to handle the academic needs.

I am not confident in asking the shadow teacher if she is updating herself in this field. So many new theories and techniques have been established. Then from government side, if there a campaign or an awareness day where online parents can attend and take personal guidance. Here awareness days are there but when we approach a clinic the consultation itself is payable. If schools can liaise with clinics and have therapies after school hours that

will be good, I don't have a car so taking him to good places is difficult. I take him in the nearest available place for occupational therapy.

Also, free programs for skill development like studying a dance or music class not for one or 2 days but a course for the kids to do. Maybe these all are there but I don't have much information, another matter is the stigma my wife doesn't want to tell anyone that our child is having a shadow she is very upset when children tease him saying he can't sit alone so he has another person. I tell her they are small kids they don't know. As parents of special needs children first we should be strong mentally lot of things upset us. That support is what we are looking at.

Researcher:

And, do you have any other comments?

Thank you so much sir, for cooperating with the interview.

Participant: My pleasure, Thank you !

Participant 8

Section 1: Interview Information

Interview Date:	29 – 02 -24		
Interview Site:	Zoom - Online		
Interviewer:	Ms. Asha Mathew		
Participant:	P8	Relationship to the	Father
		Child:	
Interview Duration:	60 minutes		
Language:	English		

Section 2: Interview transcription

Researcher:

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this study that aims to explore and understand the parent's views on shadow teachers' provision in mainstream schools. Could you give me some background about yourself, your child, and his or her journey in general and in school in particular?

Participant: My child felt like every child, I did not think he has any issues, maybe I am seeing only him. He is my only child. We spoilt him a lot actually. We used to always carry him around so he walked late, spoke late, when my parents used to say talk to him we used to give mobile to occupy him because we both were working and nanny at home was

having work to do so she also kept tv always. So at 2 yrs. only he spoke, he was very shy and did not eat well. We wanted him to go to some sports class but the person there said he is always falling and getting hurt so let him come after 1 year. Then we enrolled him in school when he was 4 years old and within 2 months we got call from supervisor saying child is crying so for long we tried everything please help. He used to fall ill a lot even attendance in school was less. Slowly school said better to do an assessment, we did reluctantly a psychological assessment and we were told he has developmental delay. After few weeks, school suggested a shadow teacher to be with him to help him be part of the class otherwise he was simply sitting in a corner, I thought it was a good suggestion. We didn't know shadow teacher is, so counsellor told us. I was happy for that option. Now it's been one and half years she is with him. My child goes happily to school.

Researcher:

So, what is your experience with shadow teachers' provision? Was it easy to hire a person?

Participant: The school supported me a lot, they sent me the credentials of 2 teachers and asked me to go through them. They were very open-minded and requested to come to attend the interview. We were part of the hiring and actually, we didn't do much, after speaking to them we decided on one person who was younger and had done ABA. The school also preferred the same person. We made a contract where school, me and the shadow teacher signed. The payment amount was fixed. It was a smooth process. One friend told me he had to run around to find shadow teachers as the school said its parents job. He put in WhatsApp group and Facebook for position vacant, I felt very sad for him.

Researcher:

How do you describe your experience with the shadow teacher provision across the different stages you have been through?

Participant: We wanted our child to participate in school activities, she made lots of flashcards and brought many stickers to motivate him. He was crying so the playground was given to him as a reward. He could go he is does a task without crying, this made him happy. They used the timer system also. He knew the routine slowly and how he has to behave. It took some time but it worked out well. He wouldn't touch his tiffin box initially, then shadow teacher started forming a play date like with other kids and motivated him to share his snacks and make new friends. Also she used to send lots of videos and pictures to us so we could see. But before all this we had asked permission from the school and an agreement that we won't send it to anyone else.

We were very happy with the progress, she used to make worksheets for him separately to do as he wasn't able to do worksheets of the school. She was very dedicated and genuinely wanted my child to progress. We had to pay a lot for the service but seeing the benefits we were happy to do that. Therapy classes he goes in the evening but there he doesn't cooperate much. So I feel he likes the teacher that's why he is doing in school.

Researcher:

In your experience, what are the factors that enabled a successful experience with shadow teacher provision? What are the factors? Is it the educational background or the school collaboration or support?

Participant: It's the school completely. It has maintained high standards. Also, the difference is the qualifications of the person. If she knows what to do, then there won't be much trouble. She knows what is good and bad.

Researcher:

In your experience, what are the challenges you have faced with shadow teacher provision? Is it the hiring or recruitment process? Or is it the cost? What was it?

Participant: I would say it's the cost, to pay for the bus, tuition fee, shadow teacher, therapy, his music class. With one person working it's difficult. We have planned to detail having another child till he is settled which I feel will be soon.

Researcher:

Did shadow teachers' educational background or skill set, or is it the experience? Did any of this matter to you?

Participant: Education, is most important. We had an option to pay less for a person who isn't as qualified but we didn't opt for that. We want the best possible for my child. He has to grow into a good student. My wife and I didn't know what to do initially if the school and shadow teacher wasn't there we wouldn't been able to adjust and help him. One thing common is the love for my child, I see that she really likes him and also the class teacher she is so involved. One day shadow teacher was sick and then she did everything that the shadow would do in the class. I observed that the teacher was very involved from the beginning otherwise she won't be able to do so.

Researcher:

Sir, do you have any suggestions and recommendations to improve shadow teachers' practice in Dubai schools?

Participant: I would like the school to mention that this service is available during the orientation itself. We parents think it's ok kids will improve. From nursery onwards this should be mandatory. I read it's easy to mould kids when they are small before 6 years old. We as parents feel we lost time, there should be more articles in newspaper and radio talk shows, more brochures etc telling people how to identify. First of all, if parents think their child is not like that, give a checklist to the clinic, or paediatrician, so we will check it ourselves. Give solutions also. I wish I didn't pamper him much. He was our firstborn after 5 years and spoilt him a lot. I think we parents were not ready to raise a child when elders say also we didn't listen. I feel a famous or big entity should tell to all parents and not just within families. 5 years back if someone told me my child has a delay I would be angry but now I help other fathers and I give good advice. Overall, I would say like, especially for parents who are not aware of such kind of arrangements.

Researcher:

Was gender or language a barrier for you?

Participant: Not at all, we always spoke English at home. The school suggested that we shouldn't allow him to watch YouTube videos or some cartoons as he is speaking those sentences and acting and speaking like them, I mean ascent. He used to say always – don't be mad. we thought some child told him, then I heard him listening to a YouTube channel on my phone and the child was saying this. We have restricted mobile usage a lot but still is there. We don't shout at him or scold him so when the teacher raises her voice he gets so sad. Shadow teacher said that when we are happy we scream and run so she is happy like that he stopped being scared. The shadow teacher is good at tricking kids in a good way.

Researcher:

So, do you have any other comments, or do you have anything to add?

Participant: Shadow teacher service is beneficial but there are factors, like education and mostly school support. Finance is a problem too but if the service is good then it is fine. Otherwise, it's cheating, and not many parents will check too much. Also, these kids don't speak when they come home. How was your day? Good, that is all. So, we don't know anything, I think more can be done in schools to empower mothers, maybe if they exchange mothers in classes instead of shadow teachers we can reduce the cost but schools don't allow mothers I heard. I understand there are limitations.

Researcher:

Thank you, Sir, for your time.