THE INCLUSIVE PRACTICE CONTINUUM: A COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY EXPLORING THE CONCEPTUALISATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN ENGLAND AND BAHRAIN

By

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ABSTRACT

Inclusive education is simultaneously an elusive and ubiquitous term. For decades, the field of inclusion has been dominated by theoretical justifications of this concept. Yet, the field lacks a consensus on its conceptualisation and the practices associated with its implementation. The purpose of this study was to explore universalist teaching approaches that address the needs of diverse learners in a mainstream primary level classroom. Through a comparative case study design, this thesis examined inclusive practices and attitudes towards inclusion in England and Bahrain. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory was used as the theoretical lens for this cross-cultural comparison. Methodological triangulation was utilised for three data sources which were interviews, classroom observations and teacher questionnaires. The results indicated that perspectives of inclusive education were vital to determining its implementation. The national focus in England on special educational needs (SEN) provision shaped schools' practice to be consistent with that view, while in Bahrain participants were lacking knowledge on the national inclusion agenda. Schools in England and Bahrain emphasised community engagement and an inclusive school ethos. The England case study suggested that staff describe positive attitudes towards inclusion in the questionnaire, but this is less evident in the teaching practice they were able to implement. In the interviews, the participating teachers in England and Bahrain both conveyed negative attitudes towards inclusive education, and SEN centric views of inclusion. Participating schools in England predominately enacted inclusion through the use of differentiated instruction within ability groups and teacher's choice of student task, whereas participating schools in Bahrain utilised peer collaborative work and student-centred learning. An operational definition of inclusion is proposed which specifies principles of inclusive practice, and the inclusive practice continuum.

DEDICATION

To the three generations of pioneering women educators in the Kingdom of Bahrain that I am proud to call my family. To Sakina AlQahtani, Moza AlQahtani, and my mother Amal AlQahtani. Thank you for being the inspirational force of my life.

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GLOSSARY

BQA	Bahrain Qualifications Authority
CAT	Communication and Autism Team
CPD	Continuing professional development
DfE	Department for Education
DI	Differentiated instruction
EFA	Education for All
EHC	Education Health and Care plan
EST	Ecological Systems Theory
ILP	Individualised learning plans
IPA	Inclusive pedagogical approach
LA	Local authority
ME	Middle East
MET	Mainstream education teacher
MOE	Ministry of Education
ODI	Operational definition of inclusion
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education
S1	School 1
S2	School 2
S3	School 3
S4	School 4
SEN	Special educational needs

SENCO	Special educational needs coordinator
SET	Special education teacher
TA	Teaching assistant

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

The global pursuit for inclusion formally commenced with the United Nations Salamanca Statement in 1994, which called for the integration of children with special educational needs (SEN) in mainstream schooling (UNESCO, 1994). This agreement, approved by 92 governments, generated an extensive worldwide restructure of education systems. Some countries have been faster than others in implementing this policy. Nations also had different incentives for embracing inclusion which were either driven by the desire to reduce the expenditure associated with segregated special education, or the strive for social justice (Armstrong, Armstrong and Spandagou, 2010). The implementation of inclusive education by developing countries is attributed to the pressures of competing with developed countries. Regardless of the motivations for pursuing inclusive education, the benefits on an individual and societal level are still achieved.

This study explores, through a comparative case study design, how inclusive education is enacted in the two research contexts of England and Bahrain. This includes an examination of national policies, schools' implementation, classroom practices of inclusion, as well as teacher attitudes towards inclusion. Inclusive practice is explored in response to the unique cultural characteristics of each research context. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (EST) is used as the theoretical lens in which all the chapters are articulated, and in which the findings are analysed and illustrated (Bronfenbrenner, 1977; 1978; 1979).

This introductory chapter first provides a background and rationale of the study from the gaps identified in the literature and from my personal and professional perspective, a justification for this comparative inquiry, followed by a background of the education systems in each context, all of which then illustrate the significance of the study. Next, an introduction to the theoretical framework is provided, which is crucial to the way this thesis is designed. The research objectives are subsequently illustrated, and a chapter preview of the thesis is provided.

1.2 Research Background and Rationale of the Study

Since the initiation of inclusive education, the field has witnessed different levels of modifications not only on an educational level, but also on a societal level. Inclusion has influenced changes in policy, structural levels, teacher education, home-school relations, curriculum, and teaching techniques (Strogilos, 2012; Slee, 2013). Throughout the decades, the increase in the global interest in inclusive education led to a surge in research on inclusion. Hernández-Torrano, Somerton and Helmer (2020) indicate that research in inclusive education gradually risen since 1994, and is currently at its peak with over 7000 publications found in the Scopus database related to inclusion.

Research on inclusion has been dominated by theoretical and philosophical justifications (Amor *et al.*, 2018). Yet, some still believe that the status of conceptualising inclusion is vague (Black-Hawkins, 2014a). This could explain the continuous efforts of researchers to engage in theoretical discussions on the meaning of inclusion. Regardless of how inclusive education is defined, it is not simply an educational policy, but represents societal values that seek to combat

the discrimination and marginalisation of individuals. Inclusive education practices therefore need to be considered within the overall cultural context.

Despite thousands of studies in the field, the definition of inclusive education lacks stability, and consequently so does what constitutes inclusive practice (Ainscow, 1999; Spratt and Florian, 2015). Inclusion research comes with minimal direction for how schools and teachers can work towards inclusion in a straightforward manner to aid student skills and attainment (Göransson and Nilholm, 2014b). In Messiou's (2017) literature review of all the articles published within a decade in the International Journal of Inclusive Education, the majority of research focused on disability and/or special needs while only a small percentage focused on pedagogy.

According to Davis and Florian (2004a), a minor number of studies explore teaching techniques for students with SEN, and the authors indicate that more research is required on the teaching approaches appropriate for all learners. Nilholm and Alm (2010) agree and support the pursuit of detailed inclusive classroom practice. Research on teacher attitudes towards inclusion is relatively extensive, yet, it is seldom explored in relation to teacher practices in the classroom. Florian and Linklater (2010) acknowledge the influence of teacher attitudes on the learning opportunities made available for students, therefore suggesting that positive teacher attitudes towards inclusion influence the provision of more effective learning opportunities for pupils. Inclusive education research is at a stage to move beyond theoretical and philosophical interpretations of the term, and instead focus on disseminating and evaluating daily practice and pedagogy in an inclusive classroom.

As for the rationale for the study from my perspective, it was shaped by my personal and professional experience. Subsequently to living in New Zealand for six years to complete a bachelors, post-graduate diploma, and master in education, I relocated to Bahrain and continued working in the teacher training profession for several years. Following that, I was granted a PhD scholarship by my employer the University of Bahrain. My concern for the educational experiences of minority or vulnerable learners initiated when I researched teacher expectations of Muslim students' in New Zealand in mathematics and reading.

My interest in inclusive education more specifically started when I was asked to re-design a course on inclusive education as a staff member at the teachers' college. From then on, my curiosity in the topic immersed me in readings as I sought more information on inclusion. I was particularly interested in finding inclusive teaching practices that I can then share with my pre-service teachers, in order to prepare them to teach diverse learners. I soon came to realise that a large gap exists in the literature in terms of sharing inclusive education teaching practices, and how it is implemented more directly in the classroom. My initial interest and investment in the topic of inclusion, was guided by my intention to provide the student-teachers with a more practical guide for implementing inclusive education in their classrooms. Being a Bahraini national and having a connection to the West through living in New Zealand and England for the majority of my adult life, was further incentive to explore the implementation of inclusion in two contexts.

1.3 Comparative Education

Bray and Thomas (1995, p. 2) define comparative education as 'studies that inspect similarities and/or differences between two or more phenomena'. In this study, the phenomena are inclusive practices and teacher attitudes, and the similarities and differences between them in England and Bahrain. The phenomena explored is between two countries, which is a common unit of analysis in comparative education. It is essential to note that the purpose of this comparative study in England and Bahrain is not for the aim of benchmarking one country to another. That is due to the youth of the education system in Bahrain, given it gained its independence in 1971 after being a protectorate of the United Kingdom (eGovernment, 2019).

The comparison is for the purpose of both countries to learn about the practices of the other, bearing in mind the cultural traditions of each, and how that influences the practice of inclusion observed. Another main benefit of comparative education is that it aids in comprehending our own context, and it facilitates educational growth. This growth is accomplished through the exposure to magnified interpretations of inclusion in the process of comparing countries and cultures (Alexander, 2000).

Alexander (2000) discusses the importance of culture in shaping all interactions and behaviour within the school and classroom. Cultural influences are manifested in the physical surroundings of the school, as well as reside in people's thoughts. The research methods used to explore practices should therefore not only focus on examining observable behaviour. Instead, participants are allowed to engage and rationalise such behaviour, in order for the research more truly to reflect the practices in each country (Alexander, 2000).

Success in inclusion can look very differently in the research contexts given the ideologies, culture, and the various forms of adaptation in the curriculum. It might be worthwhile to examine if certain practices and formalities in the Bahraini culture inhibit the progress of inclusive education policy. Similarly, in England, the interaction between the culture and enactment of inclusion is thoroughly examined, as well the chasm between policy and practice. Understanding the local context of research thus helps in interpreting the practices observed in the school and classroom, so as to attempt to comprehend teacher and student behaviours and internalisations (Booth and Ainscow, 1998).

In order to grasp how a certain education system operates, it is additionally beneficial for comparative education to understand the phenomena within the context of 'international interconnectedness' (Armstrong, Armstrong and Spandagou, 2010, p. x). Globalisation led to an increased association between countries and education systems, and the borrowing of policies and educational plans (Armstrong, Armstrong and Spandagou, 2010). This suggests that researchers in comparative education should not only focus on contextualising policies and practices, but also to consider the influence of globalisation on the specific context.

With the global push for inclusion policy, the issue that many developing countries face is the need to construct an entire inclusive education system, and one of the time-efficient ways to do that is to rely on Western experiences. Western aid usually comes in the form of experts who visit developing countries with the purpose of replicating their Western versions of inclusion (Vislie, 2003). Many countries with intellectual and cultural roots in the UK and the West have assimilated the vast wealth of inclusion documents with little consideration of their unique

cultural context. The speed of implementation of inclusive education and the process of moving from earlier stages of special education and integration towards inclusion, however, largely vary between nations (Ainscow, Dyson and Weiner, 2013).

Similar to many developing countries, Bahrain inherited several of its educational policies from England and other Western countries. For instance, the Bahrain Qualifications Authority (BQA) school evaluation and inspection system was adapted from the evaluation system used by the Office for Standards in Education (OfSTED) in England (BQA, 2010). Kirk (2014) describes Bahrain as an education importer and its reliance on foreign education to be replicated in the Kingdom as it strives to reach high levels of global competitiveness. While Bahrain and many other countries believe this process illustrates modernisation, it could simply be Westernisation.

Armstrong, Armstrong and Spandagou (2010) indicate the danger of implementing inclusion policies without their modification to the social and cultural setting. Although the import of curricula and policy is an efficient way of establishing a country internationally, there are still issues of the suitability of these foreign systems to the local context. This can lead to an adverse reaction or what Kirk (2014, p. 135) describes as 'tissue rejection' in which the host rejects an outside structure. The Education for All (EFA) movement needs to acknowledge that its implementation in developing countries comes with a unique set of circumstances and should respond to the country's history, economy, society, culture, and politics. This also includes a recognition of the voices of locals and their challenges, along with the colonial history (Armstrong, Armstrong and Spandagou, 2010). It is critical for comparative research to prevent the notion of a single definition or perception of inclusive education or exclusion, as well as to

apply the same practice observed in one country in another without consideration of the context (Booth and Ainscow, 1998).

Bahrain's longstanding relationship with England necessitates the exploration of this comparative study in inclusive education. It is vital to explore the progress of inclusion policy in England, and how that influences Bahrain's own practices and educational culture decades after working alongside England and learning from its practices. It is anticipated that England and Bahrain will be at very different stages of implementation, and that the comparison should reflect the unique conditions and state of inclusive education in each country.

1.4 Education Systems in England and Bahrain

It is essential that the education systems of each context are clearly defined. The study takes place in two countries: (1) England, a country in the United Kingdom with a population of 56,286,961 in 2019 (ONS, 2020); and (2) The Kingdom of Bahrain, an archipelago in the Arabian Gulf with a population of 1,501,611 in 2022 (Bahrain.BH, 2022). The education system in England is governed by the Department for Education (DfE) and local authorities (DfE, 2021). Formal education levels in England are divided into two main levels: primary education for ages 4-11 years old, and secondary education for ages 11-18 years old. The education levels are further separated into key stage 1, key stage 2, key stage 3, and key stage 4, as illustrated in Table 1.1. Free education is provided for ages 3-16 in state education, which is publicly funded (UKGOV, no date). Private education is funded through the tuition fees paid by parents or grants (European-Commission, 2019). The core subjects in primary state education in England include: English, mathematics, and science. The foundation subjects

encompass: art and design, computing, history, music, physical education, geography, design and technology, and religious education (UKGOV, 2013).

Bahrain's education system is centrally managed by the Ministry of Education (MOE) (MOE, 2019a). State education in Bahrain is publicly funded and does not charge tuition fees, whereas private education charges tuition fees. All state education is gender segregated in accordance with the cultural values of the country (MOE, 2007), while private education is mostly co-educational with some gender segregated options. Free state education is provided for children ages 6-18 years old. Pre-primary education in Bahrain for ages 5 and below is non-compulsory, and is only available through private education. Formal education in Bahrain is divided to three main levels: primary education (6-12 years old), intermediate education (12-15 years old), and secondary education (15-18 years old). Primary education in Bahrain is further divided into cycle one and cycle two, see Table 1.1. The core subjects taught at state primary schools include: Arabic, English, mathematics, science, Islamic education, social studies, physical education, family education, art, and music (MOE, 2007). Table 1.1 demonstrates a comparison of the educational pathways in each research context.

Table 1.1 Educational ladder in England and Bahrain

England			Bahrain		
Education Level	**Year Level**	**Age**	**Education Level**	**Year Level**	**Age**
Nursery		Under 5	Pre-primary		Under 6
Primary level – key stage 1	1	5-6	Primary level – cycle 1	1	6-7
	2	6-7		2	7-8
				3	8-9
Primary level – key stage 2	3	7-8	Primary level – cycle 2	4	9-10
	4	8-9		5	10-11
	5	9-10		6	11-12
	6	10-11			
Secondary level – key stage 3	7	11-12	Intermediate level - cycle 3	7	12-13
	8	12-13		8	13-14
	9	13-14		9	14-15
Secondary level – key stage 4	10	14-15	Secondary level – technical and vocational – specialised track – advanced track	10	15-16
	11	15-16		11	16-17
Secondary level – sixth form		16-18		12	17-18

(UKGOV, no date; European-Commission, 2019; MOE, 2019b)

In the academic year 2020-2021, the percentage of students identified as having SEN in English state schools is 12.2%, while 3.7% of the total number of students in schools have an Education Health and Care plan (EHC). This group of learners includes students with: profound and multiple learning difficulties; severe learning difficulties; social, emotional and mental health; specific learning difficulties; speech, language and communication needs; visual impairments; autism spectrum disorders; hearing impairments; multi-sensory impairments; physical disabilities; and other difficulties or disabilities (UKGOV, 2020).

The most recent publicly available statistic on SEN in Bahrain is from the academic year 2018-2019 and includes the percentage of students identified as having SEN in Bahraini state schools. Across all levels of state education, 8.72% of students are identified as having SEN. This group of learners includes students with: learning difficulties, intellectual disabilities, Down syndrome, speech and language difficulties, selective mutism, autism, hearing difficulties, visual impairments, and physical impairments. The Ministry of Education in Bahrain

additionally identifies gifted learners as having SEN with 3.3% of students in all state schools are recognised as being gifted and talented learners (MOE, 2019d). The percentages mentioned above do not comprise students who are identified as second language learners or non-Arabic speakers. The status of inclusion and related policies in each country are discussed in more detail in 'Chapter 2: Literature Review'.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The exploration of inclusive practice and pedagogy in-depth within a cross-cultural context is the main contribution of this project to research in the field of inclusive education. The findings have implications for policy and practice in both countries, and more specifically in Bahrain as it is new to inclusion in comparison to England. The conclusions from this project will additionally impact my role as a teacher educator in the only teacher education college in Bahrain. This influences how teacher education programmes are designed and revised to better prepare teachers to teach in inclusive classrooms, and be more mindful and responsive to the diverse abilities in the classrooms. Both initial teacher education and continuous professional development can be reshaped to focus on training teachers on universalist teaching approaches that respond to the needs of all learners.

Identifying the state of inclusive education in Bahrain is additionally vital as inclusion research in the Bahraini context is lacking, and this is the first study to articulate clearly inclusion in the country. Recognising the inclusive efforts of schools in Bahrain is crucial given the recent increase in the diversity of the student population, and the need to accommodate and address these changes. From a cultural standpoint, the study also reveals how the cultures and traditions

of England and Bahrain shape the daily school and classroom practices, how they shape interactions between the teachers and students, and the educational experiences of learners.

The significance of the study is also evident from a methodological perspective. Finkelstein, Sharma and Furlonger (2019) indicate the limited research which explores inclusive practice within the classroom particularly through the use of classroom observations. Saloviita and Schaffus (2016) believe in the value of comparative research between countries exploring teacher attitudes towards inclusive education, in that it potentially reveals the association between teacher attitudes and surrounding social values and principles. Inclusive pedagogy has mostly been explored in the literature through qualitative methods (e.g. Florian and Black-Hawkins, 2011). This study, however, explores inclusive practice and teacher attitudes through interviews, classroom observations and questionnaires. This is illustrated in 'Chapter 3: Methodology'. The methods employed provide a more holistic view of inclusive practice in the participating schools from England and Bahrain by exploring inclusive education practices from a national level, a school level, and a classroom level. The use of Bronfenbrenner's EST adds further to the significance of the study, which is elaborated next.

1.6 Defining the Theoretical Framework

An existing theory constitutes a theoretical framework to illustrate the principles and relationships within a certain phenomenon, and is used to interpret findings (Maxwell, 1996). Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory is utilised to deepen the understanding of inclusive education practices within the different cultural contexts of England and Bahrain (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The Ecological Systems Theory (EST) is defined as:

> the scientific study of the progressive, mutual accommodation between an active, growing human being and the changing properties of the immediate setting in which the developing person lives, as this is affected by relations between these settings, and by the larger contexts in which the settings are embedded (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 21).

The main principle behind the theory is that human development should be examined beyond the immediate environment which contains the individual, such as the home or school. The reciprocal interactions between the individual and the environment should be explored, as opposed to only examining the influence of the environment on the developing person (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). The ecological environment is illustrated as concentric circles, otherwise described by Bronfenbrenner (1979) as a set of Russian dolls in which the developing person is at the centre of the model, followed by the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem (Figure 1.1). The principles of this research are guided predominantly by Bronfenbrenner's EST as opposed to the Bioecological Model, and therefore excludes the additional ecosystem 'chronosystem', which was later added to the original theory. The four ecosystems are described as follows:

1- The macrosystem represents larger societal and religious values either present formally or informally that influence the other systems (exo-, meso-, micro-), which then influence the developing person (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Macrosystems can largely differ from one culture to another and are described by Bronfenbrenner (1977) as 'blueprints' to a society, they comprise '… the economic, social, educational, legal and political systems…' (p. 515).
2- The exosystem involves distant settings that although do not directly interact with the child, still influence the microsystems involving the developing person (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

‘These structures… encompass… the world of work, the neighbourhood, the mass media, agencies of government… and informal social networks’ (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, p. 515).

3- The mesosystem is referred to as ‘a system of micro-systems’ (Bronfenbrenner, 1978, p. 6). It consists of the relationships between different microsystems, such as the connection between the school and parents and the level of parents’ involvement in the child’s school life (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

4- The microsystem involves the immediate setting which contains the developing person. This level comprises different interactions that occur between the child and the settings that have a direct influence on his/her life, such as the school and the family (Bronfenbrenner, 1978; 1979).

The comparative nature of this study and its exploration of inclusive practices in the two cultures of England and Bahrain aligns with the EST. Bronfenbrenner (1977) endorses cross-cultural studies as they examine the overarching cultures and their influence on the developing person, rather than the unidimensional examination of the characteristics of the individual. Anderson, Boyle and Deppeler (2014) indicate that inclusive education is not only an educational policy, but also represents a societal concept and exists in the macrosystem level. Most studies on inclusive education naturally explore its function and interactions in different levels of the environment (Mahlo, 2013). That is due to the overall cultural values in the macrosystem which are likely to intercept to other levels of the ecological environment, and influence interactions between people in the ecosystems within. Singal (2006) suggests that using Bronfenbrenner’s EST enables a deeper analysis of inclusive education, and how the different factors within the systems eventually contribute to inclusion, as well as how these factors are shaped by socio-cultural circumstances.

The ecological framework helps identify the contributing environmental characteristics to inclusive practices on a national level, school level, and classroom level. Schools are not independent entities but function within a community, within religious and societal values, and within national and international policies. That is why EST significantly aligns with this comparative study, as it explores the meaning and practice of inclusive education in the two environments of England and Bahrain. The cultural assumptions of each country are expected to influence inclusive practices that are implemented within the environment of the developing person who is a child in a primary level classroom, and how his/her learning experience is influenced by inclusion policy. This research does not particularly investigate the behaviour and attributes of the developing person; however, the child remains at the centre of the model as this research explores inclusive practices that eventually influence the child's development.

Anderson, Boyle and Deppeler (2014) propose the Ecology of Inclusive Education Framework, which is based on the EST. This framework is used to guide the exploration of inclusive education practices at each of the ecosystems in this thesis (Figure 1.1). The systems of the ecological environment include the following:

1- Macrosystem: consists of the overall cultural values and traditions that influence the other ecosystems. These include: the curriculum, the education system, and national policies (Anderson, Boyle and Deppeler, 2014). The implementation of inclusion policy is examined nationally in England and Bahrain to evaluate the nationwide response to diversity.

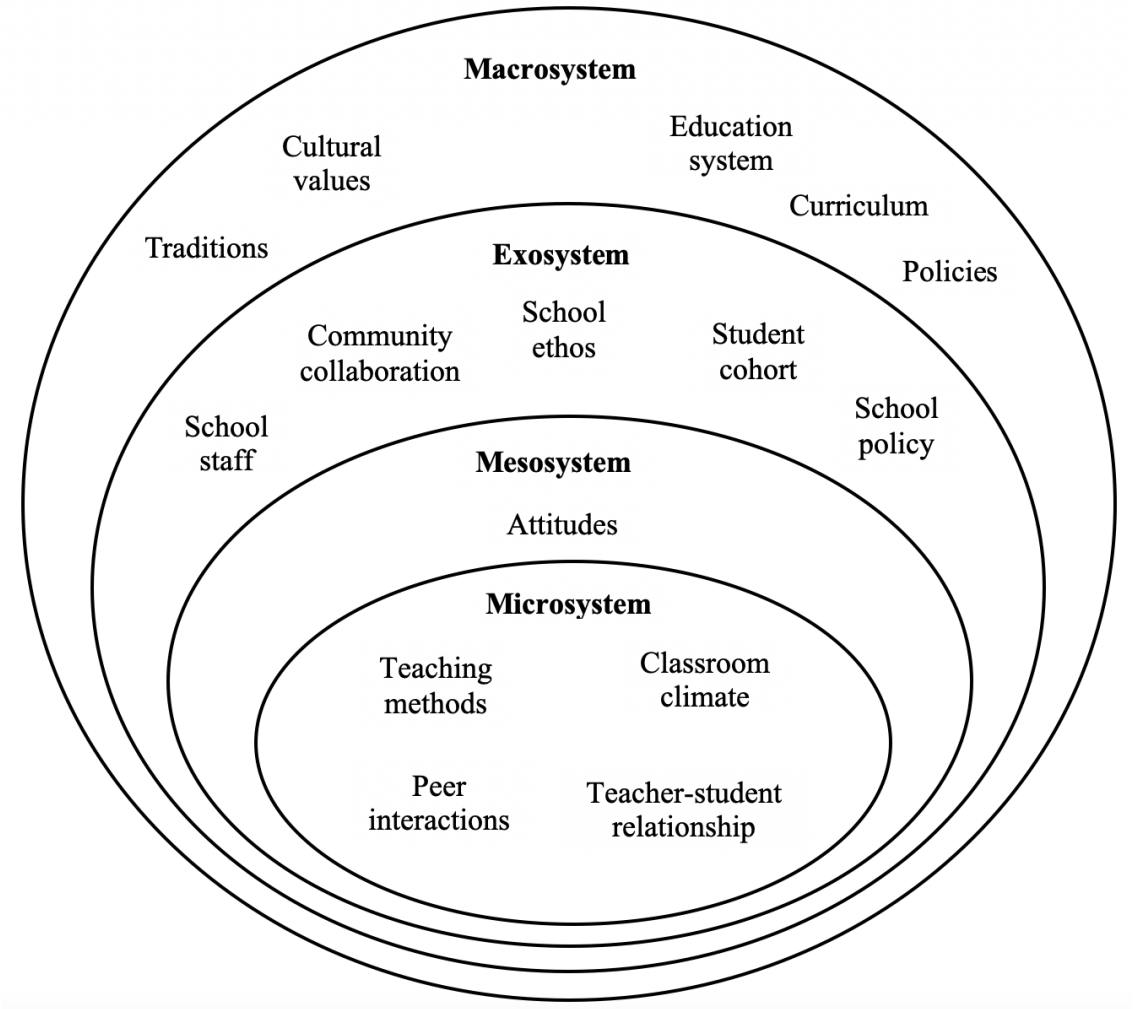
2- Exosystem: this level involves systems that do not interact with the learner in a straightforward manner, yet still influence their educational experience. These include: school staff, school climate, school and community collaboration, school guidelines, and the student cohort (Anderson, Boyle and Deppeler, 2014). This thesis explores schools' interactions and

relationships with the surrounding community such as: the Ministry of Education, local authority, other institutions, and school's relationship to other schools in the community. This level also investigates inclusive practices implemented at the school level including: home-school relations, school policies, staff interactions, and school ethos.

3- Mesosystem: this level involves the interactions between all the different systems mentioned above in which the learner is directly or indirectly present. This research examines teacher attitudes towards inclusive education at this level, as it illustrates the relationship between two or more microsystems.

4- Microsystem: this level involves the learner and any learning experiences that occur with the teacher, the classmates, other school staff, the physical learning environment, and the classroom climate (Anderson, Boyle and Deppeler, 2014). This thesis explores all the different elements involved in the inclusive classroom including: teaching practices, classroom environment, peer relations, and teacher-student interactions.

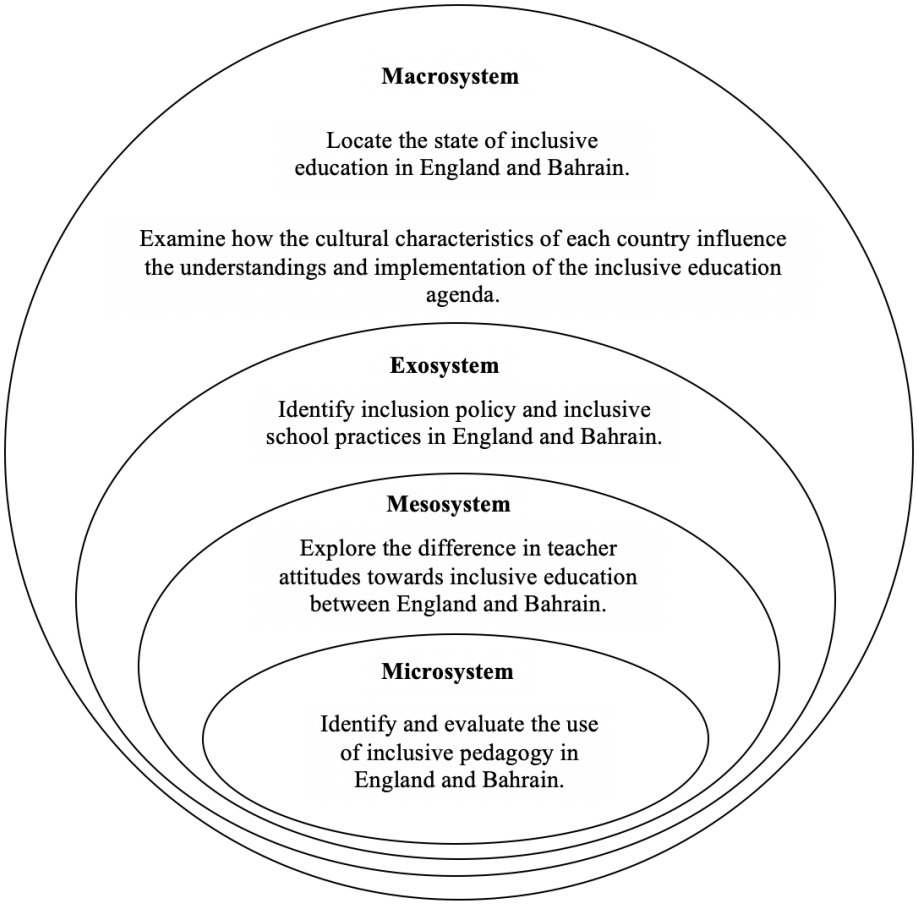
Figure 1.1 Inclusive education through the EST lens



1.7 Research Objectives and Chapters Preview

The aims of this research are aligned to the ecological environments (Figure 1.2). This illustrates that the exploration of inclusive practice in each country elicits from broader societal values and traditions of the macrosystem, all the way to practices in the immediate microsystem setting containing the developing child. An overview of each chapter is provided which demonstrates how the theoretical framework determines the organisation of this research project.

Figure 1.2 Research objectives



Chapter 1: Introduction. Bronfenbrenner's EST is central to how each chapter in this research is articulated, as the chapters explore inclusive practice from broader macro level influences to micro level factors.

Chapter 2: Literature Review. This chapter illustrates the themes that emerge from the review of inclusive education literature, and how the literature corresponds to each ecosystem. The macrosystem frames inclusive practices from a national standpoint by conceptualising inclusion from the related terms of special education, integration, and special educational needs (SEN).

Educational policies related to inclusion and SEN in England and Bahrain are then examined to deduce the national approach to inclusive education. The exosystem represents inclusive practices on a school level and different interpretations of an inclusive school such as a school with: a high enrolment of learners with SEN, an inclusive school ethos, collaborative staff, a suitable infrastructure for learners with physical disabilities, resource rooms, and strong school leadership. The mesosystem section interprets the role of teacher attitudes towards inclusive education in the successful implementation of inclusion. The microsystem defines inclusive practice followed by an examination of the most common inclusive practices in the literature.

Chapter 3: Methodology. The philosophical assumptions which determine the methodology of the research are first examined, followed by the research design, and a description of the participants of the study. Then each of the data collection instruments are discussed in detail and how they are influenced by the theoretical framework of this research, and they are: semi-structured interviews with the school leadership, unstructured teacher observations and follow-up interviews, and the teachers' questionnaire. The chapter outlines the translation requirements of the research project, validity and reliability, data analysis plan, and ethical considerations.

Chapter 4: Qualitative Findings, England Schools. School 1 (S1) and school 2 (S2) in England are introduced, followed by outlining the six themes and 26 sub-themes and how they fit within the macro-, exo-, meso-, and microsystems. The chapter then defines each theme and sub-themes for S1 followed by S2, supported with the relevant participant quotes. Lastly, a chapter summary is provided that compares the qualitative findings from S1 and S2.

Chapter 5: Qualitative Findings, Bahrain Schools. A brief description of school 3 (S3) and school 4 (S4) in Bahrain is provided, followed by outlining the six themes and 28 sub-themes and how they fit within the ecosystems. The chapter then defines the themes and sub-themes for S3 followed by S4, supported with the relevant participant quotes. A chapter summary is provided that compares the qualitative findings of S3 and S4.

Chapter 6: Quantitative Findings, Teachers' Questionnaire. The findings obtained from the teachers' questionnaire are examined. The chapter first investigates the mean differences in the seven questionnaire subscales between England and Bahrain, to determine where the reported teacher attitudes and use of inclusive teaching strategies are higher. Second, it explores the relationships between all the subscales to determine whether there is a correlation between teacher attitudes and inclusive practices. Lastly, responses to the open-ended question of the questionnaire are demonstrated.

Chapter 7: Discussion. The operational definition of inclusion (ODI) is introduced which is used to evaluate inclusionary and exclusionary practices. The findings from England and Bahrain are combined into main themes which are articulated through the four ecosystems. The macrosystem explores knowledge of national inclusive policies, whether practices are shaped by special education practices or inclusion, and inclusive practice within curriculum and pedagogy. The exosystem investigates the schools' perspective of inclusive education, inclusive school ethos, beyond school collaboration, and responding to student diversity. The mesosystem examines teacher attitudes towards inclusive education, expectations for students, and attitudes of other stakeholders in the school community towards inclusive education. The microsystem inspects the use of ability grouping versus mixed ability grouping, peer

collaborative work, co-teaching practices, differentiated instruction, pedagogical diversity and practices as indications of attitudes.

Chapter 8: Conclusion. The conclusion chapter deliberates the contribution of this research to the field of inclusive education and in particular how the study contributes to theory, methodology and practice. The limitations of the project, directions of future research, and final reflections are also discussed. The chapter proposes an addition to the ODI which specifies principles of inclusive practice on a school and classroom level, and the inclusive practice continuum.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

A central theme of this literature review is to unravel inclusive education practices on a national level, a school level, and a classroom level; as well as illustrate inclusion from a Western standpoint compared to a Middle Eastern perspective. A Middle Eastern (ME) perspective however is not continuously accessible, given the limited research on inclusion in the region. The chapter depicts inclusive practices through the theoretical framework of the study, which is Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (EST) (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). It illustrates the themes that emerged from the review of the literature and how they correspond to the macrosystem, exosystem, mesosystem, and microsystem. The EST expresses the interactions between inclusive practices within and between the ecosystems.

2.1.1 The literature review process.

Reviewing the literature started on October 2018 and ended on December 2020. In the initial stages of reviewing the literature, wider reading was done in the field of inclusive education as it was essential to gain an understanding of some of the main trends and broader issues in the field. To select the relevant literature, the title and abstract were read to determine their relevance to the study. The search became narrower as the research questions of the study were developed. The literature search was done in the following steps:

1- The search initiated by looking at the seminal work of some of the main researchers in the field of inclusive education such as: Prof. Gary Thomas (e.g. Thomas and Glenny, 2002; Thomas and Loxley, 2007), Prof. Mel Ainscow (e.g. Ainscow, 1999; Ainscow *et al.*, 2006), Prof. Braham Norwich (e.g. Norwich, 1996; Norwich, 2008), Prof. Tony Booth (e.g. Booth and Ainscow, 1998; Booth, Ainscow and Dyson, 2006), Prof. Peter Farrell (e.g. Farrell, 2001; Farrell *et al.*, 2007a), Prof. Roger Slee (e.g. Slee, 2008; Slee, 2011), and Prof. Julie Allan (e.g. Allan, 2006; Allan, 2008). The publications were located using the search engine available at the University of Birmingham Library website 'FindIt@Bham', which searches through all the electronic databases and journals that the University is subscribed to.
2- Systematic searches in databases including EBSCO, ERIC, ProQuest and Google Scholar using key words such as: inclusion, inclusive education, inclusive practice, teacher attitudes towards inclusion, inclusive pedagogy, comparative education, inclusive education/inclusion Bahrain, and inclusive education Middle East.
3- Hand-searches in the International Journal of Inclusive Education, for all the issues published after 2010.
4- A list was prepared of all the references cited in the literature above that related to the study and were not found in the initial search phase. This list of references was then located in the earlier databases. This search was more focused on finding literature on inclusive teaching practices.

All the journal articles were uploaded onto Endnote software (X9 version) and full citations were entered along with the article PDF attached. As for the e-books and printed books, they were read and the relevant parts were summarised in a Microsoft Word document, which was

then attached to the Endnote reference. All Endnote references were then imported into NVivo 12 where the literature was read, and the relevant findings of the studies were allocated into themes. According to Bryman (2016), literature reviews are mostly categorised as narrative reviews or systematic reviews. This study combined elements of both. This literature review is a narrative review, as it led to the development of the research questions as well as illustrated through Bronfenbrenner's EST and the four ecosystems. The literature review examines wider national inclusive policies in the macrosystem, followed by inclusive school practices in the exosystem, teacher attitudes in the mesosystem, and then narrower inclusive classroom practices in the microsystem. It is vital to note that although the literature review focused on reviewing more recently published work, older literature was not excluded as it was imperative to frame the context of the study and illustrate the progress the field of inclusive education made over the years. The macrosystem includes more published work from the late 90s and early 2000s, and that gradually decreases as the review moves through the ecosystems and explores more recent inclusive practices.

The literature review is also systematic in the way the literature was categorised in NVivo into themes that are discussed in this chapter. Although NVivo software is a tool commonly used for the purpose of qualitative data analysis (Bryman, 2016), it was used to conduct the literature review in order to have a permanent organised archive of all the literature that was read and the different themes and topics identified within. Nodes and their contents were reviewed periodically to ensure their relevance. As some nodes became larger overtime, they were divided into smaller sub-nodes, and the reading of the literature became more related to the research questions. The total number of nodes created in NVivo for the literature review was 118. These nodes comprise some of themes which are discussed in this literature review. An

example of a codebook imported from NVivo which illustrates some of the nodes is in Table 2.1. The table illustrates the name of the theme, the description, the number of files or literature references that discussed the topic, and the number of extracts from the source.

Table 2.1 Sample from the NVivo codebook for the literature review

Name	Description	Files	References
1- Inclusive schools	How an inclusive school is defined	41	106
Collaboration in schools	Collaboration between all the different members of the school to implement inclusion	17	23
Index for Inclusion	To measure a school's inclusive practices	5	7
Quality of inclusion	Ways to measure the implementation of inclusion in schools	9	21
Resource units	Resource rooms within a mainstream school to support students with special educational needs	14	20
School leadership	The role of school leadership in fostering inclusion across the school	14	38
2- Inclusive practices	Examples of different practices that help with the implementation of inclusive education in the classroom	0	0
Inclusive pedagogy	Definition and practices	23	139
Special education teachers	Resource room teachers, and co-teaching between special education teachers and mainstream education teachers	36	125
Teaching assistants	The role of teaching assistants in an inclusive classroom	21	38
Inclusive practice	Different forms of inclusive teaching	41	94
Specific SEN pedagogy	Specific practices targeted for students with SEN in a mainstream class	24	61
Co-teaching	Co-teaching as a practice in inclusion	5	36
Collaborative work	Student collaboration as one of the main practices in inclusion	8	12
Differentiated instruction	An example of an inclusive teaching practice	20	67
Individualised learning plans (ILP)	The use of ILP to support students with SEN in a mainstream classroom	9	11
Universal design for learning	An example of an inclusive teaching practice	10	16

2.1.2 Chapter overview.

The themes created in NVivo developed the topics discussed within each ecosystem. This chapter begins with the macrosystem which frames inclusive practices from a national

standpoint by conceptualising inclusion from the related terms of special education, integration, and special educational needs (SEN). Educational policies related to inclusion and SEN in England are then examined to deduce the national approach to inclusive education. The history of inclusion policy and practice in the ME is analysed prior to a breakdown of inclusion in Bahrain and the educational policies associated. The exosystem represents inclusive practices on a school level. It illustrates the different interpretations of an inclusive school such as a school with: a high enrolment of learners with SEN, an inclusive school ethos, collaborative staff, a suitable infrastructure for learners with physical disabilities, resource rooms, and strong school leadership.

The mesosystem interprets the role of teacher attitudes towards inclusive education in the successful implementation of inclusion. Teacher attitudes are examined as related to student factors and teacher factors. The mesosystem then examines research on teacher attitudes in the ME, and generally evaluates the contribution of research on teacher attitudes towards inclusive education. The microsystem critically analyses all aspects related to the practice of inclusion in the classroom level and its direct influence on the environment of the learner. Inclusive practice is defined through the pedagogic positions' argument, followed by an examination of the most recurring inclusive practices in the literature including: peer collaborative learning, co-teaching, differentiated instruction, and the inclusive pedagogical approach. The chapter concludes by exploring the relationships between the ecosystems, identifying the main gaps in the literature, and how that led to the development of the research questions of this study.

2.2 Macrosystem: National Inclusive Agenda

2.2.1 Exploring education systems.

When investigating a nation's implementation of inclusion, it is not as straightforward as checking the number of students with SEN who are enrolled in mainstream education compared to special education. Such statistics are not always representative of the true experiences of students with SEN in a mainstream school, and students may well be excluded or taught outside of the classroom, even in countries such as the UK (Ferguson, 2008). It is also insufficient to only focus on examining classroom practices as if they exist as independent entities which are disconnected from broader national policies. It is therefore essential for macrolevel policies to first be examined. That is because classroom practices are representations of wider socio-economic characteristics (Crossley and Vulliamy, 1996). The macrosystem encompasses national policies, that although largely influence the direct environment of the learner, do so indirectly by shaping the practices within the exo-, meso-, and microsystems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The macrosystem section of this literature review examines conceptualisations of inclusive education, and national policies related to the implementation of inclusion in the two contexts of the West and the ME.

2.2.2 Constructing inclusive education.

Progress towards inclusive education in the West began with exclusion, then to special education, followed by the integration of students with SEN in mainstream education, and finally arrived at inclusion (Ainscow, Dyson and Weiner, 2013). Inclusive education was

implemented with the assumption that it is accompanied with a system and guidelines for implementation (Nilholm, 2006). Yet, after years of research, and the significant influence of the field on education systems globally, several of its principles remain contested (Göransson and Nilholm, 2014a). Inclusive education's transcendence from integration and special education did not free it completely from parallel assumptions. Despite the implication of inclusion of the complete transformation of mainstream education (Avramidis and Smith, 1999), some still consider it to be comparable to special education (Armstrong, Armstrong and Spandagou, 2010). Due to the complex history of inclusive education, it is essential to first discuss any related terms prior to attempting to define inclusion and these are: special education, special educational needs (SEN), integration, and lastly inclusive education.

While some are critical of the strong connection between inclusive education and special education, Florian (2019) points out that we cannot comprehend the former without understanding the latter as it is one of the building blocks of inclusion. Special education has been criticised since the onset with international appeals for its revision (Avramidis, Bayliss and Burden, 2000a). Black-Hawkins, Florian and Rouse (2007) argue whether the initial purpose of establishing special schools is to provide a suitable environment for vulnerable students; or to protect the rights of mainstream students and offer a setting that is free of the distractions of peers with SEN. Some of the common criticisms of special education are its high costs (Croll and Moses, 1998; Armstrong, Armstrong and Spandagou, 2010); that it stigmatises learners (Nilholm, 2006; Armstrong, Armstrong and Spandagou, 2010); and sets up children in special education for prejudiced societal attitudes (Vlachou, 1997). The ongoing debate on the appropriateness and effectiveness of special education eventually developed the notion of

integration (Ainscow, Farrell and Tweddle, 2000). The concept of SEN has travelled with this initiative, and is still used within contexts of integration as well as inclusion.

Defining special educational needs (SEN) can be problematic, and special needs in one context can be defined differently in another context (Ainscow, Dyson and Weiner, 2013). Black-Hawkins, Florian and Rouse (2007) explain that SEN over the years has become so broad that it now encompasses almost a quarter of all children. The concept of SEN was essentially created to replace special education, and then changed to comprise milder as well as more severe learning difficulties. SEN includes students with: emotional and behavioural difficulties, autism spectrum disorder, learning difficulties (Farrell *et al.*, 2007b), hearing impairment and deafness, physical and health difficulties (Farrell, 2001), profound and multiple learning difficulties (Strogilos *et al.*, 2011), deaf-blindness, speech difficulties, and visual impairment (Norwich, 2000). Students who are non-native language speakers are also considered as having a learning difficulty as they encounter challenges in achieving the same standard as their peers (Florian, 2019).

Integration in the West commenced in the 1960s and became more widespread 10-15 years later (Clark, Dyson and Millward, 1995; Avramidis, Bayliss and Burden, 2000b; Armstrong, Armstrong and Spandagou, 2010). 'Integration' and 'mainstreaming' tend to be used interchangeably as they both involve the physical placement of students with SEN from special education to mainstream settings (Farrell, 2004; Armstrong, Armstrong and Spandagou, 2010), with either partial or full access to mainstream curriculum (Black-Hawkins, Florian and Rouse, 2007). Vlachou (1997) supposes that integration implies a negative connotation as it indicates that learners who have been integrated are somehow inferior, which is why they were originally

excluded from mainstream schools. The view of integration as the child's placement in a mainstream class or resource unit still fails to indicate the extent of a student's participation. Despite learners' attendance in mainstream education, they continue to endure exclusion from school activities and their participation is limited to the resource room. Inclusion therefore replaced integration with the expectation that inclusion indicates the participation and engagement of learners in all school activities, and that student diversity is embraced and is essential to the school community (Ainscow, Farrell and Tweddle, 2000; Farrell, 2001). The arguments above illustrate the contention in the field of inclusion regarding the use of common terms and how that leads to the construction of inclusive education, which is still deeply connected to special education, SEN, and integration.

2.2.3 Defining inclusive education in the West.

The absence of a universal definition of inclusive education and consensus of inclusive practice, along with the inconsistent impact of inclusion policy, are all widely acknowledged in the literature (Ainscow, 1999; Ainscow, Farrell and Tweddle, 2000; Farrell, 2001; Ainscow and Miles, 2008; Farrell, Hick and Kershner, 2008; Ainscow, Dyson and Weiner, 2013; Alborz, Slee and Miles, 2013; Göransson and Nilholm, 2014b; Spratt and Florian, 2015). The issue of the several perspectives of inclusion in that they vary not only from one country to another, but occasionally within the same study (Nilholm and Göransson, 2017). The most common illustration of inclusive education was developed by Ainscow *et al.* (2006) who established a typology of six ways of thinking about inclusion:

- inclusion for learners with SEN;

- inclusion to combat the exclusion of learners who are more susceptible to discrimination based on their gender, special need, ethnic background, and religion;
- inclusion of all vulnerable groups of learners;
- inclusion to create an inclusive school where certain methods are implemented to embrace all learners;
- inclusion for all to access education;
- and inclusion that reciprocates inclusive societal values.

The typology illustrates the progression from narrower to broader views of inclusive education, and the varying perspectives of inclusion across Western literature. In the typology, one of the predominant perspectives of inclusion is mainly concerned with students with SEN in mainstream education (Wilde and Avramidis, 2011; Messiou and Ainscow, 2015). In some instances, inclusive education research focuses extensively on special needs that it became the new name for special education (Black-Hawkins, Florian and Rouse, 2007; Spratt and Florian, 2015). Schuelka *et al.* (2019) agree with that perspective and suggest that students with SEN are taught through special education practices within mainstream education either alongside or instead of the mainstream curriculum, which contradicts the purpose of inclusion (Ainscow, Farrell and Tweddle, 2000; Corbett, 2001a; Nilholm and Alm, 2010; Ainscow, Dyson and Weiner, 2013). Black-Hawkins, Florian and Rouse (2007) and Messiou (2017) consider that focusing on one group of students' risks drawing attention of their peers and assigning them as different, which could impact these students' acceptance by others. The SEN label is considered problematic as it could lead teachers to relinquish responsibility for the child's learning (Farrell, 2001; Florian and Rouse, 2009), and prohibits learners from exploring other opportunities outside of education as the label accompanies them for life (Farrell *et al.*, 2007b). Inclusion

should therefore concern all students without the identification of one vulnerable group of learners (Avramidis, Bayliss and Burden, 2000a; Slee and Allan, 2001; Cigman, 2007; Nilholm and Alm, 2010).

The typology is also attentive to the wider view of inclusion in that it not only concerns curricula, but more widely comprises fostering an inclusive culture and community (Ainscow, 1999; Cigman, 2007). Ainscow, Booth and Dyson (2006) urge for inclusive values to be infused in both educational and societal values, which is why the exploration of macrolevel practices is a priority of this study prior to examining classroom practices.

This next definition demonstrates a more modern perspective of inclusive education. Ainscow *et al.* (2006, p. 15) explain that 'inclusion is concerned with all children and young people in schools; it is focused on presence, participation and achievement'. This definition of inclusion is distinct from integration in that it encompasses all students rather than focusing on one group of learners, and expects students' active participation in the learning process rather than simply their placement in mainstream education. A number of authors also emphasise inclusive education as a 'never-ending process', and that it requires significant changes in the education system that are time consuming (Ainscow *et al.*, 1999; Carrington and Robinson, 2004; Ainscow *et al.*, 2006). It is perhaps more efficient to view classrooms as more or less inclusive, rather than being inclusive or not inclusive (Nilholm and Alm, 2010). This reinforces the notion of inclusion as a journey.

The varying perceptions of inclusion explain why many authors necessitate a more unified concept of inclusion to be developed, which then informs educational policy and specific school

practices (e.g. Thomas and Glenny, 2002; Armstrong, Armstrong and Spandagou, 2010; Ainscow, Dyson and Weiner, 2013; Göransson and Nilholm, 2014a). Schuelka *et al.* (2019) suggest that a mutually agreed on definition may not be necessary, providing continuous efforts are made to secure social equity and the protection of vulnerable groups. Haug (2014) views the variations in inclusive education definitions as inspirational for researchers to tackle theoretically and empirically, and are not necessarily problematic. However, the uncertainty regarding the definition of inclusive education leads to inconsistencies in the development of accompanying policies and the implementation of inclusion (Black-Hawkins, 2010).

2.2.4 Inclusion policy in England.

Inclusive education in England is endorsed through a number of national policies and documents. This initiated with the Green Paper 'Excellence for All Children: Meeting Special Educational Needs' by the Department for Education (DfE) (1997), which specifies guidelines for enrolment and admission into mainstream education, overall support for SEN, special education provision, and requirements for initial teacher education and continuing professional development. The document also explicitly indicates the main responsibility of teaching assistants (TA) to support learners with SEN; as well as the responsibilities of the school, local authority (LA) and parents (DfE, 1997).

The White Paper 'Educational Excellence Everywhere' DfE (2016) stipulates the equality in educational opportunities across the United Kingdom. Educational excellence is sustained through improving the quality of teaching, empowering effective school leadership, supporting school improvement through school-to-school collaboration, and providing a world-class

curriculum which supports learners with SEN. The document further explains the pupil premium funding scheme to support learners from disadvantaged backgrounds (DfE, 2016).

The SEN Code of Practice by DfE (2015) outlines all the procedures related to the education of learners with SEN in response to the Children and Families Act 2014. According to this document, a child with SEN has a learning difficulty or disability, however, the policy excludes having English as a second language from being a SEN. The Code of Practice denotes the responsibilities of the local authorities, schools, and parents of students with SEN. The document also discusses students' eligibility to be admitted into a special school; Education, Health and Care plans (EHC) for learners who need additional SEN support; and SEN funding. The SEN Code of Practice furthermore endorses the use of differentiation to meet the needs of all learners especially those with SEN (DfE, 2015).

Further support for inclusive education in England is through the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) in their evaluation of schools' inclusive practices. The published guide by Ofsted (2000) 'Evaluating Educational Inclusion', acknowledges and embraces student diversity, and provides equal learning opportunities for all learners. Inclusive schools are identified as effective schools that transmit inclusive values through the school ethos. Ofsted's evaluation of an inclusive school explores: access and enrolment, support for student achievement, quality of teaching, curriculum differentiation, embracement of diverse and vulnerable learners, home-school relations, and school leadership.

The Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) role is further evidence of a school working towards inclusion (Dyson and Millward, 2000; Dobson, 2019). According to the DfE

(2015), the SENCO must be a qualified teacher who completed the 'National Award in Special Educational Needs Coordination'. The SENCO is part of the school leadership team and has a leading role in shaping the school's SEN policy; supporting learning with an EHC; coordinating between teachers, parents of children with SEN and external agencies. The SENCO role varies from one school to another, but SENCOs primarily provide support for the mainstream teacher (Lindqvist and Nilholm, 2014b). The role of the SENCO is essential for an inclusive school and acts as an inclusion manager, who is responsible for organising support for students with SEN in mainstream schools. This is done by assigning help from a TA who supports the student with SEN in the mainstream class (Ainscow, Dyson and Weiner, 2013). SENCOs are also responsible for supervising staff, and maintain a record of assessments (Lindqvist *et al.*, 2011). Collaboration should exist between all school members to create and sustain inclusive practice, and teachers should not only rely on the SENCO to move the school's inclusion agenda forward (Corbett, 2001a). From a policy as well as a literature perspective, the SENCO role appears to be heavily focused on supporting students with SEN in mainstream education rather than the perspective of inclusion for all.

While these documents outline procedures related to SEN and inclusive education, a major source of contention is the responsibility of LAs in implementing national policies. According to Ainscow, Farrell and Tweddle (2000), policies are produced by the DfE, which then the LA decides on matters of interpretation and application. The authors find great variation in LAs interpretations of SEN policies, even in the difference between fundamental terms such as integration and inclusion. Other inconsistencies in the perceptions of LAs were concerning the role of special schools, and perhaps the elimination of special education by some authorities. This is coherent with Farrell (2001) and Black-Hawkins, Florian and Rouse (2007) who indicate

that definitions of SEN can differ from one LA to another, therefore SEN provision varies across the nation. Although partnerships between LAs and different agencies are encouraged through national polices, they can also be problematic as the agencies have different perceptions of inclusion than the LA and that can be confusing for parents of learners with SEN (Farrell, 2001). Ainscow *et al.* (1999) asserts that different conceptualisations of inclusion between the agencies are considered a barrier to inclusion. This reverts to the issues related to conceptualising inclusive education which were articulated earlier. Such issues are probably the consequence of the different perceptions of inclusion illustrated earlier in Ainscow's typology, which further emphasises the need for consistency in defining and implementing inclusive education.

Ainscow *et al.* (1999) indicate LAs' requirements for more guidance for implementing inclusion policy as well as insufficient SEN funding to fulfil national policy. Ainscow, Farrell and Tweddle (2000) report that LAs are overloaded with funding applications from mainstream schools, as schools see the provision of resources as being vital for their SEN support. It is problematic as it reinforces the marginalisation of learners with SEN as they are identified by the school to require individualised learning plans (ILPs), and distances schools from responding to student diversity as their overall inclusive approach. Funding applications can also lead teachers to forgo their responsibility for certain students, so as not to lead to students' ineligibility for LA funding if their performance improves. The authors reveal that funding applications overload can sometimes cost the authorities to spend more on SEN in mainstream education than they would in special education (Ainscow, Farrell and Tweddle, 2000). Ainscow, Farrell and Tweddle (2000) clearly articulate how such provisions and emphasis on SEN are barriers to inclusive education. It is evident how SEN provisions create a culture within

schools to compete for funding, which may even lead to over-diagnose some children as having SEN and reinforce teachers to relinquish their accountability to the education of some students.

Other issues with national policies include the Green Paper's endorsement of both inclusion and special education simultaneously (Croll and Moses, 2000). This contradiction is observed in most national policies as both ends of the inclusion/exclusion spectrum are recognised. Ainscow *et al.* (2006) identify barriers to inclusion that exist within national policies which were initially created to implement an inclusive education system. The barriers are: varying perceptions of inclusion, inclusion initiatives are abundantly redundant, emphasis on SEN as a reaction to learning difficulties, and prominence of establishing individual learning targets for students rather than ensuring the provision of an effective education overall. Other barriers include an over-reliance on external assessment to ensure policy implementation, and the promotion of school-to-school comparisons rather than fostering a collective commitment to inclusion. The abundant policies related to inclusion confuse LAs and schools, and the over-reliance on external school assessment can be de-motivating and communicates a lack of trust in schools. This leads schools to focus on short-term performance in preparation for reviews rather than long-term goals for school effectiveness (Ainscow *et al.*, 2006). Ainscow *et al.* (2006) find that LAs perspective of inclusion is also as an educational facet, rather than a guiding principle to education overall. The authors recommend that national policy should help schools develop inclusive cultures, as well as work closely with the community.

Inclusive school practices have to be supported by an inclusive education system to increase chances of success. The education system should also encourage school-to-school collaboration as part of inclusive practice, which is facilitated through LAs (Ainscow *et al.*, 2006). Ainscow

et al. (2006) suggest that an inclusive education system is less concerned with transforming schools individually, and more concerned with having overall practices within the system that express inclusive ethos. That includes the selection of school leaders, the way in which school staff are encouraged to collaborate, and how schools are motivated to self-evaluate inclusive practices.

2.2.5 Inclusion in the Middle East.

Despite the Education for All (EFA) push to implement inclusion decades ago, inclusive education is still at the developmental stage in Bahrain and neighbouring countries (Crabtree and Williams, 2013). Published research on inclusive education in Bahrain is limited to two studies which are mainly concerned with pre-service and in-service teacher attitudes towards inclusion (Bukamal, 2018; AlMahdi and Bukamal, 2019). AlMahdi and Bukamal (2019) define inclusion in Bahrain as being concerned with the education of all students regardless of their socio-economic status, cultural background, level of academic achievement, and SEN. Due to the lack of research on SEN and inclusion in Bahrain, it is beneficial to consider the situation in other countries in the Middle East (ME) in order to offer some understanding of the state of inclusion in the region.

The Arab world contains 22 countries that speak the Arabic language, and share a culture and religion (Al Khateeb, Al Hadidi and Al Khatib, 2014; Kirk, 2014). It is central to note that the findings of the studies that are discussed are not used to generalise the state of inclusion for all countries in the region, but to gain insight into the circumstances of inclusive education in the Arab world and Muslim culture. According to Aldaihani (2011), the Islamic perspective

believes in a society where everyone is treated equally, and embraces disability and inclusion. Hassanein (2015) agrees and suggests that although official scriptures do not particularly mention the term 'disability', the main principles of Islam are inclusive. However, the cause for disability in Islamic culture is interesting as many believe if a relative is disabled then 'Allah' is testing their patience. Others view disability in their offspring as a punishment from God for previous wrongdoings, and therefore may have negative attitudes towards disability.

Similar to Bahrain, there is a lack of literature and data in the ME in the areas of disability and educational inclusion (Gaad, 2010; Aldaihani, 2011; Hadidi and Alkhateeb, 2015). Amr (2011) recognises that the absence of sufficient studies on inclusion could be due to the majority of research published in the ME to be in the Arabic language, or in some cases in French and only available as a hard copy (Alkhateeb, Hadidi and Alkhateeb, 2016). In Alkhateeb, Hadidi and Alkhateeb (2016) literature review of all the studies published on inclusion in the Arab world, 42 studies are located, and they explore three main areas of inclusion research: attitudes towards inclusive education, obstacles to the implementation of inclusion, and the perceptions of inclusive education. This is a further indication of the recent implementation of inclusion in the region, as the topics explored are related to the understanding or acceptance of the inclusion initiative rather than implementation.

Integration of students with SEN in mainstream education initiated in the mid 90s in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Egypt (Almotairi, 2013; Alkhateeb, Hadidi and Alkhateeb, 2016). Comparable to the West, various forms of inclusion exist in the ME. Inclusive education in the UAE is concerned with the education of students with disabilities in mainstream schools (Anati, 2012; Dukmak, 2013). In Kuwait, inclusion is often used as having

the same meaning as integration and involves the placement of students with SEN in mainstream schools without the alteration of teaching practices (Aldaihani, 2011). The interchangeable use of inclusion and integration in Gulf Cooperation Council countries is also mentioned by Weber (2012). Other terms such as 'normalisation' and 'least restricted environment' are also used in the same context (Alkhateeb, Hadidi and Alkhateeb, 2016, p. 61). Resource rooms in mainstream schools are considered as part of inclusive education in Jordan. Most special education practices are thus still mistaken to represent inclusive education (Amr, 2011). This common interpretation of inclusion to mainly focus on SEN is mirrored in the West.

Aldaihani (2011) illustrates barriers to the implementation of inclusive education in Kuwait in three main categories which are: the readiness of students with SEN to join mainstream education, the readiness of the school to teach diverse learners, and lack of policy for the direction of inclusion. In Jordan, financial resources, societal acceptance, and relevant teacher qualifications are some of the main barriers to implementing inclusion (Amr, 2011). Al-Manabri *et al.* (2013) considers that the lack of appropriate teacher education for inclusion is the central reason for unsuccessful practices in inclusive education in the Arab world. Other barriers to inclusion include: the unpreparedness of the physical layout of the schools to cater for students with physical disabilities, negative attitudes towards inclusion, lack of opportunities for the professional development of teachers, and ambiguous inclusive education policy (Alkhateeb, Hadidi and Alkhateeb, 2016).

In comparison to the barriers to inclusion in England revealed earlier by Ainscow *et al.* (2006); barriers in the ME appear to focus mainly on the need to adapt teacher education to changes in policy, societal acceptance, and the readiness of the school's physical and human resources.

The barriers in England, however, reflect the dominance of SEN support and the promotion of a competitive rather than supportive education system. One explanation for the difference in barriers between the regions could be the pressure on the ME to implement inclusion as a world-wide initiative, with minor consideration of the readiness and resources of the region. As well as the need to contextualise the policy in response to socio-cultural traditions. Dare, Nowicki and Felimban (2016) mention how several Arab countries adopt inclusion yet still operate a gender segregated schooling system, which contradicts inclusion principles. This is perhaps the way of Muslim countries to contextualise international inclusion policy to suit their culture.

2.2.6 Inclusion policy in Bahrain.

The Ministry of Education (MOE) in Bahrain is responsible for managing all matters related to education directly with the schools, as opposed to the role of LAs in England. Official documentation on the beginning and current situation of inclusive education in Bahrain are limited. The only indication of the commencement of inclusion can be traced back to 2005 (Weber, 2012), which illustrates the infancy of inclusion in Bahrain. Information about particular arrangements within the MOE for students with SEN and other policies are discussed in this section in order to predict inclusive arrangements in the kingdom.

In a report published by the MOE (2007, p. 49) regarding the development of education, it indicates some information about the state of inclusion in the country. The report states that ‘all children should be subject to similar learning-teaching methods regardless of their social and cultural background and the different abilities and skills. Education opportunities should be provided for all even for those with special needs …’. Based on this statement, inclusive

education in Bahrain seeks to incorporate students with diverse abilities and backgrounds in mainstream education, which is consistent with the view of inclusion to cater for student diversity.

In the MOE strategy of 2015-2018, one strategic goal is the most relevant to this study. The fifth goal aims to provide education for all, and more specifically to provide educational programmes for special needs students (MOE, 2019a). This illustrates the MOE's willingness to integrate students with SEN in mainstream education, and considers it to be one of its main priorities. The MOE's efforts to integrate students with SEN in mainstream education have been gradual over the years, although it is not clear through national documents when integration initiated. The MOE's Reading Strategy specifically addresses the non-Arabic speakers programme. The purpose of the programme, is to enable non-Arabic speakers to become active members of the school community and overall contributing members to the Bahraini society (MOE, 2020).

The Bahrain Qualifications Authority (BQA) (BQA, 2019) is the national authority that monitors the effectiveness of all educational institutions, and is the Ofsted equivalent. The school review process includes five main assessment domains, one of which relates to inclusive education. The second domain evaluates the quality of main processes and more specifically teaching, learning and assessment. It examines the use of teaching and learning strategies that motivate students' learning, student-centred learning, and the use of differentiated strategies and modern technology. Differentiation is required for all students including students with SEN along with teachers' consideration of multiple intelligences. This domain for school evaluation also seeks to empower and meet the needs of learners with SEN, as well as gifted and talented

learners. Academic support is provided through the ongoing evaluation of student progress, identification of learning needs, provision of remedial programs inside and outside the classroom, and continuous communication with parents regarding student progress (BQA, 2019). This process indirectly evaluates inclusive practices, as opposed to the direct evaluation of inclusive schools in England by Ofsted. Although the policies discussed above do not necessarily mention inclusive education, the practices are evident to support the inclusion of students with SEN and non-Arabic speakers in mainstream education.

The 'Special Education Guide' by the MOE (MOE, no date, p. 17) defines integration as 'the education of learners with special needs with regular students in regular classrooms either fully or partially in order to provide them with equal learning opportunities'. The mechanism of integration generally states that students with more severe SEN learn in the resource room for the main subjects and are integrated in the mainstream classroom for physical education, music, art, design, and IT. Students can be fully integrated into the mainstream classroom once their performance is evaluated by a committee. Students with SEN also have an ILP which states their strengths, weaknesses, and targets (MOE, no date).

The guide further explains all the processes to integrate students with SEN for each specific need. One of the guidelines is that all students in the school are made aware of the special needs students and how to deal with them, and special education teachers are provided with additional professional development to equip them with all the medical information necessary. This policy also specifies a set of responsibilities for the school principal to support the inclusion of learners with special needs in the mainstream classroom, monitor their academic attainment, and maintain regular communication with parents (MOE, no date). Students facing difficulties in

the Arabic language or mathematics are usually referred to the learning difficulties remedial class (MOE, 2019c).

2.2.7 Comparing education systems.

Armstrong, Armstrong and Spandagou (2010) argue that the more the definition of inclusion covers, the more difficult it is to measure. That may not necessarily be the case, as a more comprehensive definition of inclusive education can reduce the discrepancy in interpretations of inclusion policy in both England and the ME. Inclusion should be more inclusive to encompass all the elements discussed in this macrosystem, in that it: reflects educational and community beliefs, facilitates the presence of students with SEN in mainstream education, promotes the participation of all learners in the school community, prioritises the achievement of all learners, and embraces the diversity of the school community.

Protection and support for vulnerable learners in England is established through a number of educational policies. The policies largely depict a perspective of inclusion for SEN, which as argued earlier, can lead to competition for funds and the marginalisation of some learners. It was also indicated that an education system which holistically embodies inclusive values can be more effective, as the values are transmitted throughout its operations. There are several gaps in the knowledge of the situation of inclusion in Bahrain and the ME in general. Research in the ME is also limited given 22 Arab countries are involved, which indicates the infancy of the inclusion initiative in the region. Besides the few studies mentioned above, it is still extremely challenging to deduce the region's conceptualisation of inclusive education. Although all the educational policies in Bahrain provide a minor indication of the state of

inclusion, a great deal remains unknown about when integration and inclusion policies were implemented and the mechanism of their implementation. The source of inclusion policy in Bahrain is also unclear, although it is most likely a Western and borrowed tradition where Bahrain is accustomed to inherit many of its educational customs as argued in 'Chapter 1: Introduction'.

Some similarities are found in England's and Bahrain's perceptions of inclusion. Educational policies in both countries acknowledge the use of differentiation as one of the main inclusive practices. This illustrates how national policies can shape practices within the microsystem. While England and Bahrain both focus on SEN provision, that provision is extended to support gifted learners in Bahrain. It is further essential to attend to how an education system is managed. For instance, LAs communicate with schools in England directly, such a system may not be necessary in a small country such as Bahrain which is why the MOE is in close communication with school leadership. The use of LAs influences variations in inclusive practices in England, such discrepancies are unlikely to be replicated in an education system that is centrally managed such as Bahrain.

Socio-cultural conditions are depicted through the policies mentioned earlier. For instance, the focus on non-Arabic speakers in the MOE's policy is a reflection of changes in the cultural composition of the country which inflict certain challenges within the education system. Albaker (2017) stipulates that non-native Arabic speakers constitute about 20% of the students in some schools. It is also noteworthy that both education systems endorse the collaboration of school members and parents on matters related to SEN, policy in Bahrain further includes responsibilities for students in mainstream schools to be informed of their peers with SEN. This

section of the literature review examined conceptualisations of inclusive education in each region, as well as the interactions between the surrounding culture in each nation and how that responds to national practices in inclusive education. More specific inclusive school practices are evaluated next in the exosystem.

2.3 Exosystem: Inclusive School Practices

2.3.1 Defining an inclusive school.

Farrell, Hick and Kershner (2008, p. 38) define inclusive practice as 'the things staff in schools do that give meaning to the concept of inclusion'. This part of the chapter explores inclusive practices that are enacted on a school level. School practices exist within the exosystem, which involve the schools' interactions with the surrounding community and institutions in order to implement inclusive education. These connections do not necessarily directly influence the learner; however, they influence the school context surrounding the learner (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The meaning of an inclusive school is often debated in inclusive education literature, but a school is generally considered inclusive if it is welcoming of diversity (Booth, Nes and Strømstad, 2003). Considering whether a school is inclusive or not further depends on how inclusion is defined, which as illustrated earlier in the macrosystem, also lacks stability.

Booth, Ainscow and Dyson (2006) indicate several factors that influence the extent of a school's inclusivity such as: the students admitted or not admitted to the school, student placement in mainstream classes or dual placements, the teaching methods applied, the allocation of school resources, and the modification of curricula to reduce differences between students. Schools work differently to strengthen their inclusive practices such as learning from the practices of other schools, implementing collaborative learning, peer teaching, embracing diversity, co-teaching, and being more inclusive of immigrant children (Azorín and Ainscow, 2018).

A more comprehensive guide to an inclusive school is provided by the Index for Inclusion, which is a tool developed by Booth and Ainscow (2002) to support school development and improvement through the inclusive approach. The Index empowers school staff and other members of the school community to engage in a self-evaluation process with the purpose of increasing the participation of all students. The Index examines the following: the school community, student-student interactions, teacher-student interactions, staff's role in supporting and managing student relationships, staff culture and collaboration, parents and school partnership, school's view of diversity, staff's continuing professional development to deal with diversity, human and material resources to support SEN, planning for teaching and curriculum, students' role in learning, the classroom climate, and the availability of in-class support (Booth and Ainscow, 2002). One of the main characteristics of the Index is that it inspects inclusive education as an approach to educate all learners, rather than focusing only on students with SEN (Howes *et al.*, 2004).

Based on the different interpretations of inclusive school practices illustrated above, it is evident that perceptions of an inclusive school vary. This section examines some of the recurring elements within a school that the literature interprets as being inclusive school practices. These include: high enrolment of students with SEN, inclusive school philosophy, collaborative school community, physical school layout, utilisation of resource rooms, and effective school leadership for inclusion.

2.3.2 Enrolment of students with SEN.

One of the traditional indicators of an inclusive school is its large composition of students with SEN (Farrell *et al.*, 2007a; Farrell *et al.*, 2007b). This view of an inclusive school is connected to the SEN perspective of defining inclusion previously discussed, which illustrates how macro-level notions of inclusion shape exosystem school practices. Even though SEN enrolment may not always represent a school's commitment to inclusive education, perhaps a high enrolment of students with SEN is seen as inevitable, and comes with assumptions that specific arrangements are made to the school practices to involve all students (Farrell *et al.*, 2007a). Yet, a school with a low number of students with SEN can also engage in inclusive practice (Black-Hawkins and Rouse, 2007).

Some schools overly emphasise the SEN labels enrolled so as to portray an inclusive image. Booth, Nes and Strømstad (2003) assert that there is no place for the term special education or any other label in an inclusive school. Instead, students should be perceived in terms of their interests and skills. Avramidis, Bayliss and Burden (2002) provide an example of what is considered an inclusive school. This school refers to students as having additional needs rather than SEN, and labels their SEN department as curriculum learning support. Even if this is a superficial alteration of titles, it could still impact how students are perceived by their peers. Inclusive schools are therefore not defined by the large proportion of enrolled students with SEN, but also about having inclusive values infused in all the schools' principles and interactions (Corbett, 2001a). Inclusive school practices ought to be more focused on ways in which students' participation and achievement is enhanced, regardless of the number of students with SEN who are the focus of such efforts.

2.3.3 Inclusive school ethos.

The school climate has been emphasised throughout the years in research as effective for inclusive school development (Ainscow, 1999). The overall school environment can be very indicative of inclusivity or exclusivity within the school facilities, in the way in which school members interact, and in what is valued (Corbett, 2001a). Inclusive school ethos includes broader features such as: the school atmosphere to be warm, welcoming, and respectful of all (Farrell *et al.*, 2007a); a dedication by all staff towards inclusion and shared leadership (Kugelmass and Ainscow, 2004); no tolerance for bullying behaviours (Farrell, 2006); and effective school communication with parents (Avramidis, Bayliss and Burden, 2002; Lyons, Thompson and Timmons, 2016). An inclusive school ethos also supports teachers' positive attitudes towards inclusion (Avramidis, Bayliss and Burden, 2000a; Avramidis, Bayliss and Burden, 2002); inspires teachers' high expectations for all student achievement (Corbett, 2001a; Armstrong, Armstrong and Spandagou, 2010); and provides the resources necessary for inclusive pedagogy (Nind and Wearmouth, 2006). This demonstrates the effect of the inclusive school climate in the exosystem on teacher attitudes towards inclusion in the mesosystem, and inclusive pedagogy in the microsystem.

An inclusive school climate facilitates for students' full participation and membership in the school community (Booth, Nes and Strømstad, 2003). That can be done through minimal withdrawal of learners from the mainstream classroom for resource rooms, the availability of extra-curricular activities for all learners, and participation in classroom and overall school activities (Avramidis, Bayliss and Burden, 2002). Ainscow *et al.* (2006) references a school that promotes inclusive values that instils a sense of responsibility for the students as all their

names are on the classroom door. The school also encourages values of mutual respect, and supports student-student interactions. Clark, Dyson and Millward (1995) discern that a deciding factor on a school's inclusivity is its response to diversity. An inclusive school views diversity as valuable and as integral to humanity, and not as an additional obligation. While an exclusionary school views disability as a liability and a misfortune (Clark, Dyson and Millward, 1995; Black-Hawkins and Rouse, 2007).

Despite some suggestions throughout the literature on the composition of an inclusive school climate, this is another element within inclusive education research that lacks major consensus and in-depth attention from researchers. The majority of the characteristics of an inclusive school climate discussed above emanate from the perspective of researchers and their respective perceptions of inclusive education, and how it is enacted through the school climate. It will also be insightful to learn of inclusive school ethos from the perspective of learners. Based on the assumption that inclusion is a never-ending process, it needs to be accompanied with school policies that are dynamic and responsive to change, and centred on multiple factors such as student diversity (Black-Hawkins and Rouse, 2007). A school can only move forward in its inclusive practices if there is a common understanding within the school of the meaning of inclusion (Howes *et al.*, 2004). This can therefore be established through a school policy on inclusive education and instigated through the school's inclusive climate. The school policy should clearly articulate the school's agreed perspective of inclusive education and any associated expectations for its implementation.

2.3.4 Collaboration within and beyond the school.

A collaborative and shared vision between staff members and parents is beneficial to inclusion, along with a committed senior leadership team, and the willingness of staff to attempt different practices that facilitate inclusion (Corbett, 2001b). Ainscow (2016) acknowledges the influence of external factors to the school on the school climate which include the surrounding community, culture, and economy. In order to embrace student diversity, schools need to be receptive to: within school factors, between school factors, and beyond school factors.

First, within school factors are when schools use their existing resources and engage in collaborative problem-solving to be inclusive of students with diverse abilities and backgrounds (Ainscow, 2016). Ainscow *et al.* (2006) stipulate that an inclusive school encourages a positive staff culture in which staff work collaboratively and engage in problem-solving, mutual support, sharing practice, and coaching and mentoring. Teacher-teacher collaboration within the school can be very effective for inclusion especially when teachers engage in problem-solving together to develop teaching practices that respond to student needs (Ainscow, Farrell and Tweddle, 2000; Ainscow, 2010). A collaborative school culture can therefore be more conducive to inclusive education when staff members work together to solve issues through a collective responsibility for all learners, rather than shame teachers who face certain difficulties with a student (Corbett, 2001b; Voltz, Brazil and Ford, 2001; Lyons, Thompson and Timmons, 2016). Kugelmass (2001) supposes that collaboration between teachers helps improve individual teaching. Thus, teachers' perception of teaching needs to be transformed from a personal activity to a professional activity that continuously develops if shared with others (Ainscow *et al.*, 2003). Within school collaborative factors also include students in decision-making and problem-solving school activities (Forlin and Loreman, 2014).

Second, between school factors is when schools collaborate with other schools as it is beneficial for both student and school development (Ainscow, 2016). School partnerships are encouraged as they allow schools to disseminate inclusive practice and discuss mutual challenges in inclusion (Ainscow, 2010). Inclusive education research however does not particularly emphasise school-to-school partnerships as inclusive practice, despite the potential benefits. Third, beyond school factors are where schools are encouraged to establish partnerships with the community and other agencies (Ainscow, 2016). This includes any agency responsible for regulating special needs education such as the LA, health services, and social services (Ainscow *et al.*, 1999). Beyond school factors additionally involve parents and the community (Forlin, 2006), who participate in the school's decision-making related to financial allocations, infrastructural development, and school policies (Lyons, Thompson and Timmons, 2016; DeMatthews *et al.*, 2020). It is essential for schools to maintain strong links to the surrounding community and involve the community and parents in the school's practices, therefore emphasising associations between different units in the exosystem.

2.3.5 Physical school layout.

The school's infrastructure reveals its commitment to inclusive education, and the extent to which it accommodates for all members of the school community (Ainscow, 1999). A school layout that facilitates access for school members with physical disabilities enables their full participation and learning (Pivik, McComas and Laflamme, 2002). The school should maintain sufficient physical space in the classroom and ensure student access to all areas (Avramidis, Bayliss and Burden, 2000a; Avramidis, Bayliss and Burden, 2002). The physical school layout is one of the main barriers to inclusion according to Pivik, McComas and Laflamme (2002).

The authors explain that inclusive school infrastructure involves ease of access to the school, availability of appropriate and supportive ramps, light weight doors with automatic entry, sufficient fire doors, wide passageways in all school areas, and wheelchair and lift access to all floors and school facilities. Schools should also be able to accommodate for children who need personal assistance (e.g. using the lavatory, help with eating) (Alborz, Slee and Miles, 2013). Generally, the availability of human and material resources is insufficient, and they should be accompanied with efficiency in use as well as articulated through the school policy (Avramidis, Bayliss and Burden, 2000b).

Included in the inclusive physical school layout, is the recommendation of smaller classrooms as crowded classrooms make inclusive practices more challenging to implement (Walton *et al.*, 2019). Mitchell (2008) recommends that classes should include an average of 15 students as part of the school's commitment to inclusion. This however is an unrealistic number for many schools situated in large communities. A school fully equipped with supportive teams and technologies as well as ease of access to all school areas should not be considered inclusive based only on the availability of such amenities. Although the school infrastructure is an essential requirement for all students to feel welcome, this needs to be sufficiently supported with overall inclusive school values, as well as teaching strategies that support the inclusion of all learners.

2.3.6 Resource rooms.

Resource rooms are referred to in a variety of ways throughout the literature, this includes placement in a special class (Malmqvist, 2016) and a support room (Vlachou, 2006). The main

purpose of resource rooms is to provide some students with special instruction by pulling them out of the mainstream class for a portion or the entire school day (Armstrong, Armstrong and Spandagou, 2010). The existence of resource units within mainstream schools is often contested. Many believe that resource units are essential for a school considered to be inclusive, as they provide certain students with sufficient support so that their performance is enhanced to eventually be integrated partially or fully in a mainstream class (Ainscow, Farrell and Tweddle, 2000; Malmqvist, 2016). Withdrawal is also considered a teaching strategy that accommodates for individual differences (Corbett, 2001a). Most of the special education teachers in the resource units emphasise a safe environment for students where they feel support and are able to communicate more freely than in a mainstream class (Vlachou, 2006).

The presence of integration units in schools correlates with perceived teacher competence for mainstream education teachers in inclusion, as they are given more opportunities to teach students with different needs when they are partially integrated in the mainstream class (Avramidis and Kalyva, 2007). This is an important finding, if mainstream teachers feel more competent in inclusive education when students with SEN are gradually integrated, this could potentially develop further, and then teachers would feel they are fully capable of teaching students with SEN for the entire school day in the mainstream class. Perhaps the partial and gradual integration of students with SEN in the mainstream class is less about students' preparedness to join a mainstream setting, and more about the readiness of the mainstream education teacher to teach a class of diverse needs.

Resource units are perceived as a form of segregation of students with SEN within the boundaries of a mainstream school (Ainscow, Farrell and Tweddle, 2000; Corbett, 2001a).

Despite the benefits discussed above for the presence of resource units in mainstream schools, one of the main disadvantages of students' attendance in a resource class is that it prevents opportunities for social interaction with other students as well as endorses the isolation and stigmatisation of students with SEN (Slee, 2011; Mamas and Avramidis, 2013). Black-Hawkins (2010) explains that although students with weaknesses in literacy experience improvement when withdrawn from the mainstream class, they experience exclusion when they are not exposed to the other learning opportunities available to their classmates. This then prevents students from developing a sense of belonging in the mainstream class (Kugelmass, 2001). Some students spend the majority of their time outside the classroom to the extent that teachers simply forget to include these students when lesson planning. Not only that, but such students are seen to interrupt classroom activities when they do join the mainstream class for a small portion of the day (Wilde and Avramidis, 2011). Mainstream teachers additionally complain of not being included in any decisions or activities related to the resource units, which makes it more difficult for the teachers to decide on the mechanism of including students with SEN in the mainstream class (Wilde and Avramidis, 2011).

Cameron, Nilholm and Persson (2012) affirm that the use of resource units is to be with moderation and not exceed half of the school day. This helps mitigate some of the negative implications associated with student withdrawal for a large portion of the school day. Florian and Rouse (2001a) suggest that in an inclusive school, an alternative to student withdrawal from the mainstream class is for learners to be taught during recess or after school so as to prevent their removal from class in front of their peers. These lessons are made available to anyone who wishes to join. This suggestion helps overcome the isolation of students with SEN. The precise use of resource units within a mainstream school is still not made specific in the literature. It is

unclear which students with SEN and their specific groups spend more time in the mainstream class or the resource room, how much time is spent in each placement, the subjects students with SEN are allowed to join in the mainstream class, as well as the particular difference between SEN groups in their attendance of a resource unit. It also remains unclear whether the presence of resource units in a school indicates a school as being inclusive or not, except in the earlier indication by Avramidis, Bayliss and Burden (2002) that minimal withdrawal is more aligned with an inclusive school ethos. Perhaps, with the initial introduction of integration policy, the existence of resource units in a school labels a school as inclusive, while more modern views reject the notion of support rooms and encourage the full placement of all students in the mainstream classroom.

2.3.7 School leadership for inclusion.

Creating an inclusive school is a collaborative effort, and one of the primary factors contributing to an inclusive school is the role of the school leadership in implementing and sustaining inclusive education (Dyson and Millward, 2000; Armstrong, Armstrong and Spandagou, 2010; Loreman, Forlin and Sharma, 2014; Azorín and Ainscow, 2018). It is the responsibility of school leadership to create an inclusive school culture through identifying existing inclusive practices within the school (Ainscow, 2007), and modelling positive inclusive attitudes (Pivik, McComas and Laflamme, 2002; Kugelmass and Ainscow, 2004; Lindqvist and Nilholm, 2014b). As well as, facilitating collaborative practice within the school (Ainscow, Dyson and Weiner, 2013), and building a positive response to student diversity (Kugelmass and Ainscow, 2004). School leaders are responsible for leading inclusion, they have a crucial role in creating an environment based on dialogue where teachers can work together and engage in problem-

solving collectively with other teachers and the headteacher (Carrington and Robinson, 2004; Lindqvist and Nilholm, 2014b).

A central responsibility of headteachers in an inclusive school is pedagogical leadership, and supporting teachers in designing classroom activities that respond to inclusive practice (Lindqvist and Nilholm, 2014b; Andrews, Walton and Osman, 2019). Instructional leadership comprises supporting the collaboration between mainstream and special education teachers (SET) in the mainstream class, which is considered an essential partnership to achieve inclusion (Strogilos, Nikolaraizi and Tragoulia, 2012). Other initiatives taken by school leadership in support of inclusion encompass the provision of SETs and SENCOs (Lindqvist and Nilholm, 2014b); and TAs and counsellors who can then support the mainstream teachers in including all students in the learning process (Corbett, 2001a; Lyons, Thompson and Timmons, 2016). This form of support plays a major role in staff attitudes and willingness to work towards inclusion (Corbett, 2001b). Leaders should also reach out to the community and involve them in school activities as appropriate to the surrounding culture (DeMatthews *et al.*, 2020). Perspectives of the recommended level of involvement of school leaders in implementing inclusion vary from broader roles such as inspiring positive attitudes, to more specific roles such as supporting teachers in developing their inclusive pedagogy. This illustrates the crucial position of leaders as inclusion instigators both within and beyond the exosystem.

2.3.8 Deducing inclusive schools.

In conclusion, finding a comprehensive guide to an inclusive school is challenging for a number of reasons. First, the inclusive school is based on the definition of inclusive education, which

as earlier argued is unstable and built on various perceptions. Second, an inclusive school means different things depending on the surrounding context. Third, the apparent disconnect between inclusive policy and national directives, and how that influences inclusive school practices. The discussions above are indications located in the literature of some practices that enhance a school's approach to inclusion, but the most comprehensive guide for an inclusive school is the Index for Inclusion. Other practices are more focused on SEN within mainstream education such as the high enrolment of students with SEN, the provision of TAs by the school leaders, and the use of resource rooms. All the studies discussed above also represent the Western perspective of an inclusive school, as no studies are located in the ME that define inclusive school practices. This is an important distinction as the context of a study largely determines the macrosystem factors, which then influence school practices in the exosystem. Schools' inclusive practices can thus look differently in the ME as influenced by socio-cultural factors and conceptualisations of inclusion policy.

All the interpretations of an inclusive school analysed above inherently inter-relate as they either individually or collectively define inclusive school practices. For instance, inclusive school ethos and collaboration within the school are mutually inclusive, so are collaborative practices and school leadership for inclusion. While researchers in the field continue to engage in philosophical arguments on the meaning of inclusive education; there is still insufficient guidance for schools and teachers on how to implement inclusion in the exosystem. Booth, Ainscow and Dyson (2006) consider that inclusive schools do not exist in England if inclusive education strictly means that a school embraces all children in the community and employs teaching methods that reduce ability-based groupings. Perhaps, viewing a school as either inclusionary or exclusionary is unproductive and contradicts the notion of inclusion as a never-

ending process. It might be more constructive to view a schools' inclusivity as a journey where continuous adjustments and developments are made to suit the changes in the context, and the changes in schools' composition.

2.4 Mesosystem: Teacher Attitudes Towards Inclusive Education

2.4.1 Defining teacher attitudes.

Teacher attitudes towards inclusive education play an essential role in its successful implementation (Avramidis and Kalyva, 2007; Humphrey and Symes, 2013; Saloviita and Schaffus, 2016). It is vital to define attitudes prior to discussing teacher attitudes towards inclusion, which proved to be almost as challenging as defining inclusive education. Even in some of the most influential studies, defining attitudes is not common and is instead comprehended from the study overall and the instruments employed (de Boer, Pijl and Minnaert, 2011). The three main components of attitudes are:

1- the cognitive component: consists of the individual's beliefs or knowledge about the attitude object,
2- the affective component: feelings about the attitude object,
3- the behavioural component: someone's predisposition to act towards the attitude object in a particular way (Eagly and Chaiken, 1993, quoted in de Boer, Pijl and Minnaert, 2011, p. 333).

According to Avramidis, Bayliss and Burden (2000a), the dominant view of attitudes in the literature is the affective component, which is a feeling towards an object such as inclusion. The cognitive component is also heavily used and concerns the acceptance or rejection of objects, and how an object in conceptualised and understood. Teacher attitudes towards inclusive education are therefore defined as teachers' acceptance of the overall policy of inclusive education (affective component), their acceptance of the inclusion of students with SEN in a mainstream classroom (affective component), and teachers' perception and definition

of inclusion (cognitive component). This is the view adopted by this study and the literature cited in this section.

It is crucial for teachers to have positive attitudes towards inclusion and to embrace their responsibility for all learners (Forlin and Loreman, 2014). Florian and Linklater (2010) suggest that positive teacher attitudes influence the provision of more effective learning opportunities for pupils. Teacher attitudes shape classroom interactions. The more teachers embrace responsibility for the learning of all students in the classroom, the more likely they are to: engage all learners, foster a conducive learning environment, and encourage autonomous student behaviour (Rix *et al.*, 2009). Jordan, Schwartz and McGhie-Richmond (2009) further explain how teacher attitudes towards inclusion and students with SEN influences teaching practices. Teachers with negative attitudes or teachers with 'pathognomonic perspectives' tend to abandon their responsibility to teach learners with SEN and attribute that responsibility to parents and support outside of the classroom. Teachers with positive attitudes or 'interventionalist beliefs' embrace their responsibility to teach all learners, openly collaborate with support and parents, and provide sufficient learning opportunities for their diverse learners. The studies above therefore clarify the value and influence of teacher attitudes on their practices, and hence the implementation of inclusion.

Given that teacher practices in the classroom are the result of their attitudes and beliefs, it is essential for schools and policies to be as supportive of teachers as possible in order to influence positive teacher attitudes towards inclusion (Ainscow and Miles, 2008). This statement illustrates the interrelationships between the different variables between the ecosystems. In other words, inclusive school practices in the exosystem create conditions that influence

positive teacher attitudes in the mesosystem, which then influence teaching practices in the microsystem. The teacher attitudes variable is hence examined in the mesosystem, as it illustrates an interaction between teacher beliefs and the manifestation of those beliefs as practices within the microsystem which directly influences the developing child. Teacher attitudes are also largely influenced by the surroundings in the school culture in the exosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Most studies report positive teacher attitudes towards the overall principle of inclusive education (Avramidis, Bayliss and Burden, 2000a; 2000b; Avramidis and Kalyva, 2007; Wilde and Avramidis, 2011), and as an educational ideal (Croll and Moses, 2000). de Boer, Pijl and Minnaert (2011) however reveal that teachers have negative attitudes towards inclusion. Teachers' attitudes towards inclusion can vary based on certain factors such as: previous experience in teaching students with SEN; the availability of continuing professional development opportunities (Avramidis and Kalyva, 2007); the extent of a student's disability; teachers age, gender, and years of teaching experience (Avramidis and Norwich, 2002). These components are divided into student factors and teacher factors, and are examined next.

2.4.2 Teacher attitudes based on student factors.

Exploring teacher attitudes towards the inclusion of certain groups of SEN is a widespread approach. More specifically, teacher attitudes are influenced by the extent of the student's disability where some teachers indicate that inclusion is not for every type of SEN (Wilde and Avramidis, 2011). Teachers report more positive attitudes towards the inclusion of students with physical disabilities and blindness than students with intellectual and hearing impairments,

and multiple disabilities (Zoniou-Sideri and Vlachou, 2006; Avramidis and Kalyva, 2007). Teachers further indicate more positive attitudes towards students with physical disabilities than students with behavioural difficulties (Bešić *et al.*, 2018). Pappas, Papoutsi and Drigas (2018) find that teachers support the inclusion of students with physical disabilities and have more negative attitudes towards the inclusion of students with intellectual impairments. Some teachers support the inclusion of students from ethnic minorities more than the inclusion of students with disabilities (Zoniou-Sideri and Vlachou, 2006), as well as have negative attitudes towards the inclusion of students who are physically aggressive and students with a range of needs (Forlin and Chambers, 2011). Bešić, Paleczek and Gasteiger-Klicpera (2018) reveal that teachers have more positive attitudes towards students with disabilities than refugee students, which could be due to their low language proficiency. Slee (2011) is critical of studies that explore teacher attitudes towards the inclusion of different groups of SEN in that it further reinforces ideas of 'defectology'. The purpose of recognising the difference in teacher attitudes depending on student needs remains unclear, particularly given it does not appear to inform practice. It instead justifies the exclusion of some groups back to special education.

2.4.3 Teacher attitudes based on teacher factors.

Teachers' professional and personal experience with disability are strong predictors of positive attitudes towards inclusive education (Avramidis and Norwich, 2002; Forlin, Sharma and Loreman, 2007; Forlin and Chambers, 2011; Pappas, Papoutsi and Drigas, 2018). More positive teacher attitudes are reported from teachers who work in schools with resource units than teachers who do not, indicating that teachers' encounters with students with disabilities

influences positive teachers' attitudes (Avramidis, Bayliss and Burden, 2000b; Leatherman and Niemeyer, 2005; Zoniou-Sideri and Vlachou, 2006; Avramidis and Kalyva, 2007).

Teachers' educational background is associated with teacher attitudes towards inclusion. Avramidis, Bayliss and Burden (2000b) indicate the importance of providing teachers with more training opportunities, as teachers who have been through more continuing professional development in the area of SEN have more positive attitudes (Avramidis, Bayliss and Burden, 2000b; Bradshaw and Mundia, 2006; Avramidis and Kalyva, 2007; Fyssa, Vlachou and Avramidis, 2014). The more knowledge teachers have of inclusive teaching, the more positive their attitudes are (Mónico *et al.*, 2018). Teachers' perceived competency in inclusive teaching also influences attitudes positively (Avramidis, Bayliss and Burden, 2000b). Bešić, Paleczek and Gasteiger-Klicpera (2018) affirm that teachers who report having more books also have more positive attitudes towards inclusive education. These studies therefore collectively indicate that educated teachers either in the specific areas of SEN or inclusive teaching in general, have more positive attitudes towards inclusive education.

Teacher attitudes are further explored in relation to: teacher's gender, availability of support, years of teaching experience, and increase in workload. First, female teachers generally report more positive attitudes towards inclusion than male teachers (Avramidis, Bayliss and Burden, 2000a; Saloviita and Schaffus, 2016; Bešić, Paleczek and Gasteiger-Klicpera, 2018; Pappas, Papoutsi and Drigas, 2018). Second, the availability of resources and support staff are positively correlated with teacher attitudes (Avramidis, Bayliss and Burden, 2000b; Avramidis and Norwich, 2002). Third, years of teaching experience and its relationship to teacher attitudes towards inclusion shows inconsistent findings. Segall and Campbell (2012) report that teachers

with more teaching experience have more positive attitudes towards inclusion. In other studies, younger teachers who have recently gained their teaching qualification hold more positive attitudes towards inclusion than more experienced teachers (Avramidis, Bayliss and Burden, 2000a; Bešić, Paleczek and Gasteiger-Klicpera, 2018; Pappas, Papoutsi and Drigas, 2018). Sokal and Sharma (2017) reveal that teachers who have been educated for inclusion and have experiences in inclusive school settings both contribute to their positive attitudes towards inclusion. Fourth, negative attitudes towards the inclusion of students with SEN are influenced by teachers' perceived increase in workload (Zoniou-Sideri and Vlachou, 2006; Saloviita and Schaffus, 2016). Inclusion can be particularly straining on teachers at the beginning stages of integration and inclusion where they are required to restructure the learning environment and coordinate with the support team (SENCOs, TAs, SETs) (Avramidis, Bayliss and Burden, 2000b).

Teachers' expectations and beliefs on how students with and without SEN will perform socially and academically in a mainstream classroom can also indicate their attitudes towards inclusive education. This however is not emphasised in the literature with the exception of Avramidis and Kalyva (2007) who report teachers' positive attitudes towards students' academic and social outcomes. Teacher attitudes towards inclusion are positively correlated to students' social inclusion (Mamas and Avramidis, 2013). However, Pappas, Papoutsi and Drigas (2018) acknowledge that teacher beliefs for the social outcomes of students with SEN are more robust compared to academic outcomes, and that finding is also replicated for students without SEN. Another indication of teacher attitudes towards inclusion is teachers' perceptions of the barriers to inclusive education. Pappas, Papoutsi and Drigas (2018) identify the following to be barriers to the successful implementation of inclusion: shortage of qualified support, crowded

classrooms, lack of funding, and problematic school infrastructure. As for more moderate barriers to inclusion, these include: attitudes of parents, teacher hesitation, local inclusion policy, and curriculum. Therefore, both teacher beliefs in students' social and academic outcomes, as well as teachers' perception of barriers to inclusion are significant indications of teacher attitudes towards inclusive education.

2.4.4 Teacher attitudes in the Middle East.

Teacher attitudes towards inclusion in the ME is the most researched area of inclusive education in the region. In a literature review by Alkhateeb, Hadidi and Alkhateeb (2016), they establish that of the studies exploring teacher attitudes towards inclusion in the Arab world, 11 studies report positive attitudes while 10 studies report negative teacher attitudes towards inclusion. More specifically, Egyptian and Jordanian teachers express mildly positive attitudes towards inclusion (Fayez, Dababneh and Jumiaan, 2011; Hassanein, 2015). Teachers in Kuwait also have positive attitudes towards the inclusion of students with learning disabilities in mainstream schools, and have a positive outlook on students' academic attainment in an inclusive classroom (Al-Manabri *et al.*, 2013). Alghazo and Gaad (2004) and Bradshaw (2009) report negative teacher attitudes towards inclusion in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), while Dukmak (2013) reveals positive teacher attitudes in the same context. This could be because the former studies were performed at earlier stages of implementing inclusion, while the latter study was conducted more recently.

Teacher attitudes towards inclusion in the UAE are contingent on their requirement for more training, in-class material support and assistance, external support from parents and school

administration, supportive school infrastructure, and fewer students in the class (Gaad and Khan, 2007; Anati, 2012). Teachers are anxious about inclusive education as they believe society will not regard them as capable of teaching students with SEN. This could partially be due to the recent implementation of inclusion in the UAE. Teachers with previous experiences with teaching children with SEN indicate more positive attitudes towards inclusion, and believe that learners with and without SEN should be learning together in the mainstream classroom (Anati, 2012).

Alghazo and Gaad (2004) and Al-Zyoudi (2006) assert that female teachers have more positive attitudes than male teachers towards inclusion, and that generally teachers with more years of experience have more positive attitudes than their novice counterparts (Hassanein, 2015). On the contrary, Dukmak (2013) and Hussien and Al-Qaryouti (2014) reveal that male teachers indicate more positive attitudes, and teachers' years of experience and age are not related to attitudes towards inclusion. Similar to the Western studies mentioned earlier, teachers in the ME feel differently about the inclusion of different groups of SEN (Alghazo and Gaad, 2004; Al-Zyoudi, 2006; Fayez, Dababneh and Jumiaan, 2011; Hassanein, 2015). For instance, teachers have more positive attitudes towards the inclusion of learners with physical disabilities, followed by learners with learning disabilities, visual impairments, hearing impairments, behavioural difficulties, and students with intellectual disabilities with the most negative attitudes (Alghazo and Gaad, 2004).

Hassanein (2015) urges for attitudes to be considered in response to the cultural context and not be analysed in isolation. Overall, Egyptian teachers indicate positive attitudes towards the concept of inclusive education, which the author interprets to be consistent with the values of

equality emphasised in Islamic culture. Hassanein (2015) articulates that teacher attitudes are largely influenced by the socio-cultural context, policy context, school context and classroom context. Therefore, acknowledging the influence of the macrosystem and wider policies on the implementation of inclusion in the exosystem, mesosystem and microsystem. Al-Mahdy and Emam (2017) offer a different perspective by exploring the relationship between school leadership, organisational commitment, and teacher attitudes in Oman. They establish that school leadership significantly impacts positive teacher attitudes towards inclusive education, as well as overall inclusive school culture. This study thus examines the influence of school culture and leadership in the exosystem on teacher attitudes towards inclusion in the mesosystem.

Only two studies in inclusion are found in the context of Bahrain which examine teacher attitudes towards inclusive education. AlMahdi and Bukamal (2019) explore pre-service teacher attitudes and reveal that overall pre-service teachers have positive attitudes towards inclusive education and students with SEN. The majority of the participants indicate some hesitation towards the inclusion of children with aggressive behaviour, and those who require the assistance of communicative technologies in mainstream classrooms. Still, the majority of the pre-service teachers support the inclusion of non-Arabic speakers, students with learning difficulties, and students who require more instruction from a SET in a resource room. The student teachers reveal some concerns with inclusion such as the lack of support staff, increased workload, insufficient support, and issues relating to the mainstream students' acceptance of students with SEN (AlMahdi and Bukamal, 2019).

Bukamal (2018) explores in-service teachers' attitudes, perceptions and challenges with inclusive education. The majority of the participants believe that students with more severe SEN either should not be included in the mainstream class or should only be included if they are accompanied by a SET. Despite some hesitation with the concept of inclusion and teachers' belief in the increased workload associated with it, the teachers still acknowledge the social benefits of inclusion for children with SEN as well as the right of all students for equal educational opportunities. Appropriate support from the Ministry of Education, school leadership, parents, and the provision of a SET would ease the implementation of inclusion according to the teachers (Bukamal, 2018). Although studies on inclusive education in Bahrain are limited, these two studies are indicative of the state of inclusion in the country. The common issues pertaining to the implementation of inclusion in Bahrain are: having a unified meaning of inclusion, policy and guidance for implementation, support from the appropriate sources, and the unavailability of SETs.

2.4.5 The future of research on teacher attitudes.

There is considerable room for improvement in measuring teacher attitudes towards inclusive education, despite the contribution of all the studies discussed earlier. For example, teacher attitudes are predominantly explored through self-report teacher questionnaires, and rarely through observational methods (de Boer, Pijl and Minnaert, 2011). Self-report questionnaires are susceptible to socially desirable responses, and therefore should be supported with other methods of measurement. Comparing teacher attitudes towards inclusive education across cultures is located in the literature, for instance comparing attitudes of teachers in Italy and Australia (Sharma *et al.*, 2018); Ghana, Spain, and Germany (Mónico *et al.*, 2018); and

Germany and Finland (Saloviita and Schaffus, 2016). However, no studies are identified that explore the difference in teacher attitudes in Western countries compared to ME countries. This comparison is essential particularly considering the practice in the ME of importing Western educational models.

It is informative to identify the relationship between teacher attitudes and the four variables of teacher's gender, availability of support, years of teaching experience, and increased workload. Yet, it is unclear how that contributes to the implementation of inclusion and improving teacher attitudes towards inclusive education. For example, in the case of the relationship between teacher attitudes and teachers' continuing professional development. If studies consistently demonstrate a strong correlation between the two variables, then education systems and schools should ensure the provision of sufficient educational opportunities for teachers in order to influence positive attitudes and the successful implementation of inclusive education. However, in regards to exploring teacher attitudes based on teachers' gender or years of teaching experience, it is uncertain how this is productive for moving inclusion policy and practice forward.

Despite global interest in examining teacher attitudes towards inclusion, the influence of teacher attitudes on actual practices in the classroom are not consistently explored (Sharma and Sokal, 2016). A connection is assumed between these variables, as teacher attitudes can influence teachers' behaviour and approaches in the classroom. In fact, the purpose of measuring teacher attitudes towards inclusion should predominantly be either to: assess teacher perceptions towards implementing inclusion policy at the initial stages of implementation in a specific context, or measure the impact of attitudes on practice, or compare teacher attitudes towards

inclusive education in two or more educational contexts. Generally, the purpose of exploring teacher attitudes towards inclusion should be emphasised in the literature. Research on teacher attitudes should also focus less on measuring attitudes in comparison to inconsequential variables and more on examining the relationship between teacher attitudes and barriers to inclusion, concerns, and beliefs of the academic and social achievement of students with and without SEN.

2.5 Microsystem: Inclusive Classroom Practices

2.5.1 Defining inclusive practice.

Despite the constant push for inclusion by policy makers, it is accompanied with scarce guidance for teachers on its implementation (Nind and Wearmouth, 2006; Florian and Spratt, 2013). Teachers openly criticise inclusion research and its relevance to actual classroom practice (Black-Hawkins and Florian, 2012). The enactment of inclusive education is referred to in a number of ways in the literature: inclusive teaching (Anderson, Boyle and Deppeler, 2014), inclusive learning (Corbett, 2001a), inclusive practice (Farrell, Hick and Kershner, 2008), and inclusive pedagogy (Florian and Black-Hawkins, 2011). In this study, inclusive practice is used as the overall term to describe the implementation of inclusion, and it is defined by Finkelstein, Sharma and Furlonger (2019, p. 3) as 'strategies/behaviours that teachers use to ensure that students with diverse abilities can learn in regular classrooms'. This part of the chapter critically discusses inclusive practice in the classroom level which takes place in the direct environment of the learner, therefore belongs in the microsystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

At the foreground of inclusive teaching practices is the pedagogic positions argument, which rationalises the type of inclusive practice followed. The first position is the general differences position or the needs-based perspective which states that if we ignore the needs of students with SEN and the specific pedagogies needed to address them, then the learners are subjected to exclusion. This position embraces learner differences and the labelling of learners' needs. The use of specialist pedagogies is considered inclusionary, and the general differences position

acknowledges the specific needs of different types of learners. The role of the special education teacher (SET) in this position is therefore more prominent, as the teacher responds directly to the needs of learners with SEN and the use of resource rooms is considered supportive (Ravet, 2011; Norwich, 2013).

A large proportion of research is dedicated to investigating specialist pedagogies and interventions for learners with SEN, either in or out of the mainstream classroom. Specialist pedagogies are targeted for specific groups of learners with SEN, to enhance their inclusion in the mainstream classroom. For example, 'intensive interactions' interventions for learners with autism (Argyropoulou and Papoudi, 2012); outdoor education for students with emotional and behavioural difficulties (Fox and Avramidis, 2003); social problem-solving skills for learners with mild intellectual disability (Vlachou and Stavroussi, 2016); and the 'circle of friends' strategy to support students on the autism spectrum (Kalyva and Avramidis, 2005).

The second position is the unique differences position or the rights-based argument which believes that by providing special pedagogies to some learners, that identifies them as different and therefore puts them at risk for exclusion. This position thus discards specialist pedagogies for groups of SEN as a rejection of deterministic beliefs of ability, and instead utilises teaching strategies that are 'common to all' (Hick and Thomas, 2009; Ravet, 2011). Norwich (2013) further adds that the unique or individual differences position uses general instruction methods and modifies them for individual learners rather than recognises group-specific needs. Both the general differences position and the unique differences position believe the opposing view is exclusionary.

The use of specialist pedagogy, resource rooms, and individualised learning plans are practices where specialist provision strategies have transferred to mainstream education (Florian, 2014). According to the unique differences position, such practices marginalise learners (Ainscow, Farrell and Tweddle, 2000; Nind *et al.*, 2005), and are counterproductive to the concept of inclusion where schools should instead focus on the engagement of all learners in the classroom (Ainscow, 1999). Lewis and Norwich (2005) assert that for most SEN categories, specialist pedagogy is not necessary, as well as lacks the evidential support of their effectiveness within mainstream education (Norwich, 2000; Norwich and Lewis, 2001; Norwich and Lewis, 2007). Instead, teachers utilise the common teaching strategies with more emphasis for learners with SEN (Norwich and Lewis, 2001; Davis and Florian, 2004b). Davis and Florian (2004b) suppose that research should focus less on specific pedagogy for learners with SEN and more on pedagogy that suits diverse learners. Yet, the authors affirm it is still necessary for mainstream educators to be equipped with special educational knowledge to inform their overall practice.

Ravet (2011) suggests a third position called the 'integrative perspective' which combines elements from the needs-based and rights-based positions. The integrative position acknowledges that specialist pedagogies are essential to understanding the needs of some learners, and they can be extended to benefit other learners in the classroom (Farrell, 2001; Ravet, 2011; Wilde and Avramidis, 2011). Nind *et al.* (2005) argues that certain pedagogies can be extremely beneficial for certain SEN groups as long as they do not replace common teaching strategies, and instead used to support them. Specialist pedagogies thus support inclusive practice. This position also seeks to spread more awareness across the school on the needs of different learners (Ravet, 2011). Norwich and Lewis (2007) propose the 'continua of teaching approaches'. This position utilises common teaching methods and differentiates their

practice to high-density or low-density approaches depending on the needs of learners. The authors suggest this is a more inclusive approach as students with learning difficulties are being taught in the mainstream class through high density teaching of the common teaching approaches (Lewis and Norwich, 2005).

Despite the distinction between the proposed positions, how they directly impact the implementation of inclusive practice remains ambiguous. For instance, it is unclear whether some learners are being taught in the classroom or outside of the classroom, the particular role of the SET and mainstream education teacher (MET) in providing specialist pedagogy, and the meaning of 'common teaching approaches'. The pedagogic position taken by researchers throughout the literature is also not consistently clear. Norwich and Lewis (2007, p. 145) even mention how some literature reviews of inclusive practice indicate they are aligned with one position and then conclude based on another position. The authors articulate 'it is understandable, given the conceptual complexity of the issues, the scarcity of quality research, and the climate set by government education policy in the UK promoting inclusive practices, that the seemingly more relevant aim of developing an 'inclusive pedagogy' is preferred'. There is an intense fear associated with marking learners as different, with minor justification for its harm or potential benefits to student outcomes. There is no need for the 'either/or' mentality regarding the choice of pedagogic positions, inclusive practices should instead exist on a continuum where choices are made by educators based on the socio-cultural context and student needs. Based on the argument above and the exclusionary tendency of specialist pedagogy, this thesis focuses on exploring universalist teaching approaches to teach a classroom of diverse learners.

2.5.2 Generalist teaching approaches.

Generic teaching strategies for inclusion are located sporadically in inclusive education research, however, three main principles associated with implementing inclusion are identified. First, inclusive teaching discards specialist approaches and interventions, and instead adopts a 'generic pedagogical perspective' that seeks to equip students with skills to become self-regulated and life-long learners (Liasidou, 2015). Teachers utilise existing teaching knowledge and reflection to implement inclusive teaching, through using available school resources and expertise to explore different teaching strategies (Ainscow, 1999; Booth, Nes and Strømstad, 2003). Teachers therefore acknowledge their responsibility for educating all learners in their classroom as an essential pre-requisite for inclusive teaching (Rix *et al.*, 2009).

Second, students are co-agents in the learning process (Nind and Wearmouth, 2006). Teacher's practices in an inclusive classroom embrace student diversity and student-centred learning (Liasidou, 2015), in support of student autonomy (Goransson, Malmqvist and Nilholm, 2013). Inclusive practice also embraces students' input rather than enforces perspectives (Nind *et al.*, 2005), and students are involved as 'partners' in planning for the learning activities (Booth, Nes and Strømstad, 2003). Teachers set clear performance and behavioural expectations in order to inspire students to share and discuss educational issues, all whilst respecting students dignity, sustaining mutual respect, and an appreciation of difference (Nilholm and Alm, 2010). Allan (2008) further advocates the importance of consulting learners on what teaching practices they find more inclusive.

Third, inclusive practice rejects the notion of deterministic views of student abilities (Mamas and Avramidis, 2013). Classroom activities allow the participation of all learners without teachers' pre-conceived notions of student abilities, and students are presented with activities that are engaging for all (Nind *et al.*, 2005). Liasidou (2015) supports socio-cultural theories of learning to guide inclusive pedagogy as it comes with assumptions that ability is changeable. Teacher views of fixed ability not only can be detrimental to students' learning and progress, but also harmful to the teacher's role and accountability for students' learning. It further communicates messages to learners about their fixed ability, and therefore influences learners' low self-efficacy (Hart, 1998). Teachers should feel accountable for not being able to support all students' learning (Ainscow, 1999), rather than attribute the failure to learners' ability.

Mitchell (2008) provides a number of evidence-based teaching strategies for classrooms inclusive of students with SEN including: social skills training, cognitive strategy instruction, self-regulated learning, and memory strategies to enhance knowledge retention. Mitchell (2008) supposes that although these strategies are not specialist pedagogies, they are given with the purpose of ensuring the use of a variety of methods that address the needs of different learners. Morningstar (2015) agrees that diversifying instructional methods during teaching is integral to inclusive practice. That includes a combination of whole-class instruction, small-group instruction, and grouping.

Other inclusive teaching practices identified in the literature are: teacher questioning and ongoing formative assessment to oversee students' learning progress (Booth, Nes and Strømstad, 2003); active parental participation in the learning process (Mitchell, 2008; Nilholm and Alm, 2010); praise, rephrasing instructions for activities, adjusting lesson pace (Fyssa,

Vlachou and Avramidis, 2014); and imitation and modelling (Vlachou, Stavroussi and Didaskalou, 2016). The authors also collectively indicate the following to be inclusive practices: peer collaborative work, co-teaching with specialists, and a differentiated curriculum to facilitate access for all learners (Soukakou, 2012; Morningstar, 2015; Finkelstein, Sharma and Furlonger, 2019). This microsystem section critically discusses the most recurring inclusive practices in the literature. These include: peer collaborative learning, co-teaching, differentiated instruction, and the inclusive pedagogical approach.

2.5.3 Peer collaborative learning.

According to Rix *et al.* (2009), peer collaboration is the second most common teaching method for inclusion. Peer collaborative work is considered an inclusive practice as peer mentoring enhances the social participation of learners, and reduces teachers' individual support for certain students (Booth, Ainscow and Dyson, 2006; Mamas and Avramidis, 2013). It can also be particularly effective in a large classroom, which facilitates child to child support and increases the participation of more learners in the learning process (Ainscow, 1999). Peer collaborative work helps learners develop skills of interdependence, cooperation, problem-solving, and for more able learners to support less able learners (Mitchell, 2008). Morningstar (2015) identifies peer-supported learning as an inclusive practice and it is demonstrated through different variations such as: pair tasks, group work, peer mentoring, and learning centres (Clark, Dyson and Millward, 1995; Morningstar, 2015). Other adaptations of peer collaborative work include group outdoor activities accompanied by alternating student responsibilities (Nilholm and Alm, 2010); group work classroom activities by specifying individual student roles within

the group (Nind and Wearmouth, 2006); and social skills training for learners to engage in positive interactions (Mitchell, 2008).

Peer collaborative work for inclusion is more successful in mixed ability grouping (Mitchell, 2008; Avramidis, 2013), as mixed-ability grouping and 'circle time' enhance student relations. Another approach to organising collaborative work is through teacher's refusal of exclusive friendships to organise collaborative work, by constantly alternating student groups so as to enhance the participation of all learners (Wilde and Avramidis, 2011). While some teachers support the use of mixed ability groupings to teach students with SEN in the mainstream class (Strogilos, Stefanidis and Tragoulia, 2016), others use ability grouping to teach students with SEN and do not view this method as exclusionary (Vlachou, Didaskalou and Kontofryou, 2015). The way students are grouped is not always a straightforward indication of inclusionary or exclusionary practice, as Ainscow, Dyson and Weiner (2013) state that despite classrooms being organised into groups of students in England, students work individually for the majority of class time.

While several studies indicate the use of peer collaborative learning in inclusive classrooms, it is unclear the manner in which peer collaborative work enhances inclusive practice. This further contributes to the difficulty of defining inclusive practices and studies need to be more conclusive. The way collaborative work is organised in either ability or mixed ability pairings/groupings, could largely determine whether the method is inclusionary or exclusionary. The use of ability grouping would subject learners to exclusion as students with lower ability are clearly identified and are all placed within one group, which limits students' ability to socialise with other learners and restricts their academic progress. The use of ability

grouping, in this instance, is consistent with the general differences position. It is also crucial to note that mixed ability grouping could still subject some learners to exclusion. Group work is susceptible to the typical concerns where some of the students in the group who have leadership characteristics or those with higher ability, might dominate the majority of the task while their less able peers observe. Especially because it is nearly impossible for the teacher to constantly be aware of the participation of all learners in the lesson, particularly during a group activity where the teacher monitors the performance of several groups simultaneously.

2.5.4 Co-teaching.

The co-teaching partnership between a mainstream education teacher (MET) and a special education teacher (SET) is considered another form of inclusive practice (Mamas and Avramidis, 2013; Strogilos and Tragoulia, 2013), as well as co-teaching with teaching assistants (TAs) (Ainscow *et al.*, 1999). SETs are qualified teachers (Kugelmass, 2001), while TAs are often unqualified support (Ainscow, Farrell and Tweddle, 2000). Co-teaching practices between METs and SETs are not practiced in England, this review thus focuses on co-teaching between METs and TAs.

There are four main arrangements in the collaborative practices between METs and TAs. First, the mainstream teacher directs the lessons and the TA supports students with SEN. In this instance, students with SEN are physically placed in a group, however, they do not engage with other students in the group (Strogilos, 2012; Sharma and Salend, 2016). Second, the MET and support teacher work collaboratively with the student groups, and the students with SEN interact with their group members (Corbett, 2001a; Strogilos, 2012; Sharma and Salend, 2016).

Third, all students with SEN are placed in one group and work with the TA either inside or outside of the mainstream classroom, while the MET guides the remaining student groups (Strogilos, 2012). This is considered a form of ability grouping, which as argued earlier, is an exclusionary practice. Fourth, the TA is only responsible for teaching one student with SEN, and the rest of the class is the responsibility of the MET (Strogilos, 2012; Sharma and Salend, 2016).

It is crucial to critically evaluate each arrangement in terms of which is the most inclusive, as they could each have a different impact on students' learning experiences. In line with the principles of inclusive practice indicated earlier, the second arrangement appears to be more inclusive as METs embrace their responsibility to support all learners in the classroom, as well as involve learners as co-agents in the learning process. Wilde and Avramidis (2011) find that when TAs work with different students in the classroom instead of working only with students with SEN, that influences the willingness of METs to learn more inclusive practices to enhance the participation of students with SEN. A collaborative arrangement is additionally the most inclusive as it does not identify or marginalise the students with SEN. In other arrangements, Göransson *et al.* (2017) argue that the most vulnerable learners are being educated by unqualified TAs. The authors estimate that if METs collaborate with TAs, they are more likely to implement inclusive education successfully which could be beneficial to students. However, MET's over reliance on support for the education of students with SEN potentially influences positive teacher attitudes towards inclusive education (Saloviita and Schaffus, 2016).

According to Webster and de Boer (2021), the TA role ambiguity is widely acknowledged in the literature, particularly pertaining to their contribution to inclusive practice. Although the

hiring of TAs in mainstream schools was initially considered an inclusive practice, their role in teaching students with SEN is more controversial than ever (Ainscow *et al.*, 1999). Slee (2011, p. 103) explains:

> in too many instances the purchase of the integration aide was a down payment on collective indifference. The teacher should attend to the legitimate regular school children while the aides would do what they could to translate lessons and see to it that the child didn't impinge on the learning of others. This is certainly not the case for all, but it remains a common feature of what people now call inclusive or special education.

Slee elucidates the tendency of the TA role to inflict exclusion to some groups of learners. The responsibility of TAs in the mainstream class is another form of moving practices from the special education class to mainstream education and claiming that it is inclusion (Ainscow, 1997).

Booth, Ainscow and Dyson (2006) acknowledge the benefit of having TAs in supporting student participation, while also prohibiting student opportunities for interactions with other students and the MET. The presence of a TA often restricts the prospect of students with SEN to socialise with others, particularly when all students with SEN are grouped together so that the TA can more easily assist them (Webster and de Boer, 2021). Students with SEN would resort to asking the TA for guidance, rather than learning from another student. The TAs presence thus limits the social inclusion and socialisation with peers (Wilde and Avramidis, 2011; Sharma and Salend, 2016). Blatchford, Russell and Webster (2012) reveal that the academic attainment of learners who receive TA instruction is lower in comparison to their peers who do not receive TA guidance. The presence of the TA further restricts teacher-student interactions, since the MET would instead instruct the TA on how to teach students with SEN (Ainscow, 1999; Ainscow, 2000). The TA role therefore leads METs to forgo responsibility for

teaching students with SEN (Sharma and Salend, 2016), and believe their responsibilities are very difficult to manage without support (Ainscow, 1999).

Despite the many criticisms of the role of TAs, it is essential to utilise their role to support the learning of all students and support the MET. That can be established by determining TAs specific contribution to the mainstream class both in policy and in school practices, as the TA role ambiguity is likely to lead to ineffective communication between TAs and METs (Thomas, Walker and Webb, 1998; Sharma and Salend, 2016), as well as have detrimental effects on students' learning. Webster, Blatchford and Russell (2013) propose that additional planning time between the MET and TA would enhance the TA contribution to lesson planning, and transform their role from only instructing learners with SEN towards providing support for all learners. Farrell (2004) considers that appropriate training of TAs can also assist in utilising their roles to the maximum level and effectively support the learning of all students. However, training should not only focus on the skills of TAs, but also on effective co-teaching practices between METs and TAs (Farrell, 2004; Dally *et al.*, 2019). Florian and Rouse (2001a) discuss an alternative arrangement for the role of TAs, in order to overcome the reliance of students with SEN on TAs. Instead of the TA being paired to a student with SEN, the TA should be paired with subject departments. This option allows TAs the chance to learn more about the subject areas they are expected to provide support in, as well as being available to support all learners in the classroom.

2.5.5 Differentiated instruction.

Differentiated instruction (DI) is one of the prevalent inclusive practices discussed in the literature, and it generally consists of educating individuals or groups of students differently (Armstrong, Armstrong and Spandagou, 2010). According to Tomlinson (2014, p. 3):

> 'teachers in differentiated classrooms accept and act on the premise that they must be ready to engage students in instruction through different approaches to learning, by appealing to a range of interests, and by using varied rates of instruction along with varied degrees of complexity and different support systems'.

In a differentiated classroom, the teacher adjusts the content, process and product in response to students' 'readiness, interest, and learning profiles' (Tomlinson, 2014, p. 18). Student interest refers to learning topics that promote student motivation, which is also referred to as 'interest-based differentiation' (Tomlinson, 2014, p. 24). The process of differentiation begins by first, modifying the content which requires the identification of the learning outcomes and the materials available for the students in order to achieve those outcomes. Second, amending the process which requires learning activities that enable learners to interact with and construct knowledge and understanding. Third, adapting the product which includes allowing for a variety of responses and expressions of students' knowledge. The differentiated classroom is student-centred where students learn to work independently and attain individual and collective objectives. The differentiated classroom is also flexible in its arrangements, sometimes student groups are organised by the teacher or by the students themselves (Santangelo and Tomlinson, 2012; Tomlinson, 2014).

Contrary to the view of DI offered by Tomlinson, Roy, Guay and Valois (2013) propose that DI encompasses two components which are: instructional adaptations based on differences in students' ability, and academic progress monitoring. The authors developed the Differentiated

Instruction Scale (DIS) which reveals that the use of differentiated instruction is positively associated with autonomy support and a positive school climate. The view of Tomlinson (2014) is thus an all-encompassing view of DI which responds to differences in students' abilities as well as interests, while Roy, Guay and Valois (2013) respond mainly to variations in student ability.

Tomlinson *et al.* (2003) further explain that effective differentiation is 'proactive' where the teacher predicts students' needs prior to the lesson, rather than makes adjustments based on students' responses during the lesson. Differentiation involves a variety of instructional methods including whole-class instruction, group learning, and individual support, along with regular formative assessment to inform instruction (Tomlinson, 2005). Group learning is best conducted within mixed ability collaborative learning groups (Tomlinson *et al.*, 2003). Tomlinson (2016) additionally proposes a continuum of differentiated instruction where it includes instances of 'microdifferentiation' and 'macrodifferentiation'. Microdifferentiation, or individualisation is more reactive than proactive. This can happen by giving more challenging work for some learners during the lesson once they complete their initial task, or evaluating students' work differently based on their perceived ability. Macrodifferentiation is more proactive where assessments are pre-planned and content, process and product are all varied.

The definition of DI is inconsistent across the literature (Strogilos *et al.*, 2017), and is largely influenced by the school's view which imposes variations in its practice (Armstrong, Armstrong and Spandagou, 2010). The more traditional view of differentiation originates from the SEN framework. It examines students' individual needs and attempts to respond to students' learning styles, yet restricts student creativity and interactions with other students (Corbett, 2001a).

Strogilos *et al.* (2017) describe this as a child deficit-oriented activity where the use of DI is mainly to support students with SEN. This view is problematic and reveals assumptions of teachers' perceptions of how students with SEN should be taught, and equally problematic assumptions about the absence of differentiation for the remaining students without SEN. The alternative view is DI as a context-oriented approach where the curriculum is differentiated for all learners and not only learners with SEN. This is accompanied with the use of many instructional adaptations and modifications and denotes a change in the instructional methods (Corbett, 2001a; Strogilos *et al.*, 2017). DI is more inclusive when it serves students with lower abilities as well as students with higher abilities (Nind *et al.*, 2005).

Strogilos *et al.* (2018) classify three types of modifications for DI. First, curricular modification in which the curriculum content is supported through the provision of additional materials or simplified materials. Second, alternative modifications involve changes to the learning outcome, teaching technique, and learning activity. Third, instructional support by the teacher, SET, or peer, prolonged completion time for an activity; as well as the use of reinforcement, technology, additional materials, and images for instruction.

Despite DI being an inclusive practice, it can still be implemented in a way that subjects some learners to exclusion. One of the main contentions in the area of differentiation is that it reveals assumptions of an entity view of ability (Nind *et al.*, 2005), which occurs when some students are given modifications of activities that restrict their advancement. It is also unclear whether students are allowed a choice of differentiated tasks or if the task of a certain ability level is given to them by the teacher, as that determines the inclusivity of this method. Brennan, King and Travers (2019) and Finkelstein, Sharma and Furlonger (2019) discuss differentiation

through choice where students are allowed to make their own decision on which level of task they should attempt, this then leads to positive outcomes with students such as increased motivation, engagement, and academic attainment. Offering the choice does not limit student's ability and achievement, and thus rejects deterministic views of ability.

Another source of contention is that despite teacher efforts to differentiate the curriculum, national examinations remain undifferentiated (Nilholm and Alm, 2010). That is perhaps why Schwab, Sharma and Hoffmann (2019) express that teachers should focus less on differentiation and more on planning engaging activities for learners. Other issues with DI include: lack of direction for teachers on the extent and degree of differentiation (Strogilos *et al.*, 2018), that teachers forgo their responsibility for differentiation as they believe it is the duty of the SET (Strogilos *et al.*, 2017), the time consuming aspect of differentiating the curriculum, and lack of teacher training in the area (Strogilos, 2012). The promising potential of DI in meeting the needs of diverse learners therefore needs to be solidified as pertaining to: expectations from teachers and the support team for its implementation, ways of implementation, and students' choice of task.

2.5.6 The inclusive pedagogical approach.

The inclusive pedagogical approach (IPA) is another form of enacting inclusion. It is primarily introduced by Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011) who make a deliberate effort to separate inclusive pedagogy from inclusive education and inclusive practice, as both are broad and complex concepts. The IPA is concerned with improving the learning experiences of not only students with SEN, but also learners of diverse ethnic backgrounds, poverty, and non-native

speakers of the main language in their schooling context (Pantić and Florian, 2015). According to Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011, pp. 818-819), the main principles of the IPA focus on teaching practices that enhance the participation of all learners through:

> 1. shifting the focus from one that is concerned with only those individuals who have been identified as having 'additional needs' to the learning of all children in the community of the classroom.
> 2. rejecting deterministic beliefs about ability as being fixed and the associated idea that the presence of some will hold back the progress of others.
> 3. seeing difficulties in learning as professional challenges for teachers, rather than deficits in learners, that encourage the development of new ways of working.

IPA requires a shift in teachers' mindset of separating their planning for teaching for most and some learners, towards planning for everybody in the classroom (Florian, 2012). Student diversity is seen as conducive to the learning environment, and an opportunity for learners to collaborate and acquire knowledge through their interactions with their peers (Florian and Rouse, 2009; Florian and Spratt, 2013). One of the pillars of the IPA is that it rejects deterministic beliefs of ability and 'bell-curve thinking'. Deterministic beliefs of ability are usually enacted through ability groupings and overt differentiation, where limitations to student progress are imposed (Florian and Spratt, 2013). Mixed ability grouping (Spratt and Florian, 2015) and differentiation by outcome are a good representation of IPA, as students are allowed variations in their expressions and outcomes of learning (Spratt and Florian, 2014).

Spratt and Florian (2015) indicate that maintaining students' dignity is essential and a participating teacher refers to it as students' 'status'. This relates to the teacher refraining from identifying certain students as having additional needs in front of their peers, either through the language the teacher uses or through certain teaching practices. Although some learners require additional support, it is essential that support is provided without identifying these learners as

being different (Florian and Spratt, 2013). In IPA, teachers forgo the assumption that they need specialist knowledge or are not qualified enough to teach certain pupils, and accept that differences in student abilities are more due to a range of individual differences than categorial differences (Florian, 2008). Instead, teachers should embrace all learners and feel responsible for their learning progress, rather than externalise it to other factors (Spratt and Florian, 2014).

IPA does not advocate for separate classrooms for students with SEN, where such practice identifies the students who have additional needs (Spratt and Florian, 2015). Specialist knowledge should still be acquired from specialists in ways that do not identify learners with lower ability (Spratt and Florian, 2014). That is not to say the IPA denies learners from specialist support, but rather to support them in ways that would not separate them from their peers (Black-Hawkins and Florian, 2012). For instance, specialist support can be provided for the teacher who then creates the learning experience for the student, rather than simply referring the student with SEN to the SET (Florian and Rouse, 2009). The connection between the teacher and the SET is essential, as one of the main values of the IPA is teachers' willingness to work with others in order to continuously seek professional development opportunities (Florian, 2014). The same principle applies to the provision of TAs. The role of TAs in the IPA is to support all learners in the classroom based on students' request for help (Black-Hawkins and Florian, 2012).

IPA is not concerned with a specific teaching method, but how it is used in the classroom to be inclusive of all learners (Florian and Black-Hawkins, 2011; Black-Hawkins and Florian, 2012). The IPA endorses the use of whole class strategies, where all learners are engaged in the same classroom activities without a prior determination of student ability by the teacher (Black-

Hawkins and Florian, 2012; Spratt and Florian, 2015). To illustrate this further, Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011) discuss an example of a teaching strategy 'work choice' to demonstrate how it can be used within the individualised approach to inclusion where learning is planned for most and some learners, as opposed to the IPA where learning is planned for everybody. In the individualised approach to work choice, students work individually on tasks with a pre-determined level of ability by the teacher while students with SEN are supported by a TA. In this method, students become aware of who are the higher ability and the lower ability peers. Student progress is also restricted to a certain ability level, as the teacher selects the task level that students attempt.

In the everybody approach, students are allowed a choice of task level and the peers they wish to work with. This way, students are encouraged to develop their autonomy in the choice of task and their social skills by seeking help from their peers. The teacher consults the TA on how to support different learners in the classroom in a way to avoid marginalising the learners. One way to support such learners is by making grouping arrangements more flexible where students interact with different peers (Florian and Black-Hawkins, 2011). However, students are prone to selecting a task that is either below or beyond their current capabilities. Despite the efforts of the IPA to conceal differences between learners, students are intuitive and are able to eventually deduce which of their peers select easier or more challenging tasks, or need more or less support from others (Norwich, 2013).

Given this theory emerged from actual school practices and teacher training (Florian, 2012), it is the most relevant and realistic view of inclusive practice available in the literature. The implementation of the IPA however requires teachers to have the ability to be reflective

practitioners and analyse their practice, which may not be a universal skill. The IPA sets unrealistic expectations for teachers' ability to analyse practice given limitations in reflective skills, time constraints and contextual differences. Some of the guidelines associated with the IPA are thus not necessarily transferable to other contexts.

Another limitation are the rigid assumptions of the IPA regarding the elimination of resource rooms and direct contact of students with SEN with SETs, which may not be appropriate for all learners with additional needs. Some learners require focused help depending on the severity of their learning needs as stipulated by the integrative perspective (Ravet, 2011). Specialist support can be sought in alternative ways to excluding learners from the classroom. For instance, the teacher and the SET could team-teach some lessons so that specialist support is available directly to the learner, rather than the SET only being consulted by the teacher. Mintz and Wyse (2015) suppose that the IPA underestimates the power of evidence-based approaches of specialist pedagogy and their necessity for some learners with SEN. If SETs are only consulted by the teacher when planning for everyone, that then assumes that the years of training of SETs and their knowledge are easily transferable and that their role for supporting learners with SEN is obsolete.

IPA also suggests going to extremes to not identify learners with special needs through for instance, using the SET only as a consultant for the teacher rather than teach the students with SEN directly. It gives the impression that being different or having a SEN is shameful and must be concealed. While teachers should be cautious with the language used to preserve the 'status' of learners, individual differences should also be embraced in order to prepare all learners for real-world encounters. Brennan, King and Travers (2019) explain the difficulty of finding

teaching practices that do not identify students who are different especially when learners are experiencing difficulties in learning. In some instances, teachers need to guide learners into choosing the appropriate level of a differentiated task and differentiation by choice is not consistently effective. The flexibility of the IPA is admirable in not disregarding certain teaching practices and instead utilising them to be inclusive of all learners, however, it is essential to focus less on judging teacher practices and more on developing an understanding of why certain practices are used and the challenges associated with teaching in a particular environment.

Norwich (2013) describes the IPA as 'problematic' and refers to the three main assumptions of the IPA as presenting 'false dichotomies' (p. 79). First, he criticises the term 'extending what is ordinarily available' often used by Florian to equally indicate providing something 'additional', which the IPA opposes. The author proposes that the idea of 'extending what is available' is comparable to his notion of high-density teaching through common teaching approaches. Second, Norwich questions the assumption that teachers should have an incremental view of intelligence for all learners meaning that all learners are able to develop their learning and abilities. Rejecting deterministic beliefs of abilities does not necessarily mean that students do not differ in abilities or that the development of their ability is limitless. Third, Norwich challenges the assumption that difficulties in learning are the responsibility of the teacher rather than the learner. Sometimes the teachers' efforts and teaching situation are ideal, but the obstacles to learning stem from the student and environmental influences (Norwich, 2013).

Norwich (2013) further comments on how the IPA rejects the notion of identifying learners as different, yet still acknowledges the need for specialist knowledge after consultation with a SET. He argues that learners will be identified as different by the teacher if he/she seeks to find specialist approaches to accommodate the students' needs. The IPA also sets unrealistic expectations of disregarding the need for student withdrawal in that some learners need one-to-one help from the teacher or TA occasionally. Despite the limitations of IPA, it appears to be the most descriptive way of implementing inclusive education in the classroom to date. IPA's emphasis on 'not the strategy, but its use' allows practitioners to scrutinise all their practices and evaluate their inclusionary or exclusionary tendencies. That is why the IPA is used in this study to guide the data analysis and identify inclusive pedagogy. This is discussed in detail in 'Chapter 3: Methodology'.

2.5.7 Synthesising inclusive classroom practices.

This microsystem critically analysed some of the main inclusive teaching practices identified in the literature such as peer collaborative learning, co-teaching, differentiated instruction, and IPA. Research on peer collaborative learning, co-teaching and differentiation has to be more decisive on how these methods can be used inclusively as they can also be used to exclude some learners. The need to explore inclusive pedagogy came from the need of teachers for more direction on how to enact inclusion in their classroom practices (Black-Hawkins and Florian, 2012). The IPA shares many of the principles of inclusive practice which were shared in the beginning of this microsystem. These principles are: rejecting deterministic beliefs of ability, teachers embracing their responsibility for all learners including learners with SEN, and learners are co-agents in the learning process. However, the IPA addresses these principles in

a holistic manner and identifies them as an overall philosophy that guides the practice of inclusive pedagogy; whereas the principles of inclusive practice are located inconsistently throughout the literature and combined for the purpose of this literature review. The IPA also integrates elements of other inclusive practices. First, the use of differentiated instruction but with the rejection of overt differentiation. Second, the use of mixed ability grouping rather than ability grouping in peer collaborative learning. Third, the role of teaching support for co-teaching should be established in a way to not identify learners with SEN. The IPA is therefore more decisive on the dichotomy inherent in these principles.

Some of the previous inclusive practices generally seek to reduce differences between learners, while other practices emphasise differences in student ability. The latter include practices that are deeply rooted in special education such as the use of: TAs as co-teachers to predominantly support students with SEN, ILPs, and specialist pedagogy. The role of these specialist provision practices in mainstream education must be determined as that will set clearer expectations to the use of specialist pedagogy by teachers, and the SET's responsibilities in a mainstream class. This reverts back to the pedagogic positions argument and how the positions can be used to analyse teaching practices. It is vital to find a balance between the general differences position and the unique differences position in which the needs of all learners are met, as well as the appropriate balance of using SEN specific pedagogy to empower teachers with the necessary tools to educate all learners.

2.6 Conclusion

2.6.1 Inclusive practices across the ecosystems.

This literature review explored inclusive education practices on a country level, a school level and a classroom level. A conclusion to each ecosystem was provided at the end of the respective section, which critically summarises the inter-relationships and interactions between different practices within each ecosystem separately. However, it is also vital to examine the associations between the ecosystems, not just within them. National inclusive policies in the macrosystem largely influence practices in other ecosystems; as the national mandates determine the following: inclusive provision, funding, and support available for the implementation of inclusion in the school and classroom. Inclusive practices and policies in the macrosystem are the result of socio-cultural conditions in each context. In the exosystem, school inclusive practices comprise: admission, SEN support, continuing professional development opportunities, and school-to-school collaboration. Such practices are the direct implication of national policies in the macrosystem such as the Green Paper and White Paper. National agencies such as Ofsted in the macrosystem, establish expectations for exosystem practices including home-school relations as well as expectations for effective school leadership.

In the mesosystem, teacher attitudes are shaped by the socio-cultural and policy context in the macrosystem (Hassanein, 2015); external agencies (Corbett, 2001b); and school leadership in the exosystem (Al-Mahdy and Emam, 2017). In the microsystem, the majority of inclusive teaching practices are directly influenced by school practices in the exosystem. For instance, a practice such as co-teaching (microsystem) is facilitated through the school environment

(exosystem). This typically occurs when the school encourages teachers to collaborate by enabling co-teaching planning meetings. The use of differentiation and TAs to support learners with SEN are determined by national policies in the macrosystem, whereas the pedagogical leadership of school leaders in the exosystem impacts the pedagogy used by teachers in the microsystem (Lindqvist and Nilholm, 2014b). Teaching practices in the microsystem are additionally influenced by teacher attitudes in the mesosystem. Although the association between teacher attitudes towards inclusion and teaching practices is seldom explored, Florian and Linklater (2010) indicate that teacher attitudes influence classroom practices, learning opportunities, and classroom interactions. The relationship between teacher attitudes and teaching practices in inclusion is a gap in the literature, as well as the investigation of inclusive practices on a school and classroom level. Some methodological gaps have also been identified in the literature such as exploring teacher attitudes towards inclusion through observational methods, which in the past, have mostly been investigated through self-report questionnaires.

2.6.2 Comparative inclusion.

Using Bronfenbrenner's ecosystems as a conceptual lens offers consistency for the comparison of the Western perspective of inclusion to the ME perspective. However, a cross-cultural comparison was only possible in the macrosystem and the mesosystem levels as no ME literature was located that discusses inclusive school practices in the exosystem, and inclusive classroom practices in the microsystem. Given that the majority of ME research is focused more on teachers' attitudes and less on inclusive pedagogy, suggests that inclusion is at its very initial stages in the ME and for some countries might still at the integration phase. Bahrain's reliance on Western expertise for the development of its educational policies and programmes, which

was highlighted in ‘Chapter 1: Introduction’ necessitates the exploration of this comparative study. It is vital to examine how the implementation of Western educational policies without their contextualisation to Bahrain influences their progress and outcomes.

Sharma *et al.* (2018) acknowledge that teacher attitudes are seldom paralleled across education systems. The authors compare teacher attitudes towards inclusion in Italy to teachers in Australia. Italy has a longer history of implementing inclusion than Australia, and Italian teachers reveal more positive attitudes towards inclusive education (Sharma *et al.*, 2018). Comparing attitudes of teachers towards inclusion in England to teachers in Bahrain could yield significant differences, as inclusion was implemented in England years prior to its implementation in Bahrain. Exploring teacher attitudes can additionally be beneficial to assess the stage of inclusion in each country, and whether or not that influences positive teacher perceptions of inclusion. Besides a number of comparative studies exploring the difference in teacher attitudes towards inclusion across nations, other aspects of inclusive education are scarcely paralleled. Comparing inclusive teaching practices across nations is another gap in inclusion research. It would be interesting to explore how inclusive teaching practices vary across nations and how they are shaped by the socio-cultural assumptions in each country.

2.6.3 Research questions.

The research problem of the study was conceptualised in that inclusion policy must be accompanied with expectations for practice to ensure consistency in its enactment. A cross-cultural comparison is more thoroughly established when that comparison is initiated by examining broader national policies of inclusion and how they gradually shape practices and

attitudes within the ecosystems. Based on the research problem and the research gaps identified within the literature, the research questions pertaining to this study are in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2 Research questions

Research Question	Ecosystem
1- What is stakeholders' knowledge of inclusive education policy in England and Bahrain?	Macrosystem/Exosystem
a. How is inclusive education defined in each country?	Macrosystem
b. What is the national inclusion policy in each country?	Macrosystem
c. How is inclusion policy enacted in schools?	Exosystem
2- What are teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education in England and Bahrain?	Mesosystem
a. How do teachers define inclusive education in each country?	Mesosystem
b. Are teacher attitudes towards inclusive education more positive in England or Bahrain?	Mesosystem
3- What are teacher practices and pedagogies in an inclusive classroom in England and Bahrain?	Microsystem
a. What are the classroom level practices in inclusive education?	Microsystem
b. What/how teaching strategies promote the participation and achievement of all learners?	Microsystem
c. Is there a relationship between teacher attitudes towards inclusive education and their practices in inclusion?	Microsystem

The next chapter 'Chapter 3: Methodology', describes how these research questions were addressed through the philosophical assumptions, methods, and ethical considerations of the study.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter first discusses the philosophical assumptions underlying the methodological choices of this study, followed by an illustration of the research design, and a description of the participants of the study. Next, each of the three data collection instruments are discussed. First, the school leadership interviews are explained and the accompanying procedure. Second, a justification of the teacher observations and follow-up interviews. Third, the teachers' questionnaire is outlined in its four sections as well as the administration procedures. The remainder of this chapter delves into the researcher's positionality, the translation requirements of the study, the validity and reliability of the tools, plans for data analysis, and the ethical considerations pertaining to this study. Throughout this chapter, references are made to how Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (EST) shaped the methodology of this study.

3.2 Philosophical Assumptions

Understanding the research paradigm of a study is an essential prerequisite to deduce the methodology, tools, and subsequent data analysis approach. Paradigms are an indication of what the researcher interprets as valuable knowledge, and the source of that knowledge (Lincoln, 2010). Research paradigms provide a context for comprehending the world (Thomas, 2017); and according to Guba (1990, p. 18) a paradigm is determined through these questions:

- 'ontological: what is the nature of the 'knowable'? or what is the nature of 'reality'?
- epistemological: what is the nature of the relationship between the knower (the inquirer) and the known (or knowable)?

- methodological: how should the inquirer go about finding out knowledge?'

To identify the paradigm of the current study, I will attempt to respond to the questions above. Ontology deliberates the nature of reality and questions knowledge about the world. It involves deliberations of whether or not social reality is dependent upon people's notions of it, and whether these notions of reality are universal or individual. The ontological assumptions of this study align predominantly with idealism and subjectivism, where reality is the sole manifestation of individual and societal thoughts (Ritchie *et al.*, 2014). On the ontology continuum lies relativism and realism on opposite sides. Relativism is when reality is shaped by our perceptions and experiences of it, while realism assumes a single version of reality that is only partially revealed and identified through inquiry (Braun and Clarke, 2013). This study adopts a relativist view as individuals' experiences and practices of inclusive education are sought. These versions of the 'reality' of inclusive education largely vary in the respective cultures and conditions. Epistemology constitutes the way in which knowledge is obtained about the world and the foundation of that knowledge. It can be inductive where conclusions are made after yielding data from certain events, and is considered a bottom-up process. Otherwise, it can be deductive or top-down where an assumption or hypothesis is formed and later examined (Ritchie *et al.*, 2014). The present study aligns more with an inductive approach, yet is cautious about making claims for deducing theory.

The philosophical views of this study primarily align with an interpretivist epistemology, in terms of allowing the concept of inclusive practice to be interpreted and expressed differently by schools and teachers to suit the surrounding context and culture (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). Inclusive practice is interpreted differently bearing in mind the culture, religion, and unique histories of each country. Social reality thus exists based on the

individuals' perceptions of it, and it relies on human perceptions of inclusive practice. Although this study considers the cultural context when examining the inclusive practices of each country in this comparative study, the findings are still considered alongside universally accepted inclusive practice. Hence, making it susceptible to some positivistic claims of inclusion research where certain practices are considered the main way of implementing inclusion regardless of the context. In conjunction with this argument, the interpretivist perspective of inclusive practice equivalently aligns with the theoretical framework of this study. Bronfenbrenner's EST considers wider macro-level influences of culture and traditions, and how they shape the inclusive practice in the classroom comprising the developing person. The different macrosystems of England and Bahrain influence inclusive practice in all the meso-, exo-, and micro- structures within. The unique cultures shape inclusive practice implemented throughout the model, including the inclusive classroom comprising the primary school child (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Discussions on philosophical assumptions often coincide with indications of the objectivity and subjectivity of certain research methods. Qualitative research in particular is often associated with subjectivity, as the data are retrieved based on participants' personal experiences. Brinkmann (2013) argues for the opposite, and indicates the objectivity of interviews particularly as they seek the perspective of someone other than the researcher, and are focused on the experiences of the participants. Using interviews as a method of inquiry goes beyond the pursuit of facts, and instead considers the participants as experts in the subject matter. Given that the present study utilises interviews as one of the main data sources, the data impartially represent the experiences of participants. All research in inherently subjective. This begins at the initial stages of forming the research questions that stem from researcher's personal

interests, all the way to how the data are interpreted. All stages of research are influenced by researchers' pre-existing notions and personal biases, even when using quantitative methods. Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) similarly contend that even purist quantitative research is considered a 'myth' as it comprises a series of subjective researcher decisions.

Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004, p. 17) define mixed-methods as 'the class of research where the researcher mixes or combines quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, approaches, concepts or language into a single study'. In particular, this study uses a mixed-method approach where quantitative and qualitative techniques are used concurrently to collect and analyse data throughout the stages of research. This is also referred to as convergent parallel design by Bryman (2016).

The use of mixed-method research provides researchers the opportunity to answer their research questions using the appropriate tools, rather than restricts researchers to tools only available in their chosen paradigms. Mixed-method is also described as the more 'inclusive' research approach, which is appropriate given the focus of this study on inclusive education. It is considered inclusive as it combines the strengths of quantitative and qualitative methods in one study, using the advantages of one data collection tool to help overcome the disadvantages of another (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004). This is also referred to as methodological pluralism, which is when different methods are triangulated within the same study to compensate for some of the weaknesses associated with using single methods (Sechrest and Sidani, 1995). This is otherwise called methodological triangulation (Stake, 1995). Mixed-method research additionally enhances (but not determines) the ability to generalise the findings (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004). By generalising the findings, the most suitable form would be

representational generalisation, in which the results gathered from the research sample can be generalised to a certain extent to the sampled population (Ritchie *et al.*, 2014).

According to Onwuegbuzie, Collins and Frels (2013), qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods research can all be classified within the ecological model depending on where they take place in relation to the developing person. Given that this study takes place in the immediate setting involving the child which is the inclusive school, this study is considered a micro-research study. However, inclusive practice is also explored in the meso-, exo-, and macrosystems through principal and teacher interviews to determine the influence of other and larger ecosystems on inclusive practices in the microsystem level.

As this study is less focused on the representation of the sample and more focused on participants' understanding of the inclusion phenomenon through their associated practice, qualitative and interpretative methods have been employed as the main form of data gathering. With the same rationale – in other words, in order to explore and understand the inclusive school practices in-depth – a minor ethnographic element (Travers, 2001) is incorporated. The ethnographic element is offered in myself as a researcher being immersed in the school culture for 2-3 weeks to comprehend the schools' enactment of inclusive education. O'Leary (2014) states that qualitative research acknowledges the existence of more than one reality, which is produced by the unique perspectives of individuals. The author also suggests that the way qualitative data are analysed and reported can be largely subjective based on the researcher's understanding of the data, which is consistent with interpretative views. Morgan (2014) proposes that although historically certain paradigms have been connected with certain methods, the use of a method does not automatically indicate a research paradigm. It is therefore

essential to recognise the positivistic element evident in the teachers' questionnaire which is set out to explore teacher attitudes and the use of teaching strategies for inclusion. Avramidis (2001) stipulates that positivism is the leading paradigm for researching attitudes in social psychology, therefore, that influence might have extended to research on teacher attitudes in the field of education to similarly be positivistic. However, the teachers' questionnaire is added to this study to complement the qualitative element.

Ranking research methods based on being more objective or having fewer validity threats is counterproductive. Hammersley (2015) argues that all research methods have strengths as well as being essentially flawed. He believes it is inappropriate to rate methods from most to least effective as they serve different purposes. Methods should only be selected in response to what is appropriate for a study's research questions. Although combining some methods helps overcome some of the weaknesses of certain methods, it does not eliminate validity threats. In this study, three tools are employed to respond to the research questions and the results are triangulated to reach the maximum benefit possible of using the data sources.

Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) propose that mixed-methods is a paradigm in its own right, which represents pragmatism. Pragmatism discards conventional dualisms such as the objectivity versus subjectivity debate, and embraces the exploration of the world with more flexible notions regarding the sources of knowledge. Contrary to the indication by Lincoln (2010), this study's adherence to pragmatism is by no means an escape from commitment to a paradigmatic orientation. One of the main strengths of pragmatism which aligns to the values of this study is it 'recognises the existence and importance of the natural or physical world as well as the emergent social and psychological world that includes language, culture, human

institutions, and subjective thoughts' (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 18). Methodological eclecticism is hence more fitting for the overall purpose of this study and the open-minded views to what constitutes inclusive practice in different cultural environments.

Aligning with one paradigm might restrict a researcher's opportunity for flexibility and ways to respond to their research design and interpretation of data, as well as discards the advantages of pluralistic views. I have attempted throughout to select my methods of data collection and analysis as determined and in response to the research questions, unencumbered by traditional or accepted methodological practice in the field. Given that this study's focus is on forms and interpretations of inclusive practice, interpretative methods are predominantly chosen to explore these interpretations.

3.3 Research Design

The research design most appropriate for the purpose of this study is a case study design. Thomas (2011, p. 513) defines a case study as:

> Analyses of persons, events, decisions, periods, projects, policies, institutions, or other systems that are studied holistically by one or more methods. The case that is the subject of the inquiry will be an instance of a class of phenomena that provides an analytical frame—an object—within which the study is conducted and which the case illuminates and explicates.

The case study is the most suitable design given that each participating school is explored in-depth in the way in which it supports the implementation of inclusive education, through the associated school and teaching practices. In a case study design, it is common for a case to encompass several variables that are examined through a number of data collection tools (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). In this study, three data sources are selected (i.e.

interviews, observations, and questionnaires). These are used to explore the inclusive education policy and approach within the selected schools in England and Bahrain, teacher attitudes towards inclusion, and teachers' use of inclusive pedagogy to create an inclusive classroom that provides for diverse learners. The case to be studied here is the inclusive school. Given that this is a comparative study examining inclusive practice in two countries, it is considered a comparative case study (Thomas, 2016). Each school constitutes a single case by looking at different contexts and making comparisons in the schools' approaches to inclusion policy and practice. The EST is also embodied in the case study research design, as the depth accessed through a case study design is articulated through the careful analysis of each of the ecosystems and how they impact the educational experience of the primary school child within inclusive education (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

The case study typology by Thomas (2011) is used to further clarify the structure of the case study. It is essential to first determine the analytical frame and subject of this study, what is the case of? The phenomenon or analytical frame 'object' is inclusive practice, within the 'subject' which offers a response and explanation of the phenomenon of inclusive practice which is the inclusive school. The 'object' of practices in inclusive education is supported and illustrated through the theoretical framework of Bronfenbrenner's EST. According to Thomas (2011), the selection of the 'subject' (school) is a critical decision as it unfolds knowledge of the object (inclusive practice) and can be established in three main ways: (1) to select a local knowledge case, (2) a key case, and (3) an outlier case. Although the four participating schools embody elements of both the local knowledge case and the key case, a key case is more suitable as it provides an example of inclusive practice (Thomas, 2016). This is consistent with this study,

as the school selection is based on the schools' recognisable or self-proclaimed exemplary practices in inclusive education.

The next step in the typology is to articulate the purpose, approach, methods, and process of the case study (Thomas, 2011). The purpose of conducting the case study is of an exploratory nature, in order to identify the state and practice of inclusive education in each country. Next, the approach determines whether the object of study is undergoing theory-testing or theory-seeking. This study is cautiously aligned with theory-seeking as it investigates what constitutes inclusive education practice in the unique cultural contexts. This is also reflected in the use of inductive thematic analysis and grounded theory in the examination of the empirical work. As for the method, that is explicitly stated later in this chapter in the use of semi-structured interviews with the school principals, unstructured observations and interviews with the teachers, and a teachers' questionnaire. Lastly, the process is evident in the comparative element of this study which is enacted through the comparative case study between two schools in England and two schools in Bahrain. Thus, making it a 'multiple' case study (Thomas, 2011). The difference in the practices of inclusion between each of the participating schools is one of the main foci of the study. In particular, it is considered a sequential study as each of the four schools are visited for data collection sequentially within the first semester of the academic year. Ideally the cases would have been examined in 'parallel' in order to explore inclusive practice simultaneously during the same stage of the academic year to minimise the difference between the cases, that is however not possible given the study takes place in two countries.

3.4 Participants

Through the comparative case study research design, four schools were chosen to participate in the project. Two schools from England, and two schools from Bahrain. This decision was made in order to have more than one example of inclusive practice from each country which might indicate either similar national practices of inclusion, or a school's unique approach to implementing inclusive education. The overall sampling selection strategy for the study was non-probability sampling. For the school selection in England specifically, convenience sampling was followed. This was the most appropriate method given my limited connections and access to schools in England as a foreigner. The main participation pre-requisite for schools in England was the schools' attentiveness to inclusive education. An online search was conducted for schools that promote their inclusive culture on the school website, and a list was prepared for 14 schools identified in the Birmingham area. The schools were then contacted by phone and two schools expressed their interest in participation, and meetings were set up to discuss the participation details.

School selection in Bahrain followed purposeful sampling (Ritchie *et al.*, 2014). The schools in Bahrain were approached based on my knowledge of their inclusive characteristics and practices. I am a Bahraini national and am familiar with schools' reputation in inclusive practice, and have been working with schools in supervising pre-service teacher practicums for several years. A number of schools were first identified based on the school's reputation in the Bahraini small community. I then examined the Bahrain Quality Assurance (BQA) review reports of the schools and selected two schools that appeared inclusive of students from diverse backgrounds. These schools consisted of a large proportion of students of an ethnic minority and students with special educational needs (SEN), which facilitated the exploration of the overall school approach and practices in inclusion. The reports published on the BQA website

indicated the school's responsiveness and inclusion of a diverse student population, by creating special programs to enhance the participation and achievement of students with Arabic as their second language (also referred to as non-Arabic speakers) (BQA, 2020).

The practice of selecting schools with diversity is common among inclusion studies (e.g. Messiou and Ainscow, 2015) as it indicates the school's acceptance of a wide range of students, and it implies practices to accommodate them. Given the case study design where the case is the school, the sampling selection strategy was only applied on the participating schools, while other participants (teachers and school principals) were included in the study based on their membership in the particular schools. The fieldwork took place in both countries during the first semester of the academic year of 2019/2020. It initiated in England where I spent approximately two weeks in each school collecting the data. The following month, data were collected in Bahrain where I also spent approximately two weeks in each school. Table 3.1 illustrates the participating school details, and Table 3.2 shows the number of participants from each country in each data collection component.

Table 3.1 Participating school details

England	**School 1**	**School 2**
School leadership	1 school principal 1 assistant principal 1 assistant principal/SENCO	1 school principal 1 associate principal 2 assistant principals 1 assistant principal/SENCO
Number of teachers	10	16
Number of teaching assistants	7	14
Number of students	220	380
Bahrain	**School 3**	**School 4**
School leadership	1 school principal 1 assistant principal	1 school principal 2 assistant principals
Number of teachers	30	60
Number of teaching assistants	0	0
Number of students	280	884

Table 3.2 Number of participants

Participants		**England**	**Bahrain**	**Total**
	Schools	2	2	4
Qualitative	**School principals**	1	2	3
	Assistant principals	0	2	2
	SENCOs	2	0	2
	Teachers observed and interviewed	4	4	8
Quantitative	**Teachers who completed the questionnaire**	19	62	81

This study comprised three data collection instruments in order to collectively yield data on teacher attitudes towards inclusive education and inclusive practices on a school and classroom level. Each tool is described, next.

3.5 School Principal and SENCO Interviews

One-on-one, semi-structured interviews were conducted with school principals and Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCOs) in England and Bahrain. The purpose was to gain an understanding of the local context in which the school leaders are operating in, and how this context supported the implementation of inclusive education in the school from their perspective, as well as the school's practice of inclusion. Another primary purpose of the

interviews was to yield information on teachers' attitudes and practices in inclusion from the viewpoint of the school leaders. The interviews were guided by a semi-structured schedule consisting of questions eliciting the interviewees' responses in the following domains: their knowledge of inclusion policy in their country, their knowledge and attitudes towards local inclusion initiatives, their perceptions of local facilitators of inclusion, their understandings of inclusion, and their schools' inclusive efforts and practices. These interviews were therefore mostly focused within the macro- and exosystems of the ecological model, as they explored wider societal attitudes and practices in inclusive education and schools' specific implementation. There was also a meso- and microsystems element as the interviews delved into narrower inclusive practices within the classroom context, as influenced by national policies.

A total of three principals and four SENCOs (or assistant principals in Bahrain) were interviewed for approximately one hour each. Assistant principals were interviewed in Bahrain as the SENCO position (or equivalent) does not exist in the Bahraini education system. Therefore, the most suitable alternative was to interview one of the assistant principals as another member of the school leadership team who have an essential role in the implementation of inclusion. The use of semi-structured interviews was deemed most appropriate to the purpose of this research, given their flexibility in allowing for follow-up questions and clarifications on certain aspects of the interviewees' responses within the boundaries of perusing the primary research interests (Brinkmann, 2013). The use of semi-structured interviews also played a vital role in establishing the foundation and context of inclusive education in each country from the view of the school leadership. This foundation was then used to compare or relate to the findings from other instruments used in this study.

3.5.1 Procedure.

All interviews were conducted in a quiet room in each of the participants' schools. For most participants, the interview took place in their private office. The participants were given the opportunity to read the participant information sheets and consent forms (Information Sheet – Principal/SENCO, Consent Form – Principal/SENCO in Appendix 2a), ask for any clarifications, and then sign the consent form. Each interview initiated with an introduction to the research project and aims. The interview questions in Table 3.3 were used to guide the interview. All interviews were audio recorded and manual notes were taken during the interviews to aid in the interpretation of the data at a later stage, as well as to note follow-up questions. In Bahrain, the interviews were held in Arabic, which is the native language of the interviewees and interviewer. Each interview lasted for approximately one hour.

Some or all of the questions were asked depending on the pace and content of the interviewee's responses, and the unique allocation of inclusive education responsibilities of implementation between school principals and SENCOs (or assistant principals in Bahrain). The questions were designed to begin with establishing an understanding of the cultural context in which each school operates, therefore the questions initiated by asking about local inclusion policy and initiatives. This was followed by questions pertaining to the implementation of inclusion on the school level, with the purpose of understanding how the school initiatives were shaped by national initiatives. In Bahrain, the interview started with the clarification of some of the main terms associated with the research such as inclusive education and SEN. This was done to ensure a common understanding of inclusion between myself and the interviewees, in order to make sure the interviewees' later responses aligned with that perspective. The interview

questions are listed next followed by an indication of the corresponding ecosystem within Bronfenbrenner's EST (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Table 3.3 Principal and SENCO interview questions

	Interview Question	Ecosystem
National Level	In Bahrain: how are the following terms defined (inclusive education, SEN)?	Macrosystem
	What is the purpose of inclusive education or inclusive education policy? When, how and why has it started?	Macrosystem
	What is the policy of inclusion?	Macrosystem
	What is your knowledge of national and local inclusion initiatives?	Macrosystem
	How are schools supported to implement inclusion? (e.g. provision of support teachers, continuing professional development opportunities, other resources)	Macrosystem
	How is the local authority (England)/ Ministry of Education (Bahrain) supportive of students with SEN?	Macrosystem
School Level	What school policies support inclusion?	Exosystem
	What are the school's efforts to implement or sustain inclusion?	Exosystem
	What is the schools' overall approach to inclusion?	Exosystem
	What factors affect the successful implementation of inclusion?	Exosystem, Mesosystem, Microsystem
	What are teacher attitudes towards inclusive education?	Mesosystem
	How do teachers implement inclusion in the classroom?	Microsystem
	How do teachers define or understand inclusion?	Mesosystem
	How does the school support teachers' inclusive practices?	Exosystem
	What is your role in implementing inclusion? (principal, SENCO, assistant principal)	Exosystem
	What outcomes are achieved by teachers and students as a result of inclusive education?	Microsystem

3.6 Teacher Observations and Follow-up Interviews

The second data collection instrument comprised two elements. The first was an observation of teachers in their classrooms, while the second element included follow-up interviews with the teachers after the completion of the classroom observations. The purpose of the observations was to take note of teachers' attitudes, interactions with the students, the overall classroom climate, and most importantly to observe teachers' use of inclusive pedagogy. Notes from general school observations were also incorporated in the overall inclusive practices of the

school, and they focused on the availability and utilisation of school resources to support inclusion as well as the overall inclusive school climate. As for the follow-up interviews, the aim was to enhance the understanding of the teaching strategies used during the observations by requesting clarifications from the teachers.

According to Bryman (2016), participant observation and ethnography are often used interchangeably. However, in the present study, teacher observations were not the only ethnographic element but also the days spent conducting overall school observations and interviews with the school leadership. Murchison (2010, p. 4) defines ethnography as 'a research strategy that allows researchers to explore and examine the cultures and societies that are a fundamental part of the human experience'. Ethnography is no longer limited to researchers traveling long distances to live with and research a foreign culture (Hammersley, 2006). Ethnographic work can also incorporate cultures such as school cultures, and how their practice is influenced by overall national customs.

It is very common in ethnographic work for observations and interviews to be paired together or triangulated, and in this study they occurred sequentially (Agar, 1996; Reeves, Kuper and Hodges, 2008). This allowed for the comparison of participant thoughts to their actual behaviour and practices in the school and classroom. In fact, Hammersley (2006) describes ethnography as eclectic which responds to the eclectic paradigm of the study. The ethnographic element was another manifestation of the theoretical framework of this study as it explored the interactions between the surrounding culture and the observed events (Murchison, 2010). This is appropriately referred to by Murchison (2010) as 'culture in action'. Given that the ethnographic researcher is considered the research instrument, some believe this method is

flawed with subjectivity (Murchison, 2010); whereas the subjective views of the researcher can bring value and context to the observed behaviours.

The nature of the observations was unstructured to allow the observer the opportunity and flexibility to examine teachers' use of inclusive pedagogy in the two distinctive contexts of England and Bahrain (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). This aligns with naturalistic observations as a form of ethnography, where participants' behaviour is examined in its natural environment (Simpson and Tuson, 1995; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). Observations are also a more convenient choice for research participants rather than having to complete a questionnaire or attend an interview, as observations are less time consuming (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007).

It is vital to clarify how the observations and follow-up interviews were specifically used to take note of teachers' inclusive pedagogy, which was inspired by the work of Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011), Black-Hawkins and Florian (2012), and Florian and Spratt (2013). The inclusive pedagogical approach (IPA) focuses less on specific teaching strategies that are considered inclusive, and more on the use of teaching techniques that help in the implementation of inclusive education (Florian and Black-Hawkins, 2011; Black-Hawkins and Florian, 2012). Florian and Spratt (2013) acknowledge the difficulty researchers face in determining what constitutes inclusive pedagogy during their classroom observations. That is because the researcher is unfamiliar with the context, teacher's style, and student abilities (Black-Hawkins, 2014b). Florian and Spratt (2013) concur which is why linking classroom observations with teacher interviews is essential, to connect teacher's actions in the observation to the teacher's knowledge and beliefs in the interviews.

This project utilised unstructured observations as they were the most suitable given the ambiguous meaning and practice of inclusion, particularly that inclusive practice could largely vary between the two countries. The classrooms were observed, and decisions were made at a later stage on what portion of the observation was related to the research aims. The use of unstructured observations also allowed for hypothesis-generation. Yet, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) acknowledge the weaknesses of using this method as it is time-consuming for the researcher, and relies on the subjective views of the researcher and his/her perception of what is relevant. Foster (1996) believes that observations are one of the fundamental data collection tools to learn about school practices, as they document both verbal and non-verbal communication that are not easily acquired through other methods of data gathering. Observations were thus beneficial in exploring behaviour as influenced by the surrounding school culture, which was the primary reason of using this instrument.

One of the main limitations of using observations is that the participants may behave differently either intentionally or unintentionally due to the researcher's presence in the classroom. In order for researchers to reduce the reactivity (or the Hawthorne effect), that is, reducing their influence on the behaviour of those observed (Foster, 1996; O'Leary, 2014), fieldnotes were utilised instead of using video recording equipment. The use of fieldnotes was seen as the least intrusive way to record observation data. The notes reflected details of teaching strategies used by the observed teacher and planned classroom activities, and mostly consisted of event summaries or in some cases included specific details of teachers' use of inclusive pedagogy (Foster, 1996). The observer was in the form of 'participant as observer', where the role was made clear to all school and classroom participants at the onset (Robson, 2002).

The observation sessions were immediately followed by unstructured interviews with the same teachers. Supporting observations with interviews enhanced the in-depth school examination (Foster, 1996; Wragg, 1999), and was considered a form of triangulation since teachers' observed actions were compared to their quotes from the interviews (Alexander, 2000). Black-Hawkins and Florian (2012) support observations with follow-up interviews, but the methods are not conducted sequentially as the authors conduct preliminary analysis of the observation data, in order to find the central points they want to discuss during the teacher interviews. In this study, due to time constraints, the interviews immediately followed the observations whenever possible. In order to prepare for the interview, when noting down observations in class, an additional column was added for questions in relation to the observed behaviour and teaching. Open questions were utilised as well as probing when interviewing the teachers, as this assisted in expanding on the observation notes as well as revealed other practices that I failed to notice or interpret.

According to Black-Hawkins and Florian (2012), follow-up interviews constitute open questions that are less focused on discussing the advantages and disadvantages of inclusive education, and more on how and why teachers plan for their classroom activities to achieve inclusion. Teachers are asked to discuss the positive aspects of their instruction, and to explain and elaborate on certain practices observed (Black-Hawkins and Florian, 2012). This was replicated in the present study. Follow-up interviews help to overcome the difficulty of determining what constitutes inclusive pedagogy during the observations, without being fully aware of the context and the nature of the students (Florian and Spratt, 2013). Thus, the support offered by teachers' reflections and justifications in the interviews eased the interpretation of

the data derived from the observation sessions (Florian and Black-Hawkins, 2011; Florian and Spratt, 2013).

My interest in the IPA as opposed to specific teaching strategies for inclusion is that it rejects privileging some inclusive practices over others. As discussed in 'Chapter 2: Literature Review', the IPA is inclusive in itself by considering all the teaching strategies being used in the classroom, and then evaluating how these strategies were used to be inclusive of all learners. It acknowledges that some learners have SEN, yet it does so without the need to identify them as such in front of their peers. The IPA therefore rejects the marginalisation of learners.

As critically discussed in 'Chapter 2: Literature Review', the literature supports the use of differentiated instruction as inclusive practice (e.g. Corbett, 2001a; Strogilos, 2018). In the following example, three different applications of differentiation are illustrated and then critically analysed, in order to illustrate the way in which the IPA was used during the classroom observations. First, the traditional perspective of differentiated instruction that originated from the SEN framework, examines students' individual needs and attempts to respond to students' learning styles yet restricts student creativity and interactions with other students (Corbett, 2001a). In the first view of differentiation, students with SEN are highly likely to be singled out as the teacher provides activities of a limited level for them to complete during class time while other students are overtly given work to suit their higher ability. This view restricts student creativity by only providing them with an activity to suit their perceived level, and not providing a challenge that allows students to progress and develop their abilities further. It might also restrict their interactions with other students as students of a low ability are seated together in a group where they all complete a similar level of activities.

Second, the inclusive learning model where differentiation is implemented with caution to avoid the isolation and bullying of some students. According to this model, differentiation facilitates the learning of all (Corbett, 2001a). In this view of differentiation, differentiated activities are provided for learners without the teacher declaring the level completed by each student. This could be implemented within ability grouping or mixed ability grouping.

As for the third view of differentiation, student differences are embraced perhaps by providing group activities to mixed ability groups where students themselves allocate the tasks amongst the group members, based on each student's strengths and potential contribution. The valuing differences perspective views students' diverse needs as being conducive to effective learning in the classroom as well as encourages students' autonomy in learning. These values then translate to long term benefits of inclusive education that improve students' desire for lifelong learning (Corbett, 2001a). This third view of differentiation is therefore more aligned to the philosophy of IPA. This study thus critically analysed fieldnotes of the classroom observations in search of how the teaching strategies were used to be inclusive of all learners.

To situate this method within the EST (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), classroom observations are on the microsystem as the teachers were observed in the environment which comprised the developing person. These observations focused on teaching practices that directly influence the development of the primary school child, and determined the nature of the teacher-student interactions. As for the follow-up teacher interviews, the major focus was on discussing the events of the classroom which occurred during the observations (microsystem). However, it was expected that the unstructured interviews with the teachers discussed other related matters

that influenced teacher's practice such as co-teaching (exosystem/microsystem), parental involvement (exosystem), and associations with the local authority or Ministry of Education (exosystem). The comparison of inclusive practices between England and Bahrain is additionally in the macrosystem, given the differences in cultures. Hence, the use of classroom observations and follow-up interviews respond holistically to the EST and are analysed accordingly.

The use of certain teaching strategies in each country was further evaluated based on the ecological model and how these strategies were explained in response to the cultural settings. For example, in the predominantly collectivist Bahraini culture teachers were more likely to employ collaborative teaching strategies where students were encouraged to support each others' learning, as opposed to students who come from an individualistic culture such as England. Macrolevel factors significantly influence daily classroom and teaching practices. The observation notes were evaluated based on the IPA as well as the EST.

3.6.1 Procedure.

After attaining the initial school approval for participation from the school principals, the school principals discussed the research project with all their teachers in a staff meeting. The teachers who were interested in participation informed the school principal and myself directly. I was either contacted by the interested teachers via email, or in person when visiting the schools. I met with each teacher individually to discuss their participation, and the teachers read the participant information sheet and signed the consent form (Participant Information Sheet – Teacher Observations and Follow-up Interviews, Consent Form – Teacher Observations and

Follow-up Interviews in Appendix 2b). The observation and interview dates were then discussed and agreed on with the participating teachers, and the follow-up interviews were scheduled as close as possible to the observation sessions as suitable to the teachers' teaching schedules and other responsibilities.

Observations took place in year levels 2-4 classrooms in England, and levels 1-3 in Bahrain as this was the most equivalent primary education level of the education systems in both countries. The classrooms were taught by a main classroom teacher responsible for teaching the core subjects in England (i.e. English, maths, science, topic) and in Bahrain (i.e. Arabic, Islamic studies, science, mathematics, citizenship studies, social studies). Two teachers/classes from each of the four schools were observed, and each teacher was observed for three observation sessions. Therefore, making a total number of 24 observations and 24 follow-up interviews in England and Bahrain. Spratt and Florian (2015) define an observation session as half a morning or afternoon session in a primary school. The average observation session in the current study lasted for 2.5 hours, while the follow-up interview lasted for approximately 20 minutes. It was essential to observe the same classroom repeatedly (three times) with the main teacher, so as to gain a more thorough understanding of the teachers' use of certain practices as well as the nature of the students and their diverse needs within each classroom. The repeated use of observations and interviews with the same participant is also acknowledged by Tong (2007) as essential to help build a rapport between the researcher and the participants. A positive rapport was experienced in this study as teachers appeared more comfortable in the second and third observation and interview.

The observations typically started by entering the classroom, and then being introduced by the class teacher to the students as a guest. I would then sit quietly in a corner designated by the teacher to take notes. The observation data were recorded by manual note taking by the observer in a research diary, while the interview data were audio-recorded with some note taking, and later transcribed verbatim. After revising and typing the observation notes, they were combined with the interview transcriptions for each observation separately. Observations in Bahrain were recorded in English while the interview was in Arabic. Only the interview data actually used and quoted in this thesis were translated from Arabic to English. In the reporting and analysis of the data, pseudonyms were used to protect the anonymity of the participating teachers. Some of the most commonly asked follow-up interview questions were:

- Describe the range of student abilities in the classroom.
- How are the student groups organised?
- What is the role of the teaching assistant?
- Discuss this classroom activity.
- What inspires your inclusive practice?

3.7 Teachers' Questionnaire

The main purpose of the teachers' questionnaire was to explore two of the main elements of this study, which were teacher attitudes towards inclusive education and teachers' use of inclusive practice (Teacher Questionnaire - Appendix 3a). The questionnaire was used in addition to the classroom observations and interviews in order to provide a more holistic view of teacher attitudes and practices in each school and country, as more participants were surveyed in comparison to the observation portion of this study. It also was a valuable

opportunity to triangulate the findings pertaining to teacher attitudes towards inclusion and inclusive practice with the findings obtained from the qualitative tools. The teachers' questionnaire was divided to four sections. Section one comprised demographic-related questions such as gender, age, year level taught, and years of teaching experience. Section two contained 21 statements examining teacher attitudes towards inclusive education. Section three included 36 items exploring the extent to which teachers used the listed inclusive teaching strategies. Section four involved one open-ended question regarding additional teaching strategies used by the teachers for inclusion. The questionnaire was piloted in both countries with teachers identified through professional networks. After the feedback obtained during the pilot phase of the questionnaire in Bahrain, it was decided that in order to avoid teacher misperceptions of the items in the questionnaire, that definitions of the main concepts (e.g. inclusive education, integration) were provided at the beginning of the questionnaire. Teachers in England did not report any issues with the questionnaire. Each section of the survey is explained in detail, next.

3.7.1 Section one.

The questionnaire was sent out to all the primary school teachers in the four participating schools which were (n=123), the number of teachers who completed the questionnaire was (n=81). There was a large difference in the number of teachers who completed the questionnaire in England (n=19, 23.5%) compared to Bahrain (n=62, 76.5%). This was mainly due to the nature of the education systems and school structure. Teachers in England teach the majority of subjects as a classroom teacher for all primary education levels from year 1 to year 6, whilst being supported by a teaching assistant (TA) who was not targeted to complete the

questionnaire. In Bahrain, classroom teachers were only for years 1 to 3 and taught the essential subjects. Other subjects such as English were taught by other teachers. For year levels 4 to 6 in Bahrain, each subject is taught by a different teacher and there is no classroom teacher. The education system in Bahrain also does not employ TAs, which would justify having more teachers to share the teaching load. One of the participating schools in Bahrain was also significantly larger than the schools in England, hence comprising more teachers. This explains the large difference in the number of participating teachers in England and Bahrain.

The demographic information (Table 3.4) reveals that the majority of the participants in England were females (n=15), whilst all the participants in Bahrain were females (n=62). All Bahraini participants were females because the participating schools were all-female schools, which is common in a gender segregated state education system as previously indicated in 'Chapter 1: Introduction'. Most of the participants in England and Bahrain were in the age group of 20-30 years with (n=12, 63.2%) teachers in England, and (n=25, 40.3%) teachers in Bahrain. This coincided with the years of teaching experience being largely 1-5 years for teachers in England (n=10, 52.6%), and in Bahrain (n=20, 32.3%).

Table 3.4 The demographic information of the participating teachers in the questionnaire

		England			Bahrain	
		Frequency	**Percentage**		**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Gender	Male	4	21.1%	Male	-	-
	Female	15	78.9%	Female	62	100%
Age	20–30	12	63.2%	20–30	25	40.3%
	31–40	4	21.1%	31–40	21	33.9%
	41–50	1	5.3%	41–50	11	17.7%
	51–60	-	-	51–60	2	3.2%
	Prefer not to say	2	10.5%	Prefer not to say	3	4.8%
Year taught	Year 1	1	5.3%	Year 1	11	17.7%
	Year 2	3	15.8%	Year 2	7	11.3%
	Year 3	3	15.8%	Year 3	7	11.3%
	Year 4	2	10.5%	Year 4	11	17.7%
	Year 5	3	15.8%	Year 5	8	12.9%
	Year 6	1	5.3%	Year 6	7	11.3%
	Reception	1	5.3%	Year 1-6	2	3.2%
	Missing values	5	26.3%	Year 4-6	3	4.8%
				Missing values	6	9.7%
Years of teaching experience	1-5	10	52.6%	1-5	20	32.3%
	6-10	5	26.3%	6-10	19	30.1%
	11-15	1	5.3%	11-15	8	12.9%
	16-20	1	5.3%	16-20	8	12.9%
	Missing values	2	10.5%	Over 20	4	6.5%
				Missing values	3	4.8%

3.7.2 Section two.

This section examined teacher attitudes towards inclusive education, and included 21 items with a 5-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree). The majority of the items in this section were modified and adapted from the 'Teachers' Beliefs and Attitudes Toward Inclusive Education' survey developed by Pappas, Papoutsi and Drigas (2018). Two items were adapted from the 'Teacher Attitudes Towards Inclusive Education' scale (TAIS) by Saloviita (2015), and one new item. A 5-point Likert scale was used as consistent with the original survey by Pappas, Papoutsi and Drigas (2018), and then applied to all the statements in the questionnaire for consistency and to avoid the transformation

of variables which were measured with alternative scales (e.g. yes/no questions) (Gorard, 2003). The Cronbach's alpha internal consistency reliability rate for the original survey by Pappas, Papoutsi and Drigas (2018) is ($\alpha = 0.93$). The questionnaire is also tested for its structural validity through exploring the Pearson correlation coefficients between items within each subscale. The results reveal high correlations that are statistically significant, therefore implying the validity of the tool (Pappas, Papoutsi and Drigas, 2018). The original TAIS survey by Saloviita (2015) reports a Cronbach's alpha of ($\alpha = 0.89$). Teacher attitudes are situated within the mesosystem as they represent teachers who are in the microsystem level, and their attitudes towards a policy which would be in the exosystem level. Table 3.5 demonstrates the three different subscales operating within the teacher attitudes questionnaire, the item number within the survey, the item itself, and the original item adapted from the references above. The items were adapted to ensure the consistency of the way statements were structured and to enhance the flow of the questionnaire.

Table 3.5 Original survey items and adapted items

Subscale	Item Number	Items	Original Item
Attitudes towards inclusion and level of confidence in inclusion	1	I feel confident to teach students with special educational needs in my mainstream class	How confident do you feel to teach students with specific learning difficulties and disabilities? (Pappas, Papoutsi and Drigas, 2018)
	2	I support the inclusion of students with special educational needs in mainstream classrooms	Do you agree with the inclusion of the following students in mainstream schools? students with mobility problems - hearing impairments - visual impairments - speech problems - behavioural problems - comprehension problems - aggressive behaviour - mental retardation - autism spectrum - emotional disorders - learning difficulties (Pappas, Papoutsi and Drigas, 2018)
	4	I believe integrated children with special educational needs create extra work for teachers in mainstream classrooms (reverse item)	Integrated children with special educational needs create extra work for teachers in mainstream classrooms (Saloviita, 2015)
Expected outcomes of inclusion	5	I believe that students with special educational needs can benefit in social interaction in mainstream classrooms	Do you agree that students with learning difficulties and disabilities could benefit from their inclusion in mainstream schools? - In social interaction - In social development and behaviour - In social skills - In academic performance to enhance self-confidence (Pappas, Papoutsi and Drigas, 2018)
	6	I believe that students with special educational needs can benefit in academic performance in mainstream classrooms	
	7	I believe that mainstream students can improve on their academic performance in an inclusive classroom	Do you agree that students who attend mainstream schools could benefit from the inclusion of students with specific learning difficulties and disabilities? - In academic performance - In the development of social consciousness - In the acceptance of diversity - In strengthening self-esteem - In the development of sympathy (Pappas, Papoutsi and Drigas, 2018)
	8	I believe that mainstream students can improve on their acceptance of diversity in an inclusive classroom	
	9	I believe that mainstream students can improve on their self-esteem in an inclusive classroom	
	10	I believe that mainstream students can enhance their empathy in an inclusive classroom	

	3	I believe students with special educational needs learn best in their own special education classes where they have specially trained teachers (reverse item)	Children with special educational needs learn best in their own special education classes where they have specially trained teachers (Saloviita, 2015).
Facilitators to inclusion	11	I believe that the specialised training available in special education facilitates the implementation of inclusive education	Do you agree that the following factors could be barriers to the implementation of inclusive education? - Specialised training in special education - Teacher's reluctance - Curriculum - School unit infrastructures - Parents' attitudes - Incomplete funding - Legislative framework - Special and general teacher collaboration - Large number of children in the classroom - Failure to provide appropriate special education staff (Pappas, Papoutsi and Drigas, 2018)
	12	I believe that teacher's willingness facilitates the implementation of inclusive education	
	13	I believe that the curriculum facilitates the implementation of inclusive education	
	14	I believe that the school infrastructure facilitates the implementation of inclusive education	
	15	I believe that parents' attitudes facilitate the implementation of inclusive education	
	16	I believe that the available funding facilitates the implementation of inclusive education	
	17	I believe that the laws around inclusion facilitate the implementation of inclusive education	
	18	I believe that the special and general teacher collaboration facilitates the implementation of inclusive education	
	19	I believe that the number of children in the classroom facilitates the implementation of inclusive education	
	20	I believe that the availability of appropriate support staff facilitates the implementation of inclusive education	
	21	I believe that support staff should be specially trained teachers as distinct from untrained support staff	New item

3.7.3 Section three.

This section of the survey examined teaching strategies and included 36 items in response to a 5-point Likert scale (1=never, 2=uncommon, 3=don't know, 4=common, 5=very common). This section comprised four subscales. The first subscale measured cooperative learning strategies and included two items. The items were 'use of drama or role play' and 'jigsawing'. The second subscale measured classroom management strategies and included seven items. Examples of items included 'general help from learning support assistants' and 'teach study skills'. The third subscale measured social skills and included five items. Examples of items were 'explicitly teach social and group skills' and 'peer tutoring'. The final subscale measured the use of differentiated teaching and contained 22 items. Examples of items were 'offer choice of task' and 'modify lesson objectives'.

The items in this survey were initially adapted by Florian and Rouse (2001b) from the literature review by Scott, Vitale and Masten (1998) that explores the teaching strategies associated with including students with SEN in the mainstream class. The original survey includes 44 items and used for teachers in a secondary school. In this study, the following statements were removed from the survey either because they were not directly aligned to the research aims or were deemed unsuitable for primary level education. The items were: give supplemental instructions, alter instruction, teaching of specific or specialist vocabulary, learning support assistants for 1:1 teaching, provide abridged/modified text, team teaching, allow alternative responses (e.g. tape recorder answers), and use of advanced organisers. Teaching practices directly influence the learning experience of the child and are therefore situated in the microsystem of the EST (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). It is essential to note that two perspectives of inclusive practice are

explored in this study. In the teachers' questionnaire, the aim was to provide teachers with a pre-determined list of teaching strategies that were identified in the literature as being inclusive practice. However, the teacher observations open-mindedly explored what constitutes inclusive pedagogy, that it is not about the teaching strategy itself, but rather how it is used to be inclusive of all learners.

3.7.4 Section four.

This section of the survey included one open-ended item 'list any strategies which were not included in the questionnaire that you have found to be most effective in promoting inclusive education'. This item was also adapted from Florian and Rouse (2001b), and the original statement was 'list any strategies which were not included in the questionnaire that you have found to be most effective in including pupils with SEN in your classes'. This question was altered to focus on teaching strategies for implementing inclusive education as consistent with the view of this study, as opposed to the view of teaching strategies that are responsive specifically to students with SEN. This question was essential to add as the teaching strategies in section three were not exclusive to being the only teaching strategies that aid in the implementation of inclusive education. The open-ended item allowed teachers the opportunity to indicate other teaching strategies they were accustomed to using. According to Foddy (1993), the use of both open and closed questions in a questionnaire is valuable since open-ended questions offer participants the opportunity to respond on their own terms and style rather than being restricted with close-ended items. It can also assist in the analysis of some of the unusual answers in the closed questions of the questionnaire. The combination of both closed and open-

ended items was therefore seen as suitable, in order to allow teachers the opportunity to indicate other useful teaching strategies that enhance the inclusion of all learners.

3.7.5 Procedure.

The teachers' questionnaire for teachers in England was created on Qualtrics survey software. However, the SENCO in each school recommended the use of paper surveys instead to ensure a higher response rate as teachers were more likely to forget to complete online surveys. The SENCO then emailed all the teachers in the school informing them of the research project and of the questionnaire and its purpose. The teachers were assured that their participation was optional and if they choose to participate that it was completely anonymous and should not take more than 10 minutes of their time. The SENCO then distributed the questionnaires to each teacher along with the consent forms and an envelope, and asked the teachers to return the completed surveys to her in the sealed envelope. As for teachers in the Bahraini participating schools, the school principals were given paper copies of the questionnaire, the participant information sheet, and informed consent with an envelope (Participant Information Sheet – Teacher Questionnaire, Consent Form – Teacher Questionnaire, Teacher Questionnaire in Appendix 2c and 3a). The school principals then asked the school administrator to distribute the questionnaires to the teachers. The teachers were instructed to place the completed survey in the sealed envelope and return it to the administrator, who compiled the completed surveys and gave them to me.

3.8 Positionality

It is crucial to discuss my positionality within the reflexivity domain, as it could have significant implications to how the study is designed all the way to how the findings are interpreted. Reflexivity is defined by Hamdan (2009, pp. 378-379) as 'a metaphysical analysis of the researcher's analysis of the researcher's account, one that examines the researcher's own input into the research process. It involves the researcher observing him or herself in the act of observing, researching him or herself in the act of researching'. This definition helps me scrutinise every aspect of the study and my role in shaping it. Finlay (2002) examines four types of reflexivity which are: introspection, intersubjective reflection, mutual collaboration, social critique, and discursive deconstruction. The most appropriate type to this study is reflexivity as a social critique, where power relations between the researcher and participants are negotiated. My reflexivity is enacted in my awareness of my position in the experience of fieldwork, and the nature of interactions with the participants. It is an awareness of my voice as well as perpetuating the voice of participants (Hertz, 1997). Researchers' positionality can largely influence interactions with the participants and the extent and nature of participant contribution. This comparative study adds a further layer of complexity in that two different researcher positionalities are explored (as indicated in Chapter 1: Introduction), and influence the stages of research differently in England and Bahrain.

It is vital to acknowledge how my positionality and the research context of the study determine the research design and methods. Although girls' schools in Bahrain tend to perform highly in quality evaluations in terms of being inclusive of non-Arabic speakers, that is not the only reason for my decision to do my fieldwork in a girls' school. Given my previous experience of visiting schools in Bahrain as part of my role as a teacher educator, I knew I would not feel comfortable spending time in a boys' school with all-male staff. I realised that it might be

considered culturally inappropriate for me to spend all day, for several days surrounded male teachers and observing their work and interactions. That cultural factor shaped the research design and location of fieldwork. In England, I knew there is no such restriction. I knew that male teachers would not look at the floor whilst talking to me and that my gender would not necessarily determine the nature of our interactions, and therefore will not limit participants' contribution.

My years of working with pre-service and in-service teachers taught me that teachers are less interested in being told what to do from researchers, teacher educators, and educational leaders; and more interested in learning from the experiences of other teachers. This is the reason why I thought a case study would give more insight into teachers' experiences, as it allows for a deep exploration and representation of teacher practices through classroom observations. It is therefore essential to ensure that teachers' voices and practices are central to this study. Another important element of the methods is that I avoided videotaping the classroom observations. Although that would have been certainly easier for recording fieldnotes and later analysis, it would have complicated gaining access to schools and participants. I believed that seeking approval from the conservative families in Bahrain to video-tape their children in class would have been challenging.

A researcher is considered an 'insider' when he or she shares particular attributes with the participants of the study, and is considered an 'outsider' when he or she does not belong to the group to which the participants belong (Braun and Clarke, 2013). In England, I expected to be treated as an outsider given my recent arrival in the country and inexperience with the education system. However, my fluency in the English language enabled insider status to be quickly

earned. The participating principals and teachers were made aware of my status as an international student and in response I was given more details about certain aspects of the education system such as information about funding, national assessment and national curriculum. It was made clear that I am a non-participant observer during the classroom observations. When conducting the fieldwork in Bahrain, I might also be considered as somewhat of an outsider. My position as a faculty member at the Bahrain Teachers College (BTC) can be seen as slightly intimidating and a source of authority. BTC is the only teacher education college in the country which was established specifically to prepare pre-service teachers to teach in state schools under the supervision of the Ministry of Education (MOE). Given that ethical permission to conduct this study in Bahrain is granted by the MOE, as well as access to the schools, it could be another reason for me being seen by the schools as somewhat of an authority figure.

I was also aware of my different appearance compared to the more conservative appearance of women working in the public-school environment in Bahrain, and that I stood out to the students. In contrast, appearance wise, I might have been considered more of an insider in the schools in England than schools in Bahrain. Being seen as an outsider could yield certain benefits such as attaining more details of schools' practice and background information. From my previous experience sitting in classrooms in Bahrain to observe pre-service teachers in training, children often assume I am also a teacher and hence seek interactions with me. These interactions included asking for feedback of their work, asking questions, and even asking for permission to do certain things. Although my role as non-participant observer was made clear, realistically the children in the classroom still sought interactions with me. Bryman (2016) indicates that certain situations would require the involvement of the researcher, despite

adopting a passive role. This is also referred to as a minimally participant observer. However, being a non-participant observer is essential to this study to ensure observing the classroom in the most naturalistic form by limiting possible interferences.

3.9 The Translation Procedure

All the data collection tools were translated to the Arabic language to be used in Bahrain, which is the official language in the kingdom. The teachers' questionnaire was first translated by a professional translator, and later revised and modified by myself and an advisor. The advisor was a retired school principal who worked in the Bahrain state school system for over 25 years. After the questionnaire was piloted in Bahrain, further amendments to the translation of the items were made to ensure the correct use of local education terminology. Local education terminology largely differs from general Arabic educational jargon. The remaining materials used for data collection were translated by myself and the advisor. The professional translator services were only used for the teachers' questionnaire, due to the complexity of translating some of the jargon associated with the inclusive teaching strategies. The questions in the principal interview did not reveal a similar level of difficulty in translation, as they did not comprise complex terms. The school principal interview questions and the teachers' questionnaire in Bahrain were preceded with a definition of inclusive education and integration, so as to clarify the focus of the study and associated concepts. Back translation of the survey and interview questions was seen as unnecessary in this case, as the translated items will show a low similarity percentage to original items in English. That is mainly due to the large difference between the Arabic and English languages, and the difficulty of finding the Arabic equivalent for many of the main terms in the study. The translation from English to Arabic

already changes the sentence structure in search for the corresponding Arabic terminology. Back translation from Arabic to English was therefore seen as unwarranted. Corbin and Strauss (2015) acknowledge the difficulty researchers encounter in finding the English equivalent to some terms despite being fluent in their native and English language. In fact, Dare, Nowicki and Felimban (2016) indicate that the word 'damg' in Arabic, collectively means inclusion, integration, and mainstreaming. Thus, confirming the challenges of the translation process, which is why it was essential that definitions of the main terms preceded the questionnaire and were discussed with the participants before initiating the interviews.

3.10 Reliability, Validity and Triangulation

A case study of one case is not heavily focused on issues of reliability. Thomas (2016) believes that even research designs that are not a case study still find it difficult to guarantee that their research is able to be replicated from one situation to another, much less in a case study where the purpose is not to replicate the inquiry to begin with. The same assumptions apply for the validity and generalisability of the findings. Such concerns are also not aligned with the eclectic paradigm pertaining to this study.

Although reliability is not a major concern of case studies, the Cronbach's alpha reliability rate was calculated on SPSS software for the items in the teachers' questionnaire. The teacher attitudes scale showed a high reliability of ($\alpha = .87$), as well as the teaching strategies scale ($\alpha = .94$). According to Pallant (2016), values starting at .7 are considered satisfactory, but a value higher than .8 is preferred. Table 3.6 shows the Cronbach's alpha for the overall scale and the subscales. Despite reporting a high reliability value of the main scales, some of the subscales

with a fewer number of items reported a lower rate. This is not an issue given that the purpose of the questionnaire was to support the qualitative data and provide a more complete view of the inclusive practices of each school.

Table 3.6 Cronbach's alpha internal consistency reliability

Scale	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha Reliability
Overall teacher attitudes scale	21	.87
- Teacher attitudes towards inclusion	3	.62
- Expected outcomes of inclusion	7	.78
- Facilitators to inclusion	11	.84
Overall teaching strategies scale	36	.94
- Cooperative learning strategies	2	.64
- Classroom management strategies	7	.64
- Social skills strategies	5	.69
- Differentiation strategies	22	.92

To overcome the limitations associated with each data collection instrument, the results from the three data sources were triangulated. Triangulation is the process of inspecting the validity of the results from one source of data to another source (Foster, 1996; Robson, 2002). In particular, data triangulation is when different data collection tools, in different settings, are utilised to explore a single phenomenon (Reeves, Kuper and Hodges, 2008). This study employed three data collection tools (interviews, observations, and questionnaires) to explore teacher attitudes towards inclusion and inclusive practice. The act of triangulation enhances the reliability of the data (Strogilos and Tragoulia, 2013). That is because the use of the three data collection methods helps counteract the disadvantages associated with each of the methods if they were used in isolation. Given that this study adopts a mixed-method design, the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches also support triangulation as the phenomenon is explained through a number of perspectives (Ritchie *et al.*, 2014). Triangulation additionally

supports construct validity (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). More details are given in 'Chapter 7: Discussion' regarding the results of the triangulation.

3.11 Data Analysis Plan

The principal and SENCO interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim, then imported into NVivo 12 for analysis. Pseudonyms were used to protect the participants' anonymity. Teacher observation data were checked after each observation session for incomplete information and editing. The teacher follow-up interview data were also transcribed verbatim and imported into NVivo 12 for analysis. The follow-up interview data were then combined with related observation notes.

Data analysis and codes were created for each school separately as designated by the case study research design. The analysis of the qualitative data from each school were based on the principles of both thematic inductive analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006) and grounded theory (Corbin and Strauss, 2015). Bryman (2016) believes that grounded theory and inductive analysis share the same premises, where the data are coded into themes without a pre-existing notion of what the themes are (Braun and Clarke, 2006). This is an essential distinction to make given that the themes were largely data-driven.

The first step of data analysis was initiated by looking through all the data after the first draft of transcription was completed by listening to the audio recordings again to check for accuracy in the interview transcripts, as well as editing and reading the observation data. Notes were taken for initial ideas of codes and themes during this step (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The

purpose of listening to the audio recordings again was to immerse myself in the data and to gain a deeper understanding of the participants' thoughts and statements (Corbin and Strauss, 2015).

This was followed by reading each sentence of the transcript and creating initial codes line by line to represent statements found in the data, other excerpts were then coded into the appropriate initial codes. Initial codes were broad and were narrowed down as the first cycle coding progresses through all the data. Examples of the initial codes were: differentiation, peer collaborative work, SEN focus, and classroom climate. In first cycle coding, as the number of codes increased (up to 70 codes per school), they were grouped into larger codes to make the process of coding easier. These larger codes were: country level practices, school practices, and classroom practices. These larger code groups corresponded to the: macrosystem (country level), exosystem (school level), mesosystem (attitudes), and microsystem (classroom level) (example of codebook exported from NVivo for school 4 first cycle coding in Appendix 5a). After all the observation and interview statements were coded in their relevant codes, each node in NVivo was opened separately to read through its contents in order to make sure that the statements that were coded in there belonged to the code. If they did not belong there, they were moved to other codes that more accurately represented them.

Because each school data were analysed separately, as I moved from coding one school to another, I gained more experience of coding and how the codes should be organised along with their contents. The second cycle coding consisted of going through all the data again and making sure data excerpts were placed in the relevant codes, and to check if I missed the coding of any important excerpts. Data excerpts that belonged to multiple codes were also checked to evaluate whether they needed to be placed in different codes, or if there was one code that they

belonged to more than the other. Extra codes were created for very large codes that can be potentially divided. The codes were then categorised under a core category which embodied the meaning of the sub-codes. This is similar to axial coding where codes are evaluated, grouped, and labelled (Saldaña, 2016). For example, the sub-codes of 'home-school partnership', 'involving parents', 'negative Bahraini parents' attitudes', and 'parents of non-Arabic speakers' were all placed in the core category of 'home-school relations' (see codebook for second cycle coding for school 4 in Appendix 5B).

During third cycle coding, the core category codes eventually developed into themes, and the sub-codes developed into sub-themes as they were gradually refined. This was done while still maintaining the overall placement of themes and sub-themes as: national practices, school practices, and classroom practices. For example, the super-theme of classroom practices for school 4 now consisted of three main themes which were: challenging students and high expectations, a collaborative classroom environment, and classroom management. Each of these themes then comprised a number of sub-themes.

After the analysis was done for each school, the codebook from each school was retrieved to map out the similar themes between the schools and the main differences. NVivo software allows for multiple ways of looking at the data and effectively organising it. Conceptual maps were created to explore connections between themes for each school separately, and then the main themes and sub-themes from each school were compared to each other (example of conceptual map in Appendix 5c). All the super-themes, themes, and sub-themes were placed into the EST to illustrate how inclusive practice was articulated through the different ecosystems. These are discussed in detail in the next chapter.

As for the teachers' questionnaire, all the questionnaire data were manually entered into SPSS version 26 for data analysis. Descriptive statistics were first generated to obtain details of participants' demographic information. This was followed by a reversal of two negatively worded items, aggregating the subscales to calculate the means, and then calculating the Cronbach's alpha reliability rate of each subscale. The data file was split per country to test for the results in this comparative case study. The data from each country were explored as opposed to data from each school due to the small number of participants from each school that were unlikely to lead to statistically significant results if analysed per school. A One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) between-groups was used with the country being the independent variable, and all the individual subscales being the dependent continuous variables (Pallant, 2016). This was done to examine the mean for each subscale and explore the difference between the schools and the statistical significance. Correlations between all the subscales were explored to determine if there was a significant relationship between some of the important variables such as between teacher attitudes and teachers' use of inclusive pedagogy.

3.12 Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was granted by the Humanities and Social Sciences Ethical Review Committee at the University of Birmingham on 1st August 2019 (Appendix 1b). Prior to approval, the committee requested some clarification or amendments in relation to: adhering to foreign travel advice, the participation of children in the project, informed consent for the online teachers' questionnaire, participant recruitment, and participant withdrawal. Ethical approval in Bahrain was granted by the Scientific Research Directorate at the Ministry of Education on 28th July

2019 (Appendix 1a). However, the approval came with the condition of either rephrasing or removing some of the negative statements in the questionnaire, and one of the interview questions. The committee's particular recommendation was to rephrase the questionnaire statements number 11-20 related to barriers of inclusive education, suggesting that the research cannot assume that these barriers are present in the Bahraini context (see Table 3.7). The name of the subscale was therefore changed to facilitators to inclusion. Some important ethical considerations in Bahrain were the possible teachers' hesitation to share their perspectives freely as they are unaccustomed to the research culture. Overall, no notes were taken on individual children, but general patterns of behaviour and participation in the classroom in response to the teaching activities.

Table 3.7 Original statements in the teachers' questionnaire and the new statement in response to the requirements of the ethics committee in Bahrain

Source	Original Statement	New Statement
School principal interview question No. 10	What barriers or factors affect the successful implementation of inclusion?	What factors affect the successful implementation of inclusion?
Teachers' questionnaire statement No. 11	I believe that the lack of specialised training in special education is a barrier to the implementation of inclusive education	I believe that the specialised training available in special education facilitates in the implementation of inclusive education
12	I believe that teacher's reluctance is a barrier to the implementation of inclusive education	I believe that the teacher's willingness facilitates the implementation of inclusive education
13	I believe that the curriculum is a barrier to the implementation of inclusive education	I believe that the curriculum facilitates the implementation of inclusive education
14	I believe that the school infrastructure is a barrier to the implementation of inclusive education	I believe that the school infrastructure facilitates the implementation of inclusive education
15	I believe that parents' attitudes are a barrier to the implementation of inclusive education	I believe that parents' attitudes facilitate the implementation of inclusive education
16	I believe that incomplete funding is a barrier to the implementation of inclusive education	I believe that the available funding facilitates the implementation of inclusive education
17	I believe that the laws around inclusion is a barrier to the implementation of inclusive education	I believe that the laws around inclusion facilitate the implementation of inclusive education
18	I believe that the lack of special and general teacher collaboration is a barrier to the implementation of inclusive education	I believe that the special and general teacher collaboration facilitates the implementation of inclusive education
19	I believe that the large number of children in the classroom is a barrier to the implementation of inclusive education	I believe that the number of children in the classroom facilitates the implementation of inclusive education
20	I believe that the failure to provide appropriate support staff is a barrier to the implementation of inclusive education	I believe that the availability of appropriate support staff facilitates the implementation of inclusive education

3.13 Conclusion

In this chapter, the eclectic philosophical paradigm guiding the methodological decisions of this study was discussed and integrated with the theoretical framework. Three data collection instruments were developed in response to the research questions which examined inclusive practices at all levels of the ecological environment. These research questions sought responses relating to the status of inclusive education in England and Bahrain, in particular, they explored teacher attitudes towards inclusive education, school's practice in inclusion, and teacher's inclusive practice. The tools were developed in response to the research questions starting from broader information on inclusive practices at the school level from the views of the school leadership. These semi-structured interviews sought information regarding national inclusion policy in the macrosystem and how it informs schools' inclusive practice in the exo-, meso-, and microsystems. Teacher observations and questionnaires were employed in order to explore teacher attitudes and inclusive pedagogy. The observations provided in-depth information about teachers' inclusive teaching behaviour in the exo-, meso-, and microsystems. The questionnaires attained information on teacher attitudes in the mesosystem, and the widespread use of inclusive teaching strategies from all teachers within the schools in the microsystem level. The results obtained from these instruments are discussed in the next chapter.

FINDINGS PREVIEW

As indicated in 'Chapter 3: Methodology', four schools participated in the study, two from England and two from Bahrain. Given the case study research design of this thesis, data obtained from the participating schools were analysed for each school separately. Data analysis was conducted using inductive thematic analysis and grounded theory, as previously detailed in section 3.11. The schools in England are referred to as school 1 (S1) and school 2 (S2), whilst the schools in Bahrain are referred to as school 3 (S3) and school 4 (S4). Codes are assigned to all participants to protect their anonymity. The codes are used to reference participant quotes from the transcripts. If names are mentioned by the participating teachers in their quotes, they are replaced with pseudonyms to protect anonymity. The codes assigned to the participating staff are in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Participant codes

Participants	Code
School principal	P
Special educational needs coordinator	SENCO
Assistant principal	AP
Teacher 1	T1
Teacher 2	T2

An example of a code following a participant quote is (S2-P).

The findings chapters are outlined as follows:

- Chapter 4: Qualitative Findings (England)
- Chapter 5: Qualitative Findings (Bahrain)
- Chapter 6: Quantitative Findings (Teachers' Questionnaire)

CHAPTER 4: QUALITATIVE FINDINGS (ENGLAND)

4.1 Introduction

School 1 in England (S1) is a school of exceptional circumstances. It is located opposite a prison, and situated in a community largely consisting of refugee and asylum seeker housing. It is a one-form, small primary school with 220 students, 10 teachers, and six teaching assistants (TAs). The headteacher is an executive principal for S1 and S2 and is only present part-time in this school. School 2 in England (S2) shares the same executive principal with S1 who has only been appointed in this school one year before the fieldwork took place. It is a two-form primary school with 380 students, 16 teachers, and 14 TAs. The school takes pride in being inclusive and particularly in supporting students with special educational needs (SEN) who comprise 13% of the student cohort. This case study analysis explores the findings from one executive principal interview, two SENCO interviews, 12 classroom observations, and 12 follow-up interviews with four teachers.

For S1 and S2 in England, six main themes are identified in the observations and interviews and they are: (1) national inclusive policies, (2) school practices and values, (3) special school circumstances, (4) teacher attitudes, (5) differentiation, and (6) teacher-centred learning. The six themes are classified under the relevant ecosystem in Figure 4.1. This is done in order to understand how broader national inclusive policies shape inclusive practice in the ecosystems within. This chapter discusses each theme and sub-theme in detail within the relevant ecosystem, and examines the 26 sub-themes from S1 and S2 collectively (see Table 4.2).

Figure 4.1 England school themes within the ecosystems

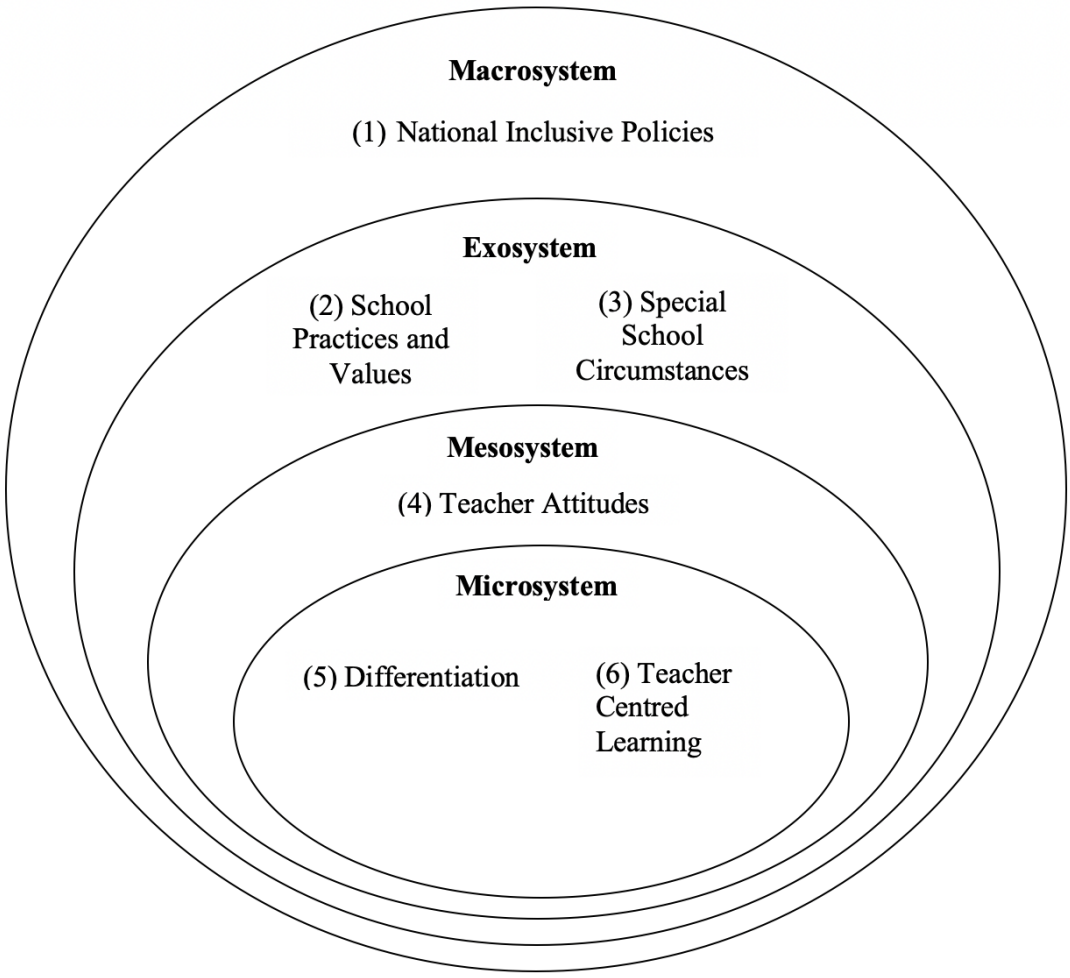


Table 4.2 England themes and sub-themes

Ecosystem	Theme	Sub-theme
Macrosystem	Theme 1: national inclusive policies	National approach to inclusion The Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) role Special educational needs (SEN) funding National curriculum Ofsted requirements
Exosystem	Theme 2: school practices and values	Community work Local authority (LA) inclusion support Inclusive school culture School's definition of inclusion The nine habits Co-planning
	Theme 3: special school circumstances	Students mental health Student outcomes Special educational needs (SEN) support agencies Interventions
Mesosystem	Theme 4: teacher attitudes	Teacher's definition of inclusion Talking about students Shifting negative attitudes Continuing professional development (CPD) for teacher confidence and attitudes
Microsystem	Theme 5: differentiation	Grouping arrangements The role of teaching assistants (TAs) Differentiated activities High ability versus low ability students
	Theme 6: teacher-centred learning	Dependent learners Individual student work Peer collaborative work

4.2 Macrosystem: National Inclusive Policies

The macrosystem consists of explicit or implicit societal and cultural values that are manifested in national polices, and comprises 'economic, social, educational, legal and political systems' (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, p. 515). One theme is allied to the macrosystem, national inclusive policies. This theme represents participants' views of how inclusive practice is communicated on a national level through different policies and procedures, and how that influences practices on a school level. The national perspective of inclusive education is focused on regulating the support for students with SEN in mainstream education. Schools in England reveal five sub-themes for national inclusive practices and they are: (1) national approach to inclusion, (2) the SENCO role, (3) SEN funding, (4) national curriculum, and (5) Ofsted requirements.

4.2.1 National approach to inclusion.

This sub-theme illustrates the nationwide perspective of inclusive education, which from the teachers' perspectives, is mostly concerned about the inclusion of students with SEN in a mainstream school. Special schools are still available for students with severe needs who are not able to succeed in mainstream provision. The SENCO in S1 is knowledgeable of the history of inclusion in the country, and believes that inclusion initiated in 1975 with the Children and Families Act which calls for the integration of students with SEN in regular education. The principal supposes that the purpose of inclusion nationally is to provide equal access to education, which is why the LA ensures schools admit students from diverse backgrounds and abilities.

> I would say the main purpose of it [inclusion policy] was to ensure that all children needs are being met within the school and that they feel included so it doesn't have a negative impact on self-esteem and social and emotional aspects of SEN as they move through their learning life in school (S2-SENCO).

4.2.2 The Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) role.

The responsibility of the SENCO is seen as essential to oversee the implementation of inclusion on a school level. It is a national directive which is why it is considered in the macrosystem, and requires training and completion of an accredited university course as previously discussed in 'Chapter 2: Literature Review'. The SENCO's responsibilities in S1 and S2 include: training staff for inclusion, coordinating SEN provision, conducting progress meetings to monitor the performance of students with SEN, developing individualised plans for students with SEN, supporting parents of students on the SEN register, and communicating with external agencies.

> Mmm I do parental workshops for specific things… I also work closely with the outside agencies such as the Communication and Autism Team mmm because we have some parents that have newly diagnosed children, so ensuring that they can come onto appropriate parenting courses for that… (S2-SENCO).

4.2.3 Special educational needs (SEN) funding.

When asked about the nature of support schools are given within the education system to implement inclusion, teachers only discuss funding or the lack of it. Both schools place a heavy importance on SEN funding in order to attain guidance from support agencies, CPD courses, more TAs for one-to-one support for some learners, further interventions and SEN support, and additional leadership roles.

> With the… Education and Health and Care plan. So, they come with a pot of money but it's never enough for a full-time one-to-one TA… (S2-SENCO).

Being a one-form school presents some obstacles to the inclusive education practices as there are fewer human and financial resources available.

> Our budget is very small. If you're in a bigger school, you have more money and you can then say yeah I will get this dyslexia tool in for all the children... We can't do that here. So, we have to make sure that we trained everyone up as highly as we can. So that they're able to deal with the barriers and issues that arise (S1-SENCO).

4.2.4 National curriculum.

Although the schools are directed by the education system to admit students with SEN and diverse abilities, the participants in S1 and S2 believe that the system does not take that into consideration for national assessments. The national curriculum is advanced and that can be challenging for a school with a large number of students with SEN and pupil premium funding. The students do not perform well in national assessments and that data are registered permanently in the LA, which reflects negatively on the schools' reputation.

> Education is rated in exactly the same way as education would be rated in an area that don't have these issues. So, we have to provide above and beyond to try and get our children to the standards that they need to reach in order to be ready for their next stage of education (S2-P).

> Children come in at Year 5 and they've never picked up a pencil before, but the government expects you to get them to pass a test in Year 6, it's impossible, there is no way (S1-SENCO).

However, the curriculum does allow for measurement of student progress throughout the academic year rather than just an evaluation of student performance against year level

expectations. The curriculum is additionally responsive to the cultural diversity in the Birmingham population through religious education.

> You have to teach about all religions. Mmm in Birmingham you can choose either the Christian syllabus or the Muslim syllabus… It's just, because in Birmingham there are lots of schools where they are all Muslim children…(S1-SENCO).

4.2.5 Ofsted requirements.

The principal articulates that although inclusion is enforced through a number of government policies and the Ofsted framework, Ofsted often is not understanding of the unique context and challenges of the schools. Given the schools are located in a disadvantaged neighbourhood and include many students with SEN, Ofsted does not take that into account when assessing the schools' performance. There is also an emphasis from Ofsted on assessing students' individual progress and outcomes. The classroom observations in S1 and S2 reveal a constant need to have a written record of students' individual progress. That was either through student books where they show their individual work, or through the teacher writing for students who do not have a book due to their severe SEN.

> We do a lot of group work activities and a lot of practical activities to evidence what they've done in groups. But I think if its… if its more than once a week, you're kind of… the books don't reflect good practice (S2-T1).

4.3 Exosystem: School Practices and Values

The exosystem level is illustrated in two themes: school practices and values, and special school circumstances. The exosystem examines factors that operate at an administrative school level, which indirectly influence the learning environment. Theme 2 of school practices and values belongs in the exosystem as it represents the school's culture and ideology (Anderson, Boyle and Deppeler, 2014). Although the school culture does not directly involve the learner, the school values are manifested through all of its practices. The theme represents the schools' inclusive values that not only revolve around the inclusion of students with SEN, but that are inclusive of all learners. This theme also explores the schools' inclusive practices of the surrounding community and external agencies. In order for the schools to overcome their logistical challenges, the staff seek to build stronger community ties to enhance their inclusive practices on a community level, which then extends to their practices on a school and classroom level. Schools in England reveal seven sub-themes for school practices and values and they are: (1) community work, (2) LA inclusion support, (3) inclusive school culture, (4) school's definition of inclusion, (5) the nine habits, and (6) co-planning.

4.3.1 Community work.

To help deal with the community challenges, S1 established a community hub where it can reach out directly to families. The hub provides a range of services for families to ease their integration into the country as well as equip them with life skills such as English language workshops for parents, finding alternative accommodation for families, young translators who are already assimilated in the school, and animal therapy to help some of the children who

struggle emotionally. Although the community hub deals directly with parents, it is in the exosystem as it describes the school's overall collaboration with the community. Due to the schools' experience of working with refugees, both schools also work with the Birmingham City Council on policies relating to newly arrived migrant and refugee families.

> When families have been through trauma, there's a lot of insecurities and so we have to build up relationships of trust with our families and that's where our community work is really important (S2-P).

Most of the families in the community have no access for public funds until their immigration status is finalised. Some students are not entitled to a school meal because the families are not on benefits. The schools therefore set up an unregistered foodbank to provide families in the area with food parcels, as well as helps with picking up children to come to school if the parents have identified needs.

> If you've got no recourse to public funds, that means that you should be in the country self-funding yourself, and if you can't fund yourself then you shouldn't be here. That's the underlying line, but I'm not having any child go hungry (S2-P).

4.3.2 Local authority (LA) inclusion support.

The schools' efforts to extend their inclusive practices include building a positive relationship with the LA, despite being independent academies. The schools exchange services with the LA through: supporting schools in the community with their inclusive practices, supporting schools with refugee and migrant education, leading training for the LA, and buying services for Pupil School Support or behaviour support services. The LA supports the schools through:

moderating the school's exam provision, training school staff and SENCO, and providing a community of other SENCOs to share practices.

> So, they [LA] were interested in developing… the support they could offer for handwriting. So, they came and did some training for us and we trialled some things out for them (S1-SENCO).

4.3.3 Inclusive school culture.

S1 has an overall inclusive ethos which is evident in its culturally diverse staff and students. The SENCO indicates that is partly due to their staff recruitment policy which is based around teachers fitting into the existing inclusive nature of the school.

> That's one of our things [inclusion] we have to because this is how we have to function... I think it will be brilliant in every school because if you're meeting the needs of one child really well then you're going to be meeting needs of lots of children really well (S1-T1).

The morning assemblies provide insight into the inclusive practices of the school. They highlight some positive practices such as celebrating the National Teaching Assistants day, nominations for student council, celebrating student achievement, and rewarding student attendance. Across S1 there are signposts on each classroom that state the number of languages spoken in the classroom by the students which are at least 14 languages in each class. Similar inclusive values are reflected in S2 with one of its main values is to embrace student diversity, not only in cultural backgrounds but also in abilities. In S2, T1 indicates that cultural diversity in the school helps the children internalise the value of accepting everyone. Religious education is one of his favourite subjects to teach as it provides students with the opportunity to discuss their faith, which is another indication of inclusive values.

> Well it's great because all of those children grow up for the rest of their life and… they don't look at someone for being different. Whereas, where I used to work it was predominantly white… some of the kids in my class have never seen a black person in their life and one of the boys I had in my previous school said black people don't exist, because he'd only ever seen one on the television (S2-T1).

4.3.4 School's definition of inclusion.

S1's perspective of inclusive education is shared amongst the leadership and the participating teachers. Their definition of inclusion goes against singling out children or taking them out of the classroom for extra support. This view is emphasised by the SENCO that students are not made to feel different whether they are of a high ability or have a SEN.

> Because we are very much whole school inclusivity, and I train the staff to teach all the children and by doing so they're all included (S1-SENCO).

According to the principal, S2's definition of inclusive education is more focused on allowing access for all students to the school. Inclusion in the school is enacted through its admission policy, inclusion policy, SEN policy, equalities policy, and teaching and learning policy.

> I fundamentally believe that every child deserves the best education that they can possibly have and so I'm not going to stop children coming to school who have additional needs or mm have just arrived into the country, having never been in school before (S2-P).

The principal also believes that the school's view of inclusion depends on the community and the nature of families which differs from one school to another. She also looks to instil the love for learning in students to develop life-long learners. The principal and the S2 SENCO share different perspectives of inclusion as the SENCO's perspective is more focused on SEN. The

SENCO acknowledges that in the past teachers in the school struggled with accepting students with SEN and that the school is working hard on its inclusion journey.

> We're on our journey as much as other schools are as well, but I think we've got a really good starting point with our team and really starting to see those success across the school and want to just continue our journey and that's just where we're at with inclusion at the minute (S2-SENCO).

4.3.5 The nine habits.

In both schools, the nine habits represent the schools' primary values and are engraved in all school activities and are expected of students, staff, and parents. The nine habits require school members to be compassionate, self-controlled, hopeful, humble, patient, honest, forgiving, joyful, and considerate. The nine habits are discussed in morning assemblies and in class, they are displayed across the schools and used for motivating positive student behaviour. During class time, teachers place a star on the habit that students accomplish. Students are often rewarded if they have listened to the teacher's instructions, or helped other students with certain tasks.

> It's [the nine habits] like, the core of everything that we do, it's how we conduct ourselves. So, if parents are coming in they might be angry, they might be cross about something. It's about reminding them of that we're one family and to have that respect, because we show that respect through our nine habits (S1-SENCO).

4.3.6 Co-planning.

Given S2 is a two-form school, teachers from each year level are able to engage in collaborative thinking to co-plan their daily classroom activities. This is an essential part of the school culture

as a result of the new leadership who wanted the teachers to engage in more teamwork. This enables the teachers to share practice and apply the best models to support the learners. In S2, T1 explains the process of working with the year group partner on a joint lesson plan that addresses the needs of all the children in the classroom, as well as plan the resources available to support the learners.

> We have a designated planning time, so mine was this afternoon, so we plan the lessons for the following week, and then once we planned the lessons, we have a section… which says TA and what their duties are for each lesson of everyday (S2-T1).

4.4 Exosystem: Special School Circumstances

Theme 3 on special school circumstances also belongs in the exosystem as it encompasses practices related to certain features of the student cohort (Anderson, Boyle and Deppeler, 2014). The challenges encountered with the student cohort in both schools represent unique school circumstances where similar student characteristics are not usually encountered in other schools, and therefore require particular school practices. Both schools are culturally diverse and have a large percentage of students with SEN. Schools in England reveal four sub-themes for special school circumstances and they are: (1) students mental health, (2) student outcomes, (3) SEN support agencies, and (4) interventions.

4.4.1 Students' mental health.

S1 attends to students' mental health and uses the necessary support from social workers to help students cope with adjusting to their new environment. Teachers are very aware of the students' difficult backgrounds and students often manifest this trauma in different ways such as aggression, general behavioural issues, and selective mutism.

> We have mental health lessons… where we deal with issues that have arisen in the classroom... It's very open and it's inclusive to everybody because mental health doesn't choose who it's going to affect, a lot of our children have experienced trauma, even just moving from one country to another has been very traumatic for them. But there's usually extenuating circumstances as to why they've come (S1-SENCO).

4.4.2 Student outcomes.

S2 celebrates any progress in student performance even if students do not perform to year level standards. Student outcomes are not only celebrated on an academic level, but also on a social level.

> Last year for example a child was new to the country, ADHD, ASD, no English, he came into the school kicking and screaming every day, throwing tables, running around punching. At the end of the year, he was well integrated into the class, he went into a mainstream school with an EHC, we managed to get him one within that short space of time, he was speaking to staff around the school, he learnt how to line up, do routines… (S2-SENCO).

According to the S2 SENCO, inclusion into mainstream schooling for some students with SEN can actually damage students' self-esteem. For one particular student, the mainstream environment was so overwhelming that the student was taken to a special school.

> This particular child knew that he wasn't working at the same level and was doing different work to his peers… knew that he couldn't socialise appropriately and therefore was drawn to younger children but he really wanted to be with his peers, and therefore his self-esteem was lowered in that regards (S2-SENCO).

4.4.3 Special educational needs (SEN) support agencies.

S2 deals with a number of support agencies to improve the learning experiences of children with SEN. These agencies include: an educational psychologist, Pupil School Support, behaviour support services, music school service, a speech therapist, Communication and Autism Team (CAT), a speech and language therapist, and a music therapist.

4.4.4 Interventions.

Interventions are an important part of S2's approach to inclusive education, and it is commonly discussed by the participants. Students with severe SEN are often taken out of the classroom to have their intervention session with the learning mentor or the TA for no more than 20 minutes. Some interventions also take place at the end of the school day. Interventions address a range of skills including spelling, maths, and social skills. S2 has a learning mentor with a designated office for her to work with individual students or student groups. She has a schedule for the morning where she attends the classes, and in the afternoon for sessions with the students and social groups. The social groups include a group for children that feel vulnerable in the playground, as well as a girls empowerment group, and a boys empowerment group.

> She [the learning mentor] works with our most vulnerable children, mainly around behavioural difficulties, but she's also very skilled with children with ASD. Mm so she goes into different classrooms within the morning when there is the most need. Not necessarily always working with the SEN children but with the vulnerable children as well… and what I mean by vulnerable… that we've highlighted that have difficult backgrounds in family life (S2-SENCO).

The participants in S2 mention the sensory room which was built using the EHC funding to support students with SEN. The sensory room sessions are scheduled for certain students to be taken there by the TA. It is for students with sensory needs particularly for students with autism.

> It has smells, sounds, lights and lots of different mm paddings and weighted things in there. So, we have weighted lap belts that the children can take in there for motor skills, the peg board, the fiddle toys, the sensory lights, the bubbles machine… it can be a quite calming environment cause its quite small… They have.. it can be used for different things, as a … as a motivator or a lower stimulus (S2-SENCO).

4.5 Mesosystem: Teacher Attitudes

The mesosystem is a 'system of microsystems' (Bronfenbrenner, 1978, p. 6). Only one theme emerged at this level and it is concerned with teacher attitudes towards inclusive education. Teacher attitudes are in the mesosystem as they do not directly interact with the learners. Teachers directly influence the learning experience of learners in the microsystem level through teaching practices. These teaching practices are shaped by teacher attitudes which exist at the ecosystem surrounding the microsystem, which is the mesosystem. Teacher attitudes are not the most direct factor to observe or discuss during interviews and are therefore realised through the following sub-themes: (1) teacher's definition of inclusion, (2) talking about students, (3) shifting negative attitudes, and (4) CPD for confidence and attitudes.

4.5.1 Teachers' definition of inclusion.

Teacher's perspective of inclusion is revealing of their attitudes towards it. In S1, T1 believes that inclusive education requires a strong teacher-student relationship where learners feel supported and have an adult they can trust. She believes inclusive education is also about providing all learners with the same opportunities to learn. S1 T2 also believes inclusion involves all students in the learning, but that depends on the context. With some learners, inclusion is more challenging than with other learners and could be achieved more on a school level rather than a classroom level.

> For a child who doesn't speak English… it's impossible to have them included in every single second of the day. If I went to a school that didn't speak English, they could be the most welcoming people, but … I wouldn't understand at all what was going on... I would hope that everybody still feels part of the school setting (S1-T1).

In S2, teachers believe inclusion is about making all students feel cared for and part of the learning, within the limitations of their ability. S2 T1's view of including students with SEN can be as simple as the students listening to the lesson and the vocabulary used. During the observations, I was guided by the teachers to observe low ability students, which is an indication of teacher's definition of inclusion that is concerned mainly with students with SEN.

> Mm so inclusive education for me would be that every child is mm is engaged and active in the learning that is taking place in that lesson… it could be an individual target linked to their ability or it could be of the whole class. But if all of the class are engaged in meeting the objective of the lesson or the knowledge of the lesson then that is inclusive (S2-T1).

4.5.2 Talking about students.

This sub-theme refers to teachers' discussing issues related to students' attainment or behaviour during class time and their low expectations of students, which indicate teachers attitudes towards inclusion. During the first observation in S1 with T1, she approached me and asked if I wanted to sit next to a student who 'struggles not to hurt anyone'. Another example of this was with S1 T2 who wanted to explain to me the difference in student books. The teacher showed the student books as the students were working on them, and explained the different books students with high ability receive as opposed to students of low ability. The teachers in S1 also discussed with the TA certain students' movement from one table to another as their level improved. Another indication of teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education was their expectation of student progress. S1 Teachers believe their expectations of student achievement should be moderated to the type of the students at their school, as their students are limited by their backgrounds and circumstances. Both S1 teachers indicate low expectations for student

progress throughout the academic year, and particularly in passing national exams and being able to work independently without the TA.

In S2, teachers openly reveal their frustration with student progress for students of low ability. As soon as I enter the classroom, the teachers would discuss with me which are the low ability tables and point to them so I can focus on them during my observations. Issues related to students with SEN are also discussed specifically in relation to one student in S2 T2's classroom (Cole). When Cole returns to the classroom with the learning mentor, the teacher asks the mentor about Cole's performance and the mentor responds. Teachers often also tell students that they will be moved to a lower table if they were not progressing. In S2 T2's class, I sat close to the low ability table that is guided by the TA. She would frequently turn to me, roll her eyes, and complain about the students in her group and how slow they were.

4.5.3 Shifting negative attitudes.

The principal of both schools' states that teachers are accepting of students, yet students of low ability groups are often taught outside of the classroom. The principal and the S2 SENCO acknowledge that teacher attitudes are a development point for the school. S2 teachers struggle with the teaching load and having students with SEN that require additional planning time. Students with behavioural difficulties can also be particularly draining for the teachers and cause classroom disruptions. The S2 SENCO encourages the staff to embrace all the children, take ownership of their learning, and take the time needed to adjust.

> That's quite difficult within a mainstream setting for some children. Mm because some children's needs in my opinion just can't be met within the mainstream due to the stimulus, the environment, and the amount of children (S2-SENCO).

4.5.4 Continuing professional development (CPD) for teacher confidence and attitudes.

S1 invests in teachers' CPD to influence positive teacher attitudes towards inclusion. Teachers' inclusive practices are built into performance evaluations. The school leadership prioritises CPD for teachers, and the principal attempts to build a professional learning community in the school by permitting teachers the time to work on projects together.

> For me I'd say that's [PD] the biggest thing we put our money into… and then all the training they have is geared to all children… if we're doing vocabulary, it's not geared towards SEN or our EAL [English as Second Language] children, it's for all the children (S1-SENCO).

The principal and SENCO in S2 acknowledge that teachers in this school have struggled with having negative attitudes towards inclusion; which is why the school dedicates a big portion of the budget to improve staff knowledge. Recent staff training opportunities focus on improving students' reading skills, metacognition and on EHCs. In both schools, the training is mostly led by the educational psychologist, SENCO, principal, Pupil School Support, and CAT.

4.6 Microsystem: Differentiation

The microsystem level is illustrated in two themes which are differentiation and teacher-centred learning. The microsystem examines factors that are in the learner's environment and directly impact students' learning (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). Theme 5: differentiation, illustrates the use of differentiated instruction as one of the main ways of implementing inclusive education in England at the classroom level. As discussed in 'Chapter 2: Literature Review' differentiation varies in its perspectives and implementation. The perspective of differentiation illustrated in this microsystem is of the participating teachers and how that translates into their practices. The differentiation practices are evaluated later in 'Chapter 7: Discussion' in how they respond to the inclusive pedagogical approach (Florian and Black-Hawkins, 2011). During the observations, differentiated instruction utilised the majority of class time and is a routine that the students are accustomed to. Not only are tasks differentiated, but so is teacher questioning, and the reading groups. The use of differentiation is explained in a number of inter-related sub-themes that include: (1) grouping arrangements, (2) the role of TAs, (3) differentiated activities, (4) high ability versus low ability students.

4.6.1 Grouping arrangements.

Grouping arrangements are an important part of inclusive practice as they determine student interactions for the majority of the school day, as well as the implementation mechanism of differentiated instruction. Classrooms include six groups with four to six students in each group. In S1, T1's classroom current grouping arrangements are ability groupings based on students' test results from the previous year. S1 T2 also has ability groups but are changeable according

to the lesson which are the: everyday seat, writing seat, reading seat, maths seat, and mixed ability seat. Student positions in each group are flexible according to S1 T2, if a child's performance improves then they are moved to a higher ability table and vice versa.

> Even though it's very clear, we try not to make it so that its 'right, you're going to the best table', it's not like that its you're going to a table where its more suitable for your needs mm rather than you're going to a table that's the best working table (S1-T2).

In S2, teachers specifically point out which are the low ability, middle ability and high ability groups, yet they still consider these groups to be mixed ability. Groups are also referred to as 'TA groups'. S2 T1 explains the purpose of grouping students is that even though they work individually, students still have the opportunity to hear the vocabulary used by the students working around them. S2 teachers have low expectations for students' ability to work in mixed ability groups as they are more likely to copy the work from higher ability students.

> So, the majority of the groups are mixed ability groups, apart from my very lower achieving. Cause we did trial on the first day where the SEN children that are lower attaining were mixed in with the rest of the group. It just meant that giving that support to those children by either myself or teaching assistant mm it was proving difficult… (S2-T1).

4.6.2 The role of teaching assistants (TAs).

In both schools, the TA role is essential to a classroom, particularly during a differentiated activity which consumes the majority of the learning time. The main responsibility of the TA is to support the low ability group and students with SEN. Typically that requires the TA to take the low ability group outside of the classroom for more focused instruction or interventions, or to sit with the group in the class and instruct them using a small white board.

The TA also stays in class to support students with SEN during assembly, play time or lunch time. Teachers often refer to the low ability group as ‘Ms’s/Sir’s group’ (the TA). Given the large proportion of students with SEN in the school, the school strives to employ a TA for one-to-one support for some students with severe needs but is unable to secure the funding for it.

> The needs of the children in this school are so high, mm that mm I don’t think that you can fulfil the needs of the children if you don’t have extra support in the classroom… it’s just impossible to be supporting mm very low ability children and then pushing the greater ability children (S1-T2).

Although the role of the TA is mainly to support students with SEN, S1 T1 is determined to transform the TA role to engage in more co-teaching. The TA would often do the following: guide the lesson, participate in the class discussion during the teacher’s instruction, and select students to participate in the class discussion. T1 and the TA have a shared understanding of their roles, and T1 values the TAs feedback to improve her practice.

4.6.3 Differentiated activities.

Differentiated activities occupy the majority of class time in both schools. The teacher usually initiates a differentiated activity on the smartboard that displays the learning outcome (LO) with three different levels of success criteria (SC). The teacher introduces the task for each star level and then asks the students to begin. In most cases, the students write down their LO and SC in their book and then start their work. Otherwise, the students are given a sheet with the task appropriate to their level of ability. One-star is for the low ability group, two-star for the middle ability group, and three-star for the high ability group. Student books are also differentiated, some student books have bigger line spacing for low ability students, and other books have regular line spacing for other levels of ability. The tasks are differentiated, as well as the

resources available to support the children in completing the work. Students complete their given tasks individually. Although S1 T1 would sometimes ask students to help each other once they have finished, but it was in an unstructured manner and most students opt not to do that. There were some instances with a student who wanted to attempt harder work, but was convinced by the teacher not to. S1 T2 did not always refer to the ability groups with the star levels, but created a colour system which corresponds to the student level. This is done to conceal which are the lower groups for other students.

> I think they [students] mm pick up on the, who is brighter, shall we say… the reason for the colour system is that we don't say 'right, the bottom group will do this today, and the top group is gonna do this'. We try not to ever use those words… Mm and you do sometimes end up saying 'right, mm you're doing the harder work today' but you try not to (S1-T2).

Differentiated instruction in S2 is implemented very similarly to S1. S2 T2 explains that 95% of lessons are differentiated by task, while the rest are differentiated by outcome. Teachers insist that students' ability to move from one-star level to the other is completely fluid. Yet, S2 T1 then says that for most children, they attempt the same star level for all subjects.

> So, in every subject mm we have to look at all the needs across the board. What I do is think about my lowest child in the class and think what activity will they still be able to access, but meeting the same objectives as everybody else. And that's kind of my lowest starting point, and then I think of the highest achiever in the class, what can they do and what can we stretch them further to. And then that gives me a middle ground where I can think, mm what's my middle achiever, what is the expectation for the whole class (S2-T1).

Although the teachers indicate that students have a choice of star levels, when introducing an activity, teachers specify which star level each group is doing. One student during the lesson requests to attempt the three-star task.

> I had a girl today say to me …‘ oh I really want to do the three-star’, and I know that she’s not a three-star child but I wanted to give her that experience. I said to her ‘can you count in fours’ and she said ‘no’, so I said ‘oh maybe the three-star challenge might be too challenging for you’. Mm so we’re just always kind of checking and assessing where they’re at and how they’re feeling, rather than giving them something that gonna completely throw them off… So, we encourage confidence rather than discouraging them (S2-T1).

In the following task with S2 T1, the teacher explains that students have a choice to either do a bar chart or a pictogram or both. The teacher then distributes a sheet with tables that students can either turn to a bar chart or pictogram. However, the low ability groups receive a different sheet which already has the axes of the chart drawn for them to fill in while the other students draw their own axes.

> So the way that .. it was differentiated in the terms of the resource. So Mrs N [TA], the one-star, had the axes already drawn for them with.. the only thing that I’d left out was the number for the scale… So, I know that if they try to draw the axes, you’d have one line going diagonally down the page, and the other one somewhere else. So, the resource was differentiated today. Yeah some lessons, the information that is given will be the same, but the resource can be differentiated… (S2-T1).

4.6.4 High ability versus low ability students.

Part of differentiation is providing sufficient challenge for students of high ability. In one activity in S1, T1 offers a box called a ‘challenge’ which contains sheets with more advanced questions for students to solve if they finish their star level task. S1 T1 is seeking more ways challenge this group of students so when the TA is taking over with the rest of the class, the teacher takes out the high ability students to discuss that.

> I took out eight children, and we talked about, I've seen you look a bit bored sometimes because you're always waiting for everyone else to catch up, you have done the learning, so we need to make sure that you're not bored and that you're really challenging yourself. So, every day in our learning objective it's got 'dive deeper' now, and it will give them a task to do… (S1-T1).

In S2, the three-star task is introduced to the high ability students separately and is not included with the other level tasks on the smart board. When working on a differentiated task in both schools, the low ability group usually leaves the classroom with the TA to focus on their work, or stay in the back of the classroom and work with the TA. S1 T1 justifies this for the purpose of providing these students with scaffolding and support.

> So, those are the ones that struggle to read and couldn't read independently so they cannot sit with a partner and read… so they do the same thing that we we're doing, they're reading in a circle, but they've got Mr. A [TA] to direct the questions and to help them record it (S1-T1).

Such learners are thus singled out of some classroom activities initiated by the teacher. When a differentiated activity starts, the TA stands near the door and announces that he will be taking the 'one-star' group out of the classroom. During a whole class activity such as sitting on the carpet for instruction, some low ability students do not partake and are at the back of the classroom with the TA. The same group of students additionally occasionally miss out on play time with their classmates, as they sit in class to complete their work.

In S2, the school structure facilitates for students to be taken out of the classroom, as outside of every classroom there is a group table setting where it is often used by the TA and the low ability group. S2 T2 explains that by saying that these students have continuum targets which the TA guides them through in order to achieve them by the end of the year. During the observations, there was one incident in the S2 T1 classroom where the TA was working with

her group and one student raised his hand for the teacher and the TA told him ‘put your hand down, Mr. B (teacher) is busy with the others in the class’. The teacher indicates that it is very difficult for these students to join the rest of class as it means the class would have to work at the slow pace of the lower ability students. The TA’s group work is very separate from the rest of the class. In one of the observations, the TA had to leave the class so his group ended up writing the alphabet in their book, while the rest of the class are working on a maths activity. Most of the time students on the TA table are given separate instructions to the rest of the class, and are not aware of what their peers are doing. In S2 T2’s classroom when the lower ability group is taken out of the classroom by the TA, Cole is left sitting in the group table alone without a task. T2 openly expresses to me during an informal conversation that Cole should be in a special school.

> Cole is very very very different. Mm very different. So, you have to plan tasks for him… but Cole won’t do anything on his own. He will just sit there, because he hasn’t got the attention span, it’s part of his condition. So, he’s got severe global delay. He’s like… he’s like a very very very very young toddler. If you imagine, they don’t do anything on their own. They’ll sit on a playing mat and they’ll play with colours and bells and that’s it (S2-T2).

4.7 Microsystem: Teacher-Centred Learning

Teacher-centred learning is the dominant model of learning in the classrooms. It represents teaching practice that directly involves the learner, which is why it fits in the microsystem. The majority of classroom events are guided by the teacher, with minimal opportunities for student participation. Students work individually on their differentiated task and feedback is mostly provided in the student book rather than through classroom discussions. Although the majority of class time is dedicated to teacher-directed individual student tasks, there are some occasions of collaborative student work. Schools in England reveal three sub-themes for teacher-centred learning and they are: (1) dependent learners, (2) individual student work, and (3) peer collaborative work.

4.7.1 Dependent learners.

The main indicator of teacher-directed learning is the students' dependence on the teacher and the TA, which is apparent during the observations in S1 and S2. This is acknowledged by the teachers themselves during the interviews. In S1, T1 believes the main reason for students' dependence, especially students of low ability, is that they are always in the group of students who are taken out of the classroom with the TA for more focused work.

> The problem is that, if they were to do it independently, they might not fully understand (S2-T1).

S1 T1 attempts to combat this behaviour by encouraging the students to rely more on each others' help, by asking them to check the work of the person next to them once they complete their individual task. That concept however, seems very strange to the children and most choose

not to partake. For the Year 2 class in S1 with T2, their dependence is evident in the teacher sticking a printed out LO and SC in each of the students' notebooks while they are out of class. The teacher explains this as a more time efficient approach to organising the classroom. T2 also has low expectations for students' ability to collaborate.

> They haven't quite developed the ability to check each other's work, check their own work never mind check other people's work (S1-T2).

Students are not given many roles or responsibilities, which could explain their constant dependence on teachers' guidance. Some organisational roles are given to students rather than academic roles such as handing out learning materials, washing the student cups, gofers, and tidying up the classroom. These roles are also given more for Year 4 students than those in Year 2. In a science lesson in S1, this event is indicative of teacher-centred learning and student dependence. The purpose of this science experiment is to see which liquid can travel the fastest down the ramp based on how viscous it is. The teacher has a number of different liquids prepared such as oil, water, and honey. T1 initially planned for this activity to be student-centred by allowing different students to perform each part of the experiment. When the experiment started, the teacher said that she will demonstrate with the first liquid as it was 'tricky'. As the activity went on, the teacher performs the entire experiment while the students quietly observe.

4.7.2 Individual student work.

Students engage in individual differentiated tasks for the majority of class time. These tasks are introduced by the teacher on the board where the teacher provides an example and then solves

it on the board. Limited opportunities are given for student participation in the lesson, and students' work is infrequently revised at the end of the lesson. Instead, the teacher grades each student book individually where feedback is provided. Students are encouraged to self-evaluate their work through the use of green pens. In some instances, teachers provide a task for everyone on the board, and students complete this task on their small white boards. In several instances in S1, T2 provides a challenge for everyone on the board, and then solves it himself. Although many of these tasks are completed individually by the students, it is largely teacher led through providing an example and responding to the task. Given that the majority of the tasks are individual, so are the rewards. Students are often reinforced with a reward on their individual token board. Students are mostly rewarded for behaviour and following instructions rather than academic attainment. In S2, T1 believes students are not capable of doing collaborative work, particularly low ability students who are unlikely to participate.

> You got the stronger child that would take over as group leader and would say 'yeah I know, I'm helping, I'm teaching them', but they're not teaching them because I know the kid so I know what they're like… We're human beings and that's a, that's a trait that unfortunately some people don't like working in groups… (S2-T1).

4.7.3 Peer collaborative work.

During the observations, group work is rarely implemented. Collaborative work is mostly restricted to the teachers asking the students to discuss things with their partner for less than a minute on occasion. During one observation, T2 organises a group activity where students sit in groups of three to write a poem. These groups are mixed ability and this activity is student-centred. The teacher introduces the task by displaying a picture of a forest on the smartboard and asks all the students to stand up and imagine walking in the forest and imagine what they

would see. The students are then asked to discuss in pairs what they are seeing in the forest and then asked to share it with the class. The teacher then organises the student groups and provides each group with a big piece of paper with a picture of the forest and asks students to write what they imagined around it. The teacher asks everyone to go to the carpet to discuss the common spelling mistakes.

> So, they were completely mixed groups apart from Emily… There's purposely put on each table, mm a higher ability child. There was also, when needed, a lower ability child, and if you like, a middle ability child working together. The idea behind that is that hopefully as they get more and more practice at that, they should be able to share ideas better and the reality should be is that the lower ability child is picking up language development from the higher ability child, that's the plan in the short term (S1-T2).

In S1, every morning, the students would come into the classroom, take their small white boards and sit on the carpet. T2 believes this is the most inclusive activity and saw this as an opportunity for all students to be learning together and achieving the same objective, as well as an opportunity to collaborate by having 'talk partners'.

In S2, T2 implements a collaborative activity where students are working in pairs. The teacher first introduces the activity by showing the students different pictures of sea creatures, and that next they will create a sea monster in pairs. The teacher pairs students by mixed ability, including students from the TA table. The students are given an A4 sheet and coloured tissue to decorate their monster. This is the most excited and engaged the learners have been in all of the observations. As students are creating the monster, the teacher is asking them to shout out some expanding phrases or alliteration to describe their monsters. The teacher then types up the student contributions on the smart board. This activity preceded another activity the next day

where it will be differentiated as usual. T2 thinks this is the most inclusive activity as all students are involved.

> Most children [were involved in the monster activity] ... apart from... obviously, you have people like Cole. So, for Cole, he was in a group where had a… one higher ability child, and one high-low child. So, he was there more for the being part of a group, being part of a discussion. Mm when I was looking around the room, most children were involved, they were doing something whether it was drawing whether it was cutting, whether it was sticking, it was only really, I'd say Cole that wasn't. But then what you got to understand for a child of his needs... he can't cut, he can't necessarily draw a monster... he won't know what a monster is, but at least he's part of the group, he's got that socialising aspect... (S2-T2).

4.8 Conclusion

This chapter critically discussed six themes and 26 sub-themes, which emerged from the qualitative data obtained from the two participating schools in England. Theme 1: national inclusive policies in the macrosystem, reveals that schools are encouraged to be inclusive of students with SEN and diverse abilities. From the participants' perspectives, the national education system's inclusive practices are centred around issues of supporting students with SEN in mainstream provision. This is particularly regulated through the SENCO role and SEN funding schemes. Even though the interview questions explore inclusive education support in general terms, the participants only articulate it in terms of financial support. Larger schools are able to secure more funding which is then used for SEN support and TAs. Schools are encouraged to be inclusive of students of varying abilities, yet the requirements of the national curriculum and Ofsted are inconsistent with that approach according to the participants.

Theme 2: school practices and values in the exosystem, represents the schools' practices that contribute to their inclusive culture and the efforts of both schools to engage with the community. The schools prioritise community outreach through supporting families as well as maintaining strong ties to the LA. Overall inclusive ethos in S1 is evident throughout the observations and interviews. The school's efforts of being inclusive are not only about the learners, but also include staff and parents where they are all made to feel as valued members of the school. Whole school inclusion in S1 is enforced through a shared definition of inclusive education, clear expectations of teachers' performance in relation to implementing inclusion, and the nine habits. The school's recruitment policy also ensures teachers' inclusive values are consistent with the school. In S2, co-planning is implemented to enhance inclusive practice.

This school's culture is in transition as a result of the new school principal who seeks to shift the climate towards being more collaborative and accepting. This is articulated in the school's efforts to embrace students of diverse backgrounds and abilities.

Theme 3: special school circumstances in the exosystem, highlights the challenges S1 encounters in ensuring a safe environment for all students, despite challenges that children are faced with outside school. Teachers are aware of students' past trauma and express concern for students' social and academic progress. S1's limited SEN budget restricts SEN provision. This then explains why S2 has a strong SEN focus in this theme as it dedicates the SEN funding to attain SEN related support such as support from external agencies, interventions, a sensory room, and a learning mentor. Participants from S2 openly acknowledge how students with SEN consume the majority of teachers' efforts and that the mainstream environment may not be suitable for all students with additional needs. Two themes are discussed in the exosystem which are: school practices and values, and special school circumstances. All of the components of the themes operate at the school level as well as in collaboration with external agencies. The practices discussed in the exosystem shape many of the practices which are discussed next in the mesosystem and the microsystem.

Theme 4: teacher attitudes in the mesosystem, is deduced through teachers' idea of inclusive education and teachers' behaviour around the learners. The dominant definition of inclusive education shared by teachers is that inclusion is contingent on students' ability to participate. Teacher attitudes towards inclusive education in S1 and S2 are also realised through teachers' negative talk about students in the presence of the students themselves and their peers. Although similar issues such as talking about students are discussed at both schools, teacher attitudes in

S1 appear to be more positive than S2 where students are described as someone that is ‘above and additional’. Participants in S2 acknowledge that positive teacher attitudes towards inclusion are a work in progress.

Theme 5: differentiation in the microsystem, is the main inclusive teaching practice observed in S1 and S2. The classroom arrangement of ability groups is designed to enable differentiated instruction. The teachers utilise the TA role to support low ability groups while the teacher supports the rest of the classroom. Differentiated activities dominate classroom time with the three level tasks, which are assigned by the teacher for students to complete individually as they are seated with other students of the same ability level. There is a stronger focus on higher ability students in S1 than S2 with the dive deeper challenge. Low ability students are frequently singled out as they are either educated separately by the TA in the classroom, or taken outside of the classroom for special support.

Theme 6: teacher-centred learning in the microsystem, represents the focus of the learning activities on individual tasks which are heavily guided by the teachers. Teachers generally communicate low expectations for student’s ability to work independently and collaboratively, as well as indicate students’ dependence on the teacher and TA. There are minor instances where students are given opportunities to work collaboratively within pairs or groups. The findings from S1 and S2 are thoroughly discussed in ‘Chapter 7: Discussion’. The qualitative findings from the participating schools in Bahrain are discussed next in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5: QUALITATIVE FINDINGS (BAHRAIN)

5.1 Introduction

School 3 in Bahrain (S3) is a multicultural school, situated in the centre of Bahrain's capital city Manama. The area is known for having a large concentration of foreign residents as well as new Bahraini nationals. The school principal is supported with one newly appointed assistant principal. The school staff comprise 30 teachers including one special education teacher (SET), and 280 students. The school includes a large student population classified as non-Arabic speakers, which identifies them as students with learning difficulties and constitute 20% of the school. School 4 in Bahrain (S4) has appointed a new school principal two months prior to when the fieldwork is conducted, she is supported with a leadership team of two assistant principals. This is a large school with 60 teachers and 884 students. Two SETs supervise the two special education classrooms, one for students with Down syndrome and autism, and the other for students with learning difficulties. The former class has six students who are there for the majority or entire school day, while the latter group is pulled out of the mainstream classroom for support. This case study analysis explores the findings from two principal interviews, two assistant principal interviews, 12 classroom observations and 12 follow-up interviews with four teachers.

For S3 and S4 in Bahrain, six main themes are identified in the observations and interviews and they are: (1) national inclusive policies, (2) school practices and values, (3) the challenge of non-Arabic speakers, (4) attitudes, (5) an interactive learning environment, and (6) a collaborative classroom. The six themes are classified under the relevant ecosystem in Figure

5.1. This is done in order to understand how broader national inclusive policies shape inclusive practice in the ecosystems within. This chapter discusses each theme and sub-theme in detail within the relevant ecosystem, and examines the sub-themes from S3 and S4 collectively (see Table 5.1).

Figure 5.1 Bahrain school themes within the ecosystems

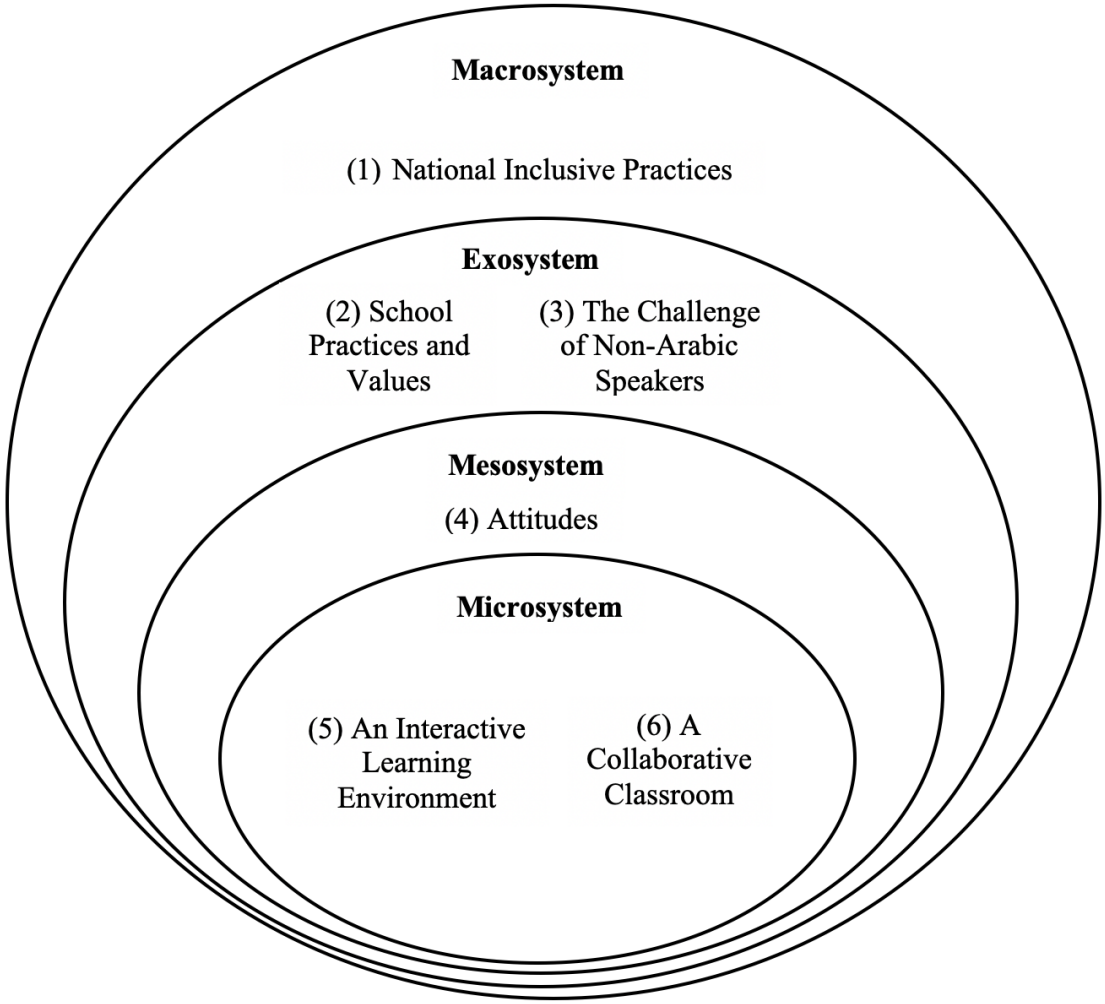


Table 5.1 Bahrain themes and sub-themes

Ecosystem	Theme	Sub-themes
Macrosystem	Theme 1: national inclusive policies	Inclusion policy Ministry of Education (MOE) support
Exosystem	Theme 2: school practices and values	The school's strategic plan Cohesive school culture Giftedness and special educational needs (SEN) management Sharing good practice Classroom composition Continuing professional development (CPD)
	Theme 3: the challenge of non-Arabic speakers	Non-Arabic speakers Practices for non-Arabic speakers
Mesosystem	Theme 4: attitudes	High expectations Teacher attitudes Student attitudes Bahraini parents' attitudes Home-school partnership
Microsystem	Theme 5: an interactive learning environment	A variety of teaching strategies Reinforcement Independent learning Student roles Teacher-directed learning
	Theme 6: a collaborative classroom	Grouping arrangements Peer pairing strategy Group work Learning through play Project-based learning Think-pair-share Differentiated activities Student modelling

5.2 Macrosystem: National Inclusive Policies

The macrosystem is concerned with societal and cultural practices which are communicated through national policies (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). One theme belongs in the macrosystem and it is national inclusive policies. This theme represents participants' knowledge of how inclusion policy is communicated nationally, and how that later shapes the practices of the schools. Both schools reveal limited awareness regarding national inclusion initiatives and the mechanism of inclusion. Participants are also unfamiliar with the term inclusive education and instead refer to it as integration. Schools in Bahrain reveal two sub-themes for national inclusive practices and they are: (1) inclusion policy, and (2) Ministry of Education (MOE) support.

5.2.1 Inclusion policy.

Inclusion policy represents the first expression of macrosystem practices. Participants are more familiar with the term integration than with inclusive education. The principal and assistant principal in S3 are uncertain of when inclusion initiated in Bahrain. According to the participants, students with SEN were integrated in mainstream schools over 20 years ago, and only integrated in the mainstream class in recent times. Integration classrooms are discussed by the participants and they resemble a special education classroom within the mainstream school. These classrooms are for students with Down syndrome, mild intellectual disability, and autism. Inclusion starts with the integration of students with SEN in a special educational class in the mainstream school where students are partially integrated in the mainstream class, sometimes accompanied by the SET. Some students with SEN however remain in the special education class where they have their own curriculum and activities. Students are given tests by the SET

who evaluates students' readiness to be included in the mainstream class, and the extent of their integration. The assistant principal in S4 justifies the national move towards inclusion and believes in the social benefits of inclusion for students with SEN.

> I believe the direction of the ministry was that some students who suffer from illnesses need to spend some time in the special needs classroom, as soon as their teacher sees any progress, I believe they get evaluated, and then integrated into the classes, but initially they are not fully included, so she [the student] comes and goes, until she is capable (S4-AP).

5.2.2 Ministry of Education (MOE) support.

According to the participants in both schools, the MOE has a big role in supporting the schools' inclusive practices through managing the registration of new students, providing physical access in schools for students with physical disabilities, and guiding the use of teaching strategies. Although student registration was previously managed by the schools, this responsibility shifted to the MOE one year before fieldwork took place. This created some challenges as it previously enabled the schools to be more responsive to the students and better prepare for them if they registered with the schools directly. The S3 principal believes the MOE support for inclusion policy is demonstrated through the different opportunities presented for schools to participate in national activities and competitions, which are open to all students. The S3 principal discusses how the MOE responded when a student with a physical disability registered in the school.

> So, I'm telling you as soon as registration started and I saw her, I straight away told the Head of Services [at the MOE] to install ramps so I wouldn't prohibit this student from entering a facility, this student has the right to enter and use the entire school and all its educational facilities (S3-P).

Further MOE support for inclusion is usually demonstrated through their interest in non-Arabic speakers, and the promotion of certain teaching strategies for the schools to implement to suit their diverse learners. The participants in S4 indicate that the ministry monitors the performance of non-Arabic speakers. That is done through providing specially designed books and curriculum to improve the students' ability in the Arabic language, as well as monitoring the attainment of these students in diagnostic tests and monthly reports. The participants in S4 indicate that the MOE priorities the use of a variety of teaching strategies to meet the needs of all learners. They endorse the teaching of 21st century skills to promote student leadership, initiative, communication skills, and confidence.

> They [MOE] tell us to provide a variety of strategies [teaching strategies] to improve the teaching and learning process… and we try as much as possible for our students to be aware of the strategies used, now if you see the second cycle students [years 4-6], they know the names of the strategies from the extent that they are used and discussed with them (S4-AP).

5.3 Exosystem: School Practices and Values

The exosystem level is illustrated in two themes which are: school practices and values, and the challenge of non-Arabic speakers. The exosystem explores practices that are at an entire school level and represent the schools' relationship with the community. Theme 2: school practices and values, embodies the schools' overall approach to inclusive education through its concern for particular student groups, the school leadership style, community work, school values and ethos, and the overall school climate. Schools in Bahrain reveal six sub-themes for school practices and values and they are: (1) the school's strategic plan, (2) cohesive school culture, (3) giftedness and SEN management, (4) sharing good practice, (5) classroom composition, and (6) continuing professional development.

5.3.1 The school's strategic plan.

Every school in Bahrain is required by the MOE to create and monitor its own strategic plan, based on the school's specific characteristics and challenges. The principal in S3 shares the school's strategic plan and how it can be inclusive and supportive of all student achievement. The strategic plan guides all school operations and programs, and each domain is handled by a team of staff to oversee its implementation. The main domains of the strategic plan address the school administration, teaching and learning, personal development, and support and assistance. One of the main goals of the strategic plan concerns SEN which includes high achieving students, gifted students, and non-Arabic speakers.

5.3.2 Cohesive school culture.

During the observations, the S3 staff exuded a mutual respect and support for each other's work. S3's school principal spoke highly of the teachers and vice-versa. The teachers particularly share their admiration for the school principal who consistently motivates and appreciates the teachers' efforts, as well as urges them to trial new teaching strategies. In S4, the school principal expressed her admiration of the collaboration between teachers. Teachers in S4 share learning materials, and experienced teachers guide novice teachers. The collaborative environment is also evident in the learning community where teachers engage in exchanged classroom visits to learn of each other's practices. Teachers speak positively of S4's leadership who according to them is supportive of students, parents, and teachers. The leadership additionally values parental involvement in school activities and students' learning, and is in continuous communication with the parents.

> I sensed the leadership's love for its teachers and its motivation for the teachers. We have WhatsApp groups, if any teacher achieves something simple, they motivate her. Teachers are awarded in morning assembly, and that is nice, it always motivates us to work more… (S4-T2).

Observations of the staff room give further insight into the collaborative climate of the schools in Bahrain. In the very centre of the room there is a big coffee table which includes a variety of foods, and large tea and coffee thermoses. Each day a teacher is responsible for bringing her own contribution to the table. During the break, teachers often gather around the table as they share the food and talk about their day. The staff room also includes teacher desks where teachers would complete the majority of their lesson planning and grading, in addition to their

desks in the classrooms. Teachers are familiar with each other's work, and know the names of students in other teachers' classrooms, despite never having taught them.

The participants in S4 constantly refer to the main school value which is coexistence, as it helps with negative attitudes towards students of non-Bahraini backgrounds. This value is recurring in the observations during morning assembly, classroom interactions, and interviews with staff.

> Our main principle in the school is coexistence, no matter how different our nationalities are, no matter how different our languages are, we have to coexist. This is something we really want to embed… and how do they coexist? Through the teaching strategies employed by the teacher in class (S4-AP).

5.3.3 Giftedness and special educational needs (SEN) management.

There is a focus in S3's practices on gifted learners and the school's role in promoting students' skills. The school established a partnership with the giftedness centre at the MOE to provide opportunities for gifted students, as well as invite the staff from the centre to provide workshops for teachers in the school. The principal believes that teachers should be utilising the students' unique talents in the learning process as much as possible.

> We give gifted students the opportunity to go [to the gifted centre] after school… so we have to work with the family to take their children to the gifted centre, and its' not only for gifted students, it's for all students, she [the student] is maybe not gifted, but has a hobby, likes to paint, likes to read poetry... we give the opportunity for all students (S3-P).

As for SEN management, S3 has one SET specialised in learning difficulties. The teachers discuss ways of managing matters related to SEN with the SET. In S3, all students are included in the mainstream class but are taken out by the SET for one period once or twice a week for

support. Teachers and the SET discuss when the students with SEN should leave the class and when it is necessary for them to stay, so as not to be excluded from important content and planned classroom activities.

In S4, although most students with SEN are in the mainstream class, the school still has one classroom for students with Down syndrome and intellectual disability (referred to as the Butterfly Class), and another classroom for students with learning difficulties. Learning difficulties in Bahrain comprises students with general difficulties in learning and low academic attainment, including weaknesses in specific areas of reading, spelling, and mathematics. The school also employs a learning difficulties teacher and a speech therapist. Students in the Butterfly Class are partially integrated in the mainstream class over time.

The learning difficulties class in S4 is managed similarly to S3. According to the S4 principal, the SET runs diagnostic tests for students with SEN and writes monthly reports which are sent directly to the special needs directorate at the MOE. The SET then provides a copy of the reports to the principal. The principal also recently learned that the special education classrooms receive an annual budget, which is given to the SET to attain the necessary tools for the entire classroom. In S3 and S4, teacher referrals for students with SEN to the SET only start in semester 2 of Year 1 as students are allowed a period of adjustment in semester 1.

> The official procedure that we do… the teacher has gotten to know the student in the first semester and understood her condition … through the tests, it becomes clear that this girl needs the support of the learning difficulties teacher, so based on that … the learning difficulties teacher gives her a test, based on the test she decides whether they [students] need her [special education teacher] support or not, she may decide to support them only in some subjects, she might take them in maths or Arabic (S4-T1).

The assistant principal in S4 believes in the social benefits that students with SEN will gain as a result of being in the mainstream class. Although the school has successfully integrated students from the special needs class into the mainstream class in the past, the assistant principal believes this process would be more effective if a teaching assistant is available.

5.3.4 Sharing good practice.

One of the main inclusive practices of the schools is sharing their practices with schools in the community. Teachers in S3 and S4 indicate how they frequently visit schools to train other teachers on certain teaching strategies. The participating schools additionally collaborate with other schools on projects based on the strengths and resources of each school. According to the S3 principal, the school hosts annual forums and reading festivals where staff and students from other schools are invited to attend. One of the forums focuses on reading skills and how to teach reading through play to increase student engagement and participation.

> I was part of a team that supports other schools, schools that did not perform well in the quality assurance reviews, so we would go and support, attend classes, do evaluations, introduce them to teaching strategies, talk about lesson planning… so we noticed that most schools didn't have a program for non-Arabic speakers, so our school gave them a workshop on how to apply this program (S4-T1).

5.3.5 Classroom composition.

Classroom composition represents one of the main practices in S4 that ensures students in each classroom are diverse in ability levels and backgrounds. The participants discuss how given that formal education in Bahrain starts at Year 1, kindergarten attendance is a choice. Students therefore arrive at Year 1 with different levels of ability, based on whether or not they have

been educated in a formal environment previously. Students are also very culturally diverse with 17 student nationalities in the school, and approximately five Bahraini students per classroom. According to the participants, this is considered unusual for a state school in Bahrain. S4's assistant principal indicates a number of variables which determine how students are allocated in the classroom such as if they are non-Arabic speakers, if they have been to kindergarten, and if they have a SEN. The classroom composition is planned strategically by the school leadership to make sure each classroom encompasses a range of abilities and cultures to promote a conducive learning environment. Teachers explain that many students encounter difficulties in the beginning of school especially if they have not been educated in a formal environment previously.

> Students struggle with emotional issues, if they haven't been to kindergarten and all of a sudden, they are put in this school, and it's a very big school, the large amount of information in the six subjects, teachers coming in and out of the classroom (S4-T2).

5.3.6 Continuing professional development (CPD).

Teachers in S4 discuss how abundant CPD opportunities are available for them internally and externally to the school. If any teacher is sent by the school to attend external training, that teacher is then required to share what she has learned with all the teachers in the school through a school training workshop. Other teachers are then expected to trial that teaching strategy they learned in the workshop. According to S4's participating teachers, the school also provides equal opportunities for all teachers to attend external training and there is no favouritism in the opportunities presented. The participants explain one of the main ways of training is through a school program called 'my best ideas', these are weekly sessions where each week one teacher shares a teaching method that is effective for her. Teachers then engage in discussions and later

attempt the strategy they learned about. This program is especially effective for novice teachers, as it exposes them to a variety of effective teaching methods.

> So, every teacher presents her ideas and everyone attends and learns, the teachers' response to 'my best ideas' is actually really positive, teachers try to switch periods with other teachers just so they would get a chance to attend (S4-P).

5.4 Exosystem: The Challenge of Non-Arabic Speakers

Theme 3 is also in the exosystem as it illustrates the schools' focus on supporting students who are non-Arabic speakers which represent the majority of the students in the schools, as well as the schools' collaboration with the community. All subjects taught in Bahraini state primary schools are in the Arabic language, and all teachers are Arabic speakers. At a school level, both schools have implemented a number of programs to support the learning of non-Arabic speakers and ease their integration in a new school and culture. Schools in Bahrain reveal two sub-themes for this theme and they are: (1) non-Arabic speakers, and (2) practices for non-Arabic speakers.

5.4.1 Non-Arabic speakers.

S3 includes a large proportion of students who are referred to as non-Arabic speakers, which is probably the largest percentage in the country according to the principal. Students come from India, Pakistan, Iran, Ethiopia, and the Philippines. Students also come from Arabic speaking countries that speak a different dialect or accent such as Egypt, Yemen, and Tunis. It is a major challenge for the school as teachers need to teach a fully Arabic curriculum to the majority of the classroom who do not speak Arabic.

> I won't call it an issue as much as it is a challenge… but thank God we turned it into a story of success, this is a success story that I am proud of, but I know it is tiring, maybe others don't feel it… but when I sit and reflect with the teachers, I know that they are tired (S3-P).

S4 also has a large proportion of non-Arabic speakers with 65 students across the school, and an average of six students in each class. The basic program for non-Arabic speakers is provided by the MOE, which the school then adds to with its own programs.

5.4.2 Practices for non-Arabic speakers.

S3 established a holistic program for non-Arabic speakers that takes place on a classroom and school level in order to create a supportive learning environment. Out of class activities usually take place during the activity period, so students are not excluded from the core curriculum. The first program starts before students' entry into Year 1 when they register in the school. Learners attend workshops at the school three days a week to learn the Arabic language, in order to equip them with the basic language skills prior to entering the school. Other parts of the programme generally focus on reading and writing, teaching parents of non-Arabic speakers, dedicating the first 30 minutes of the school day for individual student reading, limiting the number of students in the classroom, and pairing older non-Arabic speakers who have acquired the language with younger ones during the activity period or recess. This program is supervised by a team of teachers who continuously evaluate student progress.

> When I first joined the school in 2012/2013, I found many good teaching practices [for non-Arabic speakers], but these practices were not shared between the teachers, they were implementing them only in their own classrooms, so I gathered all the teachers and asked each of them [teachers] to share their practices, so we exchanged ideas, then each project was implemented across the school (S3-P).

In S4, the non-Arabic speakers program is supervised and taught by Arabic language teachers who do not have a full teaching load. Students are taken out of the classroom a few times a week. The program includes Quran lessons to strengthen their Arabic language as well as

lessons for student parents. S4's main practice is by making reading part of its ethos and culture. Students are encouraged to enter national and regional reading contests for reading. The assistant principal shares one of their reading programs called 'it is my right to learn' where non-Arabic speakers are paired with a high ability student in reading to read together consistently while their progress is monitored. The S4-AP also discusses another initiative taken by the school to raise awareness in the community on the value of reading.

> Last year we asked for book donations, and we got a huge amount of books from parents, we organised them into different packages… then we had a team of teachers and students [to give away these packages to different locations in the community] … so we told these students that we want to encourage children, who for instance are waiting at the dentist's office, instead of sitting there feeling nervous, give him one of these packages to read a book (S4-AP).

5.5 Mesosystem: Attitudes

The mesosystem represents the associations between different microsystems. Only one theme emerges at this level and it is concerned with overall attitudes towards inclusive education from teachers, parents, and students. Teacher attitudes are challenging to determine in Bahrain given teachers' limited knowledge of inclusive education. Teacher attitudes will thus be deduced from their expectations of students, and their attitudes towards students with SEN and non-Arabic speakers. The theme also discusses student relations in a diverse environment and the extent of parents' involvement in the school activities. Schools in Bahrain reveal five sub-themes for attitudes and they are: (1) high expectations, (2) teacher attitudes, (3) student attitudes, (4) Bahraini parents' attitudes, and (5) home-school relations.

5.5.1 High expectations.

Although teachers in both schools did not explicitly discuss their attitudes towards inclusive education, their high expectations of all students reveal positive attitudes. Teachers trust students sense of responsibility and decision-making abilities. Students are given roles such as keeping the key for the classroom door when it is locked during recess. Students make suggestions to the teacher during class time about a learning activity, and the teacher values students' opinions and implements them instantly. S3-T1 states how she likes to consult her students on learning matters, and explains that they are old enough to make their own decisions.

> Everyone is a participant in the learning process, even for some students [low ability students] they will learn something, even if it was less than their peers, but eventually they will learn something, learning doesn't stop, even if she doesn't know the answer doesn't mean she won't participate, she has to participate (S3-T1).

5.5.2 Teacher attitudes.

S3 has a program especially designed for novice teachers to help them adjust to the school situation. It is a way for the school to manage teacher attitudes towards including large numbers of students who are non-Arabic speakers. The principal refuses to accept it as an excuse from teachers, that just because they have a large proportion of the class who are non-Arabic speakers that there are certain teaching strategies they cannot implement.

> For the new teachers, we give them special workshops to introduce them to learning difficulties, how do they deal with the students in class, how they diagnose a special educational need, so we give them all the basics right from the beginning (S3-P).

According to the S4-AP, although teachers never exclude students from the mainstream classroom, they complain over the classroom composition in the beginning of the school year if they notice an overwhelming number of students with learning difficulties and non-Arabic speakers. All participants acknowledge the social and academic benefits that students with SEN gain as a result of being in the mainstream class. However, S4-T1 openly expresses in an interview that she believes that students with learning difficulties should not be in the mainstream classroom.

> Not all cases, some cases with intellectual disability or autism, need to be in the special needs class, they can't be in the class, because they can't adjust to the group, as for cases of learning delays… with normal behaviour and a normal brain… it is okay with me for them to be in the classes (S4-T1).

5.5.3 Student attitudes.

S4 implements a number of initiatives to influence positive student interactions in response to the culturally diverse environment, these include: the school value of co-existence, pairing students in 'it is my right to learn', and several collaborative learning strategies. The S4-AP comments on student relations between Bahrainis and students from other backgrounds.

> In cycle one [years 1-3], they play together and are getting along, in cycle two, maybe in Year 6 Bahrainis want to be together, there are some sensitivities happening between them [Bahraini and non-Bahraini groups] but we try as much as we can, through the school activities for them to get along, maybe because in Year 6 they [Bahraini students] are influenced by their families, 'oh don't be friends with this girl, be friends with this girl'… but in the classroom activities, in class, they are dispersed, so I don't have a group of all Bahrainis, we have to mix them up (S4-AP).

5.5.4 Bahraini parents' attitudes.

The S4 principal explains one of the major challenges of her role are the negative attitudes of Bahraini parents towards non-Arabic speakers. These parents request a classroom only for Bahraini students, as they are uncomfortable with the culture of non-Arabic speakers.

> They [parents] have to accept the reality of the situation, I tell them as long as you are in our school, we have the principle of coexistence… our children are young, they will be able to coexist faster than us, and integrate faster, don't give them the idea that they can only be friends with other Bahrainis, well what about the rest? We are all Arab, we are all Muslim, the least we can do is coexist. I can't have a classroom only for Bahrainis, that is impossible (S4-P).

5.5.5 Home-school partnership.

Although home-school relations are not directly related to the overall theme of attitudes, they are an essential component of the mesosystem as they represent the connection between two microsystems which are the student families and the school. One of S4's main values is for the

parent to be an active participant in school activities. In the observations there are elections for student council, and the parents of all nominees are present for the process. Parents are also invited to observe the student learning in the classrooms. If parents are not able to attend then even older siblings, extended family and neighbours are allowed to observe on their behalf. During the observations, teachers also report to parents the student achievement through sending pictures of student presentations on WhatsApp. Otherwise teachers update student performance measures on the 'Class Dojo' mobile application where parents have access to details relating to student participation, behaviour, and rewards. All the participants in S4 speak highly of parents' involvement and cooperation.

> If we need the parents, we would call them and then they would come, they are very responsive, we don't have a problem with parents, on the contrary, their responsiveness is really nice… you can feel that they really want their children to learn (S4-AP).

5.6 Microsystem: An Interactive Learning Environment

The microsystem comprises two themes which are: an interactive learning environment, and a collaborative classroom. Both themes operate in the microsystem level as they constitute teaching strategies which are implemented in the classroom and directly involve the learner (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). Theme 5: an interactive learning environment, illustrates how Bahraini classrooms implement a wide variety of teaching strategies in order to address all of the students' learning styles and preferences. Students are given roles and responsibilities, and are reinforced for their participation. Schools in Bahrain reveal five sub-themes for an interactive learning environment and they are: (1) a variety of teaching strategies, (2) reinforcement, (3) independent learning, (4) student roles, and (5) teacher-directed learning.

5.6.1 A variety of teaching strategies.

Both schools provide a wide variety of teaching strategies to suit the different learning styles and interests. The teachers explain how learning outcomes are achieved in variable ways that address all learner needs. Teachers also share the names of the teaching strategies before and after they are used with the learners. Student enjoyment is a factor in deciding the strategies employed. In the observations the teaching strategies include: flipped classroom, brainstorming, role play in storytelling, problem-solving, and peer-assessment. A teacher discusses how she tries to design lesson plans with activities that serve different learning styles.

> For the kinaesthetic students, the ones that rely on their senses, I gave them cubes, I gave cubes to all the girls, I always give them all… I try to plan the lesson to serve all the learning styles, all the intelligences and everyone in class, when I gave them the cubes, at the same time I wrote the number they are supposed to form on the white

> board, so the visual learner saw the number, the auditory learner heard the number because I said it out loud and repeated it a few times so the auditory learner hears it, and the kinaesthetic learner will arrange the cubes, so I served everyone (S4-T2).

5.6.2 Reinforcement.

Teachers use different ways to motivate students and reinforce positive behaviour and academic achievement. In both schools, the classrooms display an individual token area and a group token area, and student achievement is rewarded throughout the lesson. S3-T1 rewards students with stars which they are eager to collect, and in reading lessons students are rewarded with a crown that says 'queen of reading'. S3-T2 gives out medals for reading especially for low ability students who show progress in order to motivate them to participate in the future. The schools also honour non-Arabic speakers who make significant progress throughout the year.

5.6.3 Independent learning.

In S3 and S4, teachers indicate their preference for students to engage in independent learning whether it was through the independent learning project, or simply for students to evaluate their own work in a worksheet using a different coloured pen.

> In the independent learning project, I divide the classroom into corners and put numbers on them… and I provide a variety so that it [the corner] includes the subjects that I teach, so for example something about Bahrain… I choose a lesson from the reading book, for example a lesson about local products, and then I add other subjects like in science, animals in Bahrain, in maths, I would put a shop that sells local foods, so I integrate things… then I give them worksheets so they can do the independent learning, so I just introduce the topic and then supervise the students, and the students move from one corner to another… students really enjoy this (S3-T1).

5.6.4 Student roles.

The students in S3 and S4 are given organisational and academic roles and wear lanyards which state their responsibility. These roles are rotated between the students on a regular basis according to the teachers. First is the 'young specialist' who prepares the teacher's Power Point slides on the smart board when S3-T1 enters the classroom. Second is the 'word seller' who in reading lessons walks around the classroom and gives pieces of paper to students that have words written on them for the students to read. Third is the 'mail person' who hands out letters for the students to read. Fourth is the 'queen of reading' who is one student in each group that supervises her group members' reading and provides feedback. Fifth is the 'little teacher' who acts as an assistant to the teacher and helps explain part of the lesson as well as prepares lesson activities in advance. Sixth is the 'evaluator' who during whole class reading asks the students to provide constructive feedback to the student who is reading.

> By the end of the year you see that each student will have a role… every lesson I use one of the characters, it depends on the lesson, and what it needs, in Islamic studies for example, today I did the story telling, next time a student will do the story telling… we have a project called shared reading, I am not the narrator for this, it's one of the students who is the narrator, she narrates the stories for this reading project (S3-T2).

5.6.5 Teacher-directed learning.

Although the majority of the time students are engaged in collaborative or individual activities, there is still a teacher-directed portion of the lesson in S3 and S4. This is usually done by showing the students a video to introduce the lesson, a presentation, storytelling, or questioning. Learners are active participants in this segment with multiple opportunities for participation. When a student participates by writing on the white board, the teacher usually asks her to

explain the answer, or asks her peers to assess her response. Students are encouraged to bring materials from their home related to the lesson so they can do a presentation as part of the lesson, and these opportunities are given to all students. The S3-T1 comments on the students who brought objects from home related to the lesson.

> We can still give them [low ability students] simple roles… the student who had the car… she didn't even know the type of car, but she brought it because she wanted to participate, so I thought I would take a picture of them to encourage them that they took this initiative… any initiative is appreciated, just because she doesn't know how to write or read that we close all doors for her (S3-T1).

In S4, T2 uses storytelling and questioning in a science lesson by reading Little Red Riding Hood. She then asks the students to describe the wolf, the students actively participate and describe the wolf as having big ears with sharp teeth and nails. This is then used to introduce the lesson where students learn the difference between carnivores and herbivores.

> Year 1 love stories, so I chose something they love that I knew would engage them, so everyone knows Little Red Riding Hood, so I told them the story of Little Red Riding Hood so we would get to claws so then we would get to sharp teeth, so I wanted to emphasise that, that animals that eat meat have sharp teeth and have claws to tear (S4-T2).

5.7 Microsystem: A Collaborative Classroom

Theme 6 expresses a collaborative classroom climate in S3 and S4. Teachers employ teaching strategies that enhance student's cooperation and hence student relations. Students are encouraged to support each other's learning through mixed ability grouping arrangements and other strategies. Differentiated instruction is implemented by student choice of activity levels and is supported with peer collaboration and modelling. Schools in Bahrain reveal eight sub-themes for a collaborative classroom and they are: (1) grouping arrangements, (2) peer pairing strategy, (3) group work, (4) learning through play, (5) project-based learning, (6) think-pair-share, (7) differentiated activities, and (8) student modelling.

5.7.1 Grouping arrangements.

In both schools, each classroom contains four to five student groups with four to eight students in each group, depending on the classroom size. The groups are allocated based on mixed ability with each higher ability student being paired with a lower ability student. Students' ability and behaviour vary in each group. Students who are non-Arabic speakers are also distributed across the groups so that they can be supported by their peers.

> In the beginning I arranged them based on their levels, so each student would support another student, especially that many of my students don't speak the language… so I have to allocate the levels between groups, so in every group I have the group leader, then I have a student who is slightly lower in ability to support her [the leader] and helps her in her role. Then the rest are assorted… so you have the excellent, very good, good, and poor (S3-T1).

5.7.2 Peer pairing strategy.

S3 and S4 utilise the peer pairing strategy, which is when a higher ability student is paired with a lower ability student. It is also referred to by the teachers as ‘peer teacher’ or ‘the homogeneous duo’. These pairings function for the entire school day at every learning task where support is required by the lower ability student. Students support each other during written work, presentations, differentiated tasks, and guided reading. Since higher ability students are paired with lower ability students, students become aware of who the low ability students are particularly that the teachers specifically state during class time to some learners ‘where is your peer teacher’. When low ability students are called to the front of the classroom to participate, the teachers sometimes ask for their ‘peer teacher’ to accompany them for support. The teachers believe it is an effective strategy as the peer teacher helps to translate for the non-Arabic speakers. In S4, usually the peer teacher in Year 1 is someone who has been to kindergarten even if she is a non-Arabic speaker but has acquired the basic Arabic language skills.

> I assigned for example two or three [peer teachers in the group], the middle group has eight [students], so I assigned four [peer teachers]. I try as much as I can to assign each student a peer teacher… if I couldn’t find it for example in a group of six, then I would assign her a [peer teacher] in the middle and she has a student on her right and on her left, and the same would be opposite them… this is a better and more efficient way to learn (S4-T1).

5.7.3 Group work.

In S3 and S4, group work is used at least once in every period and is one of the main ways of supporting non-Arabic speakers as students are taught to support each other’s learning. Group

activities are either followed with a presentation or peer-evaluation. In S3, when given a group work task, students immediately take out lanyards that state each member's role in the group, which are presenter, scribe, messenger and leader. S3-T1 indicates that the students themselves change their roles every once in a while, to develop the skills required by each role. Low ability students tend to select the messenger role, and if they choose the presenter role then they are supported with their assigned peer teacher.

> I let them discuss among themselves to choose their roles, I usually like to consult them… especially since they are Year 3 and they are old enough… so I asked them and gave them the lanyards… so they suggested the role of each student themselves (S3-T1).

S3-T2 implements the revolving circle strategy in group work where writing responsibilities are allocated to all group members, as the worksheet moves from one student to another who responds to one question on the worksheet. The tasks are differentiated and each student chooses the task they want to complete based on their perception of their ability, without being told which one to complete by the teacher. Reading is also taught within group work in S3. Each group has a folder which is maintained by the leader and it contains member evaluation sheets. The leader listens to each group member as she reads and then evaluates her performance and rewards them with a sticker. The group leader is subsequently evaluated by the teacher.

> … so I tell the leader to accept any reading from them as long as they enunciate and read, then give her a sticker, if she doesn't read or enunciate she doesn't get a sticker, at the end of the week we count the stickers for each student and reward them, so the leader works with each member and the student who doesn't read then the leader stays with her and reads until she learns (S3-T2).

During a group activity in S3 and S4 where each student works individually, the high ability students finish their tasks early and then immediately support the low ability members of the group without being instructed to do so.

In S4, prior to starting a group activity, both teachers ask the students to recite the group work rules such as cooperation and accuracy of their work. There are several applications of group work for T1 and T2. In the reading period, S4-T1 asks each group to collectively read a text out loud and then for the other groups to evaluate their reading. The evaluations are varied and critical, and each group evaluates the reading of another group. Other group work is when S4-T2 chooses one student from each group to compete with a student from another group, while their group members actively motivate them. Although the students do not collectively work together on a task within their group, they support their group members. If the group representative attains the correct answer to the teacher's challenge, the entire group receives a token. The teacher has a designated group token area in the classroom where groups who achieve in a certain task, move a step on the group map and eventually are rewarded when they reach their destination.

In another lesson with S4-T2, she asks that each group uses one small white board to draw 'animal needs to survive'. The group works together to draw on the board and every group member is involved. The teacher then asks the presenter from each group to explain their drawings. Then the teacher provides a group task, each group has to create a brochure which shows the animal needs, one page is the brochure cover template where one student colours it, the second page is completed by another group member who draws the animal needs, the third

page a student sticks the animal pictures of herbivore animals, and the fourth page should include carnivore animals. The teacher then assigns each part of the task to a student.

5.7.4 Learning through play.

This strategy is employed to support low ability students in S3 and S4. For instance, after finishing the reading portion of the lesson, S3-T2 tells the students that they will play a game where they would pass around the object she gives them, which is a toy egg. The teacher starts singing, and whenever she stops singing, the student holding the object reads part of the lesson. According to the teacher, the purpose of using this strategy is to avoid identifying the low ability student in front of their peers.

> I intentionally stopped singing when the egg reached some students, so they wouldn't know… every time I will use play in the same way, so I stop at the students who need more support (S3-T2).

In S4, teachers believe that learning through play is suitable for all ability levels. S4-T1 observes the student performance and if she sees that the lowest ability student achieved the task, then the task is considered successful. In S4-T2's classroom, during a maths lesson, the teacher designed an activity using this strategy. The teacher placed five baskets at the front of the classroom with each basket containing different objects, these included stones, balls, cubes, dolls, and the alphabet letters. The teacher then called one student from each group to come to the front of the classroom, and that these five students choose which basket to use for the activity. The teacher declared a number, for example number 13, and students showed 13 of the objects to the teacher. The teacher then counted the objects out loud for each student to check

if their answer was correct. This activity was repeated with one student from each group until all students participated. All students were engaged and encouraging their group members.

5.7.5 Project-based learning.

In S4, the participants indicated that project-based learning was one of their main teaching strategies. Teachers usually introduce a project to the student groups who work together to create a solution or response, and therefore learn how to accomplish the main school value of coexistence. During one of the observations, S4-T1 introduces the project students will be working on and that it will be followed with a presentation. Each group is given a large number of animal pictures that come from the six basic animal groups (birds, reptiles, mammals, fish, invertebrates, and amphibians). The students create a poster for each animal group and stick the relevant animal pictures which belong to the group on each poster. This is an application of their previous science lesson where they learned the different animal groups. Students work together and discuss where each animal belongs. After they finish each animal group, the groups present their poster to the rest of the class. The teacher explains the value of using this teaching strategy.

> So, cooperation, responsibility, love for others, respect for other's opinions, self-reliance, self-confidence, all of this is learnt through project-based learning (S4-T1).

5.7.6 Think-pair-share.

In S4, the think-pair-share teaching strategy is used when student participation is low. It starts by the teacher posing a question and giving the students a few moments to think about their

answer. The students then pair up with a peer sitting next to them, share and discuss answer with their partner, and share it with the entire class.

> Whenever I apply think-pair-share, I always focus on asking the lower ability student to share and not the higher ability student, because I wanted to see if she [the lower ability student] learned something from her peer [the higher ability student] … of course I won't ask the high ability student because she will answer, so I ask the lower ability student (S4-T1).

5.7.7 Differentiated activities.

S3-T1 introduces the differentiated task in a worksheet which includes three-star levels (one-star, two-star, three-star). As students are solving the tasks in the worksheets, they are reminded by their teacher to use the help of their peer teacher when needed. Students attempt all the levels in the worksheet and do not only choose one of the tasks to complete.

> I don't restrict the student to one level, I tell her do what you are capable of, if you can only do the first task then that is fine, if you can do two tasks then that is fine… so the three-star is the most challenging, so you will see the high achiever quickly makes her way through and reach the three-star task, the lower ability student will feel that she accomplished something, so I don't restrict her to one level, and when she solves a task she will feel confident that she accomplished something herself and didn't only depend on the peer teacher to guide her (S3-T1).

S3-T2 also uses a worksheet with all the star levels, however this teacher calls out the student names that will complete each star level. Most of the non-Arabic speakers are told to complete the lowest differentiated level which is the one-star. Even though T2 assigns the level to each student, it is only meant to be as a starting point. Students are still allowed to attempt the other tasks on the worksheet.

> This is the first time I've tried an activity such as this, this is why I was allocating students to the star levels either one-star or two-star… then I told them whoever finished can do the other star level… the goal is to introduce the task to them step by step, if she was able to do even part of the next higher level then she can… at the end she should also attempt all levels so she can learn (S3-T2).

S4 teachers discuss their method of implementing differentiation and that students are not constricted to attempting tasks only suited to one level of ability.

> We have the sun group, who are the high ability students, the moon group who are middle ability, and the low ability students who are mostly them [non-Arabic speakers] are the stars, we intentionally named them the shining stars… if the sun finished, she would go and help the star, so they got used to it (S4-AP).

5.7.8 Student modelling.

In S3 and S4, higher ability students have an important role in the classroom as a peer teacher and a little teacher. In a reading lesson, S3-T2 allows the high ability students to read first, in order to model the reading to their peers. These students are also referred to as 'queens of reading', and their role is to model reading as well as do presentations with the teacher in class.

In one reading lesson, S3-T1 introduces a reading game in different stages. Stage one requires the highest ability student from each group to come up to the front of the class, and read a paragraph from the lesson. In the meantime, the other students follow along the reading in their reading book. The teacher then asks the class to evaluate the reading and provide feedback. Stage two is called 'the game of trains' the teacher asks another student from each group to come up to the front of the class and stand in a line. Each student is given a card containing an entire sentence from their reading lesson. The students are asked to read the card of the student standing in front of them, and once that is complete, then they move to the back of the train.

Stage three, the teacher introduces the word cube, which has a different word printed on each side of the cube. Stage four is a hopping game where the remaining students are given dice which they are supposed to throw. The number appearing on the dice dictates the number of hops they will take on the floor which has different words laid out. By the end of the lesson, all of the students in the class participate in this reading activity at differentiated levels starting from the highest ability to the lowest ability in reading.

> I try to get everyone involved in the reading, I keep that in mind when doing the lesson plan… so the little teachers read at the board, so these are the high ability students, they read from the board and the rest observe, the middle ability doesn't read a paragraph, she reads even if its two sentences from the book… then we have the reading games, we try to give a variety for the low ability students (S3-T1).

T2 implements relatively the same strategy with different games. There was one incident when the highest achieving students were reading at the front of the classroom. S3-T2 was then called out of the classroom briefly by another teacher. Yet, the students continued their reading and the student evaluator was asking the class to provide feedback on the reading.

5.8 Conclusion

This chapter critically discussed the six themes and 28 sub-themes which emerged from the qualitative data obtained from the two participating schools in Bahrain. Theme 1: national inclusive policies in the macrosystem, reveals that participants in S3 and S4 are equally not knowledgeable of the history of inclusion and how it is implemented on a country level. Participants instead focus on school and classroom practices during the discussions, which are clearly expressed in the exosystem and microsystem where the majority of inclusion practices are concentrated. In the macrosystem, the MOE offers a centralised system to closely manage school's provision for students with SEN and non-Arabic speakers, as well as the teaching strategies used to cater for the diversity of learners and to improve student skills.

Theme 2: school practices and values in the exosystem, illustrates how the inclusive values of S3 and S4 are comparable. First, while the strategic plan in S3 ensures the needs of all learners are addressed in all school activities, S4 emphasises its main value of coexistence in all its activities and lessons. The collaborative staff school climate is evident in both schools with their cohesive teaching environment. Schools additionally seek to support other schools in their community. S3 and S4 have a SEN class for students with learning difficulties to attend regularly, however S4 is a larger school and has a special needs classroom for students with Down syndrome and autism. SEN is managed similarly in both schools as the SET communicates straightforwardly with the MOE. Schools additionally display distinctive practices, for instance, S3 focuses on supporting gifted learners through its collaboration with the giftedness centre. S4 on the other hand seeks to unify teaching practices across the school

through the continuing professional development and the internal school programme ‘my best ideas’.

Theme 3: the challenge of non-Arabic speakers in the exosystem demonstrates how both schools focus on improving the achievement of non-Arabic speakers to enhance their integration in the school environment. Classrooms are very culturally diverse which presents challenges for the teachers who teach a fully Arabic curriculum. The schools established programs for non-Arabic speakers that are predominantly taught outside the classroom in order to emphasise their Arabic language development. S3 teaches the basic Arabic skills to the parents of non-Arabic speakers, which enhances the home-school partnership. The programs further improve student relations as non-Arabic speakers are paired with Bahraini students in S4 through ‘it is my right to learn’.

Theme 4: attitudes in the mesosystem, illustrates the attitudes of teachers, parents and students. Teacher attitudes towards the inclusion of students with SEN and non-Arabic speakers are overall positive through high expectations of student behaviour and achievement. Teachers generally believe in the social and academic benefits resulting from the integration of students with SEN in mainstream classrooms. There is however some concern over including students with more severe SEN. In S4 there is more emphasis on the home-school relationship which is overall positive, however, the school leadership deals with the negative attitudes of Bahraini parents towards non-Arabic speakers. The school also acknowledges the issues related to student attitudes towards non-Arabic speakers, and encourages the students to coexist.

Theme 5: an interactive learning environment in the microsystem, illustrates the schools' response to student diversity and different learning styles through their use of a wide variety of teaching strategies. These include: learning through play, role play, flipped classroom, story-telling, brainstorming, peer-evaluation, problem-solving. Student interest and learning styles determine teachers' choice of the learning activities. These strategies emphasise student leadership particularly through the different student roles given to learners in S3. Teacher-directed learning in both schools is also used to increase student engagement. In S3, the learning environment has multiple opportunities for reinforcement which is reflected in students' enthusiasm for learning. The teaching strategies in S4 are more focused on enhancing the collaboration between students, and is further discussed in the next theme.

Theme 6: a collaborative classroom in the microsystem, highlights the use of mixed ability grouping in both schools which forms the foundation for the use of other collaborative teaching strategies. It eases the use of the peer pairing strategy as students of lower ability are paired with students of higher ability within the student groups. Mixed ability grouping is conducive for group work, as the students perform different parts of the task within the group based on their interests and abilities. S4 implements further collaborative strategies such as learning through play, project-based learning, and think-pair-share. Through these strategies, students are encouraged to support the learning of their peers and group members collaborate to accomplish a shared goal. Differentiation is generally taught by giving students the opportunity to choose their task rather than giving them an assigned task. The students are encouraged to attempt the tasks of other star levels to improve their confidence. The quantitative findings from the teachers' questionnaire in England and Bahrain are discussed next in Chapter 6.

CHAPTER 6: QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS (TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRE)

6.1 Introduction

The teachers' questionnaire explores teacher attitudes towards inclusive education and teachers' use of inclusive teaching strategies. This study employs a mixed method design where the data collection methods are implemented concurrently through a triangulation design. This is when the qualitative and quantitative data are collected and analysed in parallel (Bergman, 2008). The data from all sources are then compared and critically analysed in 'Chapter 7: Discussion'. For the teachers who participated in the observation and follow-up interview part of this study, they were only able to complete the questionnaire after the observation sessions were completed due to time constraints. It is therefore unlikely that the statements in the questionnaire influenced the classroom observations, teachers' choice of teaching strategies, and overall teachers' behaviour. As for the other teachers who completed the questionnaire, they were able to complete it while the observations were taking place.

The purpose of collecting data on teacher attitudes and practices in the questionnaire, in addition to the qualitative sources, is to gain further insight on such matters and to triangulate the data from the different sources (i.e. interviews, observations, and questionnaires). The questionnaire data are not used as an explanation for the qualitative findings. This method is referred to as parallel mixed analysis where the analysis of one method is independent from the other method, and the data are compared after the completion of the data analysis (Onwuegbuzie and Leech, 2004).

The findings from the teachers' questionnaire are located in the mesosystem as they explore teacher attitudes towards inclusion, and in the microsystem as they investigate inclusive practices in the classroom. The questionnaire investigates teacher attitudes through three subscales and 21 statements. The three subscales are: teacher attitudes, expected outcomes, and facilitators to inclusion. The second part of the questionnaire explores teachers' use of inclusive teaching strategies through four subscales and 36 statements. The four subscales are: cooperative learning strategies, classroom management strategies, differentiation strategies, and social skills strategies. A total of 81 teachers completed the questionnaire (n=19) from England, and (n=62) from Bahrain. Due to the low number of participants from each participating school, results from school 1 and school 2 in England have been combined, as well as responses from school 3 and school 4 in Bahrain.

A number of tests have been used to explore the questionnaire data. According to Pallant (2016), it is essential to first assess the normality of the subscales to determine whether to use parametric or non-parametric tests. The majority of the subscales are normally distributed which indicates that it is appropriate to employ parametric tests. Normality is assessed through the use of histograms and most scales illustrate a normal distribution with the exception of cooperative learning strategies, differentiation strategies, and social skills strategies. Pallant (2016, p. 65) states that 'many scales and measures used in the social sciences have scores that are skewed, either positively or negatively. This does not necessarily indicate a problem with the scale, but rather reflects the underlying nature of the construct being measured'. For the three subscales that are not normally distributed, it is understandable why they are positively skewed as most teachers will likely indicate the use of cooperative strategies, differentiation strategies, and social skills strategies as part of their regular practice.

This chapter explores the difference in teacher attitudes towards inclusive education between England and Bahrain, the difference in inclusive practice between England and Bahrain, and the relationship between teacher attitudes and inclusive practice in England and Bahrain. This is examined through an independent samples t-test to compare the subscales between the countries, and a Pearson product-moment correlation to explore the relationship between teacher attitudes and inclusive practice. The responses from the open-ended question of the questionnaire are then examined, followed by a summary of all the questionnaire findings.

6.2 Independent Samples T-test to Compare the Subscales in England and Bahrain

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the scores for all seven subscales on teacher attitudes and inclusive teaching strategies for England and Bahrain (Table 6.1). Three of the seven subscales show a statistically significant difference between England and Bahrain. The findings are evaluated based on statistical significance where the *p* value is less than .05. Findings are additionally assessed based on the eta squared effect size which is measured as follows: .01 is a small effect, .06 is a moderate effect, and .14 is a large effect (Pallant, 2016).

First, for teacher attitudes there is a significant difference for England ($M = 3.54$, $SD = .37$) and Bahrain ($M = 2.73$, $SD = .67$; $t(55.07) = 6.76$, $p = .00$, two-tailed). The magnitude of the differences in the means (mean difference = .81, 95% CI [.57, 1.05]) is very large (eta squared = .37). Therefore, reported teacher attitudes are more positive in England than in Bahrain. Second, for expected outcomes of inclusion there is a significant difference for England ($M = 4.06$, $SD = .46$) and Bahrain ($M = 3.50$, $SD = .59$; $t(79) = 3.78$, $p = .00$, two-tailed). The

magnitude of the differences in the means (mean difference = .56, 95% CI [.27, .86]) is large (eta squared = .15). Teachers' expected outcomes of inclusion are more positive in England than in Bahrain. Third, for cooperative learning strategies there is a significant difference for England (M = 3.76, SD = .84) and Bahrain (M = 4.25, SD = .79; $t(79)$ = -2.31, p = .02, two-tailed). The magnitude of the differences in the means (mean difference = -.49, 95% CI [-.19, -.07]) is moderate (eta squared = .06). The reported use of cooperative learning strategies is higher in Bahrain than England.

Table 6.1 Independent-samples t-test to compare teacher attitudes and inclusive teaching strategies in England and Bahrain

	England			**Bahrain**			**Mean Difference**	**95% CI**		***df***	***t***	***p***	**Partial eta squared**
	n	*M*	*SD*	*n*	*M*	*SD*							
Teacher attitudes	19	3.54	.37	62	2.73	.67	.81	.57	1.05	55.07	6.76	.00	0.37
Expected outcomes	19	4.06	.46	62	3.50	.59	.56	.27	.86	79	3.78	.00	0.15
Facilitators to inclusion	19	3.63	.46	62	3.61	.70	.02	-.32	.36	79	.11	.92	0.00
Cooperative learning strategies	19	3.76	.84	62	4.25	.79	-.49	-.91	-.07	79	-2.31	.02	0.06
Classroom management strategies	19	4.29	.30	62	4.33	.51	-.04	-.23	.15	52.68	-.43	.67	0.00
Differentiation strategies	19	4.17	.50	62	4.33	.53	-.17	-.44	.11	79	-1.22	.23	0.02
Social skills strategies	19	4.21	.49	62	4.41	.53	-.20	-.47	.08	79	-1.43	.16	0.03

6.3 The Relationship Between Teacher Attitudes and Inclusive Practice

The relationships between the seven subscales (teacher attitudes, expected outcomes, facilitators to inclusion, cooperative learning strategies, classroom management strategies, differentiation strategies, social skills strategies) are explored to determine the relationship between teacher attitudes and inclusive teaching practices in England (n = 19) and Bahrain (n = 62). This is investigated using a Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. Preliminary

analyses are performed to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality and linearity. According to Pallant (2016), the following guidelines determine the strength of the correlations: a small correlation ranges between r = .10 to .29, a medium correlation ranges between r = .30 to .49, and a large correlation ranges between r = .50 to 1.00. It is not possible to test the statistical significance of the difference between correlation coefficients between England and Bahrain as each sample needs to contain at least 20 cases, and participants in England are (n = 19) (Pallant, 2016). Therefore, the correlations are explored for each country separately and they are discussed below.

In England, there are overall four strong correlations between the seven subscales with statistical significance. First, there is a strong positive correlation $\boldsymbol{r} = .64$, $\boldsymbol{n} = 19$, $\boldsymbol{p} < .003$ between facilitators to inclusion and expected outcomes. Suggesting that the more positive teachers perceptions are of the facilitators to inclusion, the more positive their expectations are for learners' outcomes. Second, there is a strong positive correlation between the use of classroom management strategies and the use of differentiation strategies $\boldsymbol{r} = .66$, $\boldsymbol{n} = 19$, $\boldsymbol{p} < .002$. Third, there is a strong positive correlation between the use of classroom management strategies and the use of social skills strategies $\boldsymbol{r} = .72$, $\boldsymbol{n} = 19$, $\boldsymbol{p} < .001$. Fourth, there is a strong positive correlation between the use of differentiation strategies and the use of social skills strategies $\boldsymbol{r} = .71$, $\boldsymbol{n} = 19$, $\boldsymbol{p} < .001$. As for the other scales, all correlation strengths are small/medium positive/negative correlations with no statistical significance (see Table 6.2).

Table 6.2 Pearson product-moment correlations between teacher attitudes and inclusive practice subscales in England.

Scale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Teacher attitudes	-						
2. Expected outcomes	-.17	-					
3. Facilitators to inclusion	.27	.64**	-				
4. Cooperative learning strategies	.11	.03	.14	-			
5. Classroom management strategies	.30	.21	.30	.32	-		
6. Differentiation strategies	.12	.11	.13	.45	.66**	-	
7. Social skills strategies	.03	.09	-.05	.20	.72**	.71**	-

** $p < .001$ (2-tailed).

In Bahrain, the relationships between the seven subscales are also explored to determine the relationship between teacher attitudes and inclusive teaching practices. There are overall nine strong correlations between the seven subscales with statistical significance. There is a medium positive correlation $r = .49$, $n = 62$, $p < .000$ between teacher attitudes and expected outcomes. There is a medium positive correlation $r = .30$, $n = 62$, $p < .019$ between teacher attitudes and facilitators to inclusion. There is a medium positive correlation $r = .46$, $n = 62$, $p < .000$ between expected outcomes and facilitators to inclusion. There is a strong positive correlation $r = .62$, $n = 62$, $p < .000$ between cooperative learning strategies and classroom management strategies. There is a strong positive correlation $r = .65$, $n = 62$, $p < .000$ between cooperative learning strategies and differentiation strategies. There is a strong positive correlation $r = .62$, $n = 62$, $p < .000$ between classroom management strategies and differentiation strategies. There is a strong positive correlation $r = .59$, $n = 62$, $p < .000$ between social skills strategies and cooperative learning strategies. There is a strong positive correlation $r = .80$, $n = 62$, $p < .000$

between social skills strategies and classroom management strategies. Lastly, there is a strong positive correlation $r = .82$, $n = 62$, $p < .000$ between social skills strategies and differentiation strategies. As for the other scales, all correlation strengths are small positive correlations with no statistical significance, and there are no negative correlations between any of the subscales (see Table 6.3).

Table 6.3 Pearson product-moment correlations between teacher attitudes and inclusive practice subscales in Bahrain

Scale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Teacher attitudes	-						
2. Expected outcomes	.49**	-					
3. Facilitators to inclusion	.30**	.46**	-				
4. Cooperative learning strategies	.19	.06	.05	-			
5. Classroom management strategies	.13	.07	.14	.62**	-		
6. Differentiation strategies	.04	.02	.08	.65**	.76**	-	
7. Social skills strategies	.11	.09	.15	.59**	.80**	.84**	-

** $p < .001$ (2-tailed).

6.4 Open-ended Question

At the end of the questionnaire, teachers were asked to indicate other teaching strategies that teachers find effective in promoting inclusive education. Three teachers in England responded to this section and they mentioned the use of: constant reviewing of what is working and what is not with colleagues and pupils; high expectations of all children to apply themselves and access help when they need it; mixed ability partner work; separate whiteboard to further focus attention; and modelling of expected behaviour. In Bahrain, a large number of teachers responded with recurring strategies, and the synthesis of their responses included the use of: learning through play, role play, brainstorming, little teacher, six hats, educational games, multiple intelligences, four corners, self-learning, collaborative work, peer learning, problem-solving, reducing the number of students per classroom, variations in student praise, think-pair-share, 21st century skills, technology, active reader, flexible grouping, bring your own device, and project-based learning.

6.5 Conclusion

The overall results reveal that teacher attitudes in England are generally more positive than teacher attitudes in Bahrain, while the use of teaching strategies for inclusion is higher in Bahrain than in England. When comparing teacher responses in the subscales between England and Bahrain, teachers in England report more positive attitudes and more positive expected outcomes for the inclusion of students with SEN in the mainstream class. In Bahrain, the use of cooperative strategies is higher than in England. Both countries share one essential finding which is that there is no relationship between teacher attitudes and the use of inclusive teaching

strategies. Correlations are instead found within the larger scales of teacher attitudes and inclusive practice, but not between them. For example, there is a strong correlation in England, and a moderate correlation in Bahrain, between expected outcomes of inclusion and facilitators of inclusion. Both these subscales are within the overall teacher attitudes scale.

In both England and Bahrain, strong positive associations are found between: the use of classroom management strategies and differentiation strategies, classroom management strategies and social skills strategies, differentiation strategies and social skills strategies. However, in all three correlations, the correlation coefficient is higher in Bahrain than England. In Bahrain, more positive and statistically significant correlations are found between the subscales than in England. First, the subscales in the teacher attitudes part of the questionnaire are all moderately correlated which are: teacher attitudes and expected outcomes, teacher attitudes and facilitators to inclusion, and expected outcomes and facilitators to inclusion. Second, cooperative learning strategies are strongly correlated to all the inclusive practice subscales which are: classroom management strategies, differentiation strategies, and social skills strategies. This finding is not reflected in the England sample. The open-ended question of the questionnaire reveals a wider variety of teaching strategies for inclusion used in Bahrain compared to England. The alignment of the findings from the teachers' questionnaire to the qualitative findings from the interviews and observations is discussed next, in 'Chapter 7: Discussion'.

CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION

7.1 Introduction

Chapters 4, 5, and 6 explored inclusive practices in a flexible manner as predetermined in 'Chapter 3: Methodology'. It is however essential that when the findings from this study are evaluated in this chapter, that the findings are interpreted according to my definition of inclusive practice. As discussed in 'Chapter 2: Literature Review', research on inclusion is largely inconclusive on what constitutes inclusive education as well as inclusive practice. It is therefore crucial that a perspective of inclusive practice is provided through the proposal of an operational definition of inclusion (ODI), which will be used as a lens to interpret inclusive practices in this chapter. This definition is from a macrosystem perspective, and will shape the ecosystems and practices within. The ODI was envisaged prior to the data collection phase, modified based on the review of the literature, and then constructed after the analysis phase of this study (see Table 7.1).

Table 7.1 Operational definition of inclusion (ODI)

Inclusive education is: - a never-ending process. - social and academic/curricular. - concerned with the presence, active participation, and achievement of all learners in a mainstream school. - involving all students without the overt identification of one vulnerable group of learners.
Exclusion is: - students' removal from a mainstream school to go to a special school. - students' full-time presence and attendance in a resource room within a mainstream school. - students' progressive movement and removal from a mainstream classroom to a resource room. However, students' partial presence in the resource room and their gradual integration in the mainstream classroom is considered an inclusive practice, as long as the students are eventually fully integrated in the mainstream classroom.

The ODI has been constructed in conjunction with different definitions of inclusive education provided in 'Chapter 2: Literature Review' (section 2.2.3: defining inclusive education in the West). In section 2.2.3, inclusion was defined as a 'never-ending process' (Ainscow *et al.*, 1999; Carrington and Robinson, 2004; Ainscow *et al.*, 2006); 'focused on presence, participation and achievement' (Ainscow *et al.*, 2006, p. 15); and concerns all students without the identification of one vulnerable group of learners (Avramidis, Bayliss and Burden, 2000; Slee and Allan, 2001; Cigman, 2007; Nilholm and Alm, 2010). The ODI incorporates these different perspectives of inclusion into one perspective, and it reflects the principle that the overt identification of one group of learners risks their marginalisation (Messiou, 2017). The ODI additionally requires the social as well as the curricular inclusion of learners, and their 'active participation' in order to ensure learners' engagement with the mainstream curriculum. This also reflects the principles of the inclusive pedagogical approach by Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011) stipulated in section 2.5.6.

Contrary to most definitions of inclusive education (Messiou and Ainscow, 2015), the ODI does not specify a vulnerable group of learners such as students with disabilities or special educational needs (SEN). The human rights perspective of the ODI is inspired by the lack of research on pedagogical tools and approaches that reach all learners' needs in an inclusive and mainstream context (Florian and Spratt, 2013). The ODI is mainly concerned with the teaching events of the mainstream classroom, or universalist approaches, while still acknowledging that supplementary and specialist practices are required occasionally. The perspective of inclusive practice in the ODI is the product of the arguments presented in 'Chapter 2: Literature Review', and is in support of the integrative perspective by Ravet (2011), and 'the idea of everybody (not most and some)' (Florian and Black-Hawkins, 2011, p. 818). The integrative position stipulates

that providing specialist pedagogies to some learners identifies them as different, and therefore puts them at risk for exclusion. This position supports teaching strategies that are 'common to all', and rejects deterministic beliefs of ability. The integrative position acknowledges that specialist pedagogies are essential to understanding the needs of some learners, and they can be extended to benefit other learners in the mainstream classroom (Ravet, 2011).

The ODI thus recognises the need for specialist approaches, but equally identifies the problematic notions of continuously associating inclusion with SEN. Specialist pedagogies can be used and extended to other learners in the mainstream classroom to avoid the identification of one group of learners. The ODI is therefore concerned with the education of all learners and generalist approaches to teaching that respond to the diversity of learners in the mainstream classroom, rather than only some learners.

Following on from presenting the findings in chapters 4, 5, and 6; this chapter synthesises the findings from England and Bahrain into themes. These themes are articulated through Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (EST) as the theoretical framework of this comparative inquiry (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The chapter therefore tackles each ecosystem starting from the macrosystem, and then the exosystem, mesosystem, and microsystem. In each ecosystem, the relevant research questions are answered and findings from England and Bahrain are compared and critically discussed, in order to explore the similarities and differences of their approaches and reasons for them. The same school codes used in the findings chapters are used in this chapter with S1 and S2 in England, and S3 and S4 in Bahrain. Findings from the classroom observations, school leadership and teacher interviews, and teachers' questionnaires are triangulated and discussed. This chapter therefore critically

discusses the findings in light of inclusive education literature, the ODI, and the interaction within and between the ecosystems.

The macrosystem responds to the first research question ‘what is stakeholders’ knowledge of inclusive education policy in England and Bahrain?’, and explores some of the main practices on a national level in three themes. The themes are: knowledge of national inclusive policies, whether practices are shaped by special education practices or inclusion, and inclusive practice within curriculum and pedagogy.

The exosystem also responds to the first research question, and explores inclusive practices that are enacted on a school level in England and Bahrain. To gain a deeper understanding of the schools’ unique inclusive practices, this section draws on additional information related to the community challenges of each context. These were retrieved from the interviews but were not discussed in the findings chapters as they do not directly respond to the research questions, yet, offer explanations to each schools’ practices. The exosystem explores school practices in four themes: schools’ perspective of inclusive education, inclusive school ethos, beyond school collaboration, and responding to student diversity.

The mesosystem responds to the second research question ‘what are teachers attitudes towards inclusive education in England and Bahrain?’, and addresses teacher attitudes and how they are influenced by broader national and school practices in the wider ecosystems, and the manner in which attitudes shape teaching practices in the microsystem. This is explored through the following sub-sections: teacher attitudes towards inclusive education, expectations for student

achievement in an inclusive classroom, and attitudes of other stakeholders in the school community towards inclusive education.

The microsystem responds to the third research question ‘what are teacher practices and pedagogies in an inclusive classroom in England and Bahrain?’, and explores how teaching practices are influenced by broader national and school practices in the wider ecosystems. This is investigated through the following sub-sections: ability grouping versus mixed ability grouping, peer collaborative work, the teaching assistant role, differentiated instruction, and varied teaching. The themes within each ecosystem are discussed next.

7.2 Macrosystem

The macrosystem section focuses on examining the overall way of implementing inclusive education in England and Bahrain, from the perspective of the participating schools. National level practices comprise the country-wide interpretation of international inclusive education policy through the instigation of local policies and procedures. The dissemination and influence of these national policies is examined in the macrosystem and the ecosystems within. This section responds to the first research question pertaining to this study:

Research question 1: what is stakeholders' knowledge of inclusive education policy in England and Bahrain?

a. What is the national inclusion policy in each country?
b. How is inclusive education defined in each country?

7.2.1 Knowledge of national inclusive policies.

One of the main differences in inclusion practices between England and Bahrain is participants' knowledge of national inclusive policies. The limited findings in Bahrain on a macrosystem level in comparison to England is indicative of participants' level of awareness of national inclusion initiatives. This is an essential element to consider as knowledge of national practices in inclusion determines schools' and teachers' implementation of inclusion policy, as consistent with nationwide standards of inclusive education.

In England's S1 and S2, participants share their awareness on national inclusion policies in relation to the: national approach to inclusion, Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) role, special educational needs (SEN) funding, national curriculum, and Ofsted requirements. The participants in England are aware of the origin of inclusion policy from the Children and Families Act 2014, and are generally knowledgeable of national guidelines pertaining to inclusion. As noted in 'Chapter 2: Literature Review', expectations for inclusive practices in England are communicated through a number of national policies such as the: Green Paper (DfE, 1997), White Paper (DfE, 2016), SEN Code of Practice (DfE, 2015), and Ofsted's guidance for an inclusive school (Ofsted, 2000). There is a clear communication of policy readily available for staff to access in England, which is why participants in this study are able to articulate these national documents.

In Bahrain's S3 and S4, however, the participants briefly discuss inclusion policy, and the Ministry of Education (MOE) support for schools' inclusive efforts. Although special education guidance is available through the MOE (MOE, no date; MOE, 2019c), such details are not mentioned by the participants when asked about national inclusion practices. That could be because participants in Bahrain do not interpret inclusion efforts to be equivalent to SEN support, which is contrary to the view adopted by the participants in England.

Another interpretation for why participants in England shared more about their national practices than participants in Bahrain could be because I was perceived as an outsider in England. I made a point to establish myself as an outsider in England with the frequent statement of 'I am not from here'. This is done in order to remind participants of my

unfamiliarity with the context, therefore requiring further explanation of their practices and policies.

In Bahrain, the participants may have assumed my awareness of national practices as a Bahraini national, and hence thought it was unnecessary to discuss the policies thoroughly. The limited awareness of participants in Bahrain about national policy could also be because of a shortage in inclusion policy and guidelines, as inclusion is at the early stages of implementation. Crabtree and Williams (2013) assert that inclusion is at its infancy in Bahrain. The participants in this study estimate that integration started 20 years ago, which is consistent with Weber (2012) who traces inclusion in Bahrain back to the early 2000s. A further explanation for participants' brief responses to inclusion policy is the general unfamiliarity with the term 'inclusive education', as the Arabic equivalent of 'integration' is used more commonly. The interchangeable use of 'integration' and 'inclusion' in Arabic is also suggested by Aldaihani (2011) and Weber (2012).

While this theme argued that participating teachers in England are more aware of national inclusion policy than teachers in Bahrain, it could simply represent the ability of teachers in England to reiterate national policy rather than represent an authentic reflection or application of that policy in teachers' practices. Teachers in England are aware of national inclusion policy, however, that mostly pertains to SEN support within a mainstream school which contradicts the ODI principles. This has clearly impacted teachers' actions and practices to be consistent with SEN support, and this is further evidenced in the other ecosystems.

7.2.2 Special education or inclusion?

In addition to the earlier finding of the limited knowledge on national inclusion policies in S3 and S4, a primary indication of inclusion being at the initial stages in Bahrain is in the existence of special classes in the mainstream schools. According to the participants, the resource rooms are used gradually to ease the integration of learners with SEN into the mainstream class. Most learners are eventually fully included in the mainstream class, while a small number of learners with 'severe SEN' remain in the resource room with the special education teacher (SET). The use of special classes within a mainstream school is also referred to as integration or mainstreaming. This is the stage preceding full inclusion or inclusive education, where learners with SEN are integrated in the mainstream school and placed in a special class rather than attending a special education school (Farrell, 2004; Armstrong, Armstrong and Spandagou, 2010).

Another rationalisation for the use of resource rooms is a contextualised view of inclusion in Bahrain. Resource rooms can thus be explained as a pursuit of educational equity, or alternatively, a way to manage the more challenging learners away from the mainstream classroom (Black-Hawkins, Florian and Rouse, 2007). It is common for resource rooms to be considered inclusive practice in the Middle East region (Amr, 2011), yet it is still considered by the ODI to be exclusionary. While the participating schools in England did not have resource rooms within the schools, students with SEN are taught separately within the classroom or outside of the classroom for part of the school day. If students do not succeed in the school, they are sometimes referred back to a special education school as indicated by the participants. 'If you can't meet their needs then that's where you go forward for a… specialist approach' (S1-SENCO).

According to Slee (2013, p.896), ‘schools exercise exclusion on a daily basis in both subtle and blatant forms’. The concept of exclusion is complex in itself. Whether it is students taught separately by a teaching assistant within the mainstream classroom (Slee, 2013), educated outside of the classroom, or sent to a special school. They all represent forms of exclusion as consistent with the ODI. While exclusionary practices are present in both research contexts, one practice can be considered less harmful. That is, the integration streams within mainstreams schools in Bahrain are considered less exclusionary than learners being sent to special schools in England. If the option of the special school is available, that encourages schools to exclude learners as soon as they encounter challenges in teaching them. The students in Bahrain, on the contrary, remain in the mainstream environment and interact with their non-SEN peers through school functions. This is however still considered social inclusion and not curricular inclusion as indicated by the ODI. The juxtaposition of exclusion practices is therefore present in both countries. S3 and S4 in Bahrain function on the system that students with SEN are gradually included in the mainstream class; whereas S1 and S2 in England operate on the system that students with SEN are gradually excluded from the mainstream class to receive individualised support outside of the classroom.

This confusion on a larger nationwide scale in England and Bahrain on the meaning of inclusion and exclusion directly translates to perplexities within the school context. Then schools will practice the exclusion of learners either within or outside mainstream education. If exclusionary spaces are available, teachers will justify reasons to use them. This practice is considered integration rather than inclusion as learners, are not being educated alongside their peers. If mainstream education teachers are not equipped with generalist pedagogy which enables them

to respond to all learners, then there will always be a need to educate some learners separately either within a mainstream school or externally within a special school.

Inclusive education practices in England are predominantly articulated through SEN support, which is evident through the participants' focus on SEN funding and the role of the SENCO. When participants are asked of the type of inclusion support provided to schools, they only perceive support in terms of financial support. That is partly instilled through the austerity prevalent in the education system and competition for funds. As indicated by the S1 SENCO: 'If they [students] have severe SEN, you can apply for more funding… that could be 1000, it could be 20,000 pounds, depending on the child's need'. The education system thus implies that funding is necessary for inclusion which could have serious ramifications to the extent to which students are identified as having SEN and the severity of their SEN, in order to secure more financial support. The funding system also gives the impression that the larger the school is, the more focused it will be on SEN, as larger schools attain higher SEN funding. 'We're a one-form entry school, our budget is very small' (S1-SENCO). Larger SEN funding attained by S2 thus enables them to have more SEN practices such as the learning mentor, a sensory room, and more interventions. This illustrates the influence of funding guidelines in the macrosystem, on school practices in the exo- and microsystems.

As earlier argued in Chapter 2, Ainscow, Farrell and Tweddle (2000) indicate the vast amount of SEN funding applications received by LAs. The authors believe such practices contribute to the marginalisation of some learners as they are identified as having SEN. In a more recent study from SENCOs' perspectives, LA resourcing cuts and uncertainty over SEN budget allocations persist and restrict SENCOs' ability to improve SEN provision (Pearson, Mitchell

and Rapti, 2015). Ainscow, Farrell and Tweddle (2000) state that such a system discourages schools from appreciating student diversity. It also leads teachers to forgo their responsibility of certain students, and over-diagnose some children as having SEN. The view of the authors is consistent with the ODI as well as the inclusive pedagogical approach (IPA) (Florian and Black-Hawkins, 2011) in that inclusion should be disconnected from funding. The continuous association of inclusion with funding is problematic. Once some funding is made available, there will always be demand for more. Whether the funding is to accommodate for more severe SEN, or for a larger number of students with SEN, or for a new type of technology deemed necessary. This explains one of the main IPA principles in that teachers should assume full responsibility for their learners (Florian and Black-Hawkins, 2011).

In the current study, the purpose of applying for funding in S1 and S2 is motivated by special education practices such as the provision of a dyslexia tool or TAs for one-to-one support for particular learners. This practice resembles special education practices, but within the confines of a mainstream school, and concealed by the illusion of inclusive education. Black-Hawkins, Florian and Rouse (2007) suppose that one of the main purposes of establishing special schools is to protect the rights of mainstream students, and provide them with an environment that is free of the distractions of peers with SEN. In current times, this practice is occurring within mainstream schools by educating the students with SEN separately, thus reversing the progress inclusive education has made throughout the decades.

In this study, participant SENCOs in England celebrate their attainment of an Education Health and Care plan (EHC) for some learners. The SENCO role as suggested by the title is a ‘special educational needs’ coordinator, and not an inclusion manager. The responsibilities of the

SENCO as acknowledged by the participants focus on support for learners with SEN in the school which includes: constructing individualised educational plans, performance monitoring, and parental support. These SENCO responsibilities are consistent with those identified by Lindqvist *et al.* (2011) and Ainscow, Dyson and Weiner (2013). Individualised plans are considered a special education practice (Florian, 2014). Perhaps the emphasis in national policies and practices on SEN in England, then influences schools to have a similar focus. SEN support then becomes schools' main way of conceptualising and enacting inclusive education.

In 'Chapter 2: Literature Review', the SEN perspective of inclusive education is identified as one of the main ways of defining inclusion in the literature and in practice (Wilde and Avramidis, 2011; Messiou and Ainscow, 2015). This view is consistent with the practices of the participating schools in England. According to Ekins and Grimes (2009), government bodies in England added to this confusion by explicitly connecting inclusion with special needs in school guidance. Messiou (2017) indicates that the continuous identification of one group of vulnerable learners can subject these learners to stigma, and impede their peers' acceptance of them.

Despite the benefits of the SENCO role and funding provisions, it is essential to evaluate whether these national efforts are constructing inclusion, or hindering it. Securing the rights of vulnerable people is different from inclusive education. The rights of vulnerable children can be secured through all the different policies and funding schemes, but these learners can still be made to feel excluded. It is equally vital to note that it can also be considered exclusionary when students with SEN do not have access to appropriate support. This is consistent with the general differences position or the need-based perspective where learner differences and the

labels of learners' needs are embraced through the use of specialist pedagogy (Ravet, 2011; Norwich, 2013). Focusing on one group of vulnerable learners however contradicts the ODI, as one of the primary principles of the ODI is to respond to the needs of all learners in the classroom through generalist pedagogy. The ODI does not reject specialist pedagogy or SEN provision within mainstream, but argues that universalist teaching approaches are vital for teachers to respond to learners' diversity in the mainstream classroom and avoid the marginalisation of learners.

The SENCO role does not exist in Bahrain, however, there is a SET in each school that monitors the performance of learners with identified needs. SEN in Bahrain is defined by the participants in broader terms to encompass students who are 'high achieving, gifted, underperforming, non-Arabic speakers, learning difficulties' (S3-P), which concurs with the indication by Black-Hawkins, Florian and Rouse (2007) that SEN encompasses almost a quarter of all children. Despite having a broad definition of SEN and the MOE's special focus on non-Arabic speakers, SEN matters are rarely discussed by the participants in S3 and S4. It is not the highlight of conversations during the interviews as it is in England's S1 and S2. There is no doubt that the education system in England is more established than Bahrain in terms of SEN support. However, it might be that it works in favour of Bahrain where SEN matters do not dominate school functions and interactions in the same way that they dictate school practices in England. Perhaps the late arrival or slow progress of the inclusion journey in Bahrain is unintentionally advantageous for attaining inclusion, in that it frees it from the influence of special education under the impression of inclusive education.

7.2.3 Curriculum and pedagogy.

In S1 and S2, one of the main national inclusive practices identified by the participants include an inclusive curriculum. Student progress scores are recognised nationally which is more responsive to students' varying ability levels, and the curriculum is responsive to the religious diversity in schools. These practices are aligned with the ODI. However, the curriculum is considered by the participants to be advanced and still not adapted to the needs of the schools and the students' characteristics. In these particular schools, many of the students have missed some years of school and have moderate learning difficulties. While schools are required to differentiate for their diverse learners (DfE, 2015), the education system does not particularly differentiate for the diversity in schools. 'Education is rated in exactly the same way as education would be rated in an area that don't have these issues' (S2-P). Through the 'marketisation of schooling' (Slee and Allan, 2001), schools are encouraged to compete with each other based on student scores and educational attainment through the rigidity of the system, regular school inspections, and public reports of performance. According to Slee (2013), the education system in England could inadvertently encourage schools to exclude some learners that would affect the schools' performance scores. If the schools are asked to differentiate for their students, then it is also essential that the national system differentiates for their schools in order for the educational system to exude an inclusive ethos.

The participants in England also report on a national emphasis on individual student attainment, and requirements for individual performance to be displayed in student books. This influences teaching practices that focus on individual student performance, which are critically discussed in the microsystem. Teachers thus refrain from collaborative peer activities, as that would be

challenging to translate to individual student performance. The competitive schooling system influences the use of competitive teaching practices that emphasise an individual pursuit of learning. Ainscow et al. (2006) acknowledge that the educational system in England is based on comparison rather than fostering a collective commitment to inclusion. This is shaped by the individualistic cultural characteristics in the macrosystem. Schools in Bahrain rely on collaborative teaching methods to implement the curriculum, which are shaped by collective cultural attributes in the wider national culture. This is evident when examining teaching practices used in the classroom, and is more thoroughly discussed in the microsystem.

In Bahrain's S3 and S4, some of the national inclusive curricula practices include the use of a variety of teaching strategies, and support for non-Arabic speakers. First, the participants emphasise the MOE's endorsement for schools to use a variety of teaching strategies to suit their diverse learners. That includes the teaching of 21st century skills to promote student leadership, initiative, communication skills, and confidence as well as the use of differentiation. The schools are also instructed to inform learners of the use and purpose of different teaching strategies. This is consistent with the Bahrain Qualifications Authority's (BQA) evaluation of schools that includes the use of student-centred learning, technology, and multiple intelligences to respond to learners' needs (BQA, 2019). The schools' application of this is reflected in the microsystem. Second, according to the participants, there is a national focus on supporting non-Arabic speakers. This is consistent with the Ministry of Education's Reading Strategy that addresses the non-Arabic speakers programme, which seeks to enable non-Arabic speakers to become active members of the school community and overall contributing members to the Bahraini society (MOE, 2020). The word inclusion may not be present in Bahrain's national policies or during conversations with the school staff, but inclusive values are conveyed through

such practices as schools embrace the diversity of learners. The MOE's efforts to have non-Arabic speakers as essential members of the school community and society are consistent with the ODI, as well as support a wider perception of inclusion which encompass fostering an inclusive culture and community (Ainscow, 1999; Cigman, 2007).

The practices above therefore reflect Bahrain's version of national inclusion policy which is enacted through their provision of different learning opportunities to suit diverse learners, and their special interest in supporting non-Arabic speakers. The eclectic support by the Ministry of Education also includes managing student registration for the schools. This shift of the registration procedure from the schools to the ministry might restrict schools' abilities to respond to student needs, which are identified by meeting the learners during the registration period. Yet, it might still be beneficial to have a centralised system such as the one in Bahrain where all matters are closely managed by the MOE, as opposed to the LA system in England. The Ministry of Education ensures practices are unified across schools, while the LA system leads to variations in practices. Despite England having a number of national policies to guide school practices, these policies are implemented and interpreted differently by LAs and schools which is counterproductive to having such abundant policies and national guidelines (Ainscow, Farrell and Tweddle, 2000). The different practices by LAs also represent dissimilar conceptualisations of inclusion which is considered a barrier to inclusive education (Ainscow *et al.*, 1999).

7.3 Exosystem

The exosystem section examines the overall way of implementing inclusive education at the school level as influenced by socio-cultural circumstances. School level practices comprise the schools' interpretation of national inclusive education policy through the implementation of school policies, procedures, and climate. This section also responds to the first research question of this study:

Research question 1: what is stakeholders' knowledge of inclusive education policy in England and Bahrain?

c. How is inclusion policy enacted in schools?

7.3.1 Schools' perspective of inclusive education.

The way that schools define inclusion consequently shapes schools' inclusive practices. Howes *et al.* (2004) suggest that a school can only move forward in its inclusive practices if there is a common understanding within the school of the meaning of inclusion. In S1, the school leadership defines inclusion in that it is concerned with all learners without singling out students, and the SENCO refers to it as 'whole school inclusivity'. S1's 'whole school inclusivity' is emphasised through their recruitment requirements of teachers, and in performance evaluations on inclusive teaching. This practice then shapes teacher attitudes and their associated teaching practices in the ecosystems within, as teachers are selected and evaluated based on their inclusive values. This view of inclusion however contradicts S1's actual teaching practices in the classroom and microsystem where some learners are taught

outside of the classroom by the TA, and are thus being singled out. A possible reason for this inconsistency in inclusion perspectives is that S1 is in the middle of a transition to implement inclusion, and teachers are still negotiating practices which enable that. Teachers in S1 also have different perceptions of inclusion than the school leadership, which is further explored in the mesosystem. Another explanation is that teachers' practices are still dominated by a SEN view of inclusion as earlier indicated in the macrosystem, and this view contradicts the ODI. S1 therefore must seek ways to implement consistent values of 'whole school inclusivity' in all of its practices, in order to ensure a unified school culture.

Despite S1 and S2 sharing a school principal, S2's perspective of inclusion as well as its practices are different from the principal's view of inclusive education. The principal's perspective of inclusion focuses on 'access' and instilling the love for learning, and reflects the ODI. This relates to that the majority of learners in S2 come from difficult backgrounds where some learners have not had access to education previously, which explains the principal's indication that each school's approach to inclusion corresponds to the surrounding context. The schools' practices and perspective of inclusion are therefore shaped by the circumstances of the surrounding community in the exosystem.

S2-SENCO's definition focuses on SEN, which is largely due to the SEN focus of her role as determined by national guidelines of SENCOs responsibilities (Dobson, 2019), illustrating the macro- to exo- connection. Practices in S2 are however more consistent with the SENCO's SEN perception of inclusion, which demonstrates the powerful influence of the SENCO on the entire school practices and attitudes. Given the influential role of the SENCO on school practices, it is vital that it focuses on inclusion for all learners as suggested by the ODI, rather

than mainly SEN provision within mainstream education. The S2-SENCO acknowledges that her school is on its inclusion journey. This is consistent with the ODI view of inclusion as a never-ending process, as long as the school works towards achieving inclusion for all learners rather than SEN support.

In Bahrain, S3 and S4 do not specifically define inclusion in a direct manner as S1 and S2, which makes it more challenging to determine whether the leadership and teachers share a similar perspective of inclusion. Schools' lack of perspective of inclusive education is consistent with the inference made in the macrosystem that schools in Bahrain are not as knowledgeable of national inclusion policies. Instead, the school's perspective of inclusion is deduced through S3's strategic plan and emphasis on gifted learners. S3's strategic plan is designed to cater and support all learners in the school, which embraces learner diversity and provides a welcoming school climate. S3's strategic school planning is consistent with the notion of provision maps by Ekins and Grimes (2009) who consider this to be an inclusive school practice. That is because provision maps enable schools to outline and plan their response to meet the needs of all learners, and correspondingly foster staff ownership. S3's support for gifted learners is also considered inclusive and supports the ODI as the school provides opportunities for all learners to participate in gifted programmes, rather than opening the programmes only for certain learners.

As illustrated in the examples above, schools' perspective of inclusion play a crucial role in determining the way in which schools implement inclusive practices. For S1 and S2 in England, there is an inconsistent view of inclusion between the school leadership and teachers which lead to practices that contradict inclusive values. In Bahrain's S3, the use of strategic planning

ensures that consistent inclusive values are shared amongst school members through outlining the school's goals and the responsibilities for staff to achieve them. The consistency between schools' in Bahrain perspective of inclusion and the associated practices is further discussed in the microsystem.

7.3.2 Inclusive school ethos.

One of the main similarities between the participating schools in England and Bahrain is the school ethos, which is used to create a positive inclusive school climate. In both countries, the school values are deeply engraved in all school interactions and are equally expected from students, staff, and parents. It is common for inclusive schools to encourage values of mutual respect and positive student relations (Ainscow *et al.*, 2006; Farrell *et al.*, 2007a). The source of school ethos in both research contexts is primarily induced by socio-cultural factors in a macrosystem level. In S1 and S2, the 'nine habits' are shaped by the Christian charity that runs the schools. 'It's not a Christian school but we use the Christian ethos' (S1-SENCO). While in Bahrain, the 'co-existence' value is encouraged by a collectivist cultural influence that promotes interconnectedness between people.

The inclusive school ethos in both research contexts emphasises strong home-school relations. DeMatthews *et al.* (2020) assert that school leaders are responsible for maintaining strong links to the community, which represents the schools' inclusive efforts. Lindqvist and Nilholm (2014b) stipulate that leading inclusion is the principal's responsibility. School leaders are able to create an environment where teachers collaborate and engage in problem-solving. The role of school leadership in maintaining an inclusive school ethos is evident in England and Bahrain.

S2's newly introduced co-planning initiative by the principal emphasises the need for school staff to collaborate and engage in problem-solving, hence contributing to a warm school climate. In Bahrain, S3's supportive school leadership also motivates teachers as acknowledged by the participants. Culture and school leadership are thus both essential determinants of an inclusive school ethos.

Further evidence of inclusive school ethos in Bahrain is through the internal continuous professional development (CPD) programme in S4 'my best ideas', as the programme focuses on introducing teachers to a variety of teaching strategies implemented by other teachers in the school to support diverse learners. The programme encourages: teacher collaboration, sustainable investment in CPD, mentoring, and encouraging collective teacher responsibility and accountability. S4's cohesive teaching team is evident through collaborative teachers and supportive school leadership. Teachers provide constructive feedback for their peers through classroom observations as well as share learning materials. According to Conderman and Johnston-Rodriguez (2009), teachers are more likely to perform collaborative roles in collaborative cultures such as Bahrain, than individualistic cultures such as England. The authors indicate the importance of more experienced teachers mentoring novice teachers for inclusive practice, which is consistent with the purpose of 'my best ideas' programme in S4.

While teacher collaboration is present in both research contexts, collaborative practices are more prominent in Bahrain especially that co-planning in S2 in England was only introduced recently by the new school principal. The difference in collaborative teacher practices between the two countries could largely be due to socio-cultural circumstances in the macrosystem and in particular, due to how the staff rooms are designed in schools. As discussed in 'Chapter 5:

Qualitative Findings (Bahrain)', the staff room layout in S3 and S4 encouraged an information collaboration network. According to Chambers (2015), this type of staff room allows for opportunities for 'spontaneous reflection' where teachers get together to discuss events, which leads to them planning other meetings to discuss issues more formally and engaging in collaborative problem-solving. This practice contributes to an inclusive school ethos and is consistent with the ODI.

Teachers in S1 and S2 do not necessarily have similar opportunities to collaborate as they only have desks in their own classrooms where they spend the majority of their time. This illustrates how the physical layout of the school is conducive for inclusive practices. While the literature mainly discusses physical school layout in inclusive schools in terms of access for learners with disabilities (Alborz, Slee and Miles, 2013), the structure of staff rooms can also be considered an essential component of inclusive practice. Another example of how the physical layout facilitates or impedes inclusive education practices is in S2, and the area outside each classroom which is used to teach learners with SEN. This area is commonly used by the teaching assistants (TA) and learners with SEN for more focused work. The repetitive use of this area leads to the isolation of some learners and their exclusion from overall class activities with the teacher and the rest of the students, and contradicts the ODI principles. This does not necessarily suggest the complete elimination of that group seating area in S2, but instead using it for mixed ability groups or reducing its usage as the observations reveal its use in every single lesson.

Although both countries utilise school-wide values to create a positive climate, the method of implementation differs. S1 and S2 in England predominantly use the 'nine habits' to encourage and reward positive student behaviour, whereas S4 in Bahrain consistently requires all school

members to implement their ‘co-existence value’. In S1 and S2, the nine habits are used to supplement the national curriculum. Each classroom contains an area for individual student attainment of the nine habits in which students receive a token when they achieve one of the habits during the school day. In Bahrain’s S4, the co-existence value is part of the curriculum as co-existence is achieved through the teaching strategies used such as group work and the peer pairing strategy. These teaching strategies in the microsystem encourage student collaborations and eventually achieve co-existence by enabling peer support. This example illustrates how school ethos in the exosystem influences the inclusive teaching strategies used in the microsystem. The purpose of the co-existence value in S4 is to additionally embrace learner diversity, which is consistent with the ODI. This is similarly found in the schools in England as student diversity is embraced through the signposts on classroom doors in S1.

7.3.3 Beyond school collaboration.

In both research contexts, school collaboration with other members of the exosystem is represented in connections with external agencies, other schools, and families. S1 and S2 in England maintain a mutually beneficial relationship with the local authority (LA) and collaborate with agencies that enhance their SEN provision which although emphasised by Ainscow *et al.* (1999) to constitute inclusive school practice, is still focused on SEN. This practice mirrors the earlier indication in the macrosystem on the SEN focus of the education system. Schools should instead attend to the ‘inclusion for all’ perspective as consistent with the ODI to cater to all learners. In Bahrain’s S3 and S4, beyond school collaboration comprises the giftedness centre, and entering local and international competitions. Both these initiatives are with the intention to support students’ diverse interests and abilities, but also target students

who are excelling in a subject area. For schools to be more aligned with the ODI, they also need to utilise external collaborations to enhance provision for students who need support.

School-to-school collaborations help strengthen schools' inclusive practices as they learn from the practices of other schools, and discuss their mutual challenges in inclusion (Ainscow, 2010; Azorín and Ainscow, 2018). The participating schools in England also engage in community support where schools with similar challenges are supported through the LA. In Bahrain, S3 and S4 support other schools in the community who similarly have a large proportion of non-Arabic speakers as students who need support. School-to-school collaboration in Bahrain is established either through direct communication with neighbouring schools, or organised by the Bahrain Qualifications Authority. External school collaboration in the participating schools in England focuses predominately on students who are under-achieving, whereas external collaboration in Bahrain attends to students who are high-achieving and under-achieving, which is more consistent with the ODI as the schools cater for their diverse learners.

Beyond school collaboration for schools in England is further represented in their extensive support of families with special circumstances who are supported through S1's community hub. These collaborative practices relate to the principal's definition of inclusion in it being contingent on the schools' needs, as discussed earlier in the schools' perspective of inclusion. For these particular schools, inclusion is primarily defined through the schools' support for families due to their difficult circumstances. The schools deal with families of particular characteristics such as: not speaking English, having no income, living in inappropriate housing conditions, and the immigration status of parents. 'I think we're…the third most deprived school in the country…over 50% of the families are in poverty. Mmm we are also opposite a

prison so people don't want to live in the area' (S1-SENCO). These circumstances thus illustrate the schools' focus on catering for their community, in order to retain their students and continue supporting them.

In Bahrain, S3 and S4 support non-Arabic speaker parents in their school community by teaching them Arabic. 'If I teach the student in school, and then she goes home and her mother can't help, then I haven't done anything, so I start with the mother' (S4-AP). This enhances schools' inclusive provision and students' inclusion in the school environment, particularly given that home-school relations are identified as an inclusive practice by the Index for Inclusion (Booth and Ainscow, 2002). S3 and S4's community outreach is extended as the schools provide Arabic lessons to non-Arabic speakers in their surrounding community prior to their entry to school in Year 1. This is in response to a national policy where state formal education only begins in Bahrain in Year 1, therefore students lack the appropriate academic and social skills prior to entry in schools if they did not choose to attend pre-school at their own expense. The extended community outreach in Bahrain could be explained by one of the main local values of generosity and hospitality, which illustrates the influence of socio-cultural factors in the macrosystem on school practices in the exosystem.

This section illustrates the importance of external school collaboration for inclusive practice. As participating schools in England and Bahrain extend their expertise and experience to schools and communities with similar challenges, that is the schools' method of being inclusive. This in turn enhances the schools' provision for their learners of diverse interests and abilities, as the schools gain experience through working with others.

7.3.4 Responding to student diversity.

A school is generally considered inclusive if it is welcoming of diversity (Booth, Nes and Strømstad, 2003). In England's S1 and S2, besides celebrating students' cultural diversity through the signposts of languages spoken in each class, the majority of practices focus on supporting students with SEN and vulnerable learners. Some of the school level SEN provisions involve awareness of students' mental health, out-of-class interventions by the TA, out-of-class support by the learning mentor, and a sensory room. The intersection of students' learning difficulties, poverty, refugee status, and mental health issues is evidently challenging for teachers. These are extenuating circumstances that are not often experienced by other schools, and they explain the schools' approach and priorities. However, the SEN focus is problematic as it emphasises a medical model of disability and focuses on deficiencies within the child, which is why the ODI focuses on inclusion for all. A more productive view is the social model of disability, which assumes policies and practices are the main reason for learners to experience difficulties in learning (Ekins and Grimes, 2009). Perhaps there is a way for schools to cater for their vulnerable learners without subjecting them to exclusion. Schools can provide SEN support in the mainstream classroom, to reduce the exclusion that learners experience as a result of receiving support outside of the classroom.

According to Ekins and Grimes (2009), interventions can actually be delivered through regular in-class teaching and there is no need for learners to be educated outside of the classroom. The same principle applies to sessions with the learning mentor, where the mentor can be present in-class to co-teach with the mainstream teacher. The learning mentor can also open the out-of-class sessions for all learners to join in common times such as the lunch break or after school.

Ekins and Grimes (2009) assert that the use of interventions is encouraged by the education system in England, which illustrates the macrosystem to exosystem impact. It is additionally important to note that the focus on SEN funding in a macrosystem level has a direct influence on schools' practices in this exosystem to be equally focused on SEN. S2's larger SEN budget enables them to implement more SEN practices than S1 such as the learning mentor and the sensory room, hence making the school more SEN focused.

SEN provision is managed differently in the participating schools in Bahrain compared to England. In Bahrain's S3 and S4, schools have a special education teacher (SET) and do not have a SENCO. The SET manages the SEN resource room where learners are gradually integrated in the mainstream classroom as they make progress, based on a discussion and collaboration between the SET and mainstream teacher. The mechanism and duration of integration from the resource room to the mainstream classroom is however unclear. The way SEN is managed is that there appears to be a disconnect between the SET and school leadership, as the SET communicates directly with the Special Needs Directorate at the Ministry of Education. The leadership is thus unaware of the SEN budget and how SEN is managed. In this instance, a SENCO role is valuable as the SENCO would be part of the leadership team in S3 and S4 and manages all matters related to SEN, however this role is not available in Bahraini schools. For schools in England and Bahrain to be more inclusive and aligned with the ODI, a member of the leadership team needs to handle the responsibility of inclusive education and promoting inclusive school values. Although the SENCO role in S1 and S2 is efficient in managing SEN provision, the role is over-emphasising SEN and the consequent isolation of some learners.

Issues of school size and the accompanying budget are comparable in the participating schools from England and Bahrain. Whether or not the students with more 'severe' SEN are fully included in the mainstream class depends on the size and resources of the school. In smaller schools such as S3, students with SEN are fully included in the mainstream class but are taken out of the classroom for a number of sessions during the week for support. In a larger school such as S4, the opposite occurs. It is however unrealistic for all schools to be small in order to exude more inclusive values. Larger schools should instead seek to cater for diverse learners in a way that is made available for all learners, without singling out some as being different or in need of special support.

In S3 and S4, the schools respond to student diversity by catering for a range of learners including non-Arabic speakers, students with SEN, and gifted learners. S4's assortment of classrooms' cultural composition indicates their perception that diversity is conducive to learning. Otherwise, Bahrain's concern for non-Arabic speakers could be less about a commitment to inclusion, and more about making sure schools' performance remains high in national assessments and quality reviews. Still, programs such as 'it is my right to learn' not only cater for student diversity, but also strengthen student relations and influence positive student attitudes when non-Arabic speakers are paired with Bahraini students. Schools' concern for non-Arabic speakers is in response to nationwide changes in the cultural composition, illustrating the macro- to exo- impact. Students are taken out of the classroom for extra lessons in the Arabic language, which then support their learning in the entire curriculum. Out of class support usually take place during the 'activity period' so students are not excluded from the core curriculum. Regardless, instead of withdrawing non-Arabic speakers from class, the Arabic as a second language teacher can co-teach with the teacher in the mainstream class. This

is consistent with what Taylor and Sidhu (2012, p. 16) designate in supporting 'refugee children without othering them'.

The inclusion of students with SEN is estimated to be different in its directional relationship than the inclusion of ethnic minority students in S3 and S4. In other words, the inclusion of students with SEN was the result of international and national regulations on the education of vulnerable learners, and illustrates a top-down approach and the extension of policy from a macrosystem level to an exo- and micro- level. It is however not always a top-down approach for ecosystem interactions, that is, it is not constantly national policy in the macrosystem shaping school level and classroom practices in the ecosystems within. School practices also impact and shape national approaches and policies. The response to diverse learners and the inclusion of non-Arabic speakers in Bahraini schools could also be in response to the schools' changing neighbourhood demographics. Schools then resort to altering practices to cater for their diverse learners. These practices are then observed and evaluated by the Bahrain Qualifications Authority and the Ministry of Education, which then shape national priorities, and consequently constructs national policy in how the nation accommodates for non-Arabic speakers and how schools are evaluated on this basis. This is a more realistic occurrence as policy is dynamic, and policy and practice are deeply interwoven. The exo- and micro-influence of non-Arabic speakers on policies and wider national practices is mentioned by Albaker (2017) who stipulates that changes in student demographic and diverse needs were not reciprocated by country level awareness or CPD to prepare teachers for this change. This implies that schools' response to non-Arabic speakers is more of a school-based effort in the exosystem, rather than nationally prescribed in the macrosystem.

7.4 Mesosystem

This mesosystem section focuses on critically analysing the attitudes of teachers, parents and learners towards inclusive education. Attitudes are examined in the mesosystem as they are shaped by the surrounding culture in the exo- and macrosystem, and then consequently influence behaviour and practices in the microsystem. This section responds to the second research question of this study:

Research question 2: what are teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education in England and Bahrain?

a. How do teachers define inclusive education in each country?
b. Are teacher attitudes towards inclusive education more positive in England or Bahrain?

7.4.1 Teacher attitudes towards inclusion.

Teacher attitudes are realised through teachers' definitions of inclusive education, which relates to the cognitive component of teacher attitudes as opposed to the affective and behavioural components. The cognitive component of attitudes is concerned with the perspective of an object, which in this case constitutes teachers' perspectives and definitions of inclusion (Eagly and Chaiken, 1993, cited in de Boer, Pijl and Minnaert, 2011).

The dominant definition of inclusive education shared by the participating teachers in England is that inclusion is contingent on students' ability to participate. Besides S1-T1's perspective of inclusion in fostering a positive teacher-student relationship, the other teachers' perspectives

indicate negative attitudes towards inclusion. Teachers believe that inclusion is more easily achieved for some learners than others, and that for some learners, their inclusion is predominantly social rather than academic and on a school level rather than a classroom level. This perspective of inclusion is mostly concerned with students' presence instead of participation and achievement, and the focus on the individual child is antithetical to inclusion. This was earlier discussed in 'Chapter 2: Literature Review' and the argument by Ainscow *et al.* (2006) for inclusion to encompass active participation as opposed to merely presence. Other issues with that view is that it is inconsistent with the ODI, and illustrates teachers' negative attitudes towards inclusion. Teachers in England also define inclusion as focused on SEN support in mainstream education, which is coherent with national perspectives and practices of inclusion as SEN support in the macrosystem, and schools' perspective of inclusion in the exosystem.

As for how teachers define inclusive education in Bahrain, teachers did not specifically define inclusion. As argued in the macrosystem, teachers in Bahrain have limited knowledge of national inclusion policy, hence limiting their ability to articulate clearly their perspective of inclusive education. In Bahrain's S3 and S4, while students are not typically excluded during class time to go to a resource room, teachers still complain about the diversity in the classroom according to the S4-AP, which illustrates teachers' perspective of inclusion. S4-T1 acknowledges the challenge to include learners with intellectual impairments and autism, in comparison to other types of SEN. This finding is comparable with the teachers in S1 and S2 who indicate that inclusion is easier for some groups over other groups of students. This is consistent with Pappas, Papoutsi and Drigas (2018) who find that teachers support the inclusion

of students with physical disabilities, but have more negative attitudes towards the inclusion of students with intellectual impairments.

A study conducted in the Bahraini context reveals that the majority of teachers believe that students with more severe SEN either should not be included in the mainstream class, or should only be included if they are accompanied by a special education teacher (Bukamal, 2018). This finding concurs with Lalvani (2013) who relates this perspective of inclusion to the medical model of disability, where difficulties in learning are attributed to the impairment rather than social factors. The medical model of impairment is a recurring theme in the findings from this study, and continues to hinder practices that are inclusive of all learners regardless of medical labels. Identifying groups of learners and teachers' preference for the inclusion of one group of SEN over another group indicates negative teacher attitudes towards inclusion in both research contexts, and opposes the ODI. This further emphasises that teacher attitudes are dependent on their definition of inclusion.

Teachers' resistance to a diverse classroom is another theme identified in both research contexts. It is due to an inherent flaw in the global perspective of inclusion, that it can only be achieved with sufficient support (Pappas, Papoutsi and Drigas, 2018). The assumption that inclusion is primarily attained with specialist support or financial means continues to hinder progress with inclusion. This is communicated through teacher education programmes, national polices, and SEN funding schemes. According to Rix *et al.* (2009), it is essential for teachers to take responsibility for everyone in the classroom as then teachers would be more likely to engage all learners, foster a conducive learning environment, and encourage autonomous student behaviour.

Although teachers in England and Bahrain reported negative attitudes towards inclusion in the interviews, only teachers in England revealed these negative attitudes during class time through their negative talk about students and the constant identification of learners with SEN. While the S4-AP and T1 in Bahrain both discuss some negative attitudes towards inclusion, it is essential to note that in both S3 and S4, teachers did not treat students differently or identify individuals and groups in front of others. During the Bahrain classroom observations, it was never clear which students have SEN or are non-Arabic speakers. It is only after in-depth conversations and recurring interviews with the teachers that they reveal their challenges with some learners. On the contrary, in the schools in England, students with SEN are identified by the teachers as soon as I entered a classroom and during the interviews.

The findings from the teachers' questionnaires reveal that teacher attitudes towards inclusion in England are more positive than in Bahrain. These positive attitudes in England contradict teachers' definitions of inclusive education in the interviews, as well as teachers' behaviours towards learners with SEN during the observations. S2's school leadership in particular acknowledge that teacher attitudes towards inclusion are a work in progress, which is why the school invests heavily in teachers' CPD. While the principal shows positive attitudes towards inclusion, the language used by the S2-SENCO to describe some learners demonstrates an opposing perspective. SENCOs, as members of the school leadership in this study, can have an influential role in setting the school culture (Ainscow, 2007). School leaders should exhibit positive attitudes towards inclusion because it could reciprocate positive teacher attitudes (Pivik, McComas and Laflamme, 2002; Kugelmass and Ainscow, 2004; Lindqvist and Nilholm, 2014b). For instance, S2-SENCO's statements that describe learners with SEN as

‘someone that is above and additional’, and saying ‘because some children’s needs in my opinion just can’t be met within the mainstream’. Such language could have consequences to how teachers perceive learners with SEN, and thus influence their attitudes towards inclusion.

As earlier indicated in the exosystem, the school leadership largely influences attitudes, practices, and ethos in inclusion; and this is replicated in the mesosystem through negative teacher attitudes towards inclusion as a reflection of the SENCO’s attitude in S2. It is important to acknowledge that the S2-SENCO demonstrates a negative attitude in comparison to the S1-SENCO who used more positive language. For instance, the S1-SENCO said ‘I train the staff to teach all the children and by doing so they’re all included’. That explains the difference in teachers’ definitions of inclusive education between S1 and S2 which were earlier discussed, in that they could be shaped by their SENCO’s perspective.

de Boer, Pijl and Minnaert (2011) state that teacher attitudes are predominantly explored through self-report teacher questionnaires, and very rarely through observational methods. According to the authors, self-report questionnaires are susceptible to socially desirable responses. This elucidates why teacher attitudes in the teachers’ questionnaire are more positive for participating teachers in England than teachers in Bahrain, whereas the observations uncover contrasting findings. The conflicting findings between the questionnaires and observations are also due to teachers’ different interpretations of inclusion. Due to the perspective of teachers in England that inclusive education in equivalent to SEN support, the teachers view their identification of learners with SEN to be consistent with inclusive values, thus making their attitudes towards inclusive education positive from their perspective. This

view of inclusive education is however contradictory to the ODI view of inclusion to be concerned with all learners.

Ainscow and Miles (2008) identify that it is vital to provide teachers with a range of support and knowledge to increase teacher confidence. That is because teachers' practices in the classroom are the result of their attitudes and beliefs. In S1 and S2, providing teachers with CPD is schools' method to combat teachers' negative attitudes towards inclusion. The positive association between CPD and teacher attitudes is acknowledged by Avramidis, Bayliss and Burden (2000b) and Mónico *et al.* (2018), who assert that the more knowledge teachers have of inclusive teaching, the more positive their attitudes will be. The participating schools in England believe that the more knowledge teachers have on inclusion issues, the less likely they are to have negative attitudes, as they feel more capable of teaching students with SEN. The CPD opportunities provided to teachers in S1 and S2 are also SEN focused, which is consistent with the SEN focus of schools in England that is earlier discussed in the macrosystem and exosystem.

An alternative to SEN focused CPD is to address more inclusive practices such as training teachers on effective co-teaching practices with TAs, or even effective co-teaching between mainstream teachers. Contrary to the SEN focused CPD in England's S1 and S2, CPD in S3 and S4 focuses on equipping teachers with a variety of teaching strategies that suit their diverse learners as well as some SEN topics.

7.4.2 Expectations for students.

Teachers' expectations and beliefs of how students with and without SEN perform socially and academically in a mainstream classroom are an indicator of attitudes towards inclusive education (Avramidis and Kalyva, 2007). In the teachers' questionnaire, teachers' expected academic and social outcomes for students in an inclusive classroom are more positive for teachers in England's S1 and S2, than teachers in Bahrain's S3 and S4. This is however inconsistent with findings from the classroom observations and teacher interviews, where participating teachers in England reveal low expectations for students in comparison to teachers in Bahrain.

In S1 and S2, teachers' negative talk about students indicates low expectations for students' ability to progress academically, as well as low teacher expectations for students' comprehension of teachers' talk either about them or about their peers. Negative talk is an indication of teachers' negative attitudes towards the inclusion of learners with SEN as teachers publicly comment on students' behaviour, achievement, position in ability groups, and progress with the SEN interventions. This practice contradicts one of the main principles of the IPA in the necessity to avoid assigning students as different, as it can lead to marginalisation and lack of acceptance by their peers (Black-Hawkins, Florian and Rouse, 2007). Negative talk about students also contradicts the ODI, which seeks to avoid the overt identification of one vulnerable group of learners.

In S3 and S4, despite teachers' low expectations in the questionnaire, teachers demonstrate high expectations for students' social and academic outcomes during the observations in a number of ways. Teachers in S3 and S4 communicate their beliefs in students' sense of responsibility by giving students organisational and academic roles, involving students in lesson planning,

and generally encouraging students' autonomy. That is evident through some microsystem practices which include assigning students with academic roles such as the 'young specialist' and 'little teacher'. The promotion of student leadership roles and autonomy in the participating schools in Bahrain is aligned with the 21st century skills endorsed by the Ministry of Education in the macrosystem. High expectations for student achievement are guided by national educational policies in the macrosystem level in Bahrain rather than cultural traditions.

On the contrary, participating teachers in England did not delegate academic responsibilities for students and instead talked negatively about learners. This is an unexpected finding in S1 and S2 particularly considering socio-cultural characteristics of promoting autonomy at an early age. Low expectations for students in S1 and S2 are therefore attributed to the school ethos in the exosystem, where negative talk about students is normalised among teachers in the school culture. Teachers' low expectations for students in England can be the result of students' challenging family circumstances and backgrounds. S1-SENCO states 'They're not fed, they don't have a clean house, and often their parents are either abusing substances or have mental health problems'. Although students' difficult backgrounds could explain teachers' low expectations for them, there is no justification for teachers' negative talk about students.

Spratt and Florian (2015) propose that maintaining students' status and dignity are essential to IPA. It is vital for teachers to communicate high expectations for students and to be inclusive of all learners regardless of their backgrounds, as consistent with the ODI. How teachers communicate expectations for learners' performance academically and socially impacts the learning opportunities made available for learners and the classroom climate, as well as reveals

teacher attitudes towards inclusion. The effect of teacher attitudes and expectations for students is examined more thoroughly in the microsystem.

The discrepancy in expectations for students in the teachers' questionnaire and the qualitative tools, highlights the benefits of using this mixed-method design and triangulation of findings to examine the consistency of results across the data sources. Prolonged classroom observations and in-depth interviews with teachers were more valuable than the teachers' questionnaire in this instance, as they revealed teachers' expectations for learners and teachers attitudes towards certain groups of students. If this variable was only examined quantitatively, as well as the variable discussed in the previous section of teacher attitudes towards inclusion, there would be a major gap in the analysis. Teachers' high expectations in the questionnaire as opposed to the observations, can be explained that because teachers in England are more aware of inclusive education policy as discussed in the macrosystem, and inclusive discourse is central to their work. Teachers in S1 and S2 therefore indicate high expectations for students in the questionnaire through their awareness of socially desirable responses, which correspond to inclusive values. Teachers in Bahrain's S3 and S4, on the other hand, do not necessarily have a clearly defined inclusion schema, as earlier evidenced in the macro- and exo- systems which prepares them to respond positively to inclusive education queries.

7.4.3 Attitudes towards inclusive education.

This section discusses attitudes of parents and students towards inclusive education in Bahrain. According to Pappas, Papoutsi and Drigas (2018), negative parent attitudes towards inclusion are one of the barriers to inclusive education. There were no comments from the participating

teachers in England about the attitudes of parents and students towards inclusive education. Any comments in S1 and S2 about parents were regarding parents' background, which were earlier discussed. The interview and research questions did not specifically inquire about parent and student attitudes, however this element elicited as a discussion point with the participants in S3 and S4 and provides unique insight of the Bahraini culture and how it shapes attitudes and practices in inclusion. S4's consistent effort to create a positive learning environment is evident through the co-existence value, 'it is my right to learn', and the peer pairing strategy. Instilling the value of co-existence in S4 is either a prediction of negative attitudes by parents and students in the school, or a reaction to past experiences of negative parent and student attitudes towards students with SEN and non-Arabic speakers. This is another instance of top-down and bottom-up ecosystem directions, that is, co-existence school ethos in the exosystem either influenced or is influenced by parent and student attitudes in the mesosystem. Negative student attitudes are connected to negative parent attitudes in Bahrain who resist the multicultural nature of schools in current times. According to the S4-AP, younger students are less likely to exhibit negative attitudes, as older students are influenced by their families of Bahraini backgrounds to start separating their friendships from Bahraini and non-Bahraini.

As an insider to the culture, the contradiction in Bahraini societal values is perplexing. While generosity and hospitality are one of the main local customs, lack of acceptance of outsiders is another cultural characteristic. That is expected for two main reasons. First, Bahrainis have generally always been accepting of people from neighbouring Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) nationalities, and unaccepting of other Arab nationalities and beyond. That is potentially fuelled by fear of a loss of cultural identity associated with the increased number of expatriate population compared to the Bahraini population (Dresch and Piscatori, 2005). Negative

attitudes by Bahraini parents and students convey a resistance to globalisation and the increasingly diverse Bahraini society. Negative Bahraini parent attitudes towards non-Arabic speakers are possibly due to fearing that socialising with non-Bahraini's diminishes Bahraini students' abilities in the Arabic language.

Second, economic and educational growth in Bahrain has historically depended on international expertise due to a lack of local expertise and educational opportunities (Al Khalifa, 2016). That may no longer be seen as necessary by Bahrainis, since Bahrain is increasingly becoming a knowledge-based economy. The Bahraini society thus considers that they are now capable and can relinquish the need for external expertise, and may have negative attitudes towards the substantial presence of non-Bahrainis in the country. There is generally a lack of literature specifically exploring bias and racism in Bahrain towards people from South Asian countries, who represent the majority of non-Arabic speakers in state schools. However, Kumar and Jamil (2020) and Simkhada *et al.* (2018) investigate the experiences and health of South Asian migrant workers as a result of the negative attitudes and marginalisation they experience when working in the Gulf states. Such socio-cultural characteristics in a macrosystem level influence school practices and attitudes within the ecosystems. Similar negative societal attitudes towards outsiders might also be experienced in England, but because inclusion and a diverse society initiated in England long before Bahrain, the British society adapted to such changes more so than the Bahraini society. This explains the absence of a discussion of parent attitudes towards inclusion in England.

Despite some negative attitudes experienced with parents, S4 maintains strong home-school relations with parents of both Arabic and non-Arabic speakers. The home-school partnership

illustrates that schools in Bahrain are inclusive of parents and reveals a strong connection between two microsystems. DeMatthews *et al.* (2020) assert that inclusive schools maintain strong ties to parents and actively involve them in decision-making, which is consistent with practices in S3 and S4. While exploring parental involvement and student attitudes are not the primary purpose of this study, including them adds value to understanding socio-cultural aspects in Bahrain. For example, the S4-AP shares that home-school relations not only involve parents, but are extended to relatives and neighbours, which is an indication of a collectivist culture. Home-school relations also relate to positive teacher attitudes as Jordan, Schwartz and McGhie-Richmond (2009) stipulate that teachers with positive attitudes or 'interventionalist beliefs' embrace their responsibility to teach all learners and openly collaborate with parents. Home-school relations are hence an attempt from the S3 and S4 to improve parent attitudes towards inclusive education and the diverse learning community. Part of an inclusive school ethos is thus for schools to foster positive parent and student attitudes, which have a significant impact on classroom practices in the microsystem.

7.5 Microsystem

The previous ecosystems revealed a balance of inclusionary and exclusionary practices in each country, whereas this section demonstrates more inclusionary practices in the schools observed in Bahrain than the schools in England. S3 and S4 in Bahrain implemented a variety of teaching practices based on student collaboration, for the purpose of improving student attainment through the use of evidence-based teaching strategies. The selection of teaching strategies in Bahrain is not with the primary purpose of being inclusive. These teaching practices however inadvertently contributed to the inclusion of more learners as students are encouraged to support each other's learning, hence more students are included in the teaching and learning process.

It is vital to note that in both research contexts, the classrooms contained students identified as having moderate learning difficulties. Students with more severe learning needs, in England and Bahrain, are educated outside of the mainstream classroom. This is earlier indicated where students with more severe needs are referred to special schools in England, and in Bahrain are taught in separate special education classrooms within the mainstream school. There is only one student 'Cole' in one of four of the classrooms in England who was identified as having severe needs. According to the teacher, Cole will be taken to a special school. Otherwise, students' range of abilities and needs are homogenous across the participating schools in England and Bahrain.

This section responds to the third research question pertaining to this study:

Research question 3: what are teacher practices and pedagogies in an inclusive classroom in England and Bahrain?

a. What are the classroom level practices in inclusive education?
b. What/how teaching strategies promote the participation and achievement of all learners?
c. Is there a relationship between teacher attitudes towards inclusive education and their practices in inclusion?

7.5.1 Ability grouping versus mixed ability grouping.

One of the main differences in practices observed between the participating schools in England and Bahrain is in the allocation of student groups. In S1 and S2 in England, student groups are organised by perceived student ability and groups are referred to by teachers as higher ability, middle ability, and lower ability groups or TA groups. Teachers arrange the ability groups based on students' performance in diagnostic tests at the end of the previous school year, or based on a trial during the first week of school.

Aside from the validity or invalidity of ability groups, the way students are assigned into a group is questionable since using results from diagnostic tests of the previous school year does not necessarily represent students' capabilities. Students' past achievement is a common determinant of their allocation into ability groups (Ramberg, 2016). Students are however expected to make some progress during the summer holidays (Paechter *et al.*, 2015) or even experience setbacks in certain skills (Shinwell and Defeyter, 2017), and thus would perform differently on the tests by the beginning of a school year. It is also questionable as organising

student groups based on students' performance in the first week of school constitutes an insufficient period to evaluate students' performance, especially without permitting learners a period of adjustment to their new surroundings and teacher.

In Bahrain's S3 and S4, the groups are allocated based on mixed ability with each higher ability student being paired with a lower ability student through the peer pairing strategy. The main difference between how groups are organised in Bahrain compared to England, is that Bahraini teachers conduct ongoing formative assessment throughout the school year to determine the student pairings for peer support. There is more fluidity in student pairings in S3 and S4 which is responsive to progress in student attainment, while the use of ability grouping in S1 and S2 is more susceptible to having students misallocated into a group that is compounded by a rigidity of movement across groups (Francis *et al.*, 2017).

The main purpose of using ability groups in S1 and S2 is to facilitate teacher support per student level in each group, rather than for the student benefit as the priority. As indicated by S2-T1 'It just meant that giving that support to those children by either myself or teaching assistant, mm it was proving difficult [in mixed ability groups] when we're actually trying to support them in the lesson'. This is contrary to the situation in Bahrain, as the groups are purposefully mixed ability in order to allow students to support each others' learning while relying less on teacher guidance, which consequently minimises the instruction load on teachers. It demonstrates how peer collaborative work is inherent to the functioning and success of mixed ability groups, which further enhances inclusion. This example illustrates a teacher-centred approach to grouping arrangements in the schools in England, and a student-centred approach in the schools

in Bahrain which is more consistent with inclusive education as more students are involved in the learning process (Liasidou, 2015).

Ramberg (2016) states that despite the wide use of ability grouping, it has no positive effect on student learning. The use of ability grouping as opposed to mixed ability grouping in inclusive education is considered contentious, the reasons for which are explained next. Students in England are seated in groups for the majority of class time, yet they mostly work individually on their tasks. This is consistent with findings of Ainscow, Dyson and Weiner (2013) where the authors describe this situation in that learners are 'getting the worst of both worlds' since individual work requires focus, but students are distracted through the group seating arrangement (p.18). Group seating allows teachers to utilise this opportunity to implement peer collaborative learning and gain some of the benefits associated with it such as improving student relations (Wilde and Avramidis, 2011) and peer mentoring (Mitchell, 2008; Avramidis, 2013). The extent of peer collaboration in England within ability groups according to the S2-T1 is that students have the opportunity to hear the vocabulary used by the students working around them. Even if students within ability groups are given a collaborative task, all students in the group are working on a similar task level and are not challenged to advance their skills and learn from their peers.

According to McGillicuddy (2021), the use of ability grouping restricts students friendship to students in the same ability group, and students in lower ability groups report experiences of teasing and exclusion from friendships with students in other groups. The benefits of collaborative work are therefore more easily attained in mixed ability groups than ability groups (Tomlinson *et al.*, 2003). This is consistent with practices in Bahrain where the use of mixed

ability groups is infused with collaborative student activities, and is therefore consistent with the ODI as all group members are engaged in the learning process. Grouping arrangements and peer collaboration are consequently inextricably connected as microsystem entities.

S2 teachers in England explicitly indicate high and low ability tables during class time due to the use of ability groups. This contradicts the principles of the IPA through the overt identification of a group of learners, in this case, the group is students with SEN seated in 'low ability' groups. Deterministic beliefs of ability are usually enacted through ability groupings and overt differentiation where limitations to student progress are imposed (Florian and Spratt, 2013). According to Towers *et al.* (2020), while the majority of teachers indicate their implementation of within-class ability grouping, the teachers also express their concern for students' self-esteem and well-being as a result of using this grouping strategy. Fixed ability views release teacher's accountability for students' learning, and are more likely to reinforce teachers' perceptions of their limited capability to influence students' progress and achievement. This is clearly enacted in S1 and S2 with teachers' reference to the low ability groups as the 'TA groups', where teachers relinquish their responsibility to teach this group of learners.

In S3 and S4, the use of mixed ability groups eliminates the need for teachers to refer to groups in terms of their perceived ability level. This is considered more inclusive as the association between ability grouping and deterministic beliefs of student ability can act as a self-fulfilling prophecy. Teachers' low expectations for students' performance are made true through the teachers' actions and instruction, influencing students' own beliefs of their ability, and leading to actual low student achievement (Hart, 1998; Francis *et al.*, 2017). As students in S1 and S2

mainly socialise with peers of a similar level of ability within ability groups, it can limit their academic progress as they are not being challenged or mentored by their peers. It then becomes difficult for students to improve their performance and move to higher ability groups. However, in mixed ability groups, students are supported by their peers and which could advance their skills as a consequence.

Both research contexts involved conversations with teachers on student ability, they are however more emphasised in the schools in England due to the use of ability grouping. According to Hart *et al.* (2004), while ability grouping is consistent with governmental standards in England, ongoing assumptions and decisions regarding students' level of ability can have a long-term detrimental effect on students' identity. The categorisation of learners as 'less able' or 'more able' refers to teachers' beliefs in a stable view of intelligence. These assumptions influence learners' attitudes, motivation and academic achievement despite teachers' teaching efforts and good intentions. Boliver and Capsada-Munsech (2021) indicate that the use of ability grouping in English primary schools is increasing. Their study reveals that ability grouping is associated with less academic enjoyment in maths for students placed in low ability groups, which impacts future choices at secondary level and career decisions. In fact, ability grouping constitutes modern-day exclusion where students with lower ability and SEN are marginalised within the mainstream classroom.

Given that students from disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to be placed in lower ability groups, that then leads to replicating discriminatory behaviours across generations that largely impact academic achievement and career opportunities (Francis *et al.*, 2017). The use of mixed ability grouping can still subject learners to the same assumptions, especially if it is

accompanied with certain teaching methods which further clarify teachers' beliefs of students' abilities and subject learners to marginalisation. Hart *et al.* (2004, p. 30) state 'we create different types of learners by believing there are different types, and by teaching them accordingly'.

The use of mixed-ability grouping should therefore be implemented by preserving students' status, and avoiding imposing limitations to students' abilities as consistent with the inclusive pedagogical approach (IPA) and the ODI. That is not to say that ability labelling in S1 and S2 is solely a teacher initiative, it is institutionally enforced in the macrosystem and is alongside similar practices such as intelligence testing and other forms of assessment. This is confirmed by Ekins and Grimes (2009) that the use of ability grouping in England is encouraged by the national emphasis on testing, which forces schools to plan interventions for groups of learners in order for them to perform highly in national examinations. Based on the discussion above, it is evident that mixed ability grouping is more consistent with principles of the IPA (Spratt and Florian, 2015) and the ODI, as it communicates to learners that their diverse abilities and skills are embraced.

7.5.2 Peer collaborative learning.

The use of mixed ability groups facilitates the implementation of peer collaborative work, as argued earlier. This is consistent with the findings from the observations and interviews that peer collaborative work is used more extensively in S3 and S4 compared to S1 and S2, as Bahraini schools utilise mixed ability groups to enable peer support. In the teachers' questionnaires, the reported use of cooperative learning strategies is also significantly higher

for participating teachers in Bahrain than in England. This illustrates the consistency of this particular finding from all data sources. Besides the use of ability groups, the main reason for the lack of cooperative learning strategies in schools in England is largely due to Ofsted requirements for individual performance in student books as discussed earlier in the macrosystem, indicating the macrosystem to microsystem effect. Participating teachers in England are required to produce sufficient proof of students' individual outcomes, and therefore do not have adequate opportunities to implement other teaching methods. The extensive use of peer collaborative work in Bahrain could also be due to the collaborative nature of the culture in Bahrain, which illustrates how cultural characteristics of the nation on a macro level have a direct impact on classroom experiences on a micro level.

Classroom observations in England reveal a minimal use of collaborative work. In one instance, S2-T2 requires students to work in mixed-ability pairs to create a sea monster. Despite teachers' low expectations for students' ability to work collaboratively, students demonstrate their ability to work interdependently without continuous teacher direction, as well as display more excitement than any other activity observed. In this activity, however, some learners are excluded as stated by the teacher 'most children [were involved in the monster activity]... apart from... obviously, you have people like Cole' (S2-T2). While Cole was seated in a mixed ability group, according to S2-T2, his contribution to the group task was limited. Despite the exclusion of some learners described as having severe needs, this example of collaborative work is inclusive of more learners than any other differentiated task, yet, individual differentiated tasks dominate class time. S2-T2 even acknowledges that the sea monster activity was the most inclusive activity I observed. This indicates teachers' multifaceted understandings of inclusive education which are contrary to the perspectives discussed in the mesosystem.

Teachers' complex conceptualisations of inclusion are also discussed Lalvani (2013) where participating teachers simultaneously view inclusion as privilege, compromise and social justice. This example of collaborative work by S2-T2 mostly aligns to the IPA principles (Florian and Black-Hawkins, 2011) in terms of: planning for everybody, the learning opportunity is extended for (almost) all learners, mixed ability grouping, and covert differentiation. The marginalisation of learners mentioned earlier, is based on the teacher's perception that some learners are not capable of being involved in this activity. This is considered exclusion by the ODI.

During observations in Bahrain, the use of peer collaborative strategies includes the use of peer pairing strategy, group work, learning through play, project-based learning, think-pair-share, and student modelling. Student modelling (Vlachou, Stavroussi and Didaskalou, 2016) and peer-supported learning (Morningstar, 2015) are identified as inclusive practices. The peer pairing strategy is the most inclusive strategy observed, as it consistently ensures the participation of all learners in all classroom activities. Even though lower ability students are eventually identified by their peers as they are paired with a student of higher ability for mentoring, students still demonstrate their acceptance and support of each other. The IPA argues that the identification of learners with SEN is inconsistent with inclusive values, however, I refer back to the argument in Chapter 2, section 2.5.6, on the unrealistic standard of the IPA to conceal learners with SEN (Florian and Black-Hawkins, 2011). Students are intuitive and are able to identify their lower ability peers through different interactions, and accept individual differences and the diversity of the classroom. It is not considered harmful as long

as learners remain supportive of their peers, and that teachers are not explicitly stating student progress in front of others.

Mamas and Avramidis (2013) acknowledge that peer mentoring reduces teachers' individual support for certain students. Extensive use of peer collaborative work in Bahrain hence relinquishes teachers' need for a TA, as students are more able to support each other and rely less on teacher support. Mitchell (2008) suggests that peer collaborative work helps learners develop skills of interdependence, cooperation, problem-solving, and for more able learners to support less able learners. These skills are observed in the Bahraini classrooms as evident in this microsystem investigation.

All of these findings explain how a strong positive correlation was found in the teachers' questionnaire between social skills strategies and cooperative learning strategies for teachers in Bahrain, but not teachers in England. Teachers in Bahrain thus focus on teaching strategies that strengthen students' social abilities and students' ability to work collaboratively. This section illustrates that peer collaborative work where all learners are included and are available to support each others' learning is consistent with the ODI. The way classrooms are constructed in the participating schools of each country is thus pivotal as peer collaboration and support is facilitated through the use of mixed ability groups. The combination of these microsystem practices enables inclusive practices in the classroom.

7.5.3 Co-teaching and the teaching assistant (TA) role.

Co-teaching in this section refers to teaching collaborations between the mainstream teacher and any support teacher, including a special education teacher or teaching assistant. The availability and role of support teachers is determined by the education system. The definition of co-teaching and roles of collaborators were critically examined in 'Chapter 2: Literature Review'. In England's S1 and S2, the routine and division of responsibilities between the teacher and teaching assistant (TA) seems to be a regular practice which students expect. TAs in all classrooms are responsible for teaching the SEN groups either separately in class or outside of the classroom, while the teacher teaches the rest of the students. This is considered one-form of co-teaching practice between the mainstream teacher and the support teacher according to Strogilos (2012). This is when the teacher directs the lessons and the TA supports students with SEN. This type of co-teaching is when students with SEN are physically placed in a group, however, they do not engage with other students in the group as they are directly instructed by the TA. This practice hence limits peer interactions and collaborative work.

The TA role does not exist in Bahrain's state schooling system. However, each school includes at least one special education teacher (SET) who manages the resource room, where students with SEN are taken for more focused work. The teacher and SET co-teach through: their joint decision making and problem-solving for students with SEN, the extent to which students attend the resource room, and strategies that promote students' full inclusion in the mainstream classroom. Co-teaching between teachers and SETs in Bahrain was not observed, this section therefore focuses on critically analysing the role of TAs in the classrooms in England as a co-teaching practice.

Slee (2011) explains that the nature of the TA role in England is exclusionary, and reflects special education practices rather than inclusive education practices. A shared and collaborative practice between teachers and TAs is considered more inclusive. Väyrynen and Paksuniemi (2018) suggest that co-teachers should feel free to interrupt the other to add to instruction, rephrase, or provide examples for learners. S1-T1 is the only teacher implementing a collaborative form of co-teaching with the TA during instruction time. Yet, the S1-T1 TA is still responsible for teaching the SEN group during a differentiated task, which leads to the exclusion of learners and opposes the ODI.

Sharma and Salend (2016) indicate that the TAs presence impedes socialisation between learners as students seek TAs guidance instead of their peers. This is another justification for why peer collaborative work is limited in England compared to Bahrain, as the TA role restricts peer interactions. The presence of the TA additionally limits teacher-student interactions, since the teacher instructs the TA on how to teach students with SEN rather than directly guide the learners (Ainscow, 1999; Ainscow, 2000). This is also observed in the S2-T1 classroom where the TA says to a student with SEN to ‘put your hand down, Mr. B (teacher) is busy with the others in the class’. These examples illustrate the exclusionary effect of the TA role in its current form in the classroom observations, and its association with other microsystem entities.

One hindrance to effective and more inclusive co-teaching practices in England, is that the participating teachers are often young, while TAs are much older. During the observations, some of the TAs even revealed that they have had multiple careers throughout the years. The age gap between teachers and TAs creates a power imbalance and makes it more challenging to co-teach. This is consistent with Chambers (2015) where the teachers who are often younger

and less experienced than TAs find it challenging to communicate with their experienced and older TAs.

Sharma and Salend (2016) suggest that team teaching between teachers and TAs is enabled if they are given the time to engage in co-teaching discussions, negotiate their division of responsibilities, and are provided with sufficient training and supervision. While this practice occurs in S2 between mainstream teachers, this needs to be facilitated through the school leadership in an exosystem level for teacher and TA collaboration as an inclusive practice.

Another obstacle to collaborative co-teaching in S1 and S2 between teachers and TAs is the variation in working hours for some of the TAs. This is also acknowledged by Webster, Blatchford and Russell (2013) who indicate that TAs contracts and hours restrict their co-planning time with the METs. Full-time TAs such as the one with S1-T1 have more opportunities to discuss and meet throughout the day, which is perhaps why they are more collaborative in their practices than the other participants in England. Other TAs work part-time which imposes a SEN support type of role. Part-time TAs arrive in school after the school day begins and leave before it ends, thus limiting their opportunities to meet with their teachers and co-plan. According to the S1-T2 ‘when your TA arrives at the same time as the children there’s very little time to communicate’. This is an implication of macro level practices in the national system with the associated TA recruitment on teaching in the classroom.

The presence of TAs influences positive teacher attitudes towards inclusive education as teachers feel more supported to teach their diverse learners (Saloviita and Schaffus, 2016), and have a partner who assumes equal responsibility of their classroom (Väyrynen and Paksuniemi,

2018). This explains why participating teachers in England report more positive attitudes towards inclusion in the questionnaire than participating teachers in Bahrain, as they have the TA support available. This illustrates a mesosystem influence of teacher attitudes on a microsystem practice of the TA role.

The role of TAs in England is however inconsistent with their role as prescribed by the IPA. Black-Hawkins and Florian (2012) stipulate that TAs should be available to support all learners in the classroom based on students' requirement for assistance. TAs should not be associated with one learner or a group of learners to avoid their isolation from their peers. This is earlier evidenced by TAs impeding student-student interactions, and student-teacher interactions. For more inclusive co-teaching practices, co-teachers can adopt team teaching where the teacher and TA equally engage in lesson planning and teaching (Forlin, 2010). This form of co-teaching is more consistent with inclusive practice as students with lower ability are not marginalised in front of their peers, and both teachers assume full responsibility for all learners in the classroom. The absence of TAs in Bahrain indicates that the TA role is not necessary for an inclusive classroom, and that teachers are able to teach a diverse classroom through the use of different methods that enable peer collaborative support. The late arrival of this Western inclusive practice to Bahrain inadvertently benefits teachers to embrace full responsibility of all learners in their classrooms, which is an essential pre-requisite for inclusive teaching (Rix *et al.*, 2009) and is consistent with the ODI.

7.5.4 Differentiated instruction (DI).

Differentiated instruction is implemented in England and Bahrain and all the participating schools have a context-oriented approach to DI, where the curriculum is differentiated for all learners and not only learners with SEN (Strogilos *et al.*, 2017). While this characteristic is shared between the two research contexts, the specific implementation of DI is distinctive. The main differences are that the DI approach for schools in England is through ability groupings, individual student tasks, and teacher's choice of student task. The version of DI implemented in S1 and S2 is more consistent with Roy, Guay and Valois (2013), that DI encompasses instructional adaptations based on differences in students' abilities, and academic progress monitoring. While in Bahrain's S3 and S4 DI is predominantly applied in mixed ability groupings, through collaborative group work or peer support at the end of an individual task, and by student's choice of task. This application of DI is similar to Tomlinson (2014) which responds to differences in students' abilities as well as interests.

In S2, differentiation is an integral part of this school's inclusive practice to the extent that I was only allowed to observe lessons where differentiation was implemented once the teachers became aware of my interest in inclusion. This is an implication of the school's definition of inclusion in the exosystem and teacher's definition of inclusion in the mesosystem, in that inclusive practice is mainly defined and enacted through differentiated instruction. While all lessons should be inherently differentiated, S1 and S2's perspective of differentiation mostly concerns lessons differentiated to three-star levels and student tasks. Individual differentiated tasks dominate class time in England because they are consistent with Ofsted requirements for individual student work as indicated by the participants, and the guidelines in the SEN Code of Practice pertaining to the use of differentiation (DfE, 2015). Such school practices and articulation of inclusive education are therefore attributed to macro level influences. In

Bahrain's S3 and S4, given the limited awareness of inclusive education on a macrosystem level, the schools did not use DI as a way to enact inclusion. DI is instead utilised to respond to learners' diverse needs and interests, and is more aligned to the ODI.

The participating teachers in England pre-determine students' star levels through the use of ability groups, by instructing each group to complete a specific star level from a given task. Although S2-T2 claims that any student can attempt any star level, the three-star level is not introduced on the smart board with the other levels. Students from other star levels are thus restricted to their allocated level and do not have an opportunity to attempt the three-star task. This is considered an exclusionary practice by the IPA (Spratt and Florian, 2015) and the ODI. Low ability groups who complete the one-star task are frequently taken out of the classroom by the TA to 'focus on their work'. This group of learners is also restricted to the one-star task, as well as identified as having SEN in front of their peers. In some instances, students want to attempt harder work, but are convinced by the teacher not to. 'She's not a three-star child, but I wanted to give her that experience' (S2-T1). Using such language to describe learners' abilities can have detrimental effects on students' self-esteem and self-efficacy by communicating low teacher expectations for students' achievement, which is attributed to negative teacher attitudes as discussed in the mesosystem.

There is a prominent difference in the language used by participant teachers in England as opposed to teachers in Bahrain when discussing DI. According to S4-AP in Bahrain, the lowest star level is referred to as the 'shinning stars'. The constructive language use is another indication of teachers' positive attitudes towards inclusive education in Bahrain. In S3 and S4, students are given an opportunity to attempt all the star level tasks which provides equal

opportunities for learners to progress, particularly that differentiation by choice increases student motivation and engagement (Finkelstein, Sharma and Furlonger, 2019). DI in Bahrain is usually supported through the use of a number of teaching strategies. For example, S3-T2's use of the 'revolving circle strategy' illustrates the use of a collaborative group task where the group members each solve part of a differentiated group activity. Group members choose the portion they want to complete as the worksheet moves across the group table from one student to another. Students are guided by their peer teachers when support is needed. This is consistent with the finding in the teachers' questionnaire where a strong relationship is found between the use of differentiation and cooperative learning strategies in Bahrain. This relationship is not significant for teachers in England, which is coherent with the findings from classroom observations.

According to Nind *et al.* (2005), giving students modifications that restrict their advancement reveals teachers' assumptions of an entity view of ability and intelligence. Deterministic views of ability are incongruent with inclusive practice, and the pre-determination of student level in the participating schools in England is linked to negative attitudes towards inclusion. As argued earlier in the mesosystem, teachers in England demonstrate negative attitudes towards the presence of students with SEN in their class through teachers' negative talk about the students during the observations. However, pre-determined teacher allocations of students' star levels are not consistently harmful according to Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011), who suggest that learners can sometimes select a task either below or above their current abilities, which is why teachers guide their selection of a level more appropriate to their needs.

An alternative approach to the one observed in England could be what is done in Bahrain by S3-T2. S3-T2 guides students to their task level when differentiation is first introduced at the beginning of the school year, yet students can still attempt and complete other level tasks (either lower or higher) once they complete their initial assigned level. Participating teachers in England believe that confidence building is facilitated through restricting students task levels, whereas participating teachers in Bahrain build student confidence by giving them opportunities to attempt more challenging work. All behaviours observed in England related to DI are consequences of ability grouping and the TA's responsibility for low ability groups, further emphasising the connections within the microsystem. The constant identification of higher ability and lower ability learners in S1 and S2 further engraves this difference culture and restriction of opportunities, which contradict inclusive values in the ODI.

The use of differentiated instruction is strongly associated with student autonomy through encouraging student choice-making (Roy, Guay and Valois, 2013). The promotion of student autonomy was observed in Bahrain to a larger extent than in England. This could be due to students' choice of differentiated task in Bahrain compared to teachers' choice of differentiated task in England. Teachers in England attribute student dependence to the TA role. Teachers generally have low expectations for students' ability to work independently or support their peers. Teachers' low expectations for students' ability could also be the result of negative teacher attitudes as argued earlier in the mesosystem. Certain teacher behaviours further emphasise students' dependence, such as preparing student books with the learning outcome and success criteria rather than allowing students to write it themselves. Another explanation for student dependence in England is the lack of responsibilities given to students either during a differentiated task or other tasks, and the excessive use of teacher-centred learning. Student

autonomy is integral to inclusive practices (Goransson, Malmqvist and Nilholm, 2013), but as observed in England, there are few student roles that give the responsibility to increase confidence. Giving students roles and tasks as well as activating student-centred learning and peer-mentoring helps counteract the student dependence experienced in the schools in England. This way, students are engaged by supporting their peers during a differentiated task rather than constantly seek guidance from the teacher or TA.

On the contrary, in S3 and S4, students have organisational and academic roles based on student choice. Student co-agency in the learning process is one of the main principles of inclusive practice (Nind and Wearmouth, 2006). Inclusive practice embraces students' input rather than enforces perspectives (Nind *et al.*, 2005), this is also found in Bahrain as teachers discuss the use of teaching strategies with students, and consult learners on the choice of learning activities. For DI to be more consistent with the ODI values, students' choice of task and student autonomy should be endorsed through mixed ability groups and peer collaborative work.

7.5.5 Varied teaching and practices as indications of attitudes.

One of the main inclusive practices observed in Bahrain is in the use of a variety of teaching strategies as they cater for learners' diverse interests and abilities. Teachers in S3 and S4 were responsive to students' different learning styles which formed the basis of lesson planning. The multi-method approach to teaching is supported by Davis and Florian (2004b) in that teaching diverse learners requires teachers' attentiveness to their learning style and multiple intelligences. The observations in Bahrain involve the use of brainstorming, role play in storytelling, problem-solving, peer-assessment, differentiation, learning through play, think-

pair-share, project-based learning, and variations in peer collaborative work. This variety of teaching practices is also consistent with teachers' responses to the questionnaire. At the end of the teachers' questionnaire, teachers are asked to indicate other teaching practices used for inclusion. Teachers in Bahrain designated the use of all of the above strategies in addition to the use of flipped classroom, little teacher, six hats, educational games, multiple intelligences, four corners, self-directed learning, and verbal reinforcement.

This variety of teaching strategies is not reciprocated by teachers in England, as teachers mostly utilise differentiated instruction with individual student work. Not only do teachers in Bahrain use a variety of teaching strategies, but many of the strategies are implemented simultaneously. For instance, the revolving circle strategy by S3-T2 shows the use of group work as students work collaboratively on a task, the peer pairing strategy as lower ability students are supported by their peer teacher, and differentiation by choice where students have a choice of task from the overall group task. This activity promotes student autonomy as students are prepared to be self-regulated learners, promotes interdependence as all group members need to work together to complete the task, and students are reinforced for their collective accomplishment. This variety of teaching methods is encouraged by the Ministry of Education at a macrosystem level, which explains its extensive use in the microsystem.

The student-centred learning experience in Bahrain additionally includes the use of reinforcement that responds to students' behaviour and achievement, and students are rewarded based on individual and group accomplishment. The use of positive reinforcement is reciprocated by students' enthusiasm in learning. Student enthusiasm is also possibly strengthened through the variety of teaching techniques that increase student motivation. There

is a lack of research to support the claim of the connection between inclusive teaching strategies with student enjoyment and engagement.

In England's S1 and S2, students are reinforced mainly for behavioural accomplishments rather than academic achievement, and most reinforcement is rewarded for individual behaviour rather than collective accomplishment. Using group rewards potentially facilitates the implementation of peer collaborative learning and peer support. There is a notable absence of varied teaching and student enthusiasm in England, which is attributed to that teaching methods are implemented more routinely.

Teachers in S1 and S2 repeatedly use teacher-directed learning, and differentiation through individual student work in their books. It might be that consistency is more beneficial for the students in these schools. During one conversation with S2-T1, the teacher explains how he has two students with autism, and that they tend to feel anxious when the routine changes, so consistency is essential in that case. This was also observed during classroom observations as some students indicated feeling disrupted during a sudden change of classroom routine. However, teacher-directed learning can still be implemented in a more interactive manner. Morningstar (2015) discusses the benefits of teacher-centred learning for student engagement as long as students are involved and responsive. This can be done by showing a video, or allowing students to vote to respond to a teacher's question, and other means of student participation. Based on the examples discussed above, the use of student-centred learning and a variety of teaching strategies are more aligned to the ODI as they are more responsive to learners' range of abilities and interests.

Following the in-depth critical analysis of the teaching practices used for inclusion in both research contexts, it is essential to determine the relationship between teacher attitudes towards inclusive education and the teaching practices used. While teacher questionnaires reveal that there is no relationship between teacher attitudes towards inclusion and inclusive teaching practices, through the observations and interviews, a relationship between teacher attitudes and practices is deduced. In S1 and S2, the use of ability grouping implies negative teacher attitudes towards inclusion as teachers convey low expectations for students' ability to progress and be challenged, and is connected to deterministic beliefs of student ability. The promotion of student autonomy and responsibility through the use of mixed ability groups in S3 and S4 indicates positive teacher attitudes towards inclusion. The extensive use of peer collaborative work and differentiation by student choice in Bahrain additionally illustrate positive teacher attitudes, as teachers communicate high expectations for students' ability to work collaboratively and independently.

The negative language used by teachers in England signifies negative attitudes towards inclusion, whereas the positive language used by teachers in Bahrain (e.g. shining stars) illustrates positive attitudes towards inclusion. The specific role of teaching assistants in S1 and S2 is connected to negative teacher attitudes towards inclusive education. This is supported by Jordan, Schwartz and McGhie-Richmond (2009) in that teachers with negative attitudes or teachers with 'pathognomonic perspectives' tend to abandon their responsibility to teach learners with SEN, and attribute that responsibility to parents and support outside of the classroom. While teachers with positive attitudes or 'interventionalist beliefs' embrace their responsibility to teach all learners, similarly to teachers in Bahrain. Positive teacher attitudes towards inclusion are therefore emphasised in shaping inclusive teaching practices, and the

experiences of learners in the classroom, as well as enabling the implementation of the IPA and the ODI.

7.6 Conclusion

This chapter highlighted the role of national inclusive policy in a macrosystem level in shaping practices in the inner ecosystems. The majority of practices illustrated a top-down approach to the local inclusive agenda, as its influence disseminates from the macrosystem, to the exo-, meso-, and microsystem. As for the operational definition of inclusion (ODI) and the practices discussed above, inclusionary and exclusionary practices are relatively equivalent in England and Bahrain in the macrosystem, exosystem and mesosystem. However, in the microsystem, the practices in Bahrain's S3 and S4 align more with the ODI than practices in England's S1 and S2. Yet, certain practices in both countries are still considered exclusionary.

From the schools' perspectives, both research contexts deal with their unique set of environmental circumstances that make the implementation of inclusive education more challenging. S1 and S2 in England encounter the following challenges: teaching learners with difficult backgrounds, a large number of learners with English as their second language, a SEN focused system, and funding shortages. S3 and S4 in Bahrain encounter the following challenges: a large number of learners with Arabic as their second language, lack of awareness of inclusive education, limited teaching support, and negative parent attitudes. One of the main challenges in Bahrain is represented in the school entry point where formal education begins in Year 1 and teachers need to teach a classroom of learners with varying educational backgrounds.

In the broader level of the macrosystem, in England's S1 and S2, the national focus on SEN provision and practice shaped schools' perspectives of inclusive education. The influence of the SEN centric education system in England extends throughout the ecosystems; from SEN school practices in the exosystem represented in the schools' perspective of inclusive education, to SEN teacher definitions of inclusion in the mesosystem, and SEN teaching practices in the microsystem through the role of TAs and interventions. While S1 and S2 were accepting of students with SEN, some of the practices and attitudes were antithetical to inclusive principles. Inclusion in S1 and S2 is articulated through special education practices, and the teaching practices discussed above are a product of their system. This illustrates how education systems can obstruct teachers' inclusive efforts and practices, where inclusion should concern all learners and embraces their diversity.

Knowledge of national practices by the participating staff in Bahrain is lacking, the possible lack of communication between policy makers and school staff on inclusive education can be a socio-cultural factor. In Bahrain's S3 and S4, the diversification of teaching methods and concern for non-Arabic speakers in a macrosystem level is influenced through the Ministry of Education's focus to cater for diverse learners, raise student achievement, as well as a response to the sudden changing student demographic in schools. Given the unawareness of participants in S3 and S4 of inclusive education and related policies, the practices discussed in this chapter are not with the primary intention of achieving inclusion. Inclusive values are however conveyed through the practices as schools are encouraged to cater for the diversity of learners in order to improve student attainment. Yet, students with severe needs are still excluded within the boundaries of the mainstream school through their placement in special needs classrooms.

While teachers indicate that these learners are gradually integrated in the mainstream classroom, the mechanism and its length are unclear.

Not all practices have disseminated as a top-down approach, some practices are estimated to have elicited from the inner ecosystems to influence school and national policies. In S1 and S2, the demand for more SEN funding and more TAs to cater for learners with SEN could have influenced national policies to enhance the provision of SEN support. Similarly, in Bahrain, changes in the classroom composition and its increased diversity could have triggered a national focus on non-Arabic speakers and the associated requirements for schools to comply.

In the exosystem, the unique way in which the participating schools implemented inclusive education in school policies and overall practices is illustrated. This level is where the participating schools from England and Bahrain shared similar principles in an inclusive school culture and collaboration with external agencies. The implementation of inclusion policy in schools is initiated with the staff's perception of inclusion, and their subsequent way to implement inclusive education. It is thus essential that the school leadership shares the same perspective of inclusion with all members of the school community as it eases implementation and ensures the consistency of practices, this can be done through school policies or a school strategic plan. Shared conceptualisations of inclusive education are considered a pre-requisite to inclusive school culture. Schools in both research contexts additionally sustain a positive inclusive school ethos, which extends schools' inclusive practices and embracement of all members of the school community. The practices in S1 and S2 are more SEN based to enhance SEN support, while practices in S3 and S4 serve a wider range of learners' interests and abilities.

In the mesosystem, the participating teachers in England and Bahrain both conveyed negative teacher attitudes towards inclusive education in the interviews, and SEN centric views of inclusion. In S1 and S2, however, negative teacher attitudes in the interviews were corroborated with teacher behaviours in the classroom which were revealing of these negative attitudes. Although teachers in S1 and S2 communicated high expectations for students in the questionnaire, they enacted low expectations for learners in the classroom. Teachers in S3 and S4, on the contrary, indicated low expectations for learners' academic progress in the questionnaire, but enacted high expectations during the observations. The negative attitudes of Bahraini parents and students towards the inclusion of non-Arabic speakers are hidden attitudes, and have not been observed to directly impact teaching practices. It is vital for all teachers to communicate high expectations for all learners to achieve academically and socially in the mainstream classroom, in order for learners to feel accepted and thrive in a more constructive learning environment. The impact of attitudes and beliefs in shaping behaviours and practices should not be underestimated.

In the microsystem, considering the cultural and societal perspective, the surrounding culture in each country is clearly linked to certain teaching practices. The individualistic culture in England is corroborated with an emphasis on individual student work in the classrooms, while the collectivist culture in Bahrain is met with collaborative practice between teachers and students in the schools. Practices examined in the microsystem reveal that the intersection of collaborative learning strategies, collaborative teaching techniques between professionals, the promotion of student autonomy, and student-centred learning are more conducive to inclusive

practice. Inclusionary and exclusionary practices in the microsystem are critically analysed next in ‘Chapter 8: Conclusion’.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

8.1 Overview

In ‘Chapter 7: Discussion’, each ecosystem responded to the respective research questions of the study. This final chapter critically summarises the main findings of this research and their educational and research implications. The state of inclusive education in each research context is determined, and the way forward with the inclusion agenda. The contribution of this study is discussed in three main domains: theory, methodology and practice. The novel contribution of the thesis to practice in inclusive education is primarily represented in the inclusive practice continuum (IPC). The chapter then illustrates the limitations of the research project, directions of future research, and concludes with the final reflections.

8.2 A Cross-national Comparison of Inclusion

It is crucial that this cross-cultural comparison attended to the history and culture of each research context, which was enabled through the use of the Ecological Systems Theory (EST) as the theoretical framework of this study (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The Salamanca Statement mandated inclusion globally in 1994 (UNESCO, 1994), whereas inclusive education in England can be traced back to the Warnock Report in 1978 (DfE, 1978). Despite the globalisation of inclusion policy, in some contexts such as Bahrain, inclusive education policy appears nascent. Inclusion in Bahrain can only be traced back to 2005 (Weber, 2012). Given the elusiveness of inclusive education policy, there was some concern whether Bahrain’s education system has

sufficient inclusive education practices to analyse and its readiness for this comparative case study.

This research explored how inclusive education was defined and enacted in England and Bahrain. The research objectives were to identify the state of inclusive education in each country, and to examine how the cultural characteristics of England and Bahrain influenced the understandings and implementation of the inclusive education agenda. Practices in England's S1 and S2 responded to the political agenda of inclusion that gave the impression of an inclusive society, whereas in reality that may not be the case. Although participant teachers in England were more aware of national inclusion policy than teachers in Bahrain, teachers in S1 and S2 have not reflected on the actual purpose of the policy in securing equal access and rights to education, and instead pursued further special educational needs (SEN) provision. Inclusive education in these schools was contingent on the amount of SEN funding schools were given to support their learners. Specialist pedagogy and SEN funding were applied in a way that subjected learners to marginalisation.

The participating schools in both countries seemed to define inclusion as location. This is referred to by Kauffman and Badar (2014) as place-based, whereas it should be instruction-based and comprises learners' academic and social participation. That is, in the participating schools, the location of learners with SEN in the mainstream classroom denoted inclusive practice, even if it was only their partial presence. In both research contexts, exclusionary spaces were created within the mainstream schools for learners with special needs. Exclusionary practices were thus evident in both education systems with the use of special classrooms or resource rooms within mainstream schools for learners with more support

requirements. The direction and movement of learners to or from these isolated settings was however different in each country.

Inclusive education practice and policy in both countries still operated within the medical model of disability. Examples of such practices included: SEN funding in England, integration streams in Bahrain, and teacher attitudes in England and Bahrain that were conditional on student needs. S1 and S2 catered for learners with SEN separately within the mainstream classroom as well as out of class support. S3 and S4 attempted to designate common times during the school day for learners to do more focused work, to avoid their exclusion from the general curriculum. While it is essential to acknowledge students need for specific support and provision, the data shows that it is equally vital for teachers to take full responsibility for students' obstacles in learning rather than attributing them to deficiencies in the learner (Florian and Black-Hawkins, 2011). The latter represents the social model of disability as opposed to the medical model (Sharma, Loreman and Forlin, 2012).

The role of external agencies in aiding schools' inclusive practice has been highlighted in this study. This specifically concerned the role of England's local authorities and Office for Standards in Education, as well as Bahrain's Ministry of Education and Bahrain Qualifications Authority. Schools' practices corresponded to the perspective of inclusion that the external agencies embodied. This was communicated through the expectations of external agencies for schools' implementation of national curriculum and pedagogy, as well as school evaluations.

As found in the research, all school practices and inclusive provision have been in response to the needs and characteristics of the surrounding community demographic. S1 and S2 in England

supported families in their disadvantaged neighbourhoods, while S3 and S4 in Bahrain supported the non-Arabic speaking community. The role of school leadership was particularly highlighted through the findings. School leaders were able to mitigate negative teacher perceptions of inclusion by modelling positive attitudes, unifying conceptualisations of inclusive education through the school ethos and/or strategic plan, and providing teaching support. School leaders additionally encouraged collaborative practice between teachers and collaborators by permitting teachers the time and space to do so; as well as provided opportunities for continuous professional development which were aligned with the 'inclusion for all' view internally and externally to the school. The SENCO role in England predominantly attended to SEN support, rather than embodying more of an inclusive manager role. The school leadership in Bahrain, on the other hand, was disconnected from SEN management and that function was performed by the special education teacher.

Inclusive school ethos largely determined the practices of school members in both contexts, and it was communicated through: the recruitment, evaluation, and training of teachers; collaboration with parents and the community; values which governed interactions across the school; and a physical school layout that facilitated participation and collaboration. Teacher attitudes towards inclusion were at the centre of all the interactions and school practices above. In both research contexts, teacher attitudes were shaped by national policies, school perceptions of inclusion, and school leadership. For example, SENCOs' emphasis on SEN support influenced teachers to express a similar conceptualisation of inclusion. Through the qualitative findings, teacher attitudes and behaviours in the classroom were connected to their teaching practices and expectations of learners.

The findings of this thesis pertaining to universalist inclusive pedagogy are summarised according to three main values. First, inclusive education was reinforced through collaborative practice between: teacher-teacher, student-student, school-to-school, teacher-student, teacher-teaching assistant, and school leader-teacher. Second, the essence of inclusive pedagogy was enabled through the student-centred learning experience which was facilitated through: the diversification of teaching methods, student autonomy, students' contribution to lesson planning and learning activities, and peer support. Third, the implementation of inclusion was beyond the sole responsibility of the school, it was also the role of: families and communities; external agencies and policy makers; and the beliefs of teachers, parents and students.

8.3 Contribution of the Study to Theory and Methodology

This study is the first to provide a holistic view of inclusive education policy and practice in Bahrain, particularly given the paucity of research in Bahrain specifically relating to the state of inclusion. Research in Bahrain and England using classroom observations to investigate teacher attitudes as well as inclusive practice is particularly limited. This study however provided an in-depth, multi-dimensional perspective of teacher attitudes and inclusive teaching through the use of interviews, classroom observations, and questionnaires. The methodological triangulation enabled an exploration of all factors through three data collection methods.

Using Bronfenbrenner's EST as the theoretical framework of this study enabled a continuous connection between culture and practice. That is, how culture shaped practices and vice versa. The theoretical lens emphasised the notion that an exploration of inclusive practice needs to be considered at all levels of the nation, the school, and the classroom; which provided an all-

encompassing view of the implementation of inclusion. The EST was key to the development of the IPC, discussed in the next section.

The theoretical framework additionally provided consistency for this cross-cultural comparison in the use of language as a basis for analysis and contrast. The ecological framework is considered integral to research in the area of inclusive education (Singal, 2006). Mónico *et al.* (2018) reveals that some teachers are inclined to improve their knowledge on inclusive teaching, but are restricted by local policies that do not share similar priorities. This stresses the consideration of the local contexts, which enable an understanding of school and teaching practices. According to the authors, one of the main reasons why so many countries struggle to establish an inclusive education system is the lack of consensus within the education system on the meaning and practice of inclusion that is most suitable to the cultural context. It is thus vital for inclusion to be studied in response to local conditions and circumstances (Kennett, 2013), particularly as it represents societal values.

One of the main contributions of this study to methodology is represented in the mixed-method, parallel design and triangulation of findings. The methodological triangulation revealed divergent findings between the quantitative and qualitative sources in the two domains of teacher attitudes and expectations for students. Teachers in S1 and S2 indicated positive attitudes and expectations for students in the questionnaire, yet enacted negative attitudes and low expectations in the interviews and observations. Teachers in S3 and S4 designated negative attitudes in the questionnaire, however, they displayed positive attitudes and high expectations for learners in the observations. This illustrated a divergence between what teachers declare and their actual practices in inclusion.

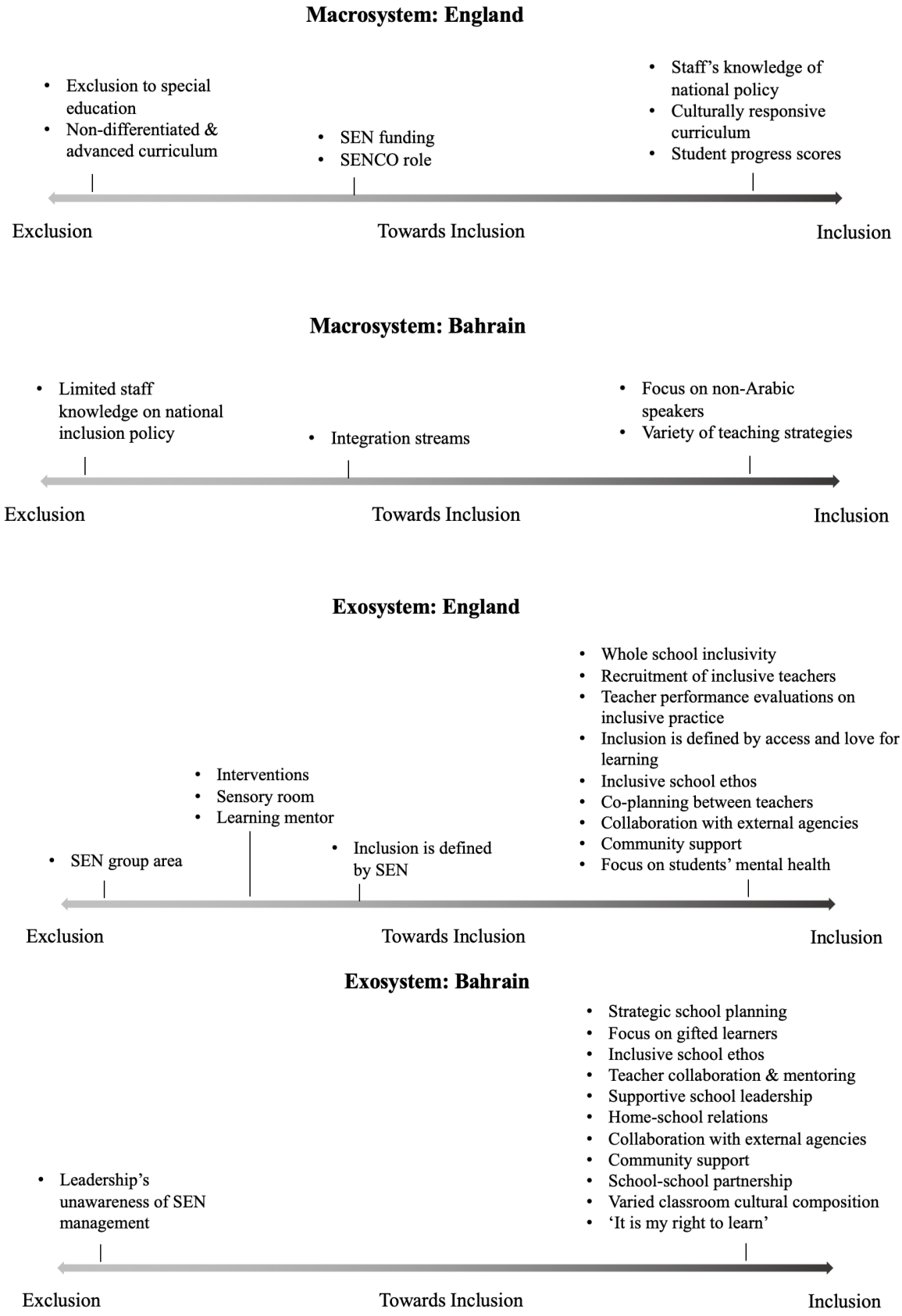
In the previous chapter, the findings from the interviews and observations were highlighted more than the teachers' questionnaire, as the findings were consistent across two qualitative sources (observations and interviews) compared to one quantitative source (questionnaire). All other variables were consistent across all three data sources and they included the extensive use of cooperative learning strategies in Bahrain, the strong association between the use of social skills strategies and cooperative learning strategies in Bahrain, and the strong relationship between differentiation and cooperative learning strategies in Bahrain. The convergent and divergent findings thus illustrated the importance of measuring such variables through a mixed-method design to enhance the validity of the results. The examination of variables such as teacher attitudes through one method is unlikely to provide the depth of a qualitative source as well its implications on teaching practices. While some might argue that the partially divergent results are due to flaws in the design of the tools or their analysis (Bergman, 2008); this instead signifies the importance of measuring attitudinal variables through a mixed-method approach.

8.4 Contribution of the Study to Practice

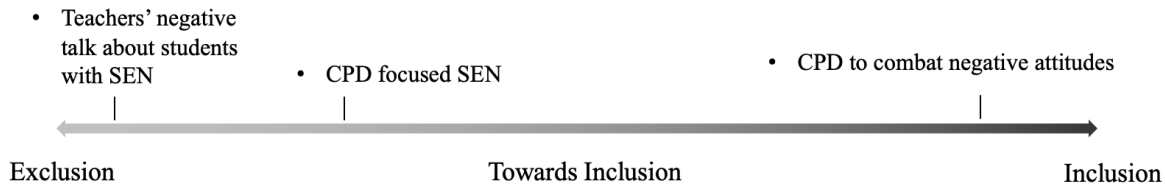
This study addressed a major gap in the literature in the area of inclusive practice as critically discussed in 'Chapter 2: Literature Review'. The main contribution of this study is exemplified in the inclusive practice continuum (IPC). The IPC illustrates some of the main practices discussed in this thesis (see Figure 8.1), where the practice and its respective country is placed on a continuum and allocated into either being: exclusionary, contributing towards inclusive education, or identified as an inclusive practice. The figure is essential as it demonstrates that the inclusion agenda is multi-layered and encompasses: national policy in the macrosystem,

school practices in the exosystem, attitudes and beliefs in the mesosystem, and pedagogy in the microsystem. Inclusion and exclusion are at the opposite ends of the continuum. Practices are placed on the continuum and they can move forwards in the direction of inclusion, or backwards in the direction of exclusion depending on how the practice is implemented. A continuum is used to evaluate inclusive practice in order to emphasise that inclusive education is an ongoing endeavour, and that some practices work to enable inclusion yet are exclusionary and need to be refined to be considered inclusive practice. The practices listed below in Figure 8.1 are not specifically prescribed as inclusive practices independently, but they are considered inclusive in response to the context and the way they have been implemented by the participating schools in this study.

Figure 8.1 The inclusive practice continuum (IPC)



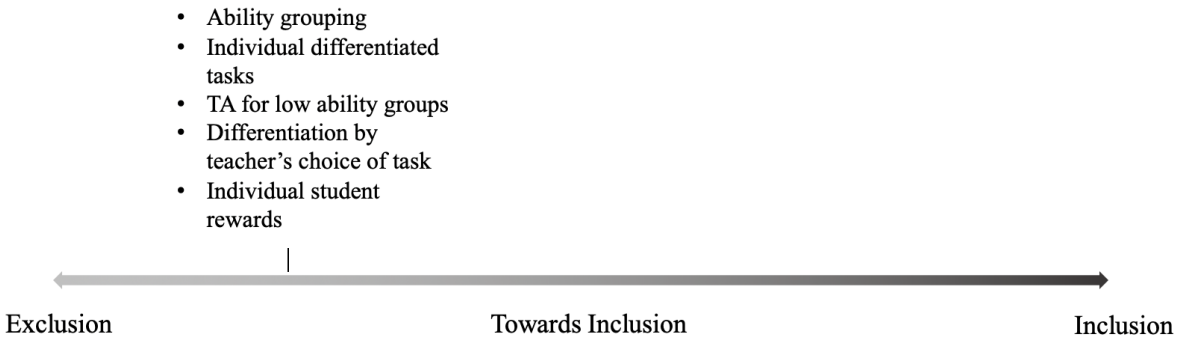
Mesosystem: England



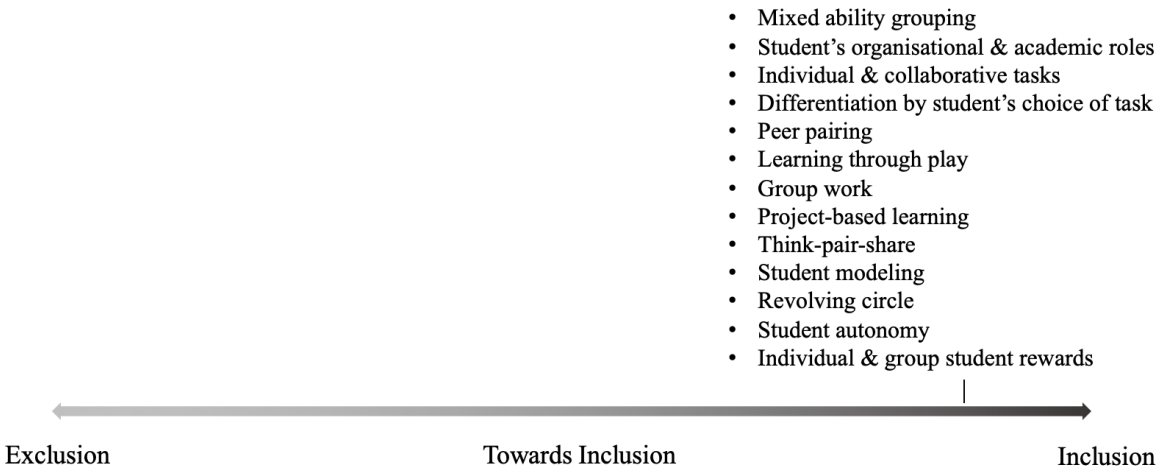
Mesosystem: Bahrain



Microsystem: England



Microsystem: Bahrain



The 61 practices in the continuum can be developed into a self-report questionnaire for schools and teachers to complete to indicate their use of the practices. It is vital for the continuum to first be trialed and refined. It can alternatively be utilised as a preliminary guide and checklist for structured school and classroom observations (O'Leary, 2014), to observe inclusive practice. Observers can place practices along the continuum based on the practice being inclusionary or exclusionary, which enables a reflective discussion between the observer and teacher on which practices align more with the view of inclusion according to the operational definition of inclusion (ODI). The ODI specifies that inclusive education: encompasses social inclusion and academic/curricular inclusion; concerned with the active participation, and attainment of all learners in a mainstream school; and is concerned with all students without the overt identification of one vulnerable group of learners. Exclusion is defined as: students' removal from mainstream education to special education, students' full-time or part-time presence and attendance in a resource room within a mainstream school, and students' marginalisation within the mainstream classroom. The use of the continuum to collect quantitative data however needs to be supported with qualitative methods in order to triangulate the findings and to provide descriptions of the associated practices.

In comparison to other tools that assess inclusive practice, the continuum is an all-inclusive tool as it examines practices on a country level, school level, and classroom level. For example, the Classroom Observation Scale (COS) developed by Jordan and McGhie-Richmond (2014) is a tool used by observers to examine teachers' instructional effectiveness in a classroom of diverse learners, and is thus at the classroom level. The COS is also implemented in the Canadian context and is based on the principles of Universal Design of Learning, whereas this thesis mostly focused on literature and practices in the European context. A local example of a tool

used to evaluate inclusion includes the Index for Inclusion established by Booth and Ainscow (2002), which measures inclusive practice on a school level.

The operational definition of inclusion (ODI) is another primary contribution of this study to the field of inclusive education. This is vital given the lack of consensus on conceptualising inclusive education (Göransson and Nilholm, 2014b; Spratt and Florian, 2015), and its consequences in determining inclusive practice. The definition of inclusive education and exclusion is considered at a macrosystem level as it shapes inclusion policy. Based on the ODI and the IPC, a number of recommendations have been developed in a macrosystem level to be implemented by policy makers in both research contexts (see Table 8.1).

Macrosystem level recommendations furthermore encompass recommendations for teacher education to be implemented on a national level. Continuous professional development (CPD) for teachers should support co-teaching practices between mainstream teachers and collaborators including other mainstream teachers, special education teachers, teaching assistants, learning mentors, and other collaborators. Current co-teaching practices predominantly endorse co-teaching with either special education teachers or teaching assistants, where these collaborators adopt the role of assistant to the main teacher (Strogilos, 2012). Co-teaching practices should instead encourage shared teaching responsibilities between teachers in the mainstream classroom and collaborators to avoid the marginalisation and stigmatisation of learners. CPD promotes collaborative practices with teachers in other schools to share mutual challenges and approaches to inclusive education, as well as within-school mentoring of novice teachers by experienced teachers.

In addition to the ODI and IPC, it is imperative to establish broad principles of inclusive practice and pedagogy. This permits a flexible approach to implementing inclusive education and inclusive teaching, as opposed prescribing specific teaching practices that are considered inclusive. Principles of inclusive pedagogy based on the ODI and IPC have been developed as guidance to more specific school and classroom inclusive practices, they are on an exo- and microsystem level. These principles of inclusive pedagogy are constructed based on the findings from this study and their interpretation in 'Chapter 7: Discussion' as being inclusionary or exclusionary practices. The principles enable practitioners to engage in a reflective process to evaluate inclusive practices, and they are an extension of the inclusive pedagogical approach (IPA) (Florian and Black-Hawkins, 2011), with adjustments and additions of certain principles that are more consistent with the reality of the classrooms observed in this study. Recommendations on an exosystem level for inclusive school practice are in Table 8.1.

It is essential that the recommendations for inclusive school practice respond to the school circumstances and availability of resources. As evidenced in this study, co-teaching is not possible in all education systems particularly schools in Bahrain where the role of the teaching assistant (TA) is not available. The recommendations are therefore general guidelines to a more inclusive learning environment, where certain adjustments have to be made to suit the context. The principles are a valuable addition to practice and research in inclusion, and can be used as a school self-assessment guide. In the mesosystem, this level predominantly tackles teachers attitudes towards inclusion. These attitudes are influenced by the recommended practices in the exosystem and macrosystem, and focus on teachers assuming full responsibility for the education and progress of their learners. As for the microsystem, recommendations for inclusive teaching and pedagogy are listed in Table 8.1.

Table 8.1 Recommendations per ecosystem

Recommendations
Macrosystem
- Communicate national inclusion policy to schools and teachers. - Recognise student progress scores. - Differentiate for schools based on community conditions. - Integrate inclusive practices in school performance evaluations. - Create the position of an inclusion coordinator or manager at a senior leadership level. - Encourage all schools to develop a school ethos and strategic plan. - Develop a culturally and religiously inclusive curriculum and pedagogy. - Support all learners including: gifted learners, students with special educational needs, second language learners, and students from ethnic minority groups.
Exosystem
- The school ethos is welcoming, collaborative, and embraces diversity. - Extra-curricular and school activities are available for all learners to participate in. - Collaborative and reflective practice between school staff is facilitated by the school. - Existing school resources and staff knowledge are used to engage in collaborative problem-solving to implement inclusive education. - Schools collaborate with parents, external agencies, community, and other schools. - The physical school layout promotes the active participation and achievement of all learners. - Limited resource room attendance. Any additional out of class support required by some learners takes place in common times to prevent the removal of some learners from class in front of their peers.
Mesosystem
- All teachers are inclusive teachers. - Teachers reject deterministic views of student abilities. - Teachers embrace their responsibility to teach all learners in the classroom.
Microsystem
- Teachers do not use a specific teaching strategy, but focus on how a strategy is used to be inclusive of all learners. - Teachers utilise pedagogical diversity to suit their diverse learners. - Teachers predominantly implement student-centred learning to engage learners in the learning process. - Teachers use mixed ability grouping for the majority of class time. - Differentiated instruction is implemented within mixed ability groups. Learners work individually or collaboratively with their own choice of task. All level tasks are available for all students to attempt. - Teachers invite active parental participation in the learning process. - Co-teaching with a support teacher. Co-teachers work collaboratively and team-teach to support all learners in the classroom. Collaborators are available to support all learners based on students' request for assistance. - Conversations on student attainment/ability are concealed from the learners. - Any additional support provided to the learners is provided without identifying these learners as being different in front of their peers. - Students are encouraged to be autonomous and self-regulated learners. - Students are co-agents in the learning process.

8.5 Limitations and Directions of Future Research

This is the first comparative study to investigate inclusive practice and pedagogy in England and Bahrain. The paucity of research on inclusive education in Bahrain invites a thorough investigation on the origin of inclusion and integration policy, the purpose of it, the specific plans of implementation from policy makers, and how this initiative is communicated to schools. Given the lack of research on inclusive education in Bahrain and in the surrounding region, different definitions of inclusion and SEN, as well as the translation of terms from English to Arabic to be used in the data collection tools could still have impacted the findings. Despite the effort to make the tools comparable between the two research contexts as explained in 'Chapter 3: Methodology', the limited inclusion awareness in Bahrain restricted participants' understanding of the questions and hence their contribution to the study.

The absence of an official and agreed upon term for inclusive education in Arabic can be problematic for some comparative studies (Weber, 2012). Aldaihani (2011) faced a similar challenge in her comparative study of inclusive education in Kuwait and England and indicated the challenges of translating inclusion to Arabic, and the inevitable changes of the terms during the process of translation. Issues related to translating the main terms in the field of inclusion affect the way the data collection tools are formed and the subsequent data analysis (Mamas and Avramidis, 2013). Differences in terminology between nations can also inflict difficulties in obtaining data and statistics on for instance the children who receive special education. This suggests that particularly when comparing inclusive education between countries, it is essential to look at the data with caution (Ainscow, 1999). This should not discourage researchers from

cross-cultural comparison of policies; however, it is vital to acknowledge these issues and prompt researchers to find ways to mediate them.

Despite months of preparation and exploration of the literature on the education system in England, the large role TAs play in the classrooms was still unanticipated during the fieldwork phase of the study. Given the significant responsibility of TAs for learners with SEN, their perspective would have been a valuable addition to the teachers' questionnaire. TAs participation in the study could have contributed to the understanding of the context, and gain deeper insight into the teaching strategies used with different groups of learners. The case study design is another limitation of this study. As indicated in 'Chapter 3: Methodology', the generalisability of the case studies is representational generalisation and can only be generalised in response to the sampled population. While the case studies provided depth and understanding of the practices in each context, they offer a narrow perspective of inclusion in each country.

One of the main limitations of the study, is the absence of the student voice. Lindqvist and Nilholm (2014a) state that the staff perspective is insufficient to learn about the implementation of inclusion. An evaluation of inclusive practice and pedagogy is strengthened through the student perspective. A large number of studies incorporate the student perspective of an inclusive setting (e.g. Bjarnason, 2002; Fitch, 2003; Messiou, 2019). Student experiences in an inclusive classroom are vital to explore as evidence of the success of practice and pedagogy, of both students with and without SEN. Future studies can further explore the student perspective of inclusive practice through student questionnaires or interviews that investigate student perceptions of specific teaching practices used in the classroom, teacher-student interactions, the classroom climate, the school culture, and peer relations in an inclusive classroom. Students

thoughts and feelings of inclusion socially and academically are the most authentic indicator of the success of specific practices.

It is recommended that the IPC is trialled and implemented to enhance the multi-dimensional measurement of inclusive practice. Future research could focus on how inclusive education policy and provision for vulnerable learners can be provided without leading to exclusion. Anderson and Boyle (2015) propose that SEN funding should be allocated based on student needs, rather than a label or diagnoses. This then causes other issues of determining the limit to certain funding, as each case is reviewed individually rather than against a specific standard. As earlier stipulated by the ODI, inclusion should comprise the social and academic participation of learners. Some studies explore the social participation and inclusion of learners in a mainstream classroom (e.g. Avramidis, Avgeri and Strogilos, 2018), however, more research is required in the area of academic inclusion. Future studies should focus on how universalist teaching strategies could yield social and academic benefits to different groups of learners. That includes intervention studies with teachers on implementing inclusive pedagogy and the associated benefits for teachers and students.

8.6 Final Reflections

The crux of this thesis revealed a significant influence of the ideology of inclusion on its implementation. Despite the knowledge of participants in England of inclusive education and national policy related to that, it was an outdated view of inclusion with the emphasis on SEN. While it was valuable to provide a range of services and support to students with special needs to ease their integration in mainstream education, the over-emphasis on SEN has shown to

subject these learners to exclusionary practices through their constant identification and subsequent isolation from their peers. Bahrain's absence of inclusion awareness might have given it an advantage where Bahrain had greater flexibility than England in implementing teaching practices. The schools observed in Bahrain were not structured by an education system which prescribed inclusion and SEN practices, and therefore permitted schools the freedom to choose which practices suit their learners.

It might be that schools in England were held to a higher standard than schools in Bahrain as concerning the practice of inclusive education, that is due to the fact that England has had decades more to refine its practices than Bahrain. The focus of the thesis became greater than purely inclusive pedagogy, and instead pursued ways to enable learners to acquire the skills to be successful and contributing members to schools. Teachers should be equipped to teach everybody, and everybody should feel that they belong. This study contributed to the emerging body of work in the area of inclusive pedagogy and inclusive education, yet there is still significant progress to be made in the implementation of inclusion policy in a classroom context. It is vital to note that inclusion is an ongoing process, challenges will continue to arise and policies will need to adapt. Inclusion needs to be viewed as a joint global challenge, with some countries being challenged more than others, hence the value of collaboration. Inclusive values should be so embedded in our society and education system that there is no longer a need to state them. This is similar to the idea proposed by Schuelka *et al.* (2019, p. xxxvi) to move beyond inclusive education and all other terminology, and to instead only have 'quality education'. Inclusive education is essentially good education, where all learners are provided with opportunities to learn and thrive.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Ethical Approvals

Appendix 1a: Ethical approval from the Ministry of Education in Bahrain.

KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN
Ministry of Education

مملكة البحرين
وزارة التربية والتعليم

الرقم: 04/06/ت م ب 2019
التاريخ: 28 يوليو 2019م

الفاضلة الأستاذة حنين أنور بوكمال المحترمة

تحية طيبة وبعد،

الموضوع: الموافقة على تطبيق أدوات البحث في مدارس التعليم الابتدائي

بالإشارة إلى طلبكم المقدم بتاريخ 2019/06/25م، بشأن تطبيق أدوات البحث المعنون - واقع اتجاهات وممارسات المعلمين في تطبيق التعليم الشامل في الصف الدراسي: دراسة مقارنة- يسرني إعلامكم بالموافقة على تطبيق أدوات البحث في مدارس إدارة التعليم الابتدائي.

على أن يتم تطبيق الأدوات وفق التعليمات والشروط التالية:

1. الالتزام عند التطبيق بأداة / أدوات البحث التي تمت الموافقة عليها دون إضافة أو حذف.
2. أن يراعى عند تطبيق أدوات البحث عدم الإضرار بسير العملية التعليمية وتحصيل الطلبة.
3. المحافظة على المعلومات التي يتم جمعها، وعدم استخدامها إلا لأغراض البحث العلمي.
4. تزويد إدارة المكتبات العامة بوزارة التربية والتعليم بنسخة من البحث بعد الانتهاء منه.
5. جميع الإجراءات والخطوات اللازمة لتطبيق أدوات الدراسة تقع على عاتق الباحث نفسه ولا يحق له الاعتماد على كوادر الوزارة لأداء هذه المهمة.

مع تمنياتنا لكم بالتوفيق، وتفضلوا بقبول خالص التحية والاحترام

[redacted]

الدكتورة فرزانة عبدالله المراغي
مديرة إدارة البحث العلمي

إدارة البحث العلمي بالأمانة العامة لمجلس التنظيم العالي

Appendix 1b: Ethical approval from the University of Birmingham.

Dear Dr Papoudi,

Re: "The Realities of Teacher Attitudes and Practices in Inclusive Education: A Comparative Study" Application for Ethical Review ERN_19-0651

Thank you for your application for ethical review for the above project, which was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Ethical Review Committee.

On behalf of the Committee, I confirm that this study now has full ethical approval.

I would like to remind you that any substantive changes to the nature of the study as described in the Application for Ethical Review, and/or any adverse events occurring during the study should be promptly brought to the Committee's attention by the Principal Investigator and may necessitate further ethical review.

Please also ensure that the relevant requirements within the University's Code of Practice for Research and the information and guidance provided on the University's ethics webpages (available at https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk /finance/accounting/Research-Support-Group/Research-Ethics/Links-and-Resources.aspx) are adhered to and referred to in any future applications for ethical review. It is now a requirement on the revised application form (https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/finance/accounting/Research-Support-Group/Research-Ethics/Ethical-Review-Forms.aspx) to confirm that this guidance has been consulted and is understood, and that it has been taken into account when completing your application for ethical review.

Please be aware that whilst Health and Safety (H&S) issues may be considered during the ethical review process, you are still required to follow the University's guidance on H&S and to ensure that H&S risk assessments have been carried out as appropriate. For further information about this, please contact your School H&S representative or the University's H&S Unit at healthandsafety@contacts.bham.ac.uk.

Kind regards,

Ms Sam Waldron
Research Ethics Officer
Research Support Group
C Block Dome (room 132)
Aston Webb Building
University of Birmingham
Edgbaston B15 2TT
Tel:
Email:

Please remember to submit a new Self-Assessment Form for each new project. Click Ethical Review Process for further details regarding the University's Ethical Review process.

Appendix 2 – Participation Information Sheets and Consent Forms

Appendix 2a: Participation information sheet and consent form for the principal and SENCO/assistant principal interview.

Information Sheet – Principal/SENCO

Study title: The Realities of Teacher Attitudes and Practices in Inclusive Education: A Comparative Study
Name of lead researcher: Hanin Bukamal

My name is Hanin Bukamal and I am a PhD student at the School of Education, University of Birmingham. You can find out more about me if you visit: https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/education/postgraduate-research/profiles/bukama-hanin.aspx

I would like to invite you to participate in this study. Before you decide, I will explain why the research is being done and what it would involve for you.

My PhD study is a comparative study between England and Bahrain that explores the difference of practices in inclusive education in both countries with regards to inclusion policy, teacher attitudes towards inclusion, and inclusive pedagogy. More specifically, I seek to explore teachers' use of inclusive pedagogy and teaching practices to support an inclusive classroom of diverse students. The study aims to bring a greater understanding of the meaning of inclusive education and how it is practiced in each country.

If you agree to partake in the study, I will have a one-on-one interview with you asking about inclusion policy in the country, how it is enacted in your school, your role in its implementation, and the overall school inclusion approach and attitudes towards inclusive education. The interview should take approximately one hour of your time.

If you agree for your school to partake in the study, you would nominate two teachers who would be interested in participating in the observation and interview part of my study. I would like to observe two teachers in their classrooms for three school days for each teacher. In the three school days, I will attend the teacher's classroom for half a morning or afternoon to observe the teaching practices and will then interview the teacher (maximum 30 minutes) after the observation session to inquire more into his/her chosen pedagogy. During the observation, I will sit quietly in the classroom in a corner designated by the teacher to take notes. During the interview with the teacher, I will use an audio recording device to record the discussion.

There is no element of judgement involved in the process of my research. Participation is voluntary and you can withdraw your data one week after participation. All the information

gathered will be absolutely confidential and no participant or place names will be identified. It will not be possible to identify any school or individual during data analysis or in my finished thesis. The data will be stored on a secure platform used by the University of Birmingham. A summary report of the findings will be sent to the participating schools upon request after the completion of the study.

I hope that this information is helpful to you and if you have any questions please feel free to contact me or my supervisors.

Hanin Bukamal
Email: [redacted]

Supervisor details:
Dr Despina Papoudi, Lecturer in Autism, School of Education, University of Birmingham, [redacted]
Professor Gary Thomas, Professor of Inclusion and Diversity, School of Education, University of Birmingham, [redacted]

Consent Form - Principal/SENCO

Dear Principal and SENCO,

My name is Hanin Bukamal and I am a PhD student at the School of Education, University of Birmingham. You can find out more about me if you visit: https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/education/postgraduate-research/profiles/bukama-hanin.aspx

My PhD study is a comparative study between England and Bahrain that explores the difference of practices in inclusive education in both countries with regards to inclusion policy, teacher attitudes towards inclusion, and inclusive pedagogy. More specifically, I seek to explore teachers' use of inclusive pedagogy and teaching practices to support an inclusive classroom of diverse students.

You are invited to participate in my study by allowing me to interview you on the inclusion policy in the country, how it is enacted in your school, your role in its implementation, and the overall school inclusion approach and attitudes towards inclusive education. The interview should take approximately one hour of your time. This interview will be audio recorded to make it easier for me to remember our discussion.

If you agree to give your consent, please tick the relevant boxes below:
- I confirm that I have read and understand the participant information sheet for this study. I have had the opportunity to ask questions if necessary and have had these answered satisfactorily.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that one week after participation I may withdraw my consent and/or ask any part of the recordings to be erased.
- I understand that the information gathered will be confidential. Names or other identifying factors will be removed from any report or publication of the data or results.
- I agree that audio recordings can be used for the interviews.
- I give permission for the data derived from the interviews to be used for publications.

Principal or SENCO Name:

_____

Principal or SENCO Signature:

_____

Date:

_____

Appendix 2b: Participation information sheet and consent form for the classroom observations and follow-up teacher interviews.

Participant Information Sheet – Teacher Observations and Follow-up Interviews

Study title: The Realities of Teacher Attitudes and Practices in Inclusive Education: A Comparative Study
Name of lead researcher: Hanin Bukamal

My name is Hanin Bukamal and I am a PhD student at the School of Education, University of Birmingham. You can find out more about me if you visit: https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/education/postgraduate-research/profiles/bukama-hanin.aspx

I would like to invite you to participate in this study. Before you decide, I will explain why the research is being done and what it would involve for you.

My PhD study is a comparative study between England and Bahrain that explores the difference of practices in inclusive education in both countries with regards to inclusion policy, teacher attitudes towards inclusion, and inclusive pedagogy. More specifically, I seek to explore teachers' use of inclusive pedagogy and teaching practices to support an inclusive classroom of diverse students. The study aims to bring a greater understanding of the meaning of inclusive education and how it is practiced in each country.

If you agree to partake in the study, your total time of involvement will be three school days. In the three school days, I will attend your classroom for half a morning or afternoon to observe your teaching practices and will then interview you (maximum 30 minutes) after the observation session to inquire more into your chosen pedagogy. During the observation, I will sit quietly in your classroom in a corner designated by you to take notes. During the interview, I will use an audio recording device to record the discussion.

There is no element of judgement involved in the process of my research. Participation is voluntary and you can withdraw your data one week after participation. All the information gathered will be absolutely confidential and no participant or place names will be identified. It will not be possible to identify any school or individual during data analysis or in my finished thesis. The data will be stored on a secure platform used by the University of Birmingham. A summary report of the findings will be sent to the participating schools upon request after the completion of the study.

I hope that this information is helpful to you and if you have any questions please feel free to contact me or my supervisors.
Hanin Bukamal
Email: [redacted]

Supervisor details:

Dr Despina Papoudi, Lecturer in Autism, School of Education, University of Birmingham, [redacted]
Professor Gary Thomas, Professor of Inclusion and Diversity, School of Education, University of Birmingham, [redacted]

Consent Form - Teacher Observations and Follow-up Interviews

Dear Teacher,
My name is Hanin Bukamal and I am a PhD student at the School of Education, University of Birmingham. You can find out more about me if you visit: https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/education/postgraduate-research/profiles/bukama-hanin.aspx

My PhD study is a comparative study between England and Bahrain that explores the difference of practices in inclusive education in both countries with regards to inclusion policy, teacher attitudes towards inclusion, and inclusive pedagogy. More specifically, I seek to explore teachers' use of inclusive pedagogy and teaching practices to support an inclusive classroom of diverse students.

You are invited to participate in my study by allowing me to attend your class and observe your teaching for about three observation sessions. Each session will be about half a morning or afternoon part of the school day. Whilst observing your teaching, I will be taking notes silently in a corner designated by you in the classroom. After each observation, I would like to sit with you and interview you about the teaching practices you used in the session. This interview will be audio recorded to make it easier for me to remember our discussion.

If you agree to give your consent, please tick the relevant boxes below:
- I confirm that I have read and understand the participant information sheet for this study. I have had the opportunity to ask questions if necessary and have had these answered satisfactorily.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that one week after participation, I may withdraw my consent and/or ask any part of the recordings to be erased.
- I understand that the information gathered will be confidential. Student and teacher names or any other identifying factors will be removed from any report or publication of the data or results.
- I give permission to the researcher to attend my class and take notes.
- I agree that audio recordings can be used for the interviews.
- I give permission for the data derived from the observations and interviews to be used for publications.

Teacher's Name(s):

_____

Teacher's Signature(s):

_____

Date:

_____

Appendix 2c: Participation information sheet and consent form for teacher questionnaires.

Participant Information Sheet – Teacher Questionnaire (England)

Study title: The Realities of Teacher Attitudes and Practices in Inclusive Education: A Comparative Study
Name of lead researcher: Hanin Bukamal

My name is Hanin Bukamal and I am a PhD student at the School of Education, University of Birmingham. You can find out more about me if you visit: https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/education/postgraduate-research/profiles/bukama-hanin.aspx

I would like to invite you to participate in this study. Before you decide, I will explain why the research is being done and what it would involve for you.

My PhD study is a comparative study between England and Bahrain that explores the difference of practices in inclusive education in both countries with regards to inclusion policy, teacher attitudes towards inclusion, and inclusive pedagogy. More specifically, I seek to explore teachers' use of inclusive pedagogy and teaching practices to support an inclusive classroom of diverse students. The study aims to bring a greater understanding of the meaning of inclusive education and how it is practiced in each country.

If you agree to partake in the study, you will complete an online questionnaire sent to you by your school principal that will take approximately 20 minutes of your time. There is no element of judgement involved in the process of my research. Participation is voluntary and all the information gathered will be absolutely anonymous and no participant or place names will be identified. It will not be possible to identify any school or individual during data analysis or in my finished thesis. The data will be stored on a secure platform used by the University of Birmingham. A summary report of the findings will be sent to the participating schools upon request after the completion of the study.

I hope that this information is helpful to you and if you have any questions please feel free to contact me or my supervisors.
Hanin Bukamal
Email: [redacted]

Supervisor details:
Dr Despina Papoudi, Lecturer in Autism, School of Education, University of Birmingham, [redacted]
Professor Gary Thomas, Professor of Inclusion and Diversity, School of Education, University of Birmingham, [redacted]

Consent Form – Teacher Questionnaire (England)

Dear Teacher,

My name is Hanin Bukamal and I am a PhD student at the School of Education, University of Birmingham. You can find out more about me if you visit: https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/education/postgraduate-research/profiles/bukama-hanin.aspx

You are invited to participate in my study by completing a questionnaire. This questionnaire will ask questions about your practice and teaching methods in an inclusive classroom. It will take approximately 20 minutes of your time. All questionnaire data will be anonymous and your name will not be identified. Your completion of the survey will be taken as your consent to participate.

If you agree to give your consent, please tick the relevant boxes below:
- I confirm that I have read and understand the participant information sheet for this study. I have had the opportunity to ask questions if necessary and have had these answered satisfactorily.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary.
- I understand that the information gathered will be anonymous. Teacher names or any other identifying factors will be removed from any report or publication of the data or results.
- I give permission for the data derived from the questionnaire to be used for publications.

Appendix 3 – Data Collection Tools

Appendix 3a: Teacher questionnaire.

Teacher's Questionnaire

Dear Teacher,

My name is Hanin Bukamal and I am a PhD student at the School of Education, University of Birmingham. You can find out more about me if you visit: https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/education/postgraduate-research/profiles/bukama-hanin.aspx

You are invited to participate in my study by completing a questionnaire. This questionnaire will ask questions about your practice and teaching methods in an inclusive classroom. It will take approximately 10 minutes of your time. All questionnaire data will be anonymous and your name will not be identified. Your completion of the survey will be taken as your consent to participate.

If you agree to give your consent, please tick the relevant boxes below:
- I confirm that I have read and understand the participant information sheet for this study. I have had the opportunity to ask questions if necessary and have had these answered satisfactorily.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary.
- I understand that the information gathered will be anonymous. Teacher names or any other identifying factors will be removed from any report or publication of the data or results.
- I give permission for the data derived from the questionnaire to be used for publications.

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my study. All the information you submit is confidential. Please select one choice in response to each statement. The survey should take no more than 10 minutes to complete.

Gender
- Male
- Female
- Other

Age
- 20–30
- 31–40
- 41–50
- 51–60
- Prefer not to say

Year taught:
- Year 1
- Year 2
- Year 3
- Year 4
- Year 5
- Year 6

Years of teaching experience: _____
Qualifications: _____
Subject/s taught: _____

	Statement	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Undecided 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
1	I feel confident to teach students with special educational needs in my mainstream class					
2	I support the inclusion of students with special educational needs in mainstream classrooms					
3	I believe students with special educational needs learn best in their own special education classes where they have specially trained teachers					
4	I believe integrated children with special educational needs create extra work for teachers in mainstream classrooms					

5	I believe that students with special educational needs can benefit in social interaction in mainstream classrooms					
6	I believe that students with special educational needs can benefit in academic performance in mainstream classrooms					
7	I believe that mainstream students can improve on their academic performance in an inclusive classroom					
8	I believe that mainstream students can improve on their acceptance of diversity in an inclusive classroom					
9	I believe that mainstream students can improve on their self-esteem in an inclusive classroom					
10	I believe that mainstream students can enhance their empathy in an inclusive classroom					
11	I believe that the specialised training available in special education facilitates the implementation of inclusive education					
12	I believe that teacher's willingness facilitates the implementation of inclusive education					
13	I believe that the curriculum facilitates the implementation of inclusive education					
14	I believe that the school infrastructure facilitates the implementation of inclusive education					
15	I believe that parents' attitudes facilitate the implementation of inclusive education					
16	I believe that the available funding facilitates the implementation of inclusive education					

17	I believe that the laws around inclusion facilitate the implementation of inclusive education					
18	I believe that the special and general teacher collaboration facilitates the implementation of inclusive education					
19	I believe that the number of children in the classroom facilitates the implementation of inclusive education					
20	I believe that the availability of appropriate support staff facilitates the implementation of inclusive education					
21	I believe that support staff should be specially trained teachers as distinct from untrained support staff					

	Teaching Strategies	How common would you say you use these strategies when teaching to promote inclusion?				
		Never 1	Uncommon 2	Don't know 3	Common 4	Very Common 5
1	Use of praise					
2	Vary teaching style					
3	Break down activities into smaller steps					
4	Modify seat planning					
5	Adjust performance expectations					
6	Frequent monitoring and feedback					
7	Shorten assignments					
8	Adapt the curriculum					
9	Adjust lesson pace					
10	Use alternative papers, worksheets					
11	Allow additional time to complete assignments					
12	General help from learning support assistants					
13	Adapt assignments					
14	Modify lesson objectives					

15	Review prior learning					
16	Use of visual cues around the room					
17	Offer choice of material					
18	Peer collaboration					
19	Vary group composition for different kinds of activities					
20	Teach study skills					
21	Use supplementary aids (calculators, enlarged text, tape recorders, etc.)					
22	Base evaluation on the amount of individual improvement					
23	Explicitly teach social and group skills					
24	Teach self-management skills					
25	Demonstrate problem-solving strategies					
26	Use shorter and more frequent methods of assessing performance					
27	Co-teaching					
28	Peer tutoring					
29	Use of mnemonic devices					
30	Teach meta-cognitive strategies (e.g. reflection on learning)					
31	Use of scaffolding					
32	Use of drama or role play					
33	Jigsawing					
34	Offer choice of task					
35	Consult with pupils on preferred learning styles					
36	Use computer-assisted instruction					

List any strategies which were not included in the questionnaire that you have found to be most effective in promoting inclusive education.

Thank you for completing the survey

Appendix 3b: Semi-structured interview schedule with the principal and SENCO/assistant principal.

- In Bahrain: how are the following terms defined (inclusive education, SEN)?
- What is the purpose of inclusive education or inclusive education policy? When, how and why has it started?
- What is the policy of inclusion?
- What is your knowledge of national and local inclusion initiatives?
- How are schools supported to implement inclusion? (e.g. provision of support teachers, teacher assistants, continuing professional development opportunities, other resources)
- How is the local authority (England)/ Ministry of Education (Bahrain) supportive of students with special educational needs?
- What school policies support inclusion?
- What are the school's efforts to implement or sustain inclusion?
- What is the schools' overall approach to inclusion?
- What factors affect the successful implementation of inclusion?
- What are teacher attitudes towards inclusive education?
- How do teachers implement inclusion in the classroom?
- How do teachers define or understand inclusion?
- How does the school support teachers' inclusive practices and pedagogy?
- What is your role in implementing inclusion? (Principal, SENCO, Assistant Principal)
- What outcomes are achieved by teachers and students as a result of inclusive education?

Appendix 4 – Data Analysis

Appendix 4a: Transcription sample.

School 1 - Teacher 1
Second classroom observation and follow-up interview

Observation Notes	**Initial Code/ Sub-theme**
8:47am "Some questions on the board, if you want to get your white boards out" Some students started doing the questions on the smart board, while others are still coming in from outside Teacher is checking on students Question on the board (Idris buys a pen which is 1.37 pounds. What is the smallest combination of coins he could use to pay for it?) and two other questions Some students helping each other, one student reading a book	Individual student work Students encouraged to collaborate
Teacher takes the register, the usual way by saying "good morning name" and then the student says "good morning" followed by a number from 1-5 indicating how they are feeling.	Teacher-student relationship Classroom routine
One student is washing the drinking cups Two students are putting up the class routine cards on the board	Student roles
TA comes in, teacher asks him if he is okay, and if he wants to start with the questions on the board. TA does question 1 of 3	Co-teaching with the TA Teacher-directed learning
Then teacher informs TA that it's time for assembly. Reader of the week is J**** and says that she chose her because of all the books she is reading. TA stays with 2 students during assembly in the classroom Students line up for assembly and go outside to the hall and sit nicely on the floor. The teacher running assembly then says its Wednesday so it's time for Attendopoly (Monopoly) and the class with the best attendance was Year 6. So, two students from year 6 come up and roll the dice and move up the Attendopoly chart. Then the classes in second place also have a go Then the second part of the assembly was rewarding the "Reader of the week" as chosen by each teacher from each year level	Morning assembly Role of the TA Singled out students
9:20am Book Talk Back from assembly, settling in On the board, a chart showing 5 different colours with student names under each colour. Talking about words that describe how something might taste	Reading groups

Positive and negative words for taste, teacher explaining the task Text on the board, she reads it and then they read it together "I will read with the yellow group, and sir (TA) will read with the green group. Yellow group line up with your sheet" The TA stayed in class with the majority of the students Teacher takes 7 students with their books and takes them to the library, sit on the floor in a circle, and one student starts reading using their finger to point to the words as they go. Teacher asks questions "is there any word on this page that describes taste", asks the students for synonyms Asks them to do a face if they ate something sour Its more conversational, three students read out loud so far out of seven. "We've got lots of lovely words, I will write them on the sheet for you"	Teacher 1 Activity 2 Co-teaching with the TA Low ability students
<u>10am English</u> Teacher hands out coins for students who are ready first Teacher puts up a table on the smart board with 4 columns Students changing their seats to other groups Recap from Monday lesson Sentence on the board, asks a student to read it. Teacher goes through all words on the board and asks what some of them mean. Students are given a task to write words that describe a beach.	Reinforcement Teacher-directed learning
Teacher comes to me and explains her method: "The write stuff", breaks things down into smaller sections, the language is really important. Rather than she asks them give me words about the beach, she gives them to the students instead. They all had training on it.	"The write stuff"
Teacher goes around and checks on the students, TA as well.	Co-teaching with the TA
Teacher moves on, but not all students finished She starts reading the words related to "relaxing" <u>Asks them to write three "relaxing" words</u>	
Teacher regularly stops to discipline students chatting or misbehaving.	Classroom disruption
"in your books you're going to write whether you're looking to … you've got 2 or 3 minutes to write your own one" Teacher immediately checks with individual student. TA is still with the same group of students at the back with a small white board. And marks their work and give feedback. If you finished your sentence, you can line up. Students line up for play time.	Individual student work Role of the TA
<u>11am maths</u> Students back from play time "Don't do (write down) your LO yet because you don't know yet which one you're doing" On the board, the LO, and SC in three-star levels LO I can count in 1000s S.C explore how Th, H, T and O are related	Teacher 1 Activity 2 Differentiated task – assigned by teacher

*Make thousands with different equipment **count in steps. < > ***count in steps. <>. Dive Deeper Maths Story	
Students handing out bead worms to everyone	Student roles
Teacher starts explaining using the beads. Teacher reinforces students regularly with coins, that they place on their individual pocket hung up in the class. "Do you remember one of your targets, is to listen, then to ask questions" teacher said that after J*** interrupted her again. Teacher uses demonstration with students help and cubes to learn how to count. New activity on the board, order these numbers from smallest to largest. To solve on their white boards. Teacher hands out cubes, sticks and coins to each group as the students started working. Comments on classroom climate: sometimes it seems tense as teacher disciplines children who were being disruptive. Good teamwork between the teacher and TA. Teamwork?? Mostly individual work, but sitting in groups. Teacher knows all student names. Teacher starts by asking the students which one is the smallest number? And doing the ordering of numbers with them. "What you're going to do, is that on your table" they have the cube and sticks and they will have to use them to match the number she says. TA check on another group than his usual one, while teacher goes to his group. And asks them to justify their answer. This is a group activity when they make up the numbers together using their tools. Things to put into consideration. It's the beginning of the year. So, the disciplinary and organisational issues are more apparent.	Teacher-directed learning Reinforcement Talking about students Individual student work Co-teaching with the TA Students encouraged to collaborate Teacher-student relationship
Follow-up interview 2 transcript	**Code/ Sub-theme**
Interviewer: So, I thought maybe today we can focus on more general things but before that if we could talk about what you mentioned which was the, the training that you did, what was it called? The write stuff?	
Teacher: Oh, the 'Write Stuff', I got the planning somewhere. So, in England because English is our language and writing about it, I think we've taken the learning of English and the teaching of it for a granted a little bit. So, we've always taught all the different aspects but I don't know how well we equipped the children to actually be able to write well and understand the different parts. So, this framework breaks everything down into small components and you practice doing every little part of it. Mmm I think it's probably slightly different in this school, because there's no, there's very little vocabulary, or there is a vocabulary, it's quite patchy. So, some children will have really strong words but then we'll have some massive gaps in other areas. So, the idea is that, so this should take one morning, you should have the three levels in your book.	"The write stuff" Student characteristics National curriculum
Interviewer: and the levels are? Just so it's clear for the recording.	

Teacher: so, the first one (first level) is usually something around vocabulary. And then the second one, not always. So, in this situation, alliteration, and then we're going move on to talk about adverbs. And then we move on to talk about conjunctions. And then these little symbols tell you which area you're working in. Mmm so it looks like grammar. So, its the symbols on the wall as well. So, across the top you've got in The Fantasticks which are the basis of writing like feelings, speech, noticing, touching, action words, smelling, tasting. And then you've got mm things that add to your language like: the slimily, or the, the way that words are used. And in the bottom, there's the grammar. So, every lesson you're teaching a little bit from each one and showing them from a text how it, what that actually looks like, and then getting them to practice it in very small steps, is the idea. Whereas previously we would've taught a lesson for 20 minutes and then they would've written something for the remainder. But in the UK, it's changing a lot, so you're supposed to do a little bit of a demonstration then they practice it, a little bit of a demonstration then they practice it, so that your much more involved in every step and all the steps are broken down. Does that make sense?	Teacher 1 Activity 1 "The write stuff"
Interviewer: yes, it does.	
Teacher: so, I'm embarking on that journey I'm just learning how to do it as I go really.	Teacher's awareness of practice
Interviewer: okay, do you think that mmm, how does it work with inclusion?	
Teacher: Mmm I tried it with my class last year at the end that the year and they loved it. Because the children that struggle had it broken down into these really really small steps and all of them could write some language, all of them could write a sentence because you'd given them all the different parts of the sentence. So, they could all achieve a quality statement or sentence by the end of the lesson. Mm and the more able, or the ones that can work more independently, by the end it, they would extend their writing by doing more sentences so I've given them more of the targets by adding two adjectives rather than one, or using a fronted adverbial rather just an adverbial phrase. So, there was a room to really extend it and dive deeper but also everyone in the class had written a statement independently. Mmm so it's interesting doing it at this end of the year when I don't know them as well and when there is some who can't write or really struggle to engage with the lesson. So, J*** for example knows the maths really well, but never really listens to the input. He's always distracted and being distracting, he's the only one really in the class who's a problem in that way but also N**** and a few of the lower ability children who would struggle. I just watch them and they don't listen for the input. They wait for the TA to come and show them. So..	High ability students "The write stuff" Low ability students
Interviewer: why do you think that happens?	
Teacher: I think (the students wait for the TA to come and help them work) because they've always been in the group that's been taken out.	Dependent learners

For really good reasons. I think it's important that they have the inputs but I found this last year with the class I had and I stopped them going out and I stopped the TA working with them. I said okay my group this is what's were going to do now. And we just dipped in and said 'ooh I see you haven't done that, why didn't you start writing that because everybody, that's what we just said to do. I said oh I was waiting for Sir. I said no no, you can start and you can have a go'. And I found that some of the children that had been low ability suddenly found they can do maths especially, they could excel in. And they started out at a Year 2 level and by the end that they were working a Year 4 level. And that was just because they started to be independent (to work without the TA) and started listening for themselves and started working it out for themselves so there's a …	Singled out students Low ability students Role of the TA Student outcomes
I just need to really rethink the groups that I've got and just try and get down to work a bit more independently (without the help of the TA). That's my aim. I have them in ability seating's according to their test results but mmm it hasn't worked I need to go by what I think now. I think. If you've got to start somewhere and change it all around a bit. Because there's a few people aren't helping each other. My idea is to have a table of mixed ability and everyone can help each other. So even the brighter kid whose good at one thing, but actually I had some children last year, one child who's an amazing mathematician but as soon as it became visual like this he couldn't do it. Because he knew the numbers but he didn't understand what was behind it. So, it was really interesting seeing one of the children whose always been taken out last year go, 'oh no no this is how you do it, this means this'. And he got it from this other child, which for me was a brilliant moment. Because she learned that she could teach him and he learned that he needed to be taught sometimes.	Grouping arrangements Students encouraged to collaborate Individual differences Student outcomes Singled out students
Interviewer: so, you mean that's happened now in the mixed ability.	
Teacher: that happened last year Interviewer: and now it's not mixed ability Teacher: it is (mixed ability groupings) but I don't think the test results… I think tests reflect how we you do on a particular day but they don't necessarily reflect your general ability.	Grouping arrangements
Interviewer: so, the ability… the mixed ability, is it based on their performance in a test at the beginning of the year?	
Teacher: (current grouping arrangements were made based on) at the end of last year at their previous teachers results. So obviously they've had a chance to mature over the summer and some things have passed into.. that's like some things that's have become concrete for them and other things they've forgotten. So I want to now look at who I think.. And also personality counts for a lot. So, J** and D***** for example are really good friends. And actually, they're both slightly better and different things but they don't work when they sit together so what look like a really good pairing but actually it isn't because they're not doing anything. Even A** and K**** mmm, A** is stronger at maths,	Grouping arrangements

and K**** is stronger at English. But again they're more interested in chatting than they are in that. So, I need to break up some of those pairings. Does that makes sense?	
Interviewer: yes it does, that was very helpful when you mentioned the 'Write Stuff', it's very.. It makes things much easier for me to understand the thinking behind what you're doing, and where it comes from, so if there is anything else, that maybe tomorrow it comes up, also let me know. Okay the other thing I wanted to talk about just the general questions that I mentioned about inclusion. So first I wanted to see how do you think about inclusion? Teacher: what does it mean to me? Interviewer: yes what does it mean to you and to your practice.	
Teacher: I think I want.. I think I want everybody to be able to do what everybody is doing and then that's requires putting things in place so that everyone can. I'm in a weird point at the minute because I'm moving from how I used to teach into how I've read around. Mmm I'm trying to teach in a different way. So I'm.. So for example at the start of last year I had some children working at a level 2, and some children approaching level 5 even though we're year 4. And so, I was almost teaching three different lessons and so tailoring it to each of them but my current thinking based on what I've read is that everyone tackles the same task but that they do it at a slightly different level. But we're all working together. So, the questions on the board everybody should access. And then after that mm you put in things in place so that the highest get a bump to try something and to think about it differently. And the ones that are struggling in the bottom get the scaffolding and support they need. Interviewer: at what stage does that happen? Whether you challenge someone or give the scaffolding? Teacher: it should be happening all the time Interviewer: and you mean in the same lesson?	Teacher's definition of inclusion Teacher's awareness of practice High ability students Low ability students
Teacher: yeah. So today, this is example on the board, for example, I've got the work sheet that takes, this will be a sort of middle level but they would have a sheet that slightly more complicated with more steps to it and a sheet that's easier. And I had a very practical lesson for the children that still haven't grasped a 1000 and were really insecure around their numbers. So that we're all looking at thousands but we're all looking at them in a way that we can access. But not so diverse that you can't tell it's the same lesson. My issue was that we never got to that point. Partly because I haven't got the equipment ready in the way that I had planned to, and lots of other reasons. But it's also children like J*** who really struggles to listen that I can engage with him and I really need to think about that. And I've discovered having something visual from the board means that everyone can have a go so they can look at it and start thinking about it. The problem that I got at the minute is that they're looking at it but not thinking about it. Whereas I want them to think I could have a go at that. But we haven't quite got there yet and they just wait until Miss	Teacher 1 Activity 2 Classroom disruption Individual differences Teacher's awareness of practice Dependent learners

comes over or Sir comes and explains it, or when someone does it for me. That's probably one of my biggest challenges at this stage and also there's some children like J**** who's just, just a bit disengaged really. I don't know if it's low self-esteem. He's sat here and C****** as well who's really able but again she goes to a magic place somewhere in her mind. And I want her to stay with them me for the lesson and I haven't quite worked out how to get each one of those so there with me even in their different abilities I can see that things are happening. But if they're not focused.	Expectations of students
Interviewer: since you see their struggle with being independent, is it something that you ever thought of, you know, working on directly?	
Teacher: as we go on that's one of the… in the process of the year I suppose is to challenge them to do things independently. Mmm partly the structure the lessons when I have actually done the proper lesson in the way that we are working towards. I'm hoping that will be… they'll know right now I do this and then I do that, which it sounds like they're not being independent. But it's like now I need to get my head down, I need to do my work for myself, now I need to be thinking about what's on the board.	Dependent learners
Interviewer: that's self-regulated learning?	
Teacher: yeah so they're responding to what's required of them but they're also completing tasks because they know that task needs completing. But I don't think it's just about ability I think that's what I was starting to say, I think it about all sorts of different things. Lots of our children have experienced trauma… I think even moving schools can be a traumatic thing weather you got a secure family life or not. But a moving school and having lots of other variables in your life, moving to a new country or to a new city. You know there's loads of things that can affect how well you're acclimatised.	Student's mental health
Interviewer: can you give more examples of some of these challenges, other than moving?	
Teacher: well for example we've. In the past we've who had children soldiers I think in Rwanda who've come so obviously they're experiencing not only a massive trauma themselves but they've been educated to think things in a certain way. So, helping them to understand themselves more and understand some of the things that are happening to them. J***'s got a very difficult prior history to coming here, which just means he's very aggressive and doesn't really understand the aggression. I think also children who mmm have different needs. So, whether you diagnose them as autistic or dyslexic, it doesn't really matter as long as you're addressing the way that they're responding. So, there's quite a few children last year who I thought could be dyslexic but there, we're not going to get the diagnosis at this point for lots of different reasons. Maybe families, mmm it's not a thing for them, and it would mean going to the authorities and they don't like going to the authorities because it exposes them. So, they're not going to go through a process of getting their child assessed and it could cost money. So therefore, just teaching	Student's mental health SEN in class Family circumstances Student characteristics

those children according to the fact that you might be dyslexic and I think this might help you. But if you're autistic and you've moved school three times, and you've come from another country, and part of your way of thinking is that you need things to be the same. Then you're actually sitting in the middle of a really traumatic experience because you've not only moved but know you're in a completely different place, you don't really understand how to relate with other people or some things about that to give a stereotypical view of it. So, I think they've actually having to negotiate lots and lots of different things all at the same time.	
Interviewer: so, you said you haven't taught at a different school?	
Teacher: I did previously but since I've been back to work I've taught at this school. I've worked in my community in my local school as well but I wasn't paid. I just went in and … Interviewer: I'm asking because I was wondering if there was difference between you know the nature the students here because of the challenges that are.. That they're dealing with, compared with students in other schools.	
Teacher: yeah so this area, when you arrive or newly arrived in the country in Birmingham, you get housed here because there's enough housing and people get placed here. But this area doesn't have a good reputation unfortunately. I think there is a really strong community here but there's also lots of other things that mmm would make it less desirable to live here. So, you've got families placed here. We had mm a couple of years ago, the textile trade in Italy collapsed. So, the textile workers who already migrated to Italy for the work then found themselves without any work in Italy. So had three or four children who spoke Italian .. Italy wasn't, they've only been there for two or three years and mm, they got placed here mmm lots of other children come from all over the world and some are economic migrants and some have had to flee mm. So everyone's story are quite different and a lot of our children are experiencing trauma or have experienced trauma when they arrive. A family from, I can't remember which nation now, but all three sisters are just really traumatized. And you'd be talking about feelings like when you're happy and they just being in tears because it's reminded them of all the times that they hadn't been happy. And they couldn't say in the class 'I'm feeling a bit sad because mom dropped my birthday cake', it was because.. you know these weren't things for sharing and then she's sitting there with the weight of that emotion on her … its sort of been teased out in her because of the lesson and then it's how you look after her afterwards and support her so that it doesn't just remain there. So that is different to other schools, I think you'd have one or two in other schools but we have lots all at the same time.	Community challenges
Interviewer: that's too much! Teacher: I know. Interviewer: ok I think that's it for me today. Is there any final comment that you have about inclusion and how you plan for it?	

Teacher: we do plan for it (inclusion) but I think it's also part of the culture of the school. Interviewer: how so? Teacher: I think, just in the way that the staff are treated and the vision of the school. so, our head teacher, maybe you haven't met her because she's covering two schools, doesn't shout, and I think even just that, that's very rare to have someone in upper management who isn't mm a big shouty person. I mean it's really handy to have that sometimes so we're always spoken to respectfully. Part of the way the school works is we're measured on our teaching assessments on mm our ability to, how we talk to the children. So, the nine habits, how we talk to each other, are we compassionate, are we hopeful, are we kind, are we forgiving? Have we been demonstrating those? And so, for example mm a colleague on staff was making the children in the class cry over forgetting their homework. It wasn't really them, it was their family situation. And so, they got asked to not make the children cry anymore and to think about their family situation and I don't know if that would've happened in another school I would've, you would've been asked to be less shouty. That's quite unusual I think. I think your allowed to teach how you want. It's a value here that your kind and gentle and that's you tease people out. Interviewer: I love that reference to the school culture, that's very useful.	Inclusive school culture Supportive leadership The nine habits Family circumstances PD for inclusion Teacher evaluation

Appendix 5: NVivo Exported Codebook

Appendix 5a: Example of codebook exported from NVivo for first cycle coding (school 4).

Name	Description	Files	References
School 4		0	0
1 Country level		0	0
BQA	Bahrain Qualifications Authority assessment requirements and criteria for the schools in relation to non-Arabic speakers	2	8
Homework	National policy to cancel homework	1	1
Integration policy	The start of integration in Bahrain and ways of managing it within the schools	1	7
MOE policy		2	7
MOE support non-Arabic speakers	The support provided from the Ministry of Education to support non-Arabic speakers and interest in their progress	1	4
Selective retirement	National policy to increase number of retired teachers	1	1
What is inclusion	Confusion on the meaning and practice of inclusive education	2	6
2 **School level**		0	0
21st century	21st century skills integrated into the curriculum	2	5
Classroom composition	One of the main things that helped the school better manage the challenge of non-Arabic speakers is mixing the classrooms equally with abilities and student backgrounds, fair distribution of mixed abilities among classrooms and especially first years	1	3
Inconsistent practice	Inconsistent practice from the leadership perspective and teaching perspective	2	5
It is my right to learn	A program implemented by the school to enhance the language and reading abilities	1	3

Name	Description	Files	References
	of all students especially non-Arabic speakers, a focus on reading has been found in both Bahraini schools		
Kindergarten students	The fact that some students attended kindergarten or not prior to enrolling in a primary school is a common topic that was discussed by the teachers and determines student ability. Formal education in Bahrain starts at Year 1 for 6 year old, huge difference with UK which has reception and nursery as part of formal education	3	5
Non-Arabic speakers in school		2	31
Physical facilities		2	3
Reading hour		1	5
School activities		1	3
School leadership		4	6
School policy		1	3
School values coexistence		1	8
SEN in school	How SEN is managed within the school	3	14
SEN management	Between the SEN teacher and the MOE	3	20
Student council		2	7
Student relations	Coexistence between the students, especially with non-Arabic speakers	1	1
Supporting schools	Supporting other schools in the community	2	6
Sustainability goals		1	3
Teaching strategies	Variety of teaching strategies	4	16
Home-school relations	The school describes positive parental involvement and communication from parents of non-Arabic speakers	3	17
Involving parents	The school tries to involve parents as much as possible in school activities and events	4	6
Negative Bahraini attitudes	Negative attitudes from Bahraini families towards cultural diversity in schools	1	5
Parents of non-Arabic speakers		1	4

Name	Description	Files	References
Communication	Communication between the school staff	4	9
Exchanged visits	Within the school and between other schools in the community	1	1
Learning community	On a school level	1	1
My best ideas	A school programs for teachers to share their practice on a weekly basis	3	12
Need TA	Teacher requirements for assistance	2	5
PD	Professional development opportunities available	1	7
Teacher attitudes		3	6
3 **Classroom practice**		0	0
Brainstorming		2	7
Challenging tasks		2	3
Class rules		1	4
Classroom climate		2	16
Classroom routine		2	5
Differentiation	Differentiation policy by the MOE and the school	3	9
Group work		4	23
Group work roles		2	13
Grouping arrangements		2	8
Individual work	The use of the small white board	2	22
Learn by play		3	14
Learning style	Teachers awareness of students' different learning styles and how to approach them differently through teaching strategies, individual differences	2	6
Non-Arabic in class		2	21
Pair work	Or think pair share	2	8
Peer evaluation		2	4
Peer pairing strategy		3	8
Presentation	Student presentations are very much a normal practice in Bahraini primary schools, and students and are gradually introduced to it in Year 1	1	3

Name	Description	Files	References
Problem-solving		2	3
Project based learning		4	12
Reinforcement		3	15
Role play		1	6
Self-evaluation		1	1
SEN in class	These are examples of critical incidents in this school, interestingly, a major difference in them with UK schools, observation notes do not reveal any different practices or activities for these students, only in the teacher interviews later on	2	5
B****	Students as critical cases	1	4
N****	Students as critical cases	1	7
Small teacher		2	3
Student enthusiasm		2	15
Student participation		2	13
Student roles		1	1
Teacher-directed		2	6
Year 1 challenges		2	16

Appendix 5b: Example of codebook exported from NVivo for second cycle coding (school 4).

Name	Description	Files	References
School 4		**0**	**0**
1 National Inclusive Practices		**0**	**0**
Integration & inclusion policy	The start of integration in Bahrain and ways of managing it within the schools	1	11
MOE endorsed teaching practices	National guidelines regarding the use of some teaching strategies	3	19
Selective retirement	The influence of national policies such as selective retirement on school practices	1	1
The start of formal education	The fact that some students attended kindergarten or not prior to enrolling in a primary school is a common topic that was discussed by the teachers and determines student ability. Formal education in Bahrain starts at Year 1 for 6-year olds, huge difference with UK which has reception and nursery as part of formal education	3	7
2 Positive School Climate		**0**	**0**
Coexistence	As one of the main school values	1	8
Collaborative environment	Communication between the school staff	4	12
Learning community	An established learning community between the teachers to share practice	2	3
My best ideas	A school program for teachers to share their practice on a weekly basis	3	13
Professional Development	Opportunities for PD	1	7
Student leadership	Trying to instil student leadership skills through different activities	4	13
Supporting schools	Supporting other schools in the community	2	7
Supportive school leadership	A supportive school leadership that is commended by the teachers	4	7
Teacher attitudes	Towards non-Arabic speakers and SEN	3	12

Name	Description	Files	References
What is inclusion	So, the view of inclusive seems to be focusing on when looking at the school's practices, teaching strategies used to offer even the low ability students the chance to learn and engage in the lesson by modifying certain aspects, on the other hand, the higher ability students are also challenged as they are given the responsibility for their peer's learning through the peer pairing strategy	2	12
3 Non-Arabic Speakers		**0**	**0**
Classroom Composition	One of the main things that helped the school better manage the challenge of non-Arabic speakers is mixing the classrooms equally with abilities and student backgrounds, fair distribution of mixed abilities among classrooms and especially first years	1	4
Embracing student diversity	The school includes multiple student nationalities and ethnicities	3	8
Inconsistent practice	Inconsistent practice from the leadership perspective and teaching perspective, is it inconsistent practice or absolute necessity	3	6
It is my right to learn	A program implemented by the school to enhance the language and reading abilities of all students especially non-Arabic speakers, focus on reading has been found in both Bahraini schools	1	3
Non-Arabic in class	All the different Non-Arabic speakers in class	2	18
Non-Arabic Speakers in school	Describing the Non-Arabic speakers in the schools and the programs designed to help them progress	2	31
Quality assurance	Bahrain Quality Assurance assessment requirements and criteria from the schools in relation to Non-Arabic speakers and other matters	3	9
Reading hour	The focus of MOE and the school on improving students' reading abilities	1	5
Societal assumptions	Dealing with issues on a societal level with some religious influence	2	8

Name	Description	Files	References
Student relations	Coexistence between the students, especially with non-Arabic speakers	1	4
4 Parental Involvement	**Home school relations**	**0**	**0**
Home-school partnership	The school describes positive parental involvement and communication from parents of non-Arabic speakers	3	15
Involving parents	The school tries to involve parents as much as possible in school activities and events	4	10
Negative Bahraini parents' attitudes	Negative attitudes from Bahraini families towards cultural diversity in schools	1	5
Parents of non-Arabic speakers	Interactions with parents of non-Arabic speakers	1	4
5 Managing SEN		**0**	**0**
Managing SEN provision	Between the SEN teacher and the MOE, management on a national level	3	17
SEN in class	These are examples of critical incidents in this school, interestingly, a major difference in them with UK schools, observation notes do not reveal any different practices or activities for these students, only in the teacher interviews later on	2	5
B****		1	4
N****		1	8
SEN in school	How SEN is managed within the school	5	18
SEN parents	Interactions with parents of students with SEN	1	5
The need for TA	Teacher indicated their need for support to teach cycle 1 students	2	5
6 Challenging Students and High Expectations		**0**	**0**
Acknowledging learning styles	Teachers awareness of students' different learning styles and how to approach them differently through teaching strategies, individual differences	3	11
Brainstorming	An example of a teaching activity used in class	2	7

Name	Description	Files	References
Challenging high ability students	Practices to challenge students of high ability	2	5
Differentiation	Differentiation policy by the MOE and the school	4	10
Individual work	Instances of students engaging in individual work that still has a collaborative component	2	15
Problem-solving	Was indicated as being a good teaching method	2	3
Self-evaluation	Students encouraged to self-evaluate their performance	2	2
Small whiteboard	The varied use of the small white boards	2	15
Student participation	Different ways of involving students in the lesson	2	18
Teacher-directed learning	Teacher-directed instruction still involved engaging storytelling and student involvement	2	10
7 A Collaborative Classroom Environment		**0**	**0**
Group work	This strategy was consistently used and students were encouraged to collaborate	4	26
Group work roles	The allocation of responsibilities between group members	2	14
Grouping arrangements	The mechanism of organizing student groups, student grouping strategies	2	9
Learn through play	As one of the main strategies that students enjoy	3	15
Other teaching strategies	Variety of teaching strategies	4	22
Peer pairing strategy	Described as one of the best methods to include students of low ability	3	11
Peer-evaluation	Students are encouraged to evaluate each other's performance	2	4
Project based learning	Indicated as being of the main methods used at the school	4	12
Role play	Another example of a teaching method observed	1	6

Name	Description	Files	References
Think Pair Share	Pair work	3	11
Year 1 challenges	All the challenges associated with teaching a Year 1 classroom	2	17
8 Classroom Management		**0**	**0**
Classroom climate	Overall teacher-student interactions in class	2	17
Classroom routine	Daily routine and tasks	2	6
Reinforcement	Different ways of rewarding good behaviour and achievement	3	16
Student enthusiasm	Students are always happy to learn and engage in the learning activities	2	15

Appendix 5c: Example map of school 2 themes and sub-themes.

