COMPARISON BETWEEN SPECIAL AND GENERAL TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS INCLUSION OF LEARNERS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS IN PRIMARY MAINSTREAM GIRLS' SCHOOLS IN THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

by

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore and understand Saudi teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of students with special educational needs (SEN). It aims to compare the attitudes of special and general education teachers in the context of female primary mainstream schools in Riyadh, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The investigation considers a number of variables responsible for shaping teachers' attitudes towards inclusion.

The study employed a mixed-methods design, based on an interpretive paradigm. The data collection methods included both interviews and questionnaires. Questionnaires explored teachers' attitudes in relation to beliefs, emotions and behaviour. The questionnaires investigated the influence of teachers' attitudes, with a particular focus on three factors: length of experience, teachers' qualifications and in-service training. Interviews covered four themes: teachers' understanding and knowledge of the concept of SEN inclusion; teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools; factors affecting the effective implementation of inclusive education; and issues influencing teachers' attitudes towards inclusion of students with SEN.

The research findings indicate that special education teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream girls' schools are more positive than those of general education teachers. One possible reason for this disparity according to the study is the fact that Saudi special education teachers hold qualifications in the area of special education, having participated in pre-service training, while general education teachers do not. Considering the study context, certain obstacles impeding successful implementation of inclusion were highlighted by both groups, including the physical school environment, human resources, and the availability of resources to support diverse students' needs in a mainstream setting. The conclusion to this study recommends that if inclusion is to be successful, then the obstacles identified need to be removed by addressing the issues present in the school environment and

offering professional training programmes for teachers, to improve the quality of provision for students with SEN.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to everything in my life: my father, Marzouk, and my mother, Fedhah, for their prayers, encouragement and support in achieving my goals.

Also, I would like to dedicate this thesis to my supervisor who was a Senior Lecturer in the School of Education, Penny Lacey, who passed away while I was doing this research. She was a very supportive supervisor every time I needed her assistance. Her constant motivation was a very significant factor for what I am achieving today. I will never forget her golden words regarding my research and personal life.

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List of Figures

Figure 2.1. Distribution of female students among special schools and programmes, 2006/2007 (Al-Mousa, 2007).....33

Figure 3.1. The UNESCO Salamanca Statement on special educational needs (UNESCO, 1994, p. viii-ix) 40

Figure 5.1. Bar chart of mean attitude component scores by special education teachers.....128

Figure 5.2. Bar chart of mean attitude scores by years of experience. 129

Figure 5.3. Bar chart of mean attitude scores by level of qualification. 132

Figure 5.4. Bar chart of mean attitude scores by in-service training for special education teachers. 133

Figure 5.5 Bar chart of mean attitude component scores by general education teachers. 134

Figure 5.6. Bar chart of mean attitude scores by years of experience. 136

Figure 5.7. Bar chart of mean attitude scores by level of qualification. 138

Figure 5.8. Bar chart of mean attitude scores by in-service training for general education teachers. 140

Figure 6.1. Thematic map of the sub-theme ‘The meaning of inclusion of students with SEN’ based on the responses of ST1, ST2, GT3 and GT4. 147

Figure 6.2. Thematic map of the sub-theme ‘Inclusion in schools versus inclusion in classrooms’ based on the responses of ST1, ST2, GT3 and GT4. 153

Figure 6.3. Thematic map of the sub-theme ‘The types and severity of disabilities’ based on the responses of ST1, ST2, GT3 and GT4. 155

Figure 6.4. Thematic map of the sub-theme ‘The impact of inclusion upon students with SEN’ based on the responses of ST1, ST2, GT3 and GT4. 158

Figure 6.5. Thematic map of the sub-theme ‘Training of teachers’ based on the responses of ST1, ST2, GT3 and GT4. 163

Figure 6.6. Thematic map of the sub-theme ‘Schools’ facilities’ based on the responses of ST1, ST2, GT3 and GT4. 167

Figure 6.7. Thematic map of the sub-theme ‘Teachers’ collaboration’ based on the responses of ST1, ST2, GT3 and GT4. 170

Figure 6.8. Thematic map of the sub-theme ‘Barriers to inclusion’ based on the responses of ST1, ST2, GT3 and GT4. 173

Figure 6.9. Thematic map of the sub-theme ‘How to overcome barriers to inclusion’ based on the responses of ST1, ST2, GT3 and GT4. 176

Figure 7.1. Factors affecting teachers’ attitudes regarding the inclusion of students with SEN. 199

List of Tables

Table 4.1 Reliability coefficients for the components of attitude.....97

Table 4.2 Reliability coefficients for the factors affecting teachers' attitudes. 98

Table 4.3 Interviewees (qualitative sample) 106

Table 4.4 Level of agreement according to 5-point Likert scale. 108

Table 4.5 Coding framework for thematic analysis.....110

Table 5.1 Characteristics of the study sample (n=165).....122

Table 5.2 Characteristics of the study sample on experience and in-service training 123

Table 5.3 Characteristics of sample related to working with students with SEN.....124

Table 5.4 Disabilities that could be included in inclusive classrooms as perceived by special education teachers and general education teachers.....125

Table 5.5 Correlation coefficients between components of the attitude scale.....126

Table 5.6 Special education teachers' attitude means and standard deviations.....127

Table 5.7 Mean(SD) attitude component score by years of experience with p-value 129

Table 5.8 Mean (SD) attitude components scores by level of qualification with p-value.....131

Table 5.9 Mean (SD) attitude scores by in-service training for special education teachers with p-value.....132

Table 5.10 General education teachers' attitude means and standard deviations.....134

Table 5.11 Mean(SD) attitude component score by years of experience with p-value 135

Table 5.12 Mean (SD) attitude components scores by level of qualification with p-value...137

Table 5.13 Mean (SD) attitude scores by in-service training for general education teachers with p-value 139

Table 5.14 Mean (SD) attitude scores by position in school with p-value 141

Table 5.15 Distribution of teachers by position in the school by attitude component score category 142

Table 5.16 Mean score by position in the school and factors that affect the teachers' attitudes with p-value 143

Table of Contents

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION....1

1.1 General background....1

1.2 The rationale for conducting the study....3

1.3 The nature and contribution of the study....7

1.4 The objectives of the study....10

1.5 Research questions....11

1.6 Definition of terms....12

1.7 Summary of the chapter and structure of the thesis....13

CHAPTER 2: STUDY SETTING: OVERVIEW OF THE SAUDI CONTEXT....16

2.1 Overview of the literature selection....16

2.2 Introduction....17

2.3 General information....17

2.4 Islamic attitudes towards disabilities....18

2.5 Saudi society's attitudes towards disabilities....21

2.6 History of education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia....23

2.7 The history of the development of special education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia 24

2.8 Definition of students with SEN and beneficiaries from SEN services....31

2.9 Definition of inclusion in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia....34

2.10 The training and the roles of general and special education teachers in the KSA....34

2.11 Summary of the chapter....37

CHAPTER 3: THE CONCEPTS OF 'INCLUSION' AND 'ATTITUDE' 38

3.1 Section 1: The concept of inclusion....38

3.1.1 Introduction....38

3.1.2 Definitions of integration and inclusion....38

3.1.3 Overview of the concept, meanings and practices of inclusive education 41
3.1.4 Models of disability 44
3.1.5 Classifications of inclusive education.....46
3.1.6 Advantages and disadvantages of including students with SEN in mainstream education.....47
3.1.7 Summary of the section 51
3.2 Section 2: The concept of attitude and inclusive education.....52
3.2.1 Introduction.....52
3.2.2 Overview of the concept of attitude.....52
3.2.3 The three-component model of attitude.....54
3.2.4 The importance of a teacher's attitude towards inclusion 55
3.2.5 International studies concerning attitudes towards the inclusion of students with SEN.....58
3.2.6 Arab studies concerning attitudes towards the inclusion of students with SEN.....66
3.2.7 Factors affecting teachers' attitudes towards SEN inclusion.....71
3.2.8 Summary of the section 80
CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY 82
4.1 Introduction.....82
4.2 Research paradigm.....83
4.3 The research methodology.....85
4.4 Mixed methods design.....87
4.5 Methods of data collection.....88
4.5.1 Questionnaire.....88
4.5.2 Interviews.....98
4.6 Sampling procedures.....103

4.7 Data analysis 106
4.7.1 Quantitative data analysis (data analysis process) 106
4.7.2 Qualitative data analysis 108
4.8 Trustworthiness of qualitative data (interview) 113
4.8.1 Credibility 113
4.8.2 Transferability 114
4.8.3 Conformability 114
4.8.4 Dependability 115
4.9 Ethical considerations of the data collection 116
4.10 Researcher Positionality 117
4.11 Summary of the chapter 119
CHAPTER 5: QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS 121
5.1 Introduction 121
5.2 Questionnaire sample of the research participants and demographic variables 122
5.3 Characteristics of the sample related to working with students with SEN 124
5.4 Linear correlation results 126
5.5 Results for each variable and differences between components of attitude 127
5.5.1 Special education teachers 127
5.5.2 General education teachers 134
5.6 Differences in attitude according to position held in the school 140
5.7 Differences in response median about factors that affect the teachers' attitudes 143
5.8 Summary of the chapter 144
CHAPTER 6: FINDINGS OF QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWS 145
6.1 Introduction 145
6.2 Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the concept of SEN inclusion 146

6.2.1 The meaning of inclusion of students with SEN 146
6.3 Teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of learners with SEN in mainstream schools 148
6.3.1 Inclusion in schools versus inclusion in classrooms 148
6.3.2 The types and severity of disabilities 153
6.3.3 The impact of inclusion upon students with SEN 156
6.4 Factors and requirements affecting the effective implementation of inclusive education 158
6.4.1 Training of teachers 159
6.4.2 Schools' facilities 163
6.4.3 Teachers' collaboration 167
6.5 Issues influencing teachers' attitudes towards inclusion 170
6.5.1 Barriers to inclusion 170
6.5.2 How to overcome these barriers 173
6.6 Summary of the chapter 177
CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION 181
7.1 Introduction 181
7.2 Theme one: Teachers' understanding of inclusive education 182
7.3 Theme two: The attitude of teachers towards the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools and classrooms 186
7.3.1 Differences in attitudes between teachers 187
7.3.2 Collaboration between general education teachers and special education teachers 190
7.3.3 Teachers' attitudes towards the benefits of inclusion 194

7.4 Theme three: Factors affecting teachers' attitudes regarding the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools 198
7.4.1 Teacher-related factors 199
7.4.2 Environment-related factors 214
7.4.3 Child-related factors 218
7.5 Attitudes and religion 223
7.6 Summary of the chapter 225
CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION 229
8.1 Introduction 229
8.2 Summary of the study 229
8.3 Limitations of the study 236
8.4 Recommendations 238
REFERENCES 246
APPENDICES 272
Appendix 1: The Ethical Research Approval 272
Appendix 2: The Authorisation Letter from my Supervisor 273
Appendix 3: The Permission Letter from the Ministry of Education 274
Appendix 4: The Questionnaire - English Version: 276
Appendix 5: The Semi-Structured Interview Schedule – English Version: 291
Appendix 6: Example of an Interview Transcript with a Teacher– English Version: 301
Appendix 7: Translated Quotes from the Arabic Transcript in Support of the Findings: (The meaning of inclusion of students with SEN) 314
Appendix 8: Translated Quotes from the Arabic Transcript in Support of the Findings: (Inclusion in schools versus inclusion in classrooms) 315

Appendix 9: Translated Quotes from the Arabic Transcript in Support of the Findings: (The types and severity of disabilities) 318
Appendix 10: Translated Quotes from the Arabic Transcript in Support of the Findings: (The impact of inclusion upon students with SEN) 320
Appendix 11: Translated Quotes from the Arabic Transcript in Support of the Findings: (Training of teachers) 322
Appendix 12: Translated Quotes from the Arabic Transcript in Support of the Findings: (Schools' facilities) 325
Appendix 13: Translated Quotes from the Arabic Transcript in Support of the Findings: (Teachers' collaboration) 327
Appendix 14: Translated Quotes from the Arabic Transcript in Support of the Findings: (Barriers to inclusion) 329
Appendix 15: Translated Quotes from the Arabic Transcript in Support of the Findings: (How to overcome barriers to inclusion) 332
Appendix 16: Example of Coding Process for Interview Transcript 334

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 General background

The field of special needs education experienced remarkable development internationally, in the Middle East and in the Arab world during the last century. Recently, the main focus has been on the concept of inclusion, whereby students with special educational needs (SEN) are educated together with their typically developing peers. It is important at the very beginning of this thesis to provide and examine definitions of students with SEN, including how the researcher will be using the term SEN in the course of this work. The UK Education Act (1981, p.1) provided the following definition of students with SEN: "*a child has special educational needs if he has a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision*". However, the Saudi Ministry of Education (2002, p.41) stated that students in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) are considered to have SEN if they experience "*cognitive, sensory or physical disabilities, emotional, behavioural, academic or communicative disabilities which require extra educational resources, apparatus or techniques*". Since this definition has been conducted in the context of the KSA, this thesis employs the latter definition from the KSA. Prevailing opinion suggests that inclusion in mainstream schools provides students with SEN with improved learning opportunities, equal to those of their typically developing peers, and which also facilitates their academic and personal growth (Angelides & Aravi, 2007). It is a commonly shared assumption that inclusive education can lead to the improvement of students' social skills, thus helping their integration into an array of different social settings (Forlin & Cole, 1993; Hadjikakou, 2002; Ward, 2003). The increased interaction between individuals with and without disabilities is expected to remove barriers between both groups and prevent stigmatization of disabilities in general (Allan, 2003). Therefore, one of the major improvements in the relationship between individuals with and without disabilities has been the development of education of students with SEN in mainstream schools.

A number of changes have been observed in various countries concerning the system for providing educational facilities for students with SEN. This has been particularly evident following the global support for inclusion by the United Nations' Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO, 2000), stressing that equity of special needs students can be achieved socially and academically when they are provided with education in mainstream schools. Subsequently, the KSA was one of the countries that introduced new provisions for students with SEN, the effects of which were to replace separate teaching in special schools by inclusion in mainstream schools (Al-Amri, 2009). This change involved an acknowledgement that students with SEN need to be effectively engaged and their needs respected in schools that are appropriately prepared to provide for them. Therefore, it is important that the school environment be inclusive and teachers in mainstream schools need to be qualified and capable in order for students with SEN to be successfully included. In the present study, it is important to discover and explore the attitudes of Saudi teachers towards the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools.

A number of previous studies have confirmed that a key prerequisite for the successful implementation of inclusive education concerns the attitudes of those dealing with its practical consequences, i.e. teachers. It has therefore been proposed that the attitude of teachers is of fundamental importance in providing the appropriate conditions for the implementation of inclusive practices (Norwich, 1994). This view is based on a perceived correlation between the level of acceptance of these practices by teachers and the degree to which they are committed to their correct implementation (Norwich, 1994). Wood (2002) confirmed the importance of the role of teachers in successful inclusion, describing them as the most influential catalyst for classroom social interaction. In addition to implementation, effective inclusive practices require that school staff and teachers in particular are made aware of the core principles of inclusion, including the actions required to uphold these principles. Thus, teachers' attitudes

towards inclusion represent a factor capable of either facilitating or hindering its implementation (UNESCO, 1994).

This study therefore places particular emphasis on attitudes, as the attitudes of both general and special education teachers are significant for the success of inclusion. It is thus also important at the outset of this thesis to define the concept of attitude and to establish the significance of the attitudes of professionals towards inclusion. Petty and Cacioppo (1981) regarded 'attitudes' as sentiments, perspectives, or mental stances adopted by an individual in relation to an external factor (i.e. a piece of artwork, the environment, or another individual). This study considers attitudes to be the sentiments, perspectives, or mental stances adopted by special and general education teachers in relation to the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools. This section has discussed the background of this current study. The following section examines the rationale for its undertaking.

1.2 The rationale for conducting the study

The history of inclusion in the KSA, as in many countries, began after attempts at educating students with SEN in separate institutions. In the KSA, inclusion only began in 2000.This implies that both groups of teachers, both special and general, may have had different educational backgrounds, which might affect their attitudes towards the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools.

When referring to inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools, the culture of a society should be taken into account. Historically, the majority of Saudi Arabians came from tribes and originally lived in rural areas; they had a collective ideology within their communities, including how they perceived people with disabilities. Most of these people did not attend school so they were not educated. It should be stated that the Saudi culture, relationships within the immediate and extended families and their tribal society were strongly connected. However, living in a society with limited openness and freedom, their attitudes

towards people with disabilities were challenging. It was unfortunately common that families perceived disability as a shame and that parents felt embarrassed when their child had a disability. This meant that families who had children with disabilities preferred their disabled children not to accompany them in public, including their close relatives. However, as Muslims who were influenced by Islamic religion, those who accepted that their children should go to school, were influenced by mercy and sympathy to choose special schools for their children since the collective culture accepted special education schools where the other children also had disabilities. Parents, as carers, believed their children could be manipulated or harmed in mainstream schools as being different from ordinary children.

Such practices contradict what Islam actually urges in terms of human rights and so it could be said such practices misunderstand the rights of people with disabilities and consequently mislead the way students with SEN are educated.

It is significant to note that, in comparing Saudi educational policies with those of other countries, we find that most articles of Saudi educational policy refer to Islam and the importance of complying with Islamic rules with less emphasis on the needs of each child and how to meet these needs. So, when referring to the Saudi history of inclusion, the above factors have influenced decision-makers to adopt examples of segregation from other countries because they preferred segregation. It is because the policy-makers themselves were influenced by the collective culture that they learned from other countries about segregated schooling but not about more inclusive schooling. This is why inclusion was only introduced in 2000. However, once inclusion legislation was officially enacted and implemented, the question of the attitudes of special and general education teachers became significant. Since the researcher is from the same country, these are the elements that influenced the researcher to study the differences between special education teachers and general education teachers working in mainstream schools regarding their attitudes towards students with SEN.

So, since teachers are part of the society, these cultural issues could affect their attitudes in spite of their education. The Ministry of Education is required to provide both sorts of teachers with appropriate training if inclusion is to be implemented appropriately. However, has the Ministry of Education met such a requirement? From the evidence found in the relevant literature, including this study's findings, the Ministry of Education has yet to commit to this condition. In this research, although special education teachers had more positive attitudes than general education teachers, which could be attributed to the training special education teachers had had, those teachers also found the issue of training still needed improvement.

This section outlines the rationale for conducting this study and for choosing to focus on girls' schools and on primary education. Firstly, the researcher's motivation for conducting this study relates to a professional interest in the field of special education, and in particular the inclusive education of students with SEN in mainstream schools in the KSA. Secondly, a considerable gap has been previously identified in the knowledge regarding the state of inclusive education and teachers' attitudes in the KSA, in particular in terms of facilitating or hindering inclusion. This gap is therefore another primary motivation for conducting the present study within its current parameters.

Thirdly, inclusive practice in education is relatively new in the KSA, resulting in a need to address a number of vital factors, i.e. its novelty may serve as an indicator of potential positive and/or negative attitudes towards inclusion. This subject has been previously explored by Al-Mousa (2007), who identified contradictions in teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of students with SEN. However, his study contains a number of limitations, which this study now seeks to address. For example, Al-Mousa's (2007) study was limited to boys' schools, leading to a need to focus on female teachers in girls' schools, which has been the focus of this study.

Teachers' positive attitudes towards inclusive practices are considered conducive to the successful implementation of inclusive education policies and practices (and vice versa) (Ellis

et al., 2008; Olson, 2003; Sadler, 2005) resulting in a need to explore whether this is also the case in the context of the KSA. In addition, the researcher selected primary mainstream girls' schools in Riyadh as the focus of this research. Firstly, girls' schools were chosen to enable the researcher to become an insider in the research process; this is because the education system in the country is segregated based on a gender and conducting the research in girls' schools will therefore allow the researcher to achieve the goal of being an insider. Secondly, the focus on primary schools arose from inclusion in the KSA having been initially implemented at this stage, resulting in the majority of inclusion programmes being available at the primary level (Al-Khashrami, 2000) and therefore giving access to more teachers who have experience of the inclusion of students with SEN.

As a result of the aspects discussed above, this study aims to understand the attitudes of both general and special education teachers in primary mainstream girls' schools in the KSA. Moreover, it aims to compare the attitudes of both groups of teachers in order to find out if there are any differences in their attitudes and how to overcome any differences if found for the purpose of creating a more positive working environment. In addition, it aims to reveal the challenges that both groups of teachers face in promoting the inclusion of students with SEN in primary girls' mainstream schools in the KSA.

The benefits of any study can be measured by the ability of its researcher to offer relevant and unique conclusions and recommendations, with the potential to bring tangible benefits for a whole, or specific parts, of a society. The recommendations and conclusions of this study are therefore expected to benefit a number of different groups of people including: general and special education teachers, members of the school administration, and students with SEN. The findings of this study are also expected to contribute to informing stakeholders within the Saudi context concerning the importance of teachers' roles and attitudes towards inclusive education.

This section has highlighted the rationale of this study. The following section examines in detail the nature and contribution of this study.

1.3 The nature and contribution of the study

This study considers the successful implementation of inclusion as requiring the skills, knowledge, experience and positivity of teachers; i.e. how teachers judge and perceive inclusion (Norwich, 1994). The successful implementation of an inclusive education could be said to be largely dependent on teachers' positive attitudes (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Cook, 2001). It has been previously demonstrated that teachers' attitudes constitute a crucial aspect of the successful implementation of any such programme (Hodkinson, 2010). Therefore, one of the key factors determining the success of inclusion of students with SEN into mainstream schools is the attitudes of both general and special education teachers towards inclusion as a concept, as well as its various practical dimensions.

As noted above, the inclusion of students with SEN into mainstream schools is still a relatively new concept, particularly in the context of the KSA. Consequently, there are only few available studies exploring inclusive education, in the Arab world in general, and in the KSA in particular (Al-Gomah, 2009). Due to inclusion being a relatively new concept in the KSA, research is required to indicate the possibility of there being positive and negative attitudes towards inclusion, as well as the extent of its acceptance. There are a number of contradictions in attitudes towards inclusion, with those in favour believing that it can decrease stigma (Al-Mousa, 2007), while those against inclusion insisting that the needs of students with SEN are fulfilled by special schools, i.e. practical educational environments to support their foreseeable future needs. Those who hold this latter opinion also argue that the inclusion of students with SEN could effectively lead to the introduction of a new education system, which is not easily achieved (Al-Mousa, 2007). The importance of recognising teachers' attitudes towards various

issues related to education lies in the wide-ranging consequences of such perceptions on the educational process, as well as teachers' performance.

Given the above, this study could make a valid contribution to existing knowledge, both locally and globally. The first unique contribution of this research is that it investigates and compares the attitudes of general and special education teachers towards the inclusion of students with SEN in the context of mainstream schools, in which both groups of teachers work together, which has not been conducted before in the context of the KSA. It is particularly important to compare the attitudes of general and special education teachers working in an inclusive setting, as both are expected to plan for, work with, and teach students with SEN within the same setting.

The second unique contribution of this study is that it examines such attitudes using the three-component model of attitudes (i.e. cognitive, affective and behavioural) (Ajzen, 2005; Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). The importance of this model lies in its capacity to encompass the expected complex character of teachers' attitudes regarding inclusion. In addition, this study examines the impact of a number of different variables upon teachers' attitudes with its components (i.e. cognitive, affective and behavioural), including the experience of teachers in working with students with SEN, level of their qualifications, and in-service training. This has not been previously employed in comparing teachers' attitudes in the context of the KSA. This therefore forms a significant contextual contribution for this research as it provides a detailed and rich picture of the attitudes of both groups of teachers regarding the inclusion of students with SEN using the three components model of attitudes.

The third unique contribution of this study is that it is undertaken in girls' schools. These have frequently been overlooked. To the researcher's knowledge, the majority of previous research into teachers' attitudes has focused on boys' schools and involved male teachers, while only a few research studies included both male and female teachers. The latter include those

conducted by Al-Abduljabber (1994) and Al-Ahmadi (2009, cited in Alquraini 2010), which differ in terms of nature and focus from the present research, as discussed in Chapter Three, Section 3.2.6. The fourth unique contribution of this study is that it also examines the attitudes of teachers towards the inclusion of all types of SEN, which has not previously been researched, thus identifying whether a difference in a student's type of SEN can influence teachers' attitudes.

The fifth unique contribution of this study is its use of a mixed methods approach to investigate the attitudes of general and special education teachers. Most of the previous studies focussing on educational research and special education in the KSA has relied heavily on a quantitative approach, i.e. in which questionnaires are used for large scale data collection. This study therefore addresses a vital gap in the previous research and to the best of the researcher's knowledge is the first to employ mixed methods to focus on teachers' attitudes towards inclusion, in particular qualitative (i.e. interviews) and quantitative (i.e. questionnaires) methods. This study employs a mixed methods approach situated within the interpretive paradigm; thus it could add to the body of research in the social sciences domain in the KSA. In addition, it is judged that the qualitative approach will be more efficient in establishing an in-depth understanding of teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream primary schools in the KSA, thereby possibly establishing a foundation for future research using a qualitative approach.

The final unique contribution of this study to the literature is that a considerable number of studies previously examining teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education have been predominantly positioned within Western contexts. By contrast, this current study represents an opportunity to analyse teachers' attitudes in a Saudi context from a Saudi perspective, while at the same time comparing these attitudes with the theoretical basis composed of research previously conducted in Western contexts. It is therefore important to understand the attitudes

of both general and special education teachers towards inclusion of students with SEN within mainstream schools in the KSA, and to analyse the key factors in the construction of teachers' attitudes in order to highlight those with the potential to contribute to the development of positive attitudes towards inclusion. This section has outlined the nature and contribution of this study. The following section further elaborates on its objectives.

1.4 The objectives of the study

Considering the aforementioned, the successful implementation of inclusion in the KSA is, to a large degree, dependent on better understanding of an array of factors, among which the most important are the attitudes of teachers towards inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools, and the impact of a number of variables that shape teachers' attitude towards inclusion. This understanding is necessary as it helps to highlight those factors that might contribute to the development of positive attitudes towards inclusion. Therefore, the objectives of the study are:

- To understand the attitudes of special education teachers and general education teachers towards the inclusion of students with SEN and the factors that affect their attitudes, whether positive or negative;
- To understand the impact on teachers' attitudes towards inclusion, taking into consideration how background factors, such as length of experience in working with students with SEN, teachers' level of qualifications and in-service training are related to teachers' attitudes towards inclusion and how they might positively or negatively influence teachers' attitudes towards inclusion;
- To compare the attitudes of both groups of teachers in order to find out if there are any differences in their attitudes, the possible reasons behind these differences and how to overcome any differences if found, for the purpose of creating a more positive working environment.

- To identify the challenges that both groups of teachers face in promoting the inclusion of students with SEN in primary girls' mainstream schools in the KSA.

1.5 Research questions

Based on the objectives presented above, this study focuses on answering the following research questions:

- What are the attitudes of special and general education teachers towards the inclusion of learners with SEN?
- What is the impact of the background factors on the attitudes of special education teachers and general education teachers towards the inclusion of learners with SEN?
- What are the differences between the attitudes of general education teachers and special education teachers towards the inclusion of learners with SEN?
- What are the challenges facing successful inclusion in the context of this study?

The research questions for this study build on the gaps in the KSA literature. In addition, the assumptions underlying the research questions addressed in this study were primarily interpretative in nature, based on the existing research regarding teachers' attitudes, the differences between the attitudes of general and special education teachers, the underlying factors influencing these attitudes, and the challenges to successful inclusion of students with SEN. Most research about attitudes towards inclusion is predominantly positioned within a Western context. For this reason, this study explores how those areas mentioned above are also manifested in the context of the KSA, where inclusion is in its infancy. The KSA has an urgent need to address these types of questions, because not much research has been undertaken in these areas. Hence, the present study represents a valuable contribution to knowledge in this field. The questions are also entirely original in nature, being aimed at understanding and comparing the attitudes of general and special education teachers, and using the three-

component model which has not previously been employed in comparing teachers' attitudes in the context of the KSA. The important terms applied in this study are defined in the following section.

1.6 Definition of terms

Students with special educational needs (SEN): In this study, following the terminology used within the context of the KSA, students with SEN are defined as those who experience *'cognitive, sensory or physical disabilities, emotional, behavioural, academic or communicative disabilities which require extra educational resources, apparatus or techniques'* (Ministry of Education, 2002, p.41). The following categories/names of SEN are used in the KSA context: (1) hearing disabilities; (2) visual disabilities; (3) learning difficulties; (4) multi disabilities; (5) physical disabilities; (6) speech and language disability, and (7) mental disabilities (Ministry of Education, 2002). As this study focuses primarily on all students with SEN who attend mainstream primary schools in the KSA, using the *in-situ* definition of SEN was deemed contextually appropriate.

Inclusion: In this study, 'inclusion' is defined as *'educating students with special educational needs in regular schools and providing them with special educational services'* (Ministry of Education, 2002, p.8). In this thesis, the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools can refer to both types of inclusion.

Mainstream girls' schools: In this study, 'mainstream girls' school' denotes only those schools which run inclusion programmes for girl students with SEN where these schools are the primary stages of education affiliated to the Ministry of Education in the KSA (Riyadh). It refers to schools that involve females only, teachers, students and all the staff.

Special education teachers: In this study, a 'special education teacher' denotes a teacher who holds a degree in Special Education, and who works in mainstream schools and assists both

students with SEN in the resource room or in special classrooms in mainstream schools to facilitate the inclusion of students with SEN (Ministry of Education, 2001).

General education teachers: In this study, a 'general education teacher' denotes a teacher who holds a degree in different subjects in Education, and who works in mainstream schools and teaches mainstream classrooms (Ministry of Education, 2001).

Moderate disabilities: *The general level of academic attainment of … learners* (with moderate disabilities) *will be significantly lower than that of their peers. Their cognitive ability and/or attainment levels will be at or below the second percentile. Generally they will have difficulty acquiring literacy and numeracy skills. Other difficulties may include associated speech and language delay, low self-esteem, low levels of concentration and underdeveloped social skills* (CEA, n.d.)

Severe disabilities: *'Learners with severe learning difficulties…have very significant intellectual or cognitive impairments. Their cognitive and/or attainment levels are normally at or below the 0.01 percentile. This has a major effect on their ability to participate in the school curriculum without support* (CEA, n.d.)*'.*

1.7 Summary of the chapter and structure of the thesis

This chapter has presented an overview of the whole study, including: the general background; the nature and contribution of the study; the objectives of the study; and the rationale for conducting this study. Finally, this chapter listed the research questions that the study seeks to find answers to, clarifying the background of the study and identifying its purpose. This chapter has emphasised that the attitudes of teachers towards inclusion constitutes the fundamental determinant of the success of its implementation, and that therefore their identification and analysis is both relevant and urgent.

In accordance with the focus of this research, this thesis is organised into eight chapters. Following this introductory chapter, Chapter 2 presents an overview of the KSA context in which this study was conducted. This review commences with general information concerning the KSA, along with Islamic attitudes towards disabilities and the attitudes of Saudi society towards inclusion. It further establishes an historical perspective concerning the education system including the development of special education systems in the KSA. In addition, this chapter includes a definition of inclusion and students with SEN as well as the role of general and special education teachers in the KSA, in order to provide an improved understanding of the study setting.

Chapter 3 presents a relevant review of the literature used to inform this research. It is divided into the following two sections. The first section provides a review of the major topics related to inclusive education, including a definition of inclusion and integration and an overview of the meanings and practices of inclusive education. In addition, this section includes a description of the social and medical model of disabilities, as well as classifications of inclusive education and the impact of including students with SEN in mainstream education. The second section provides a comprehensive review of the relevant literature regarding attitudes towards the inclusion of students with SEN, and explores studies related to teachers' attitudes and presents factors potentially influencing these attitudes. Chapter 4 outlines the research methodology and framework. This includes a more detailed description of the research design and of the methods of data collection, analysing the methods used and highlighting their resources and limitations. In addition, it discusses the sampling procedures of this study, data analysis, ethical considerations and researcher positionality. Chapter 5 presents the findings of the quantitative data collected from the questionnaires. Chapter 6 reveals the findings of the qualitative data collected from the interviews. These results are discussed in Chapter 7, with reference to various previous studies, as reviewed in the literature. Finally, Chapter 8 presents

a summary of the study, along with the answers to the research questions, including the limitations of the study. It offers recommendations for the inclusive education of students with SEN. The following chapter therefore presents an overview of the study setting.

CHAPTER 2: STUDY SETTING: OVERVIEW OF THE SAUDI CONTEXT

2.1 Overview of the literature selection

It is important to note that, since there has been a lack of research in the Saudi context regarding the issue discussed in this study, it was necessary to include literature from both the KSA and other countries containing data relevant to the theoretical framework. The relatively larger data set concerning inclusive education in other countries arises from the fact that inclusive education has a longer history there than in the KSA. A comparative examination of inclusive education practices in those countries is beneficial, as it can inform how the situation could be improved upon in the KSA. By investigating the methods and best practices employed within these countries, it is possible to learn by example and thereby further develop the existing system in the KSA. Furthermore, attaining insight into the inclusive education systems of other countries demands an in-depth analysis of literature concerning those contexts. For example, a review conducted by Avramidis (2000) about primarily Western contexts, clearly established that the effective implementation of any inclusive practices is largely dependent on school staff being positive about it. Thus, if teachers are not suitably prepared to accept students with SEN into mainstream schools and classrooms, this limits the chances that inclusion will succeed.

Although there is a lack of research conducted in the KSA, Al-Mousa (e.g. Al-Mousa, 2007; 2008) offers a significant contribution to the field of inclusion of special education in the KSA, making his work a key source for this study. The process of literature selection was designed to explore teachers' attitudes toward the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools; it did not include all aspects of inclusion research but only the significant parts related to the present study.

Sources for this research include books, research papers, journals and other academic works, and the purpose of reviewing them was to construct a theoretical framework and to position

this study. In order to implement a rigorous and satisfactory search protocol, and to avoid selection bias, the researcher initially consulted the greatest possible body of literature (e.g., books, journals and articles). During this period of immersion, notes identifying potential keywords were made, for later use when searching electronic databases. As Bryman (2016) suggested, when searching for the intended literature, the researcher also needs to consult the reference lists contained in the textbooks, articles, and other resources. Electronic databases were searched using the following keywords and search terms: 'SEN', 'disability',' students with disability' 'inclusion', 'attitude', 'teachers' attitudes', 'factors', 'mainstream schools' and 'inclusive schools'. The electronic search engines targeted were: Google Scholar, Find@Bham, online journals and academic databases (e.g. ERIC and ProQuest.).

2.2 Introduction

Establishing the setting of a study is essential for understanding context and findings (Law et al., 1998). This chapter provides an overview of the KSA, the research context, examining its religious and cultural environment and the various ways in which religion shapes Saudi culture. An outline is also provided detailing the history of the Saudi educational system and an in-depth examination of the development of special education systems in the KSA, to provide essential insights into the study setting to inform the investigation overall. The discussion of special education in the KSA explores a number of key terms and perspectives, including the definition of inclusion within the specific context of the KSA, categories of SEN, general education and special education teachers' roles and duties.

2.3 General information

Formally founded in 1932, the KSA is situated on the Arabian Peninsula where Asia, Africa and Europe meet (Ministry of Culture and Information, 2006). To the north, it borders Kuwait, Jordan and Iraq, and the United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Bahrain are at its eastern border. The

KSA's southern border is with Oman and Yemen, and the country's west coast is along the Red Sea. According to the most recent demographic data available from the Saudi General Authority for Statistics (2016), the population of the KSA is 31.7 million, of whom 1.5 million of all ages have recorded disabilities (Ministry of Health, 2016). The capital of the KSA is Riyadh, and this is where this study took place. The kingdom's constitution and legal system are based on Sharia law, which is a legal extension of key rulings and teachings from the Quran and the Sunnah's prophetic tradition. The political system has the characteristics of an absolute monarchy, with the King presiding over the legal system, advised by the Saudi Council of Ministers. The culture of the KSA is based on Islamic traditions, and religion is a central feature in its inhabitants' social life and moral values. The social contract is prescribed by Islam, including how individuals treat one another and form relationships, the structure of family systems, and the importance given to education, which is seen as a duty for all (Al-Salloum, 1989). The Islamic attitude towards disabilities is explained in the following section.

2.4 Islamic attitudes towards disabilities

The purpose of this section is to contextualise how Islamic practice influences approaches towards disability in the KSA, due to the significance of Islam as a factor in the study context. This will be done by examining key Muslim texts, including the Quran (Muslims' Holy Book) and the Sunnah/Hadith (the life/example/practices of the Prophet Muhammad). Both these texts will be discussed throughout, in order explain attitudes towards disabled people in Islam.

According to Muslim teachings, the writings of the Quran are the direct words of God; thus, they transcend time, history and location and are applicable to all situations. In the society that pre-dated Islam, not only were disabled people not allowed to eat and live with the general populace, but they were also restricted from marriage (Bazna & Hatab, 2005). Conversely, Islam promotes inclusion. One example of this is evidenced in the following verse from the Quran which states:

> *All of you, o believers, are brethren: hence, no blame attaches to the blind, nor does blame attach to the lame, nor does blame attach to the sick [for accepting charity from the hale] and neither to you by others, whether it be food obtained] from your [children's] houses or your fathers' houses* (28:61, Al-Nour Chapter).

This example promotes solidarity within Muslim communities, highlighting how all individuals should be treated with equal importance, regardless of any disability or social class (Bazna & Hatab, 2005). The Quran furthermore emphasises how Muslim communities should be inclusive and base their dynamics on kindness and support between members. Hence, given that such great importance is placed on these values within the context of Islamic teaching, it is evident that the Quran aims to remove discriminatory practices based on physical disabilities, or social status. Not only does Islam promote equal treatment between disabled and non-disabled people, with emphasis on this being a right, but it also highlights how disabled people have particular needs and requirements, which need to be recognised and taken into consideration. For example:

> *God does not burden any human being with more than he is able to bear: in his favour shall be whatever good he does and against him whatever evil he does* (2:286, Al-Baqara Chapter).

The Sunnah, which is another source of the teachings, actions and sayings of the Prophet Muhammad, contains important information, setting out tenets of the Islamic faith that are pertinent to inclusion. To exemplify this, Bano (2013) drew attention to the story of Julaibib, a blind and short man. After Julaibib's death, the Prophet prepared his grave, saying the following: 'this man is of me and I am of him'. According to the Sunnah, the Prophet Muhammad restated this several times, ensuring his words would be perceptible to all.

In addition, in Islam one of the most noble and elevated acts a person can engage in is to politely, sensitively, and meticulously treat the disabled well. This is reflected in the Prophet

Muhammad's treatment of a blind companion *Sahaabi*, detailed in the Prophet's saying *Hadith* given by Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him):

> *A blind man came to the Prophet and said: 'O Prophet of Allah, I do not have a guide to lead me to the mosque'. He then asked the Prophet of Allah to allow him to pray in his home. First, the Prophet permitted him, then he asked him: 'Do you hear the prayer call?' Yes, said the blind man. The Prophet said: 'Then, answer the call'.*

In a further example, the Prophet Muhammad, during the early Islamic period, bestowed the authority to manage the city of Medina on a blind person, Abdullah Ibn Umm Maktum (Bano, 2013). This *Hadith* vividly shows the optimal way to interact with disabled people. The Prophet Muhammad encouraged the blind man not to be isolated, encouraging him to integrate with others. It is unsurprising to note, therefore, that many non-Muslim authors have highlighted the positive way in which Islamic tenets provide for the education and rehabilitation of disabled people (Farrell, 1956; Kirtley, 1975; Ross, 1951).

From the examples given above, it emerges that connecting negative behaviours and beliefs concerning disabilities in Muslim countries with Islam is inaccurate, as Islam supports the inclusion of disabled people. In light of this, Miles (2002) poses the question of why, regardless of the positive principles expressed in religious texts, disabled people may be neglected and treated unfavourably. This contradiction between the stance of Islam and societies' attitudes possibly arises from the fact that, in developing Muslim countries, education on Islamic texts is scarce, allowing room for misinterpretation (Al-Aoufi et al., 2012). Miles (2002) highlights a strong connection between economic conditions in developing countries and negative attitudes towards disabled people. Given that, in some of these communities, people are both poor and ruled by dictators, the needs of disabled people are afforded minimal priority and many are unable to defend themselves and their rights. In a similar vein, Oliver (1990) highlights how there is a clear correlation between disability and poverty in Britain. This

finding led to a focus on *"*the poverty of disabled people' as distinct from cause, i.e. 'the oppression of disabled people by society" (Oliver, 1990, p.109). Oliver furthermore discusses how negative attitudes also lead to the segregation of disabled people, and an inability to recognise their skills and provide them with opportunities. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, the issue of poverty has not been researched. There could be different elements behind the lack of research into this topic in the KSA. Since the government is the biggest producer of oil, with the largest global reserves of oil, this could have influenced researchers not to focus on poverty when investigating issues around disabilities. The cultural interventions towards disabled people in the KSA which help them through charitable works and initiatives, could be also behind the absence of poverty in the relevant research. In addition, government provision for people with disabilities, including financial aid to every person with disabilities, including employees, may be another reason behind the lack of research in terms of poverty in the field of disability. However, although the KSA is regarded as a wealthy country, alongside other reasons mentioned earlier, the issue of poverty needs to be considered in future research.

The religious traditions in KSA determine what is inappropriate or unsuitable, and there is almost no distinction made between cultural, social and religious values (Rice & Al-Mossawi, 2002). Al-Aoufi et al. (2012) also mentioned that, despite the fact that Muslims share the same beliefs and principles, people's attitudes and understandings regarding the concept of inclusion, and their attitudes to individuals with disabilities might vary depending on factors such as their socio-economic status, their level of education and awareness.

2.5 Saudi society's attitudes towards disabilities

The histories of the KSA and the Islamic faith are closely intertwined. Consequently, cultural aspects of the KSA have been strongly impacted by the permeation of Islamic beliefs into all aspects of society. A fundamental way to categorise diverse types of national culture, and thereby to illuminate the nature of the societies' national cultures, refers to the individualism

versus collectivism dichotomy. In this way, certain national cultures can be described as 'collectivistic', as exemplified by the prominence of extended family structures locating power within the group. Within collectivistic family structures, it is a social given that each family member has a duty of care to the other members. To illustrate this, Abd El-Khalek (2004) highlighted the context of a family with a disabled member. In a collectivistic society, the probability would be high that the disabled family member benefited from the full support of their family members. This reflects one of Hofstede's (1991) observations about collectivism; namely, that in-group loyalty is a foundational tenet (and more specifically, in-group loyalty is an expression of collective duties of care that extend to the national level). In individualistic national cultures, however, the treatment of disabled people requires that they are treated as far as possible like everyone else (Westbrook & Legge, 1993). This fact should not be overlooked, despite its limited generalisability. This is because there is a prominent level of overlap between individualistic and collectivistic principles and modes of being.

The attitudes of members of society in the KSA concerning the inclusion of individuals with disabilities differ from those in western countries. This has been directly associated with religious factors which influence culture, because western countries are multi-faith and so different cultures are expected to co-exist, while the KSA has only one faith, Islam, and its culture is Islamic related. The relationship between religion and culture is a very close one (Kelleher, 2007). Moreover, because Islamic religion in the KSA informs multiple aspects of life, it is essential to understand how Islam advocates for individuals with SEN. Further, it is important to examine Saudi societal and cultural influences on the attitudes of teachers. However, despite thoroughly searching for evidence, the researcher found a lack of literature on this topic, with references generally referring exclusively to religion. Thus, it proved difficult to examine society's attitudes towards individuals with disabilities beyond the scope of religion in the context of the KSA.

2.6 History of education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

The public education system in Saudi Arabia was established in 1925, with the creation of the General Directorate of Education. The jurisdiction of the Directorate was initially limited to four primary schools, but this was later extended to cover the whole country by 1932, with the issuance of a royal edict by King Abdulaziz. The next major development occurred in 1953, with the foundation of the Ministry of Education. It is important to note that the education system in the country is based on gender segregation (Ministry of Education, 1978).

The current education system in the KSA is organised into gendered levels: primary school, which students attend from the age of six; a three-year intermediate level starting at the age of twelve; and high school, which students attend from fifteen or sixteen and which also lasts for three years (Al-Senble et al., 1998). Upon completion of these three levels, students have the option to progress to undertake a two-year diploma course or enter university and complete a degree, free of charge. Students at Saudi universities usually specialise in a single area, and a Bachelor's degree takes four years to complete. The specialization is usually very narrow, so for example, general education teachers and special education teachers study different programmes, although both teachers will ultimately be employed in mainstream schools, some within inclusion programmes.

Provision for students with special needs began in 1960, with the opening of the first school for the blind (the Al Noor Institute for the Training and Education of the Blind) in Riyadh (Ministry of Education, 2002). In 1962, the Ministry of Education established the Administration for Special Needs Education, which was tasked with providing an official form of specialised education for students who were disabled, blind and/or deaf (Ministry of Education, 2002). This was followed two years later by the opening of the Al Amal Institute, in Riyadh, a residential school for the deaf that taught various subjects using Arabic sign language. Although many of the initial programmes were offered only in the capital city, other

projects were later introduced in different regions of the KSA (Ministry of Education, 2002). Specialised education provision was expanded in 1970, through the Education Law Resolution No.674/36/40, which established the right of all students with SEN to be taught to the best of their abilities (Ministry of Education, 2002). During that same year, the Administration for Special Needs Education became a government body and was renamed the General Directorate of Special Education; it included specialist departments focused specifically on the education of disabled students. The primary responsibilities of the General Directorate of Special Education were to: (1) train educators; (2) launch new programmes; (3) provide teaching equipment and materials; (4) develop and modify curricula; and (5) foster educational improvement (Ministry of Education, 2002). The Directorate underwent numerous organisational developments over subsequent years, and now contains many specialist departments, including those for individuals with developmental disabilities (i.e. autism and Asperger's), individuals with multiple disabilities, individuals with physical disabilities, individuals with learning difficulties and mental disabilities.

Having provided a historical overview of the general education system in the KSA, with a focus on special education, the following section provides a detailed account of the development of special education systems in the KSA.

2.7 The history of the development of special education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Since the 1960s, public special schools in the KSA have tended to isolate students with SEN (Alquraini, 2010). Under the Administration for Special Needs Education, and later the General Directorate of Special Education, students with SEN in the KSA have traditionally attended official special schools, where they have been provided with education and care by specialist teachers capable of meeting their needs (Al-Mousa, 2008; Al-Mousa, 2007). However, a reorganisation took place in 2000, reflecting growing interest in the transfer of students with SEN from special schools to mainstream schools (Al-Amri, 2009; Al-Mousa, 2010). The

traditional approach to educating students with SEN has been replaced by a philosophy of inclusion within the general educational system, in response to the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) recommendations made in 2000.

In the KSA, the priority to educate students with SEN in mainstream schools where possible is emphasised in Saudi educational policy, and the drive for inclusion aligns with the significant emphasis on the significance of inclusion as discussed in global educational reforms. The aim of inclusion in the Saudi setting, and in other countries, is to extend the right of all students with SEN to attend mainstream schools where appropriate environments are available, to increase their opportunities to learn, and facilitate their inclusion with typically developing students. To ensure Saudi students with SEN receive an appropriate education, the General Directorate of Special Education is in the process of adapting existing provision close to where students with SEN live, as the KSA is a large country (Ministry of Education, 2000). The official goal of the General Directorate of Special Education in the KSA is to ensure all students with SEN have access to specialised educational programmes in mainstream schools, wherever they live, to enable them to fulfil their potential to become productive members of society. The Ministries of Education, Health and Social Affairs established regulations in 2002 specifying the requirement for appropriate education and care to be delivered to all children (Ministry of Education, 2000). The General Directorate of Special Education has worked to fulfil this objective by assigning students with SEN to their nearest mainstream schools following accurate assessment of their needs. Under this system, each student is evaluated according to the nature and severity of his or her condition. This assessment process includes consideration of the following criteria: (1) the student's need for special education services; (2) the nature of their disability; (3) the severity of their disability; (4) the grade in which they are enrolled; and (5) further variables that the educational situation dictates to both the special education teacher

and the general classroom teacher (Al-Mousa, 2010). Applying this assessment process could be one way to improve the quality of education for students with SEN in mainstream schools.

Students deemed to have moderate disabilities can receive the majority of their teaching in mainstream classrooms, in conjunction with supplementary work delivered in resource room sessions, and additional support from a SEN specialist. To ensure they receive a good quality education, this approach is designed to enable students with SEN to complete the standard curriculum (Alquraini, 2010). In this way, full inclusion in mainstream schools can be accomplished through the provision of special education support programmes, a resource room, peripatetic teachers and teacher-consultant programmes. In inclusive schools, students with severe disabilities would follow a specialised curriculum, taught in special classrooms in mainstream schools. However, they would be encouraged to participate in mainstream school activities (Alquraini, 2010). This then enables the potential of students to be fully realised, through the design of individualised educational plans (IEPs) and the supply of necessary educational aids (e.g. software, wheelchairs and other teaching equipment), delivered in conjunction with resource rooms that offer a conducive environment for quality psychological, medical and social services. This regulation also highlights the importance of involving all stakeholders in SEN meetings, and of ensuring that parents and relevant school staff can prepare students for effective learning, and, eventually, for inclusion in real world contexts (Ministry of Education, 2000).

Despite attempts at the policy level to improve the quality of education provided for students with SEN, little is known about the extent to which such policies have been implemented, or the extent of their effectiveness. Undoubtedly, however, it is essential to ensure appropriate support for the required resources is in place to improve the quality of the education being offered. According to DFID (2010), it is not possible to achieve suitable outcomes without improving the quality of the education service being offered. In particular, in the case of

inclusion in mainstream schools, merely teaching students in such a setting does not mean that they will achieve the wider purpose, as certain support conditions need to be put in place to improve the quality of the education provided, such as adequate financial support to ensure the provision of appropriate resources and the materials required to support the teaching and learning process. There is also a need for teaching support and curricular design that meets the diverse needs of SEN students (Wang, 2009).

The KSA is playing a leading role in raising awareness in the Arab world regarding the importance of inclusion of students with SEN into mainstream education. Saudi Local Education Authorities have attempted to extend their policies to accommodate all students with SEN. In 1996, there were 67 initiatives in the KSA, providing education to 9,424 students (Al-Mousa, 2005). By 2000, 13,914 students with SEN were dispersed across 226 educational mainstream programmes within various settings, including special schools and mainstream schools delivering specialist provision, such as clinical psychologists, resource rooms and speech therapists (Al-Mousa, 2007). Moreover, in 2001 there were 901 programmes available, with the addition of more diverse types of students with SEN into the mainstream education (Al-Mousa, 2005). It seems probable that this situation evolved as inclusion expanded; indeed, the provision of mainstream programmes had expanded to 2,577 by 2007 (Al-Mousa, 2010). The number of students in these inclusion programmes has increased, where more than 90% of male students with SEN and 65% of their female counterparts have been assimilated into diverse arrangements within mainstream schools (Al-Mousa, 2007).

Since 2007, there has been little statistical data made available on inclusion, and so it is necessary to gather new data highlighting key variables, including the numbers of students with SEN integrated into primary, secondary and high schools in the KSA and the relative representation of boys and girls. In addition, there is insufficient data to explain why the proportion of male students with SEN in inclusive settings is greater than that of female

students. However, this seems not to be limited to students registered in inclusive schools but it also applies to schools nationwide regardless of the type of school or student, as the latest KSA national statistics show that more males than females are enrolled at all levels of public education. According to this national statistic authority, there are different reasons why students are not enrolled in education in the KSA, such as marriage, family assistance and transportation difficulty in getting to schools, and in these categories the figures for females largely overweigh those for males. Such reasons could account for the difference in numbers of male and female students in inclusive schools (Authority for Statistics of Saudi Arabia, 2017).

According to the Ministry of Education (1998), facilities available to support inclusion in the KSA are divided into the following categories:

- The first approach to the implementation of inclusive education in the KSA is to offer special classrooms within mainstream schools. In these classrooms, a minimum of five students with SEN are taught by special education teachers, who have completed degree programmes in special education. Each classroom is supplied with the specialised materials necessary to teach and fulfil the specific needs of the students. Although students with SEN are enrolled into special classrooms, where they receive special educational services, they are also given opportunities for interaction with their typically developing peers through engagement in extra-curricular activities, as well as through the shared use of all school facilities (Ministry of Education, 1998).
- The second key approach is to use resource rooms operated by special education teachers and furnished with the materials and equipment necessary to facilitate learning for students with SEN. The majority of students with SEN are expected to spend most of the school day in mainstream classrooms with their typically developing peers, while they would sometimes be sent to special education teachers for assistance in particular

subjects. The special education teachers then address the specific educational needs of each student, such as by offering academic advice, clear guidelines for completing homework, or explanations of specialist terms or concepts taught in the mainstream classroom (Ministry of Education, 1998). This type of inclusion is referred to in the KSA as full inclusion, since the main aim is to keep the students with SEN in the mainstream classroom alongside their typically developing peers, rather than to pull them out into the resource room, unless there is a specific need to do so. Arguably, the KSA has not achieved absolute full inclusion, as this would require specialised support delivered in the students' mainstream classroom, to avoid the need to take them out to a resources room. In this thesis, the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools might refer to both types of inclusion, because both types can be found in the same school.

In the KSA context, partial inclusion for students with SEN is more widely available in mainstream schools than full inclusion. However, no research has been conducted in the KSA to date to reveal which type of inclusion is more effective and why. This has necessitated reference to studies from other international contexts in this research. For example, Cambra and Silvestre (2003) have observed that full inclusion is widely agreed upon to be much more effective than simply allowing a student with SEN to be just physically present in an establishment where general education is taking place (i.e. partial inclusion). Another study was conducted by Marston and Heistad (1994), who focused on a sample group of primary school students with SEN. The purpose of their study was to compare inclusion, pull-out only, and combined special education service models, and their findings indicated that teacher satisfaction, and students' academic progress were most effective under the latter model. The researchers also reported that both groups of special and general education teachers saw a

significant improvement in support service quality when schools implemented a full inclusion and combined services model.

The KSA media have played an important role in raising public awareness of disability and the rights of students with SEN to inclusion in mainstream education. This has been supported by an increasing numbers of Saudis graduating from universities in the KSA and abroad, with a specialism in inclusive education (Al-Mousa, 2010). In addition, parents have begun to demand expansion of the functions of units serving special needs students, which historically concentrated on supporting and educating students with a wide range of disabilities (Al-Mousa, 2010). A national evaluative study of mainstream schools conducted by a team of academics in the field of special education in 2014 (Al-Mousa et al., 2014) suggested mainstream programmes have improved the quality of inclusive education. Improvements were identified in the following main areas. Firstly, a wider range of educational services has been integrated into the educational environment in response to the development of educational policy and practices concerning inclusion. These options include: (1) peripatetic teachers; (2) consultants; (3) clinical psychologists; (4) speech therapists; and (5) resource rooms. Secondly, educational services are now targeted towards all students with SEN; a group largely neglected prior to 1996. Now, however, the provision of educational services is delivered to a wider range of students, including those with: (1) autism; (2) physical disabilities; (3) impaired motor skills; (4) hearing disabilities; (5) gifted and talented; (6) visual disabilities; and (7) multiple disabilities. This expansion of provision is particularly important for students from remote areas, such as the outer suburbs and rural areas, as they are often unwilling to leave their home towns. These students with SEN can now be taught within their own locality by specialised peripatetic teachers. This has encouraged parents to send children to mainstream schools who were in the past kept at home due to the lack of local specialist services provisions (Alquraini, 2010). Although improvements to date are promising and considered to be important steps in

promoting inclusion, the quality of the service offered is important. Thirdly, Al-Mousa et al. (2014) mentioned that many senior academic and educational roles within the Ministry of Education have recently been filled by a new generation of male and female postgraduate professionals and academics specialising in special education and inclusion, resulting in the implementation of inclusion policies (Al-Mousa et al., 2014).

Having discussed the historical development of special education in the KSA, the following section provides a more detailed discussion of how to define students with SEN.

2.8 Definition of students with SEN and beneficiaries from SEN services

Comprehensive understanding of special needs requires the identification of clear categories (Webb-Hendy, 1995), enabling organisations and institutions to provide appropriate services for each individual (Stakes & Hornby, 1997). In general, the term 'special educational needs' (SEN) covers a number of disabilities experienced by students for which special adjustments are required to ensure their needs are met. The precise categorisation of special education differs between countries. For example, the UK initially included difficulties with hearing, learning, vision, speech and language, as well as emotional and behavioural difficulties, physical disabilities, and medical conditions (DfEe, 1994). However, the 2001 version of the code of practice (DfES, 2001) reorganised the former categories into four areas: (1) communication and interaction; (2) cognition and learning; (3) behavioural, emotional and social development; and (4) sensory and/or physical disabilities. Whereas in the US, students with SEN are categorised under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act as follows:

> *Speech or language impairments, visual impairment including blindness, serious emotional disturbance, orthopaedic impairments, autism, traumatic brain injuries, other health impairments, or specific learning disabilities, and who, by reason thereof, need special education and related services* (Osborne, 1999.p.54).

As noted above, the Saudi education system recognises a number of different SENs, including hearing disabilities, visual disabilities, autism, learning difficulties, multi disabilities, physical disabilities, speech and language disabilities, and mental disabilities (Ministry of Education, 2002). The term 'mental disabilities' was used because it is the term used in the context of the KSA. Despite the negative connotations of this term in the western context, it was deemed contextually appropriate because of its accurate reflection of the terminology used in the KSA. However, the meaning of mental disabilities in the KSA may be different to some contexts as in UK where the terms is used to refer to what is known as mental retardation. As all students with SEN have the right to study alongside their typically developing peers in a mainstream setting, irrespective of their specific individual needs (Al-Khashrami, 2000), it is important to determine whether a particular student requires support and if so the form this support should take. A diagnosis is required for each student, to be assessed by a multidisciplinary team at an assessment centre, allowing future provision to be tailored to their needs (Ministry of Education, 2001; Section 76).

The current study focuses on students with SEN attending mainstream primary schools, concentrating on female students with SEN attending mainstream primary schools. The chart below illustrates the distribution of female students attending special schools and programmes in the KSA, for the academic year 2006/2007.

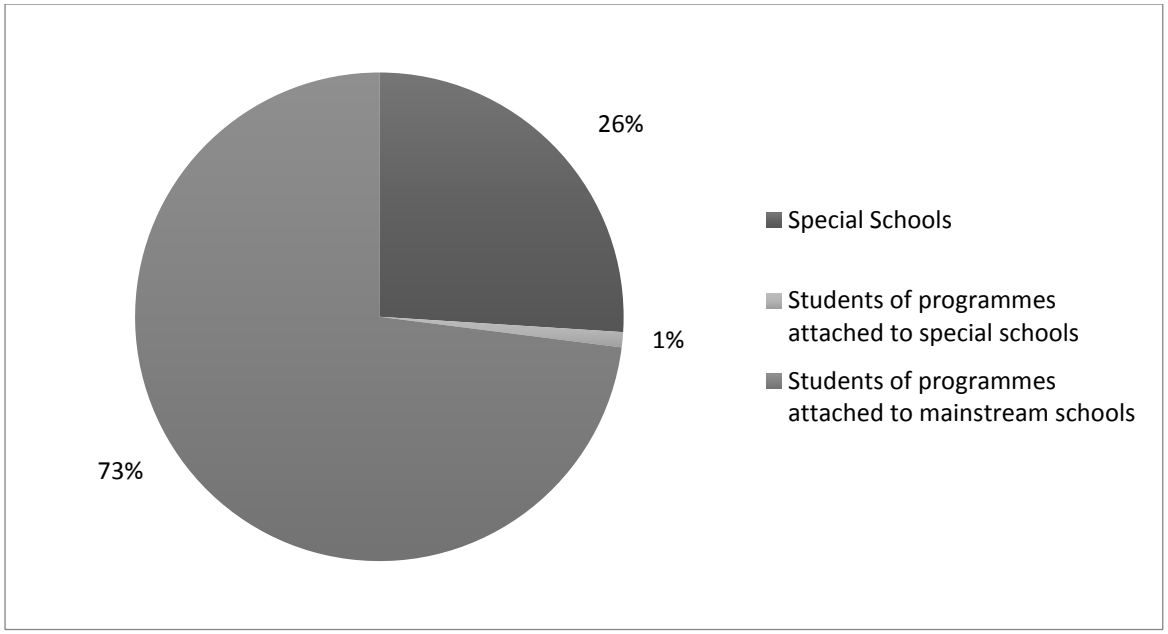


Figure 2.1. Distribution of female students among special schools and programmes, 2006/2007 (Al-Mousa, 2007).

It should be noted that the rapid increase in the number of students with SEN in the educational system, combined with the growth in associated special education schools and inclusion programmes in mainstream schools, should not be attributed to an increasing number of people with disability in the KSA. Rather, it reflects a growing societal awareness about providing for those with disability and the increasing efficiency of the methods available for identifying children with SEN (Al-Mousa, 2010). The results might also be a consequence of the expansion in the provision of special educational services, in terms of both quantity and quality (Al-Mousa, 2007). As mentioned earlier in this chapter, due to the limited written sources pertaining to the KSA specifically, it was important to intensively review Al-Mousa's research because of his significant contribution in the field of inclusion of special education in the KSA. His work has also been cited by other researchers in the field of inclusion, i.e. Al-Ayed (2008), Alquraini (2010) and Al-Amri (2009). The following sections examine the definition of inclusion to understand how it is used in the context of the KSA.

2.9 Definition of inclusion in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

The Ministry of Education in the KSA (2002, p.8) defines inclusion as *'educating students with special educational needs in regular schools and providing them with special educational services'*. The definition of 'inclusion' used in the KSA is therefore based on the Ministry of Education's approach to the placement and involvement of students with SEN in mainstream educational settings. Therefore, educational inclusion denotes a system that accords students with SEN an opportunity to be taught alongside their typically developing peers in mainstream settings, whether inside or outside the classroom, giving them the opportunity to interact with their typically developing peers. As mentioned above, the practical application of inclusive education in the KSA is delivered through two main avenues of provision. The first approach is through the delivery of special classrooms within mainstream schools, while the second approach is full inclusion, with students with SEN studying alongside their typically developing peers in mainstream classrooms for the entire duration of the school day. However, students can be called to the resource room when there is specific need to do so.

The following section outlines the training and role of general and special education teachers in the context of mainstream schools in the KSA.

2.10 The training and the roles of general and special education teachers in the KSA

Teacher education in universities in the KSA separates training for teachers of general education and special education teachers. All student teachers are required to study their specialised subjects for a period of four years, alongside courses in general subjects and teaching methods, delivered in the final semester of the third year of the course (International Bureau of Education, 2011). During their final year, student teachers undertake pre-service training to acquire practical teaching skills, under the supervision of their university module tutors. It is important to note that general education teachers complete their training in regular

schools, whereas special education teachers train in special schools or mainstream schools which run inclusion programmes focusing on the type of disability in which they wish to specialise.

The concept of inclusive education is a comparatively recent one in the KSA, leading to a lack of understanding among the principals of mainstream schools that follow the inclusive education system (Al-Fahily, 2009). According to the Ministry of Education (2001: Article 39), the role of general education teachers in the education of students with SEN in mainstream schools is to:

- Provision of relevant information concerning students with SEN to special education teachers;
- Coordination with special education teacher to prepare students' schedules;
- Monitoring of students and following up on their performance in the classroom;
- Consulting with special education teachers concerning the appropriate setting for examinations and other forms of student evaluation; and
- Using new methods to improve students' academic and social integration.

As a reflection of these additional duties, general education teachers working in inclusive schools are currently paid 20% more than their colleagues in non-inclusive schools (Ministry of Education, 2002). Until 2002, only two universities in the KSA had a department of special education, but growing demand has since resulted in the establishment of special education departments in universities across the country, with the aim of increasing the number of qualified special education teachers. This has resulted in more graduate specialist teachers and higher standards in terms of the teaching placements completed. In an attempt to promote the professional status of special education teachers, and to improve standards, they now receive a salary 30% higher than the standard teaching salary (Ministry of Education, 2002).

A core responsibility of teachers responsible for the education of students with SEN in the KSA is the design and implementation of Individualized Education Plans (IEPs). Teachers must prepare IEPs for students with SEN to ensure their targets are achieved in terms of educating students with SEN in accordance with curricula and assessments, particularly in terms of the acquisition of the skills of reading, writing and comprehension. IEPs set out a framework for personalised lesson planning to meet the special educational needs of individual students, and can be structured to ensure that targets are met within prescribed timeframes. The importance of IEPs is reflected in the specific tasks and responsibilities of special education teachers of students with SEN, as set out within their general role descriptors (Ministry of Education, 2001: Article 39):

- To ensure recommendations meet the individual needs of students with SEN;
- To prepare individual or collective plans, both short-term and long-term, to be implemented with the help of an IEP;
- To involve families in positive participation with the teacher;
- To identify the issues experienced by students with SEN and represent them in school meetings;
- To review the progress of students on a weekly or monthly basis, and make further adjustments to meet developmental targets;
- To inform the school, neighbouring schools and education administrators about the benefits of inclusion programmes;
- To collaborate with administrators, students and their parents;
- To develop the basic skills of students with SEN, including: (1) hearing; (2) visual; (3) educational; (4) social; and (5) self-control; and

- To provide guidance to general education teachers in matters concerning students with SEN, including: (1) teaching methods; (2) educational strategies; (3) grading; (4) administration of examinations; and (4) methods of dealing with students with SEN.

These points suggest that, while there is an attempt to specify the roles of both general and special education teachers in terms of educating students with SEN in mainstream schools, there remains an apparent lack of clarity and practicality concerning collaboration between general and special education teachers responsible for the same students with SEN. There is no mention of the shared responsibilities between teachers in the current guidelines.

2.11 Summary of the chapter

The KSA is currently experiencing considerable development in all areas, including education. This is especially apparent in the field of special education, as the KSA is one of the first Arab nations to implement the inclusion of students with SEN into mainstream schools in recognition of their equal rights (Al-Mousa, 2005). Nevertheless, the 'movement towards a more inclusive education system still requires dedicated effort in the Arab region' (Al-Mousa, 2010, p.10). This chapter introduced a number of key factors that inform the context of this study. An overview was provided of the KSA and its education system, particularly in relation to special education and students with SEN. This was followed by a detailed discussion of the role of general education teachers and special education teachers, to clarify the parameters of the study and its primary focus, namely research into the attitudes of special and general education teachers towards the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream Saudi girls' schools. The following chapter therefore comprises two sections: a discussion of inclusive education and a detailed examination of teachers' attitudes.

CHAPTER 3: THE CONCEPTS OF 'INCLUSION' AND 'ATTITUDE'

This chapter is divided into two main sections. The first section discusses the concept of 'inclusion', and presents the different perspectives in inclusive education. After that, the second section focuses in more detail on the concept of 'attitude', and on studies investigating teachers' attitudes towards inclusion of students with SEN.

3.1 Section 1: The concept of inclusion

3.1.1 Introduction

There are many studies in the literature which agree that inclusion is useful for students with SEN (Ainscow, 2007; Cambra & Silvestre, 2003; Foreman et al., 2004). After the Salamanca Declaration (1994), having an education system that includes students with SEN in mainstream schools has become an important goal for many countries around the world. Many inclusive education models have been developed to describe the educational needs of students with SEN, drawing on large-scale studies of inclusive education conducted in Western countries. These are still being introduced in developing countries, including KSA, where inclusion is in its infancy.

3.1.2 Definitions of integration and inclusion

In their 2005 work, Loreman et al. explained that 'integration' refers to students with SEN being taught in a special education classroom within mainstream schools. Similarly, Schuelka and Johnstone (2012) defined 'integration' as the presence of students with SEN within general education schools, stating that 'inclusion' involves their active participation and engagement. It can be argued that the term 'integration' assigns the burden of responsibility for engagement to the students with SEN, whereas 'inclusion' suggests that the educational institution is responsible for facilitating both participation and acceptance (Schuelka & Johnstone, 2012).

In general, ‘integration’ refers to equal rights of access to education and accommodation of students with SEN in mainstream schools, in order that their educational needs are met. It suggests the necessity of unrestricted access to mainstream educational institutions, and implies the potential for the immersion of students with SEN into mainstream education, although not necessarily academic, or peer-to-peer participation at the same level, on a full-time basis (Sarason & Doris, 1979). Authors such as Ashman and Elkins (2002), and Foreman (2001) noted that a further aspect of integration involves a reduction in the segregation of students by ability, either through constructing an entirely inclusive mainstream school, or by ensuring the availability of special classrooms within a mainstream school. The integration of students with SEN into mainstream schools infers that special classrooms are conducted alongside, but separate from, general classrooms (Garner, 2009). While curricula, classrooms, and outcomes for students with SEN are not necessarily required to be identical to those of their typically developing peers, the aim is to provide students with SEN with opportunities and activities designed to meet their needs within the school setting. This premise is based on the concept that students with SEN should feel part of the mainstream socio-educational environment. However, this is not always effective, as some educators argued that this social aspect can also occur within special schools (Cambra & Silvestre, 2003; Powers, 2002).

The concept of ‘inclusion’ requires that mainstream schools alter their practices to offer students with SEN opportunities to both learn and socialise (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002). Inclusion should occur at the most basic level, ensuring that students with SEN are considered to be members of mainstream classrooms, and it extends not only to the presence of students in the mainstream classroom, but also to their active participation (Warnock, 2005), including learning together, and welcoming and valuing each other’s contributions (O’Brien, 2001). This goal requires the restructuring of mainstream schools, and the implementation of practices that are effective for all students (Ainscow, 2005). Although Thomas, Walker and Webb (1998)

noted that these expressions were frequently used interchangeably, now however, the term 'inclusion' has come to replace that of 'integration' as the key focus of the field, with inclusion referring to the full participation of students of all abilities and needs in mainstream education. Therefore, inclusion can be perceived as a rights-based, rather than a needs-based, concept, as in the concept of 'integration' (UNESCO, 1994). The decisive moment in the application of the term 'inclusion' occurred in the UNESCO Salamanca Declaration in 1994, following criticism from some quarters that the concept of 'integration' implied little more than the introduction of minimal SEN provision in mainstream schools (Ainscow, 2005; Frederickson & Cline, 2015). According to the Salamanca Declaration (see Figure 3.1), inclusion should be incorporated into a human rights agenda.

- Every child has a fundamental right to education, and must be given the opportunity to achieve and maintain an acceptable level of learning;
- Every child has unique characteristics, interests, abilities, and learning needs;
- Education systems should be designed, and educational programmes implemented to take into account the wide diversity of these characteristics and needs;
- Those with special educational needs must have access to regular schools, where a child-centred pedagogy capable of meeting these needs should accommodate them;
- Regular schools with this inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society, and achieving education for all; moreover, they provide an effective education to the majority of children, and improve the efficiency, and ultimately the cost-effectiveness of the entire education system.

Figure 3.1. The UNESCO Salamanca Statement on special educational needs (UNESCO, 1994, p. viii-ix)

The policies concerning inclusion within education have been disseminated and internationalised throughout countries and international organisations, resulting in increased

public awareness. The United Nations, together with its related organisations, such as UNESCO, is a strong example of an organisation that assists in the internationalisation of inclusion policies. With their assistance, inclusive education has been adopted by international and national agencies worldwide, demonstrating the widespread belief that education is a right of all children, regardless of their abilities, and that every child has a right to be educated, and to have an active presence within society. As a result, the concept of inclusive education is gradually being understood around the world as part of a citizen's human rights (Florian, 2008).

3.1.3 Overview of the concept, meanings and practices of inclusive education

Although the philosophy of inclusion has been implemented in various countries worldwide, each country's context differs, as do the specifics of the inclusive practices employed. The question of what inclusive education constitutes, for instance, remains an ongoing debate, and as a result, there is a lack of anything resembling a universally accepted definition (Pearson, 2005). One of the reasons for this is that the understanding of inclusion is informed, to a large degree, by the socio-cultural perspectives of a particular country (Mitchell, 2005). Therefore, although a set of commonly agreed principles of inclusive education exists, its deeper meaning, and the appreciation of its benefits, can differ substantially. Furthermore, various angles exist, from which inclusive education can be approached, one of which is the concept of human rights, whereby the inclusion of children with SEN is considered to be a part of their human rights (Mittler, 2005). Understanding inclusive education through the prism of human rights proposes a definition of inclusive education as a state in which students, irrespective of their abilities or disabilities, are taught together in mainstream classrooms (Loreman et al., 2005). Furthermore, Ainscow (2007) understood inclusive education to be learning and teaching that does not discriminate between students, due to their abilities, or lack thereof. This understanding of inclusive education implies the need for extensive changes to numerous aspects of the education process, including adjusting the teaching style and methods employed,

updating the facilities required, and amending certain aspects of the curriculum. Such changes should be governed by the aim of establishing an educational institution capable of catering effectively for the needs of students both with, and without, SEN.

The fact that the implementation of inclusive education entails a comprehensive transformation of the educational processes in schools was confirmed by Janney et al. (1995, p.v), who argued that inclusive education represents "a move towards extending the scope of ordinary schools so they can include a greater diversity of children". The fact that inclusion, by its nature, cannot discriminate was highlighted by Corbett and Slee (2000, p.134), who asserted that inclusion "is about establishing access for all individuals. It is not conditional, nor does it speak about partial inclusion". This understanding of inclusive education highlights the fact that one of its cornerstones is the provision of equal access to learning, regardless of a child's abilities, or disabilities.

The concept of inclusion also possesses a dimension other than education: that of the inclusion of a child with SEN into the community, in particular, and society in general. However, this understanding of inclusion requires more than changes to the educational setting, and numerous authors have emphasised this social element of inclusion. For example, Uditsky (1993, p.88) noted that one of inclusive education's key characteristics is the fostering of an image of a child with SEN "as a valued and needed member of the community in every respect". Similarly, in his definition of inclusive education, Farrell (2004, p.7) focused on the fact that this form of education represents:

> *The extent to which a school or community welcomes pupils as full members of the group and values them for the contribution they make. This implies that for inclusion to be seen as 'effective' all pupils must actively belong to, be welcomed by and participate in a general school and community - that is they should be fully included.*

This understanding of inclusive education highlights the fact that inclusion is not limited to just increasing the degree to which a child with SEN is included in mainstream education settings; it also concerns lowering the extent to which the child is, and feels, excluded from the community, and society as a whole (Armstrong et al., 2000; Booth, 1996; Booth et al., 1998). Specifically, inclusive education should appreciate the individual characteristics of each learner, whilst also assisting in dismantling barriers preventing a child with SEN from becoming a fully-fledged member of society (Bayliss, 2003).

Since these perceptions of inclusive education possess a strong communal dimension, it is necessary to explore how different scholars perceive the connection between a school and a community. A number of authors proposed that the idea of community involvement constitutes a part of the concept of an inclusive school (Bayliss, 1995; McConkey, 2002; Reid, 2005). Hence, since the school is a part of the community, it introduces children to the notion of belonging and identity. It is crucial for children to experience in their daily life the fact that a healthy society is based on the equality of all its members, irrespective of gender, ethnicity, religion, socio-economic background, or disability (Bayliss, 2003). This implies that in order for schools to deliver educational services that fulfil the needs of all students, regardless of their abilities and disabilities, they must become more inclusive communities with zero tolerance to exclusion, selectivity, or the prioritising of children without disabilities (Visser et al., 2003). A truly inclusive environment thus creates a sense of belonging, for both the students and the teachers. These interpretations of the concept of inclusion demonstrate that the authors considered it to involve more than simply a child's physical placement into a system, and that it also refers to their academic, psychological, and social involvement. Therefore, inclusion in education concerns more than simply locating students with SEN with their typically developing peers; it also involves such students experiencing a range of learning and life

opportunities, in order that they are considered members of society, not just within schools, but also in their daily lives.

The various aspects of inclusive education presented above evidence the fact that, in order to understand the concept fully, an array of issues and actions must be connected. Among the most important of these are the fostering of the participation of all children in inclusive schools, accompanied by their active participation in other aspects of life beyond school. Secondly, it is necessary to perceive inclusion and its implementation as a concept, or a phenomenon, the understanding of which should not focus only on identifying the technical details required for the physical creation of inclusive classrooms. In reality, this necessitates a shift from disseminating instructions to teachers and students concerning how to operate in an inclusive environment, to an increased focus on the ability of schools to cater for every single need of their students, in the context of their educational progress. In addition, by locating a child in a mainstream class, without creating a more inclusive environment in the school as a whole, and significantly, in the wider community, the implementation of a fully inclusive education cannot be achieved. Moreover, the distinction between abilities and disabilities requires revision, and the traditional 'medical' view of disability as a problem to deal with should be replaced by a social model of disability, whereby it is understood simply as another characteristic of a child. Such a shift enables schools to approach children with disabilities more positively, perceiving their 'handicaps' as just a set of needs to be met, not as criteria justifying the limitation of the children's access to education (Oliver, 1990; Rieser, 2012). Therefore, the following section discuss the models of disability.

3.1.4 Models of disability

In order to understand the different perspectives on disability, the following section discusses the two main models that seek to explain disability which are: the medical model, and the social model.

- **Medical model of disability**

This model suggests that the reason for the inability of disabled people to interact with society is the individual's state of suffering, caused by the impairment that damaged an organ of the body. Such an impairment results in limitations to the function of this organ, and consequently produces challenges for interacting in the social world on a daily basis (Oliver, 1990). This model does not assume that the values and beliefs of the society are relevant.

When policy makers employ the medical model as a basis for policies, they tend to focus on managing the issue of people with disabilities, or organic damage, by framing educational and care systems, and then providing treatment and rehabilitation service institutions, based on such individuals' isolation from social interactions, and experiences of normal life (Oliver, 1990). This model of disability also possesses an effect on the way disabled people perceive themselves, with the majority exhibiting negative views concerning the reason for their isolation from society, and believing that the challenges they face are related to their inability. Furthermore, such individuals tend to believe that their impairment prevents them from participating in social activities (Carson, 2009; Oliver, 1990).

- **Social model of disability**

The social model was developed following the criticism of many disabled people of the medical model, their primary objection being the fact that it does not provide a convincing interpretation of the reason for their exclusion from social life. The experience of many disabled people clarifies that their social problems are not related to their impairment, rather to the way in which they are perceived by society (Carson, 2009).

The reason why the social model has replaced the medical model is that the latter perceives the problem as being inherent to the individual, and isolated from external factors, which means that it focuses on the disability, rather than on the challenges faced when social institutions are

unconcerned with the needs of the disabled. This implies that society is the disabled party in the relationship, as its approach towards the individual with a disability presents challenges for them to participate in social activities (Zarb, 1995). Therefore, if society wishes to include individuals with disabilities, it is necessary to re-organise it in terms of its construction and functions, and to thereby overcome the barriers, inhibitions, and obstacles preventing the inclusion of disabled people into mainstream society. Furthermore, the medical model raises questions of legality, social marginalisation, and negative perceptions regarding disabled individuals as a challenge to educational inclusion, rather than the disabled individual themselves. In contrast, according to the social model, disability is positioned as a failing of society when catering for individuals with differing physical and cognitive abilities. In order for inclusion to occur, society must therefore affect changes both in attitudes, and in the way in which infrastructure and educational systems are designed (Johnstone et al., 2002). The importance of changing attitudes towards disability is particularly important in the case of teachers, as their positive attitude towards inclusion is vital for the change's success. The classifications of inclusive education will be explained in the following section.

3.1.5 Classifications of inclusive education

Since theorists adopt various approaches for the purpose of understanding the principle of inclusion in education, it is essential to first understand the different classifications of educational inclusion practices. According to the extant literature, inclusion can be categorised into various types.

1. Physical inclusion

    Physical inclusion refers to the construction of two buildings within a school, with one intended for the use of special education, and children with SEN, and the other for mainstream education. A scheme applying this format, called the *Link Scheme*, was

introduced and piloted in the United Kingdom (UK), allowing mainstream and special education institutions within the same geographical areas to transfer students and teachers between schools for a limited time period (Joweth et al., 1988);

2. Social integration

Social integration is a type of inclusion whereby students with SEN are kept apart from typically developing students during lessons, and are taught separately, but have opportunities to socialise with their typically developing peers during social periods, and extra-curricular activities;

3. Academic inclusion

Warnock (1978) considers academic inclusion to be the integration of physical and social inclusion, whereby students with SEN join their typically developing peers for either some, or all, of the time.

The following section discusses the advantages and disadvantages of inclusion.

3.1.6 Advantages and disadvantages of including students with SEN in mainstream education

A number of potential positive and negative outcomes of inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream settings exist, and while several studies have demonstrated that the inclusion of students with SEN has generally positive outcomes, some educators have indicated that inclusion also possesses negative effects on students with SEN. The first section below discusses the social benefits, while the second section focuses on the academic benefits of inclusion of students with SEN.

3.1.6.1 Social and communication benefits of inclusion

There are a number of studies which have reported that the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools has a positive effect on the degree to which such students are socialised.

For example, a study conducted by Fryxell and Kennedy (1995) examined the effect of the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools, in terms of social contact, and found that the 71 students involved possessed an elevated level of social contact, and had developed friendships with their typically developing peers. Similarly, Ward (2003) argued that students with SEN can improve, in terms of education and social skills, when they are included in mainstream settings. These studies indicated that students with SEN in mainstream schools have a greater opportunity to interact socially with their typically developing peers and teachers, and that they are able to acquire positive social skills for social inclusion. This is consistent with Hadjikakou's (2002) findings, which demonstrated that the majority of students with SEN included in mainstream schools achieve promising results in terms of their emotional and social adaptation, and self-esteem. Meanwhile, Cole and Meyer (1991) contrasted the social skills of students with SEN in special schools with those in a mainstream setting, across different elementary schools, reporting that, over a two-year period, students with SEN in a mainstream setting progressed in social competence, whereas their counterparts in special schools did not attain the same degree of competence.

Similarly, a number of studies have concluded that students with SEN also increase their communication skills in inclusive settings, compared with students educated in special schools. Foreman et al. (2004) compared the communication skills of two groups of students with SEN, one group educated in a mainstream setting, and the other in a special setting. The results revealed that the students with SEN who received their education in an inclusive setting developed expressive and receptive language skills through interaction with their typically developing peers to a higher level than students with SEN educated in special schools. Furthermore, Kliewer (1998) explored the benefits of inclusion for students with severe disabilities, reporting that such students were more likely to acquire functional skills in areas such as communication, ICT, team-working, presentation, and problem-solving if they studied

in inclusive classrooms, thereby underlining the importance of inclusion for the development of SEN students' communication skills. He added that these high-performance skills are most likely to be learned in classrooms that are similar to other social situations, wherein students with SEN and their typically developing peers communicate and learn co-operatively.

However, other studies have found that mainstreaming settings have disadvantages for the development of social and communication skills among students with SEN. For example, the inclusion of students in mainstream schools may engender the emergence of certain challenging behaviours, such as aggression, school avoidance, and disobedience (Warnock, 2005). Moreover, Al-Asmari (2010) argued that the inclusion of students with SEN does not improve their social skills, because such students are not actively involved in school activities, which can isolate them from their school, and from society as a whole. Furthermore, other scholars have argued that students with SEN should be educated in special schools because their abilities may be a limiting factor, impeding their participation in inclusive schools (Kluwin & Stewart, 2000; Sinka et al., 2003). Similarly, Dale (1984) noted that students with SEN should be taught by special education teachers, who may be more equipped to understand, and to help, such students to improve their skills. In addition, he reported that while all students with SEN in special schools have specific disabilities, they feel more comfortable, and less neglected, in such a setting than during their time in mainstream schools. However, some researchers have argued that inclusion has a positive impact, while others have contended to the contrary.

3.1.6.2 Academic benefits of inclusion

Several researchers have acknowledged that the academic outcomes for students with SEN increase when they study with their typically developing peers, in mainstream classrooms. Irmsher (1995, p.6) observed that "it appears that special needs students in regular classes do better academically and socially than comparable students in non-inclusive classes".

Furthermore, a study conducted by Hunt et al. (1994) sought to ascertain the academic benefits of inclusion by examining the academic performance of students with severe and multiple disabilities in the context of co-operative learning groups, in an inclusive classroom. The results revealed that the students with SEN improved their social skills and communication, and achieved improved academic levels through interaction with their typically developing peers.

A number of studies investigated whether teaching and learning effectiveness in mainstream and special classrooms is a factor affecting the academic achievement of students with SEN. For example, Waldron and Mcleskey (1998 cited in Spencer et al., 1999) compared the reading and writing skills of two groups of students with SEN, one group with specific learning difficulties, who were taught in an inclusive classroom, and one with specific learning difficulties who were taught in a special classroom. The findings revealed that the students who received their education in an inclusive classroom demonstrated a significantly higher reading and writing level than those who studied in special classrooms, although there was no significant difference in terms of their progress in mathematics.

A viewpoint in concurrence with the aforementioned study is that of Powers (2002, p.236), who argued that, even if differences exist, they cannot be interpreted as providing "evidence of a difference in teaching effectiveness because special schools and mainstream programmes serve quite different populations". It should therefore be understood that the academic attainment of students with SEN, whether they are taught in an inclusive or a special classroom, can be attributed to several factors, such as the age of the students, and the type and/or the severity of their disabilities (Alghazo & Gaad, 2004; Avramidis et al., 2000). These factors will be discussed in more detail in Section 3.2.7. Moreover, Cole et al. (2004) demonstrated that the academic benefits for typically developing students who are educated in an inclusive setting alongside with students with SEN engenders greater academic skills for such students, compared with those who receive their education in a non-inclusive setting. The typically

developing students in inclusive classrooms also reported that they received a greater understanding, respect, and acceptance of differences, which engendered co-operative learning opportunities. It can therefore be claimed that a marked positive benefit exists for typically developing students and students with SEN, supporting the argument in favour of inclusion in an educational setting for both types of students.

In conclusion, as Snell and Eichner (1989) reported, students with SEN who are located in a mainstream school are likely to develop their social communication skills through interacting with their typically developing peers. Nevertheless, in terms of the academic attainments of the students, irrespective of the context variables, whether inclusive or special classrooms, a range of other factors exist that might influence the outcomes of students with SEN, including student-specific variables, and teacher-specific variables.

3.1.7 Summary of the section

Inclusive education is a complex and controversial topic that continues to generate debate, despite the numerous developments in the field (Ainscow, 2007; Farrell, 2004). The term 'inclusion' is complex, and does not possess a universal definition, owing to the differences in context (Mitchell, 2005). A particular focus concerns the importance of the model of disability in the discussion of the concept of inclusion. The medical model of disability has been rejected, because it concerns the students' special needs, considering them to be related to the impairments of the individual, and perceiving their impairments as preventing the individuals from social and educational engagement (Carson, 2009; Oliver, 1990). The discussion has also focused on the impact, and both the positive and negative outcomes, of including students with SEN in mainstream schools. The next section will explore, and discuss in depth, the main concept of this study, which is 'attitude', and will consider the different issues regarding the attitudes of teachers towards the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream settings, and the factors affecting teachers' attitudes towards inclusion of students with SEN.

3.2 Section 2: The concept of attitude and inclusive education

3.2.1 Introduction

Attitudes towards the inclusion of students with SEN in education have a significant impact on the success of inclusion, and unsupportive attitudes have been at the heart of many of the problems concerning inclusive education (Ellis et al., 2008; Olson, 2003; Sadler, 2005). The primary objective of this chapter is to explore the concept of 'attitude', and the literature related to the teachers' attitudes towards inclusion of students with SEN. There are many studies that have shown that the educational development of students with SEN in mainstream schools is significantly influenced by teachers and their attitudes toward teaching such students (Deisinger, 2000; Odom, 2000; Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996).

There are two main models concerned with the study of attitudes: the single-component model and the three-component model (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993; Stahlberg & Frey, 1996), the latter of which was adopted for the investigation of teachers' attitudes in this present study. The three-component model is a multidimensional model that considers attitudes to be comprised of cognitive, affective and behavioural components (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993), which will also be discussed in detail in this chapter. This section discusses several international studies of teachers' attitudes towards inclusion of students with SEN, including a number of studies conducted in Arab countries. In addition, this section discusses some of the factors influencing teachers' attitudes, and their potential for the success of inclusion.

3.2.2 Overview of the concept of attitude

Over the course of the twentieth century, the way in which the notion of attitude is defined and conceptualised has changed in a variety of important ways. One of the first approaches to the concept was formalised by Allport (1935), who perceived attitudes to be the cognitive activities that translate into the actual and possible behaviour of a person. To be more specific, Allport

(1935) argued that attitudes are essentially cognitive mindsets that are closely correlated with the way in which a person reacts to their surrounding environment.

If Allport's conceptualisation is assumed to be accurate, a series of crucial inferences can be extracted from it, many of which were recently investigated by Bordens and Horowitz (2001), who emphasised Allport's (1935, p.798) phrase describing attitudes as cognitive mindsets connected with a 'state of readiness'. The authors also highlighted Allport's (1935) notion that experience is responsible for organising and shaping attitudes, subsequently underlining the conclusion that the nature of an attitude is, therefore, context-dependent. Finally, the authors concluded from Allport's (1935) analysis that since attitudes are connected to the way in which individuals interact with, and react to their environments, attitudes inform behavioural factors. In a similar way, Petty and Cacioppo (1981) earlier regarded attitudes as those sentiments, perspectives, or mental stances that an individual adopts in relation to an external factor, such as an artwork, the environment, or another individual. For the purposes of the present study, attitudes were considered to be the sentiments, perspectives, or mental stances adopted by special and general education teachers in relation to the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream primary schools. Therefore, from these different definitions of attitude, it is possible to conclude that the concept of attitude is distinguished by its assessment-oriented essence, wherein it constitutes a person's mental stance towards something in the external world. In this way, what can be distilled from these views is that attitudes are reactive, responsive products, connected to the attitude holder's external environment via the sentiments and perspectives such attitudes generate. Hence, teachers' positive, negative, neutral, or mixed attitudes are based on their evaluation of various factors in the environment.

Several studies (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Cook, 2001; Malone et al., 2001) confirmed the importance of the attitudes of special and general education teachers towards the inclusion of students with SEN, in terms of the eventual success or failure of inclusion. Such an assumption

is partly based on the responsibility of teachers to meet the needs of all students in their classrooms, and to the way in which their attitudes towards these students might influence a teacher's performance in the classroom. Consequently, it is vital to regard these attitudes as factors that, when understood, can help facilitate the promotion of the inclusive education of students with SEN.

3.2.3 The three-component model of attitude

A number of researchers, including Eagly and Chaiken (1993), Franzoi (1996) and Stahlberg and Frey (1996), have argued that attitudes are comprised of three components: cognitive, affective and behavioural. The cognitive component includes ideas and facts relating to the opinion-object, which was the concept of inclusion involved in this present study (Ajzen, 2005; Eagly and Chaiken, 1993; Stahlberg and Frey, 1996). The cognitive aspects of attitude are generally referred to as beliefs, which can be assumed to mean the connections made between the object and the possible characteristics of the object. The cognitive component also encompasses reactions to the creation of these connections, whether they are held internally, or are expressed externally. The characteristics associated with the object during the cognitive process of attitude will be either positive or negative in association and, as a result, can be measured and recorded quantitatively on a positive-negative scale. A reference to beliefs, ideas, knowledge, and assumptions is thus a reference to the cognitive component (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993).

The affective component of attitude consists of emotional responses to the object; these are the visceral reactions to the object, which also inform attitude. The affective component includes moods, feelings and emotions in relation to the attitude objects (Ajzen, 2005; Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). The range of these emotional responses extends from extreme negativity to extreme positivity, and can be a factor in the evaluative dimension of meaning. Consequently, an

individual's feelings towards inclusion in education can range from pessimism to optimism, and these feelings will affect how they behave towards the inclusion concept.

Finally, the behavioural aspect of this process refers to the behaviours and physical reactions towards the object, whether intentional or unintentional (Ajzen, 2005; Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). Emotional and cognitive aspects work together to determine this behaviour. Likewise, these reactions can lie anywhere on the spectrum between extreme positivity and extreme negativity, and can, therefore, be located in an evaluative dimension of meaning.

The rationale behind employing the three-component model of attitude for this present study concerns the notion of its capacity to encompass the expected complex character of teachers' attitudes regarding inclusion. The authors Schlegel and DiTecco (1982) asserted that, vis-a-vis a very complex web of often contradictory attitudes, it might not be advisable to rely on just a basic evaluative response, since this might engender the loss of important details concerning pertinent attitudes. This can be especially relevant with respect to a construct such as the inclusion of students with SEN in education, which is of a problematic character, and which renders the use of a multi-dimensional attitude scale more appropriate than a simple model. Moreover, the benefits of employing a multi-dimensional attitude scale, particularly in the domain of special education needs, has been confirmed by a number of studies (Avramidis et al., 2000; Findler et al., 2007).

3.2.4 The importance of a teacher's attitude towards inclusion

Teachers' expectations regarding the academic and social progress of students with SEN in mainstream schools are significantly influenced by their attitudes towards teaching such students (Deisinger, 2000; Odom, 2000; Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996). Furthermore, the extant literature suggests that, in order for inclusion to be successful, teachers must adopt and

demonstrate positive approaches to students who require special teaching methods (Beattie, et al., 1997; Freagon & Kachur, 1994; Giangreco et al., 1996).

It is important to note that teachers' attitudes towards teaching students with SEN directly affect the students' education, since these attitudes have a significant impact on the way in which teachers conduct the educational process, and manage their classrooms (Garvar-Pinhas & Schmelkin, 1989; Nader, 1984; Smith, 2000; Winter, 1995). Specifically, a teacher's personal view of a student with SEN, and of their learning capacity, is a crucial factor which determines the extent of the modifications that a teacher is willing to affect in their teaching process, method, or curriculum, demonstrating whether the teacher is aware of the student's presence, and the learning problems which that student experiences (Fields, 1995). A teacher's confidence in teaching students with SEN, together with their positive expectations of such students' learning capacities, are vital to the educational process, and to the successful inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream classes (Forlin, 1998). In this regard, Lewis and Norwich (2001) suggested that students with SEN can all benefit from broad and non-specific pedagogical approaches, a stance that was neatly summarised in the supposition that all students can learn effectively by employing the strategies that work for the majority. It is noteworthy that other scholars, including several SEN experts, supported this shift in the direction of non-specific SEN teaching and learning strategies (Lewis & Norwich, 2001). Despite the lack of concrete findings, these scholars proposed what is referred to as the 'unique differences' stance, which is characterised by its positing that identical tenets for teaching and learning can apply to the 'unique differences' that all students display, and that this extends to students with SEN (Lewis & Norwich, 2001, p.324). Moreover, Cook and Schirmer (2003) agreed with this view, stating that what distinguishes one pedagogic strategy from another is its level of intensity, not the degree to which it is relevant for a certain category of SEN. The findings published by Lewis and Norwich (2005) also supported this position, thus illuminating

the fact that all teaching and learning strategies can be beneficial, if applied in a context-dependent way. Considering these perspectives, the content teachers provide to students with SEN should not necessarily differ from that of their typically developing peers; rather, the spectrum of intensity should be considered, and appropriate teaching methods selected. Drawing from the abovementioned, it could be concluded there is an important relationship between the applications of non-specific pedagogical approaches by teachers, alongside taking into account the 'unique differences' and the attitudes of teachers. It is because, as we learnt from the literature throughout this chapter, teachers are affected by their attitudes when teaching students with SEN. This is supported by Florian (1998) who set some significant conditions if teaching students with SEN is to be inclusive, which includes positive attitudes and pedagogy when teaching students with SEN. To strengthen the preceding relationship, teachers need to understand the needs of all students, including those with SEN. In addition to this, they need what Shulman (1987) named PCK (Pedagogical Content Knowledge) where teachers acquire this integrated knowledge. Teachers acquiring this integrated knowledge should be able to understand the content they teach and identify the difficulties for which some students need more attention than others. They are also expected to have knowledge of how to teach this content appropriately to meet the needs of all students. So, having this type of significant knowledge beside the knowledge about the different needs of students, including those with SEN, and the ability to meet their needs, could influence the attitudes of those teachers and consequently the way they teach in inclusive schools.

The aforementioned attitudes of teachers regarding the inclusion of students with SEN have been the subject of multiple studies worldwide (Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996). The character of teachers' attitudes towards inclusion has been examined in various studies (Ellis et al., 2008; Olson, 2003; Sadler, 2005), the findings of which were surprisingly similar in their emphasis on the attitudes of teachers as the most important factor determining the success or failure of

inclusion. In other words, if the attitude of the teacher is positive, the inclusion is more likely to be effective while, in the case of negative attitudes, any attempt at inclusion is likely to fail. This further highlights the necessity of exploring and analysing teachers' attitudes towards inclusion, in order to reveal the factors influencing these attitudes, which might then be addressed in order to change them. These factors were categorised by Salvia and Munson (1986) as child-related, environment-related, and teacher-related. The factors influencing teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of students with SEN are discussed in detail later in this chapter, while the next two sections focus on these studies, both those conducted internationally, and in Arab countries, with a geographical focus for this study on the KSA. As a result, it is important to note the cultural variations that exist in attitudes towards inclusion of students with SEN in different contexts.

3.2.5 International studies concerning attitudes towards the inclusion of students with SEN

For the purposes of this study, it was crucial that the previous international studies concerning inclusivity in education were considered, in order to enable a contrast and comparison with their results, and to ensure that this study was informed by prior research. This section primarily focuses on the comparable studies conducted in international countries, with an emphasis on attitudes, the consequences discovered, the challenges faced, and the overall findings.

A study conducted in the United States (US) by Waldrop (1998) employed questionnaires to identify the attitudes of a school's members, including the teachers, administrators and parents, towards the inclusion of students with SEN, and its effects. Of the three categories of respondent, the parents possessed the most positive attitudes towards inclusive practice, particularly those whose children received SEN services. This contrasted with the attitudes of the mainstream teachers. Surprisingly, many of the teachers and parents demonstrated an above-average knowledge of students with SEN, and inclusion. The question of why the

teachers appeared to be less receptive to the inclusion of students with SEN than parents has been much debated, and one possible reason is that, although there are many benefits to this practice, the greater demands of inclusion legislation that prompts teachers to implement inclusion have made teachers react adversely as they are required to gain additional skills (Kauffman & Hallahan, 1995). This was supported by Harrington and Quinn-Leering (1996), who found that the testimonies of the teachers in their study supported the theory that increased pressure on teachers was the primary reason for their opposition to inclusion.

Several similar studies have also tried to identify the reasons for the development of the difference in the attitudes of teachers in relation to SEN provision, and the students in receipt of such provision. The findings demonstrated that a significant correlation existed between the attitudes towards inclusion and gender, years of teaching experience, and the type of SEN (Avramidis & Kalyva, 2007; Glaubman & Lifshitz, 2001). It is noteworthy that teachers' competencies, in terms of speciality, qualifications, and training, were demonstrated to be a key factor (Boyle et al., 2013). However, these are not the only factors that can affect teachers' attitudes, as other factors may relate to the type of needs of a child, and the availability of physical and human support (Salvia & Munson, 1986). A detailed discussion of the factors affecting teachers' attitudes is presented later in this chapter.

A study conducted in Malaysia by Spedding (2005) investigated the attitudes of stakeholders, including school staff, parents, teachers and administrators, regarding the inclusion of students with SEN in various primary schools. The results indicated that the negative attitudes towards inclusion held by all of the participants, including the school principals and teachers, had a significant potential to undermine the development of an inclusive education process. Similarly, in a study conducted in England, Avramidis et al. (2000) proposed that the successful implementation of any inclusive policy is largely dependent on the positive attitude of school

staff. Thus, if teachers and school principals are not ready to accept students with SEN in mainstream schools and classrooms, it will be challenging for inclusion provision to succeed.

Yuen and Westwood (2001) conducted a survey in Hong Kong, based on a sample of 345 teachers, and concluded that the teachers possessed neither a positive nor a supportive attitude towards inclusion. Although the fundamental concept of inclusive education, which is to say that every child should have the right to study in a mainstream classroom, was supported by the majority of the teachers (79.3%), only 42.4% of the sample considered inclusion to be desirable. Moreover, only 37.9% believed that the concept of inclusion could be successful. These findings indicate that, although a widespread awareness and concern about inclusive education existed, the actual support or participation of the teachers in inclusive education was lacking. As discussed earlier, in the relationship between teachers' attitudes and pedagogy (please see page. 57), teachers require experience and specialist knowledge if they are to successfully support students in challenging contexts (Al-Sartawi, 1995; Eagly & Chaiken, 1993; Elhoweris and Alsheikh, 2006; Olson, 2003). The disparity between the findings suggests a lack of alignment between the attitudes towards students with SEN, and the attitudes towards implementing inclusion provisions. Even when inclusion, and the equality of education, are perceived to be positive, a hesitancy to implement changes exists, because of the potentially negative effects they may have on current educational practices.

A comparative study of attitudes towards inclusion was conducted by Leyser et al. (1994) on a sample of more than 3,500 teachers from mainstream elementary schools in six countries (the US, Germany, Israel, Ghana, Taiwan and the Philippines). The findings revealed that teachers in the US possessed the most positive attitudes towards inclusion, with teachers in Germany in second place while, in the other countries, the prevailing attitude of the teachers towards inclusion was less positive. The teachers' attitudes towards inclusion were demonstrably

affected by the following variables: previous training in special education, grade level, the age of the teacher, and their experience with general and special education. It was therefore clear that training and experience are important predictors of the success of inclusive education, and these factors are discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.

The above studies suggest that teachers' attitudes towards inclusion vary from one country to another, and even UNESCO's (2000) description of how inclusion can be implemented noted that research findings on the subject are contradictory. This is referred to as the 'voice of reality'. While the previous studies tended to focus on one or multiple aspects, and on one or several countries, since a significant degree of variation exists in the results for each country, the conclusions drawn from research conducted in one country cannot be generalised to the rest of the world. Nevertheless, in many cases, the differences between countries concerning attitudes towards inclusion are not simply caused by differences between the countries themselves. Rather, they may be related to other contextual factors within the education systems and schools, such as the awareness and understanding of the staff, the amount of special education training provided, the type of additional needs that the students possess, and the time at which the study took place (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002). As reported in a US study (Boucier, 2003), another factor influencing mainstream teachers' attitudes to the inclusion of students with SEN is the length of their teaching experience with students with SEN. The study consisted of a questionnaire with two separate components that was sent to a sample of 19 general education teachers, in order to gauge their attitudes towards students with SEN. The first part of the questionnaire collected basic information, such as the age and gender of the recipient, together with the length of their teaching experience. The second part asked the participants to answer 28 questions regarding their attitude towards teaching students with SEN. The results, which were analysed using a 4-point Likert scale, revealed that the more experience with students with SEN a teacher possessed, the more open they were to favouring

inclusion. Nevertheless, the general attitude of the teachers towards inclusion was found to be negative.

The extant literature reveals the importance of the attitudes of both general and special education teachers towards the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools. In particular, a number of studies have demonstrated that teachers who are not specialists in special education tend to possess less favourable attitudes towards inclusion than specialist teachers (D'Alonzo, 1997; McLeskey & Waldron, 2002). Possessing sufficient knowledge, skills, and information regarding special education, and students with SEN, produces positive attitudes, as teachers are able to teach such students, and manage any issues related to them. This fact was supported by the findings of the study conducted by Martha et al. (1999). However, in a study conducted by Vaughn et al. (1994), employing focus group interviews to examine the attitudes towards inclusion among general and special education teachers, the majority of the teachers were not participating in any type of inclusive learning programme at the time of the research, and expressed negative attitudes towards inclusion. Moreover, these teachers named several factors directly affecting their attitudes to inclusion, such as classroom size, lack of resources, and lack of preparedness.

Similarly, a study conducted by Hastings and Oakford (2003) considered the effect of the various type of students, in terms of those with emotional and behavioral difficulties versus severe disabilities, on the attitude towards inclusion among teachers. The total number of participants who completed the questionnaires was 93, and the researchers concluded that these teachers possessed a negative attitude towards inclusion, but with a specific focus on the type of student needs. A more recent study conducted by Mahony (2016) revealed similar findings, after surveying 67 primary school teachers in Dublin. In total, 58 of the participants taught in an inclusive classroom, while nine did not. The researcher employed survey questionnaires to assess the teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of students with SEN, and concluded that

some of the teachers possessed negative attitudes towards inclusion in mainstream education. The teachers also identified various factors that might hinder the success of inclusion, such as class size, and inadequate skills to manage the multiple needs of students with SEN.

Since the majority of these studies focused on either both special and general education teachers' attitudes, or only those of general education teachers, to the researcher's knowledge there is a lack of research concerning only special education teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of students with SEN. This present study therefore focused on special and general education teachers' attitudes, employing the three-component model of attitudes, in order to compare the attitudes of Saudi female special and general education teachers' attitudes towards inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream girls' schools in the KSA.

A study conducted by Ali et al. (2006) produced different findings from those discussed previously. Their research focused on the attitudes towards inclusion of both general and special education teachers from primary and secondary schools, and on their knowledge concerning the subject. The results indicated that the teachers possessed positive attitudes towards the concept, and agreed that this type of education improves the possibilities for social interaction for students with SEN, thus minimising the negative stereotypes surrounding the needs of such students. The researchers also emphasised the importance of collaboration between general and special education teachers, and requested comprehensive guidelines to assist in implementing inclusive education. These findings helped to identify the requirements that school administrators, teachers, and other responsible parties, should satisfy in order to successfully implement inclusive education. Interestingly, the study identified collaboration between general and special education teachers as a factor able to affect the inclusion of students with SEN; this gives us an indication of the importance of communication between teachers, and the support or insights they might provide to each other. Since such collaboration between teachers is crucial to the successful inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream

schools, it is vital to discuss the relationship between general and special education teachers, and also to determine how this collaboration can be maximised.

The necessity for special and general education teachers to collaborate from the beginning of the academic year, in order to plan and implement changes to lesson plans, to teach and work together and to exchange information and advice, was stressed by Sisalem (2006). The issue of low-quality communication between the two types of teachers has far-reaching consequences, particularly when considering the fact that communication is vital for effective collaboration. Collaboration between special and general education teachers is not always effective, as demonstrated by Cohn and Safran (1981 cited in McNamara, 1989), and McNamara (1989) thus suggested that special education teachers should have a strong partnership with general education teachers, if they wished their students to be provided with effective inclusion practices.

In mainstream schools, a factor affecting the collaboration between special and general education teachers is the lack of understanding on the part of general education teachers regarding the role of their special education counterparts. This was reported in the findings of Griffin et al. (2008) in their examination of the relationship between special education teachers and their counterparts in general education, during their first year of service. They identified conflicting, fragmented and often unclear expectations regarding the responsibilities of special education teachers on the part of their general education colleagues. Griffin et al. (2008) suggested that the majority of these expectations resulted from an absence of sufficient information regarding their proficiency and role, together with their importance. The authors concluded that this highlighted the need for general education teachers to have access to information, advice, or first-hand experience of working with students with SEN, or special education teachers.

An argument can be advanced that the vague expectations Griffin et al. (2008) highlighted are indicative of more complex matters, connected with the clear and coherent assignation of roles, duties, and responsibilities to the two groups of teachers, with regard to students with SEN. It is unclear whether the role that special education teachers play is simply to support general education teachers in the process of providing education to students with SEN, or to take responsibility for this procedure. A clear understanding and definition of roles and responsibilities is regarded as best practice in many lines of work, not only teaching, and this can be especially important when the structure of a team, such as an academic teaching team, is undergoing change. It is apparent that general education teachers favour a clear distinction between their roles and those of their special education counterparts, as evidenced by a study of 20 general education teachers with a wide range of specialisms conducted in Georgia, US (Mousel, 2004). The authors discovered that the general education teachers were willing to teach students with SEN in their classes, although they required further training in order to manage the task. In addition, these teachers were found to be appreciative of, and to recognise any support provided by special education teachers. This presented a positive outlook for the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream educational classrooms. However, Kellher and Colleen-Dare (2007) reached a different conclusion, based on a study of 20 general education teachers, and 20 special education teachers, with specific attention ascribed to the perceptions of teachers regarding the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream classrooms. The two groups of teachers displayed positive approaches regarding inclusion, indicating the importance of collaboration among classmates for the students' skills development. However, the study indicated that the general education teachers who participated were more inclined to relinquish some of their responsibility of educating students with SEN to their special education counterparts.

According to Friend and Cook (2006), the theoretical rationale for collaboration between general and special education teachers stems from the notion that each group brings a different type of expertise and knowledge to the process of learning. Hence, it is assumed that the expertise and knowledge available will increase when both groups of teachers are involved in teaching. However, it should not be overlooked that such benefits only arise when the teachers receive appropriate training, and when they are sufficiently motivated, since these variables predict the degree to which the teachers will share resources effectively, make decisions collaboratively, and exercise joint responsibility for learning outcomes (Carter et al., 2009). Considering this fact, it is possible to account for poor instances of collaboration between special and general education teachers when the following issues arise: firstly, ineffective training initiatives for teachers (Conderman & Johnston-Rodriguez, 2009; Laframboise et al., 2004); secondly, insufficient school support for collaboration, limited time for collaboration, and classroom tension arising from power disparities between teachers; and finally, ineffective allocation of responsibilities (Hamilton-Jones & Vail, 2014).

3.2.6 Arab studies concerning attitudes towards the inclusion of students with SEN

Following the above review of wider international studies concerning inclusion of students with SEN, this section now focusses on studies conducted within Arab countries.

There is evidence that attitudes towards the inclusion of students with SEN differ, depending on the types of disabilities to be integrated. Research conducted in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) by Alghazo and Gaad (2004) found that general education teachers were willing to include students with SEN in their classrooms, but only within certain limits, according to the students' physical disabilities and learning difficulties. Similarly, in Kuwait, Abdul-Ghafour (1999) examined teachers' and administrators' attitudes towards the integration of students with SEN in mainstream primary schools. The sample involved in the study was comprised of 447 teachers and administrators, and it was found that the participants believed the recent trend

towards integration was beneficial for students with SEN, and that it created opportunities for social interaction with typically developing students in mainstream schools. The group made distinctions between the types of disabilities that were suitable for integration, with the disabilities deemed least acceptable being mental disabilities and deafness, while those deemed most likely to be accepted being physical and visual disabilities. With regard to the degree of disability, the responses showed that the participants believed that students with moderate disabilities would be better integrated than those with severe disabilities. Similarly, a study conducted in Palestine by Abdullah (1998) examined teachers' and principals' attitudes towards the integration in mainstream schools of students with physical disabilities, visual impairments, and hearing impairments. The study elicited the views of 248 teachers, who demonstrated positive attitudes towards the inclusion of students with physical disabilities, but not towards those with sensory impairments.

Likewise, Al-Otaibi's (1986) observations revealed that integration was approached more positively with regard to hearing impaired students than to students with mental disabilities. A Palestinian study conducted by Habayeb and Othman (2005) also examined general education teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion in mainstream schools of students with physical, hearing and visual impairments. This study employed questionnaires that were distributed to 1,251 teachers, and the findings revealed that the teachers' acceptance of the different impairments was ranked in the following order: physical impairment (most accepted), hearing and visual impairment (least accepted). Interestingly, the researchers believed that the reason for the relative acceptance of physical impairments, compared with that of other disabilities, was because students with physical impairments possessed the same hearing and visual ability as other 'normal' people, and that when facilities were available, they had full accessibility. This study concurred with those of Alhainini, (1989), and Forlin, Douglas and Hattie (1996). However, a study conducted by Abd-Aljabbar (1999) with 510 Saudi general education

teachers produced the following scale of disabilities, according to the level of acceptance, from the most to the least accepted: physical disability, visual impairment, and hearing impairment. Unacceptable disabilities were ranked as follows: deafness, blindness, and mental disabilities.

To conclude, the extant studies demonstrate that child-related factors are relevant to the acceptance of students with SEN, with most teachers supporting the integration of students with moderate, rather than severe, disabilities. This evidence highlights questions concerning special and general education teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of students with SEN in Saudi mainstream schools. Several pieces of research conducted across various Arab countries revealed differing attitudes towards inclusion, dependent on the type of disability, a factor that is therefore important for understanding teachers' attitudes. Since all of the teachers in the aforementioned studies displayed more positive attitudes towards the inclusion of students with moderate, rather than severe, disabilities, this factor is discussed in further detail later in this chapter.

An additional factor that is important for understanding teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of students with SEN concerns individual differences between teachers. As individuals are likely to possess diverse attitudes, it is important to consider trends relating to the various factors involved. A study conducted with 183 teachers in Oman by Abbas and Al-Qaryouti (2009) explored the attitudes of teachers and principals towards the integration of students with SEN in mainstream schools. The sample of this study comprised 183 teachers and found no statistically significant differences in attitudes towards inclusion between principals and teachers, and found that teachers' experience also had no statistically significant effect on their attitudes. However, the results showed a statistically significant difference between male and female teachers, with the female teachers generally exhibiting more positive attitudes. The study made a number of recommendations, such as the need for further studies to focus on the relationship between the attitudes of administrators and teachers, and their

associated qualifications and specialisations. In the context of the KSA, Alquraini (2010) cited two studies, Al-Abduljabber, 1994 and Ahmadi, 2009, that examined the perspectives of male and female teachers towards teaching students with disabilities in regular schools. Interestingly, those studies revealed conflicting findings in regard to the attitude of male and female teachers. The more recent study found the attitudes of male teachers were more positive than those of female teachers, while the second study revealed the contrary. However, it could be argued that the earlier study was conducted prior to the new legislation on inclusive education for students with SEN, which could influence the practices and attitudes of teachers, while the later study focused particularly on students with specific learning difficulties. However, these studies are different to the present study in terms of their focus and nature. This is because both studies took place in regular schools but not in inclusive schools as in the present study and, as mentioned before, one of this study's contributions is that it examines the attitudes of teachers towards the inclusion of all types of SEN, which has not previously been researched.

A study conducted in Jordan (Alghazo, 2002) supported the finding that special education teachers display more positive attitudes towards the integration of students with SEN in mainstream schools than do general education teachers. In a survey of 900 general and special education teachers in the UAE, Alahbabi (2009) investigated the factors that might contribute to the differences in attitude of general education teachers towards the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream classrooms at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. The teachers involved responded negatively towards the concept of inclusion, which they considered to be detrimental to the education of both the students with SEN, and their typically developing peers. However, a high percentage of the special education teachers surveyed acknowledged that students with SEN would benefit from sharing a learning space with their typically developing peers. Although these findings may be due to the fact that some of the teachers had a specialism in special education, they might also be explained by other contextual

factors. For instance, teachers are more likely to develop positive attitudes towards inclusion when they have access to adequate and appropriate resources and materials, and therefore a better understanding of the issues involved (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002). Teachers may also possess more positive attitudes when a physical environment conducive to students with SEN is available (Clough & Lindsay, 1991; Mushoriwa, 2001).

There is an accumulation of evidence that both the possession of qualifications in special education, and experience in the field, have an impact on teachers' attitudes, and it is therefore important to investigate these factors within the target culture and context of this present study. In a study conducted by Al-Abduljabbar and Masoud (2002), the attitudes towards integration held by 447 teachers in the KSA were investigated. The study focussed on four factors, including the effect of the integration of students with SEN on attitudes, peer relationships, the correction of negative behaviour, and the openness of teachers and school staff towards integration. The researchers established that a relationship existed between these factors, with all of the results achieving a level of significance. The attitudes towards the integration of students with SEN varied based on the individual's role in the school, special education qualifications, training, and the type of special educational needs involved. Similarly, Al-Zyoudi (2006) found that teachers' attitudes might be influenced by a number of factors, such as the nature and severity of disabilities, teaching experience, and the grade level of the students taught. Similarly, Al-Khashrami (1995) suggested that the likelihood of successful integration would be affected significantly by the openness and efficiency of the staff, the type of disabilities or educational needs involved, the obligation to acknowledge different special needs, and the roles played by the teachers. The attitudes of the teachers themselves towards inclusion, and the characteristics of the students with SEN were also likely to influence the success of inclusion.

It is clear that several factors appear repeatedly in the research review above. These include the absence of training for teachers, the amount of experience held by teachers in working with students with SEN, the lack of sufficient preparatory measures for inclusive schools, the ineffective standards of educational facilities and materials, the absence of teachers holding relevant qualifications, the type and severity of disability involved, expectations regarding the outcomes and results of education, and the wider socio-cultural context.

Alongside the review of international literature, a review of Arab studies concerning the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream education has provided a knowledge base for this study's investigation of teachers' attitudes towards inclusion, since the majority of the contexts in which the studies were based were similar to that of the present study, in such differing fields of investigation as the socio-cultural factors and the educational system involved. This present study aimed to enhance the existing knowledge through its exploration of the complexity of attitudes towards inclusion, employing the three components model of attitudes. Thus, it aimed to create opportunities for future research to progress the knowledge of the field, since, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, none of the extant studies in the Arab context and the KSA context, in particular, have compared general and special education teachers' attitudes using this model.

In order to understand the complexity of any attitudes, it is important to comprehend how they are formed, and by what means they might be influenced and shaped. Therefore, the following section discusses the factors that might play roles in shaping the attitudes of teachers towards the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools.

3.2.7 Factors affecting teachers' attitudes towards SEN inclusion

The above review of both the international and the Arab context demonstrates that the attitudes held by teachers can have a major impact on the success of inclusion of students with SEN.

These attitudes can be influenced by a number of factors. For example, training in special education (Cook et al., 1999; Salend, 2001; Shade and Stewart, 2001), the type of the students' needs (Hastings & Oakford, 2003), the years of experience working with students with SEN (Salend, 2001; Shade & Stewart, 2001), and the availability of supporting resources and materials that facilitate inclusion (Avramidis & Norwich, 2010). According to the way these factors were categorised by Salvia and Munson (1986), some factors can be referred to as 'child-related', 'teacher-related', or 'educational environment-related' variables. These three categories are useful for understanding the most important factors influencing teachers' attitudes towards inclusion of students with SEN. Accordingly, the following sections examine child-related, teacher-related, and environment-related factors in more detail.

Firstly, in terms of child-related variables, teachers' attitudes towards inclusion of students with SEN are significantly affected by the severity of the students' needs, the age of the students, and the type of their disability. The willingness of teachers to include students with SEN in the mainstream classroom increases with the decreasing severity of the disability, and vice versa (Avramidis et al., 2000; Lanier and Lanier, 1996; Opdal and Wormenæs, 2001; Smith, 2000; Yuen and Westwood, 2001). Secondly, research shows that teachers have greater concerns regarding the inclusion of older students with SEN, as they can represent increased challenges to effective classroom management. It is therefore apparent that the age of students with SEN, and the degree of negativity of teachers' attitudes towards their inclusion are directly correlated. This might be due to the fact that teachers who educate higher grades within schools are required to be considerably more specialised in their subject matter, and thus possibly possess less experience or training in dealing with students requiring special attention. This direct correlation was both confirmed and supported by a study conducted by Clough and Lindsay (1991). On the other hand, Hannah (1988) and Jamieson (1984) did not identify any relationship between the age of students with SEN and the teachers' attitudes towards their

inclusion in mainstream classrooms. Thirdly, other research explored whether the specific type of disability constitutes a factor that potentially influences teachers' attitudes towards inclusion students with SEN to a large degree. More specifically, the study conducted by Avramidis et al. (2000) investigated the aspects that support increasing levels of positivity in teachers' attitudes, and these were found to include the presence of a disabled student in a mainstream classroom. The results of the survey indicated that teachers exhibited more stress and concern when a student had emotional or behavioural disorders, as opposed to other types of disability.

With regard to teacher-related variables, research has demonstrated that multiple factors are associated with teachers' attitudes towards inclusion of students with SEN. Several studies established the existence of a strong connection between teachers' attitudes, their training, and the eventual success of inclusion (Elhoweris & Alsheikh, 2006). Adequate and systematic training of teachers has a profound impact, whereby teachers with more training and experience in working with students with SEN have a more positive attitude towards teaching them (Cook et al., 1999; Salend, 2001; Shade & Stewart, 2001). In a survey of both general and special education teachers, before and after their training, Dickens-Smith (1995) found that the teachers from both groups were more positive towards inclusion after their in-service training than before, and the general education teachers demonstrated a marked change in their attitude in favour of inclusion. The author consequently concluded that the key to the success of inclusion is staff development. Furthermore, evidence from a descriptive study demonstrated that teachers who have experienced training have a more positive attitude towards inclusion than those without, apparently because they possess more expertise about inclusion than their counterparts (Chopra, 2008). This result concurred with that of Forlin (1995), who confirmed that teachers from Education Support Centres, which are special centres catering to the educational needs of students with SEN requiring limited or extended support, were more accepting of students with SEN than general education teachers. In addition, Martha et al.

(1999) emphasised the fact that teacher training was one of the needs identified for both groups of teachers in their study.

The findings of the above studies were supported by the research conducted by Heiman (2001), which indicated that teachers with less training, who feel unprepared, are likely to reject the inclusion of students with SEN. Similarly, other studies revealed that general education teachers possess more negative attitudes towards the inclusion of students with SEN than special education teachers (D'Alonzo, 1997; McLeskey & Waldron, 2002). Consequently, general education teachers often reject inclusion by stating that they do not have the required training, knowledge, or confidence to properly cater to the specific requirements of such students (Olson, 2003). It can therefore be argued that the performance of teachers might be more favourable if they had knowledge and experience of inclusive education. This lack of awareness of SEN students on the part of teachers, together with their lack of skills and professional engagement in the field, impacts on their behaviour in term of their attitudes towards inclusive education. Kristensen, Omagor-Loican and Onen (2003) attributed Ugandan students' and teachers' positive attitudes to inclusion to the exhaustive information they received regarding the subject, thus clearly demonstrating the role played by knowledge and information in the promotion of positive teacher attitudes, and therefore the effectiveness of inclusive education. A study conducted by Cheuk and Hatch (2007) concurred, emphasising the need for the complex and structured training of teachers in mainstream classrooms where the inclusion of students with SEN occurs, in order to create a positive and welcoming environment for such students.

Furthermore, Smith (2010) emphasised the necessity for both general and special education teachers to attend training sessions concerning effective ways of delivering their lessons to students with SEN, adding that most teachers involved in his study had not participated in training sessions regarding teaching in inclusive classrooms. Similarly, Al-Gomah (2009)

highlighted the importance of creating sufficient opportunities for general education teachers to participate in training courses and workshops concerning teaching methods for students with SEN. She perceived this issue to be pertinent for both general and special education teachers, as while the former required training related to special education, the latter required training in methods for providing consultancy services for their colleagues. In addition, Al-Gomah (2009) stated a preference for in-service training, since it enables teachers to immediately employ the new information gained in their classrooms. She also emphasised the importance of teacher training of any form, noting the general lack of training sessions for new teachers in most Arab countries. A considerable amount of research therefore exists concerning the importance of training, in terms of both providing teachers with experience, and developing their skills related to teaching students with SEN, which will improve their confidence, change their expectations of the inclusion of students with SEN, and increase their positivity and motivation towards inclusivity.

Once the necessity of specific training for teachers working with students with SEN is confirmed, it is worth asking about the consequences of not having established effective training schemes. Al-Hadidi (2003) offers a simple but far-reaching answer to this question, as he maintains that general education teachers may not support the efforts of special education teachers if they are not trained and, thus, not aware of the issues related to inclusion of students with SEN. In addition, he underlines the need for training that would focus on the tailoring of education to the needs of the individual, as the individualisation of education is considered one of the most effective teaching features for students with SEN.

Moreover, the study by Avramidis et al. (2000) showed that teachers who have received training in the field of inclusive education increase in confidence, knowledge and competence and, therefore, their attitude regarding inclusion shifts to a more positive one. The Martha et al. (1999) study, which used questionnaires with both groups of teachers to investigate

teachers' confidence working with students with SEN, showed how understanding SEN issues can positively influence the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools. Furthermore, Briggs et al. (2002) supported the view that often those teachers who have positive attitudes toward the inclusion of students with SEN have higher confidence and understanding about their inclusion, which is further enhanced by training. Despite the differing research contexts in the available studies, a consistent finding across each is that generally positive attitudes are held by teachers who have participated in training programmes in special education (prior to or during their work). In addition, the studies report that teachers exposed to these training opportunities were less concerned towards inclusive education.

Teachers do need to have the requisite characteristics in order to teach in inclusive classrooms. As Martha et al. (1999) argued, these include confidence, understanding, the ability to adapt materials and the curriculum, and to provide individual assistance, which are all significant for promoting successful inclusion. Furthermore, Lambe and Bones (2006) claimed that the failure to acquire these skills is a crucial factor in negatively affecting teachers' attitudes toward inclusion of students with SEN in schools. As a result, in the inclusive classroom, teachers can be expected to experience difficulty in dealing fairly with all students if these skills are lacking. It is important to note that teachers can obtain these crucial skills with training and experience.

The past research highlights some of the pathways for improving teachers' attitudes, and for preparing them for inclusive education. Through training, exposure to new methods, and communication with experienced special education teachers, it is possible to change attitudes. Since these factors are important for the introduction of inclusive education in mainstream schools, it is prudent to assess the attitudes of teaching teams, and to evaluate their preparedness for inclusion, prior to affecting changes to the educational system and customs, as research demonstrates that this affects the success of inclusion.

A further factor that may affect teachers' attitudes towards inclusion is qualifications in general, although this is not confirmed consistently. A study conducted by Stoler (1992) indicated that teachers with a high level of education possessed less positive attitudes towards inclusion, while a later study by Heiman (2001) claimed that a teacher's level of education does not significantly affect the teacher's attitude. Another study, which used a survey involving 23 mainstream schools in the UK to investigate the relationship between teachers' attitudes towards inclusion and variables such as education level, also found that the level of education did not have a significant impact on attitude (Avramidis et al., 2002). Hence, together with the availability of in-service training, questions remain in the KSA context concerning the level of qualifications and the previous experience of teachers working with students with SEN, and whether or not they have an impact on teachers' attitudes towards inclusion of students with SEN.

Regarding experienced teachers working with students with SEN, Avramidis et al., (2000) found that teachers with many years of experience were more supportive of the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools than teachers with limited or no experience. Furthermore, a US study (Leroy & Simpson 1996 cited in Avramidis & Norwich, 2002) that sought to understanding the impact of inclusion over a three-year period found that teachers' attitudes changed positively over the years, demonstrating that an increase in a teacher's amount of experience with students with SEN increases their confidence in teaching such students. This was confirmed in a later study conducted by Avramidis and Kalyva (2007), which revealed that teachers who were experienced in teaching students with SEN exhibited considerably more positive attitudes than their less-experienced counterparts. The study also highlighted the importance of long-term training in formulating positive attitudes towards inclusion. In addition, Batsiou et al. (2008) found similar results, and a significant connection between experience and a more positive attitude towards inclusion.

Other factors that play an active role in achieving successful inclusion for students with SEN are school and classroom facilities, the provision of support, and the availability of resources. A number of studies examined the environment as a factor influencing teachers' positivity toward inclusion (Avramidis & Norwich, 2010; Center & Ward, 1987), and the following quote refers to some of the school-related factors found to be connected with teachers' attitudes towards inclusion:

> *The availability of support at the classroom and school levels (e.g. learning support assistants, special teachers, speech therapists, etc.); the availability of resources (e.g. teaching materials, IT equipment, etc.); the availability of non-contact time set aside for collaborative planning coupled with opportunities for regular in service (INSET) training; and continuous encouragement from the head teacher* (Avramidis & Kalyva, 2007, p.370).

This quotation illustrates that such support can be divided into two parts: physical, including resources, teaching materials, IT equipment and restructured physical environments; and human, including teaching support assistants, special teachers, and speech therapists. Together, these factors are important for ensuring successful inclusion for both students with SEN and their teachers, since they have a strong association with the positive attitudes of teachers, and are also connected with "high perceptions of self-efficacy, competence and teaching satisfaction" (Avramidis & Kalyva, 2007, p. 370).

The fact that these environmental facilities are not always available in schools contributes to the negative attitudes of both general and special education teachers towards inclusion since, without the appropriate support and materials for teachers planning for and establishing a class, teachers are likely to be less confident, and therefore to perceive inclusion negatively (Al-Ayed, 2008). Studies conducted over the course of more than two decades demonstrate that the advancement of inclusion in the educational field relies on the following factors: (1) sufficient and suitable facilities and resources; (2) learner-centred teaching plans and pedagogical methods; and (3) learner-centred, especially SEN-centred, environments that promote accessibility (Al-Zyoudi, 2006; Janney et al., 1995; Koutrouba et al., 2006; Singal, 2005).

One of the aspects of the mainstream school environment that is considered problematic for inclusive programmes is that of class size. A study conducted by Bender et al. (1995) found that teachers managing a large number of students with SEN in a classroom exhibited more negative attitudes towards the inclusion of such students. Studies conducted by Buysse et al. (1998) and Wesley et al. (1997) supported this conclusion. The number of students with SEN in a class may thus be directly related to teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education, as students in a large class may not acquire knowledge adequately due to the number of students, entailing receiving less individualised attention from the teacher for their particular needs (Scruggs & Mastropiere, 1996). This was supported by Al-Amri (2009), who noted that general education teachers emphasised the fact that a reduction in the number of students in a class to 20 would facilitate an inclusion effort, and that the failure to provide teachers with sufficient time for consultations with specialists, in order to plan and employ effective approaches for teaching students with SEN in inclusive classrooms, was one of the significant barriers affecting the implementation of inclusion, especially for general education teachers, who are often expected to seek such expert consultation (Al-Amri, 2009; Santoli et al., 2008). For these resources to be provided, supporting frameworks and training are required, which demands sufficient funding.

The findings of a Jordanian study conducted by Alghazo (2002) revealed that general education teachers display a lower percentage of positive attitudes towards inclusion, compared with teachers specialising in special education, and this may be due to the specialisations of SEN teachers, which are not applicable to those of their general education counterparts. Research further suggests that teachers' attitudes towards inclusion can be expected to be more positive when suitable and sufficient resources are available and accessible, and the appropriate physical environment for students with SEN is provided (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Koutrouba et al., 2008; Mushoriwa, 2001). These educational environment-related variables

are therefore vital in promoting the positive attitudes of teachers towards inclusion of students with SEN, and in eventually enhancing successful inclusion, since without adequate structural support, such as the provision of the facilities required in both the classroom and the school as a whole, together with the associated support, appropriate resources, resources rooms, and any related and required services, teachers will not be sufficiently confident in aiding students with SEN (Morley et al., 2005).

Having discussed the factors that influence teachers' attitudes towards inclusion of students with SEN, it can be concluded that teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education can be influenced by either a single set of factors, such as teacher-related factors, or more than one set of factors, for example teacher-related factors, environmental factors, and child-related factors. In addition, teachers lacking in sufficient training and experience, together with support in terms of classroom resources, are more likely to exhibit negative attitudes towards the inclusion of students with SEN. It is therefore important to consider and address all of the factors discussed in this section, simultaneously.

3.2.8 Summary of the section

In summary, research concerning the attitudes of teachers towards the inclusion of students with SEN provides consistent conclusions, finding that both the positive and negative attitudes of teachers are affected by similar factors. Several elements were found to be of particular significance, such as familiarity with the concept of inclusion; the provision of special education training; the provision of the appropriate resources, whether human or/and physical; qualifications; and previous experience of teachers working with students with SEN. In this regard, and of particular relevance to the aims and questions involved in this present research, general and special education teachers can have quite opposing attitudes towards the inclusion of students with SEN, which threatens to hamper efforts to implement inclusion in mainstream schools. Therefore, it is necessary to analyse the impact of a number of the factors that might

influence teachers' attitudes towards inclusion, in order to highlight those contributing to the development of positive and proactive attitudes towards inclusion. It is important to note that the transition to inclusion is a difficult and complex process, involving academic and social engagement, in order to accommodate all students, school restructuring, inclusive standards, and a new ethos.

In many places, this research highlighted the notion that attitudes of teachers towards inclusion constituted the fundamental determinant of the success of its implementation. This attitude may develop with the accommodation of diversity, collaboration between general and special teachers and the school staff, belief in the abilities of students with SEN, facilitation and access to various related services and the improvement of expectations, as it is, after all, 'society and not people with impairment that should be the target for professional intervention and practice' (Oliver, 1996, p.43).

Prior to the presentation of the findings of this present research, it is necessary to discuss its methodology. Therefore, the next chapter provides a summary of the methods applied in this study.

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

The concept of inclusive education is relatively new in the KSA, resulting in a lack of relevant research in the local context. Importantly, the attitudes of teachers towards inclusion (as previously discussed in this study) are critical, and can be instrumental in determining its success or failure. Thus, this thesis investigates attitudes in the Saudi context, by comparing the attitudes of both special and general education teachers regarding inclusion in girls' mainstream primary schools in Riyadh. Therefore, as noted in the first chapter, the aims of this study are: firstly, to explore and understand the attitudes of both general and special education teachers towards the inclusion of students with SEN; secondly, to compare the attitudes of both groups of teachers to identify the factors informing the differences in attitudes between the groups (if any), to determine ways of addressing negative attitudes towards the inclusion of students with SEN in the KSA.

These aims led to the formulation of the following research questions:

- What are the attitudes of special and general education teachers towards the inclusion of learners with SEN?
- What is the impact of the background factors on the attitudes of special education teachers and general education teachers towards the inclusion of learners with SEN?
- What are the differences between the attitudes of general education teachers and special education teachers towards the inclusion of learners with SEN?
- What are the challenges facing successful inclusion in the context of this study?

This chapter outlines the methodology and related research designs, justifying their selection. It discusses the interpretive research paradigm adopted for this study; the methodology

employed, which determined a mixed methods design; the data collection tools, the benefits and drawbacks of the chosen tools; the sampling, data collection and data analysis procedures; positionality, and finally, ethical considerations.

4.2 Research paradigm

A research paradigm is a broad framework of perceptions, understanding and beliefs, within which theories and practices are situated. It requires the researcher to proceed with a clarity of vision by providing the ideological and theoretical tools necessary to support their research and accomplish achievable targets (Burrell & Morgan, 1985). Every paradigm contains a number of different assumptions, namely, ontology, epistemology, methodology, and methods.

Ontology is defined as 'the study of being', and focuses on the nature of existence and the structure of reality (Crotty, 2003, p. 10). Anderson and Biddle (1991) view ontology as exploring reality in response to the question 'what is there that can be known?' Denzin and Lincoln (2000) describe ontology as a set of assumptions concerning reality. The educational research literature typically views reality from one of two different stances, namely, positivism and interpretivism. The positivist perspective states that 'realities exist outside the mind', while interpretivism perceives of reality as shaped by the collective understanding of individuals within a particular society (Crotty, 2003, p. 10).

Ridenour and Newman (2008) observed that the majority of educational research tends to employ the interpretive paradigm, since its principal aims are to explore and understand a subject under consideration and its influence on a specific case. Thus, this research employs an interpretive ontological assumption, as its aim is to establish meaningful explanations in real world contexts, to explore, understand and explain the current situation (Bryman, 2016). This research establishes the attitudes of both general and special education teachers regarding the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools, identifying the factors that influence

the differences between each group's attitudes. To obtain the related data, the participants were both interviewed and invited to complete the questionnaires, establishing a multiple reality, focussed on understanding 'the subjective world of human experience' (Cohen et al., 2000, p. 22). The research ontology adopted in this study had determined the approach taken, in order to obtain insight into the attitudes of the participants. Reflecting the advice of studies conducted by Morrison (2002) and Pring (2000) it was deemed necessary to draw on research methods to enable knowledge to be acquired to express the multidimensional nature of the inclusive education of students with SEN, particularly regarding teachers' social world, their behaviours, and the socially-constructed meanings with which they are associated.

Epistemology focuses on the knowledge of reality and is, therefore, concerned with exploring notions about what is known and how it is known. In the research context, epistemology influences: (1) the association between the researcher and the forms and sources of knowledge within the study; and (2) the methods employed to realise this knowledge to advance the work of other researchers (Crotty, 2003). Pring (2000) asserted that, in the field of educational research, the choice of epistemology ensures the researcher can adopt a unique methodology to effectively explain various aspects of reality. In this study, the epistemological assumption is subjectivist, due to the nature of the interactions between the researcher and the research subjects. Working within an interpretivist framework, the researcher recognises the validity of subjectively-held knowledge. The implication of this is that each individual who participated in the research can freely construct meaning in a distinct way. As was previously noted, the overarching purpose of the present study was to explore the participants' attitudes to develop an understanding of inclusive education for students with SEN, along with the key considerations that influence their attitudes. Hence, in this context, reality is socially-constructed with respect to the attitudes of the general and special education teachers, since they are unlikely to conform to a single position.

Significantly, almost all the examined earlier studies utilised standard quantitative data collection instruments, and quantitative research designs. This is indicative of the fact that – to date – most of the research conducted in the area of educational research and special education in the KSA has adopted a positivistic philosophical paradigm (for example, Al-Zahrani, 2005). One viable explanation to account for this trend is to acknowledge that scholars in the KSA favour a quantitative approach and practical measurement instruments. Nevertheless, as the literature attests, quantitative research designs have limitations in terms of their explanatory power. However, the researcher believes that when addressing ideas such as inclusion, students with SEN, mainstream schools, and teachers' attitudes, quantitative research designs fail to afford in-depth insights. Particularly notable is the fact that concepts such as these are deeply-rooted into local contexts, and therefore a qualitative research design is deemed more helpful as a means to understand the issue under consideration. Therefore, the most appropriate data collection tools are those generally associated with a qualitative approach (i.e. interviews), since they concentrate on social interactions and socially constructed meanings, focusing on the individual. This study also employed a questionnaire to obtain a broader picture of the current situation, and establish an overview of the attitudes of general and special education teachers working in mainstream schools in Riyadh. It is important to note that, although this research combines interview and questionnaire methods, it is based on the interpretivist paradigm only (Bryman, 2016).

4.3 The research methodology

Wellington (2000) noted that the role of methodology is to describe, evaluate and justify adoption of a particular method (or methods) for a piece of research. Crotty (2003, p.7) asserted that during the research process 'methodology is the research design that shapes our choice and use of particular methods and links them to the desired outcome'; moreover, it is possible to employ quantitative or qualitative methods, or a combination of the two (Robson, 2011). Pring

(2000) noted that diverse methodologies can be utilised to address the specific aims of educational research.

Applying mixed methods is advantageous as a means of enabling researchers to gain a broader (and more in-depth) perspective, while also identifying information that is not unobtainable when using a single approach only. Furthermore, a mixed methods approach allows for the investigation of a wider variety of research questions, while maximising the opportunity to produce reliable answers (Creswell, 2003). One key advantage of using a mixed methods approach concerns the rigour of the resulting research. This positive effect arises because qualitative and quantitative methods complement one another by addressing their relative weaknesses (O'Cathain, 2009). For example, the failure to adapt to setting and context, a major disadvantage of quantitative research, is largely offset by the strength of qualitative research, which is ideally suited to explaining the influence of setting and context on findings. By combining the two methods, a researcher can limit the risk of overgeneralisation and weakened assumptions. Johnson and Christensen (2004) affirmed the advantages of using a mixed methodology, asserting that when both qualitative and quantitative methods are combined, this enhances the researcher's interpretation of the collected results. Quantitative methods provide succinct and readily analysable results, while qualitative results afford a greater degree of complexity and insight, which is described by Johnson and Christensen (2004, p. 31) as a 'wide-angle and deep-angle lens, examining the breadth and depth of phenomena, to learn more about them.' This advantage is particularly notable when identifying and analysing the motivation behind teachers' specific responses to the concept of inclusivity in relation to SEN. Despite these advantages, a small number of key weaknesses arise when conducting mixed methods research, for example, its complexity, the amount of time taken (it is time-consuming), and the scale of resources required to undertake the research (Currall & Towler, 2003). As mentioned above, this study employed questionnaires and interviews to facilitate the

interpretation of results and the drawing of conclusions (Greene et al., 1989). The reasons for this are explored in the following section, which offers a more in-depth description and evaluation of the mixed methods design selected for this study.

4.4 Mixed methods design

This study used a convergent parallel mixed methods design to allow both quantitative and qualitative data to be gathered together at roughly the same time (Creswell, 2013; Johnson & Christensen, 2004). This was done to take advantage of the completeness, triangulation, and richness of the data. The data collected offered a clear understanding of teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools in the KSA. This approach therefore, is considered: (1) to be an appropriate choice; (2) relevant to answering the research questions; and (3) suitable to realise the study aims. Due to the improved consistency of the data obtained using a range of methods, the mixed methods approach enhances the validity of the results (Creswell, 2013).

The procedures undertaken for this research involved the researcher collecting both forms of data simultaneously, and then integrating the information when interpreting the overall results (Creswell, 2013). Therefore, the research in this study was undertaken in four stages. Firstly, during the design stage, the questionnaire and semi-structured interview were finalized and the potential participants chosen. Secondly, piloting of the research instruments was undertaken. Thirdly, quantitative data was collected using a questionnaire, from which interview participants were also selected based on their willingness to participate in the interview. Finally, the data analysis stage involved the discussion and a presentation of results. The following section gives a more in-depth discussion of the data collection tools used in the study.

4.5 Methods of data collection

Research employing mixed methods approach generally employs a number of data collection methods, including interviews and questionnaires. The following section outlines the research tools, commencing with the questionnaire.

4.5.1 Questionnaire

Questionnaires are defined by Czaja and Blair (1996) as a set of written questions, created using a simple framework, which frequently includes requesting subjects to complete the questionnaire in the absence of the researcher (as with a postal or email questionnaire). Alternatively, the questionnaire might be completed in the presence of the researcher, administered to the respondent in either written or verbal form. Czaja and Blair (1996) described two basic types of questionnaire: (1) closed-ended or closed questionnaires (in which the researcher generally offers a list of possible responses to each question); and (2) open-ended questionnaires (for which no answers are provided, allowing respondents to express themselves more freely in narrative text).

To lower the risk of inconsistent interpretation, the questionnaire for this study employed closed-ended questions (Converse & Presser, 1986). For example, there is little room for misinterpretation when the list of possible responses included: ‘strongly disagree’; ‘disagree’; ‘neither agree nor disagree’; ‘agree’; and ‘strongly agree’. (a classic Likert five-point scale) as used in this study (Converse & Presser, 1986; Czaja & Blair, 1996,). Bryman and Teevan (2005) argued that uniform questions can increase the potential for all participants to understand questions in a similar manner, leading to results that are more valid and reliable, and aiding the collation and interpretation of responses from a range of individuals. The decision to use questionnaires as a tool for collecting data in this study was based on their ability to collect a large amount of data from a range of schools and teachers. Indeed, it was

possible to obtain responses to 165 questionnaires, involving more participants than would have been possible using another method. The questionnaire is a component of a mixed methods, and can be used to establish a general view of context and to analyse the impact of certain background factors on teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of students with SEN. This includes length of experience, teachers' level of qualifications and in-service training, which are related to teachers' attitudes in terms of the three component models of attitudes. The interview phase was included to gather more specific data. However, the use of questionnaires is subject to significant weaknesses, although attempts were made to avoid these as much as possible in this research. These include uncertainty (particularly in the case of postal questionnaires) over whether the questionnaire would be completed by the intended individual (Hess & Singer, 1995). In this study, the researcher distributed the questionnaires to the participants and collected them after completion in person. To ensure anonymity and confidentiality, at the distribution stage the researcher provided the participants with envelopes with a glue line and the researcher's name on the top, and instructed them to place their completed questionnaires inside these envelopes and seal them, and finally put them into a file with the researcher's name on the top placed on a shelf in the staff room for the researcher to collect later.

In terms of ensuring the participants the right to withdraw, when the researcher met the teachers for the first time for distributing the questionnaires, the researcher verbally assured them that they had the right to withdraw up to an agreed date (the Arabic date from the Arabic calendar) without giving any reason for opting out. Teachers remained in close contact with the researcher throughout the weeks following distribution of the questionnaire and they were provided with her phone number in case clarification was needed. This allowed the participants to raise questions and concerns, and reassured them of the importance of their contribution.

4.5.1.1 Questionnaire design

The questionnaire is based on a format obtained from Avramidis et al. (2000), and is designed specifically to address the attitudes of teachers towards inclusive education, and to evaluate the multidimensional nature of attitude (Avramidis et al., 2000), as discussed in the previous chapter. Several adjustments were made to the original questionnaire, such as the addition of further questions and alterations to the wording of others to ensure they all fit the specific context of the research, and to meet the aims of the study. Through the adapted questionnaire, an attempt was made to address the majority of factors indicated in the literature regarding shaping attitudes. The final version of the questionnaire used is divided into three sections (see Appendix 4).

The first section was added by this researcher and comprises several close-ended questions to determine key study variables. It asks for factual information about the participants, such as years of experience in working with students with SEN, the level of teachers' qualifications, in-service training, teachers' position in schools, and whether the teachers are general or special education teachers. Three questions concerning the participants' characteristics, which related to working with students with SEN were introduced in questions 2, 5 and 8, and relate to students with SEN; the aim being to investigate the link between teachers' attitudes and type of student with SEN. For example, it helped to establish whether the teachers had previously taught students with SEN, the type of students' needs the teacher has encountered, as well as asking about the type of students' needs teachers believed would be included in an inclusive classroom.

The second section contains various close-ended questions comprising the attitude scale, which consists of three components: cognitive, affective and behavioural.

Section one contains five items about the teachers' attitudes towards inclusion, which address their opinions, beliefs, ideas, knowledge and assumptions related to inclusion. These were adopted from items used by Avramidis et al. (2000) to describe the general philosophy of inclusion, which represents the cognitive component of attitudes. Some of the items were retained in their original form without modifications, whereas other items were modified to fit the context and the study aims. For example, item number one 'isolation in a special class has a negative effect on the social and emotional development of students with special educational needs' was used in its original form because it was appropriate for the study. However, item number four 'the challenge of being in an ordinary classroom promotes the academic growth of the child with special needs' was amended to 'teaching students with special educational needs in the mainstream classroom will promote their academic growth', to avoid implying the inclusion of the child is a challenge and provide a more positive wording without affecting the meaning. Item number five 'students with disabilities should be given every opportunity to function in the general classroom where possible' was reworded to emphasise the students' right to education, rather than suggesting it is optional to extend them opportunities to be educated in the mainstream setting, giving 'all students with special educational needs have the right to receive their education in mainstream classes'. Item number three was reworded to focus on students with SEN specifically, since the original item stated 'integration offers mixed group interaction that will foster understanding and the acceptance of differences'; the changed statement reads 'inclusion helps to change the negative perception of non-SEN students towards their peers with special educational needs'. Item number two was modified to fit the context more closely; the original item was 'the student with disabilities will not be socially isolated in the general classroom' limiting this idea to classroom time. Since inclusion in the KSA could refer either to inclusion into mainstream classes or attendance of special classrooms in the same school where students only come together during breaks, it was modified to cover

times when students are likely to come together to establish whether teachers can determine if students are interacting or are isolated. Therefore, the item became ‘during breaks, students with special educational needs gather together apart from ordinary students’.

Section two consists of six items addressing the teachers’ emotional reactions and feelings about the inclusion of students with SEN in their class (affective components). These items are based on the semantic differential scale which consists of bipolar adjectives (Osgood et al., 1957). The teachers are asked to rate their views on a five-point scale. Some items were reworded, but the meaning remained the same; for example, ‘anxious-relaxed’ was changed to ‘nervous-calm’, and ‘worried-self-assured’ to ‘comfortable-uncomfortable’. This was done to soften the language (as the original forms were highly judgment loaded, especially when translated into Arabic) and encourage honesty in terms of responses. The other adjectives used were kept in their original form as they were suitable, transparent and appropriate to the study context.

Section three (behavioural component) contains five items concerning teachers’ tendency to behave in certain ways in regard to their inclusive classes. The items in this section aimed to describe the actions teachers might take in the class, when indicating their agreement or disagreement. The respondents were asked to imagine what they would do, instead of asking them what they do, as in the original questionnaire, as that might affect the honesty of their responses. This meant the verb tenses used in the statements were changed. Also the focus has changed from being focused only on students with severe learning difficulties to being focused on all students with SEN in the KSA context. For example, in item number one, the original was ‘I will change my teaching processes to accommodate children with severe learning difficulties’, and this was replaced by ‘I would change my teaching processes to accommodate a student with special educational needs’. Similarly, the second item was changed from ‘I will engage in developing skills for managing the behaviour of children with severe learning

difficulties' to 'I would engage in developing skills for managing the behaviour of a student with special educational needs'. Item number three was added because technology has been introduced into schools to augment teaching and learning processes. In addition, the fourth statement concerned whether teachers consider different abilities of students in the classrooms, and it was found to be more specific to the educational processes in the classroom. The final statement does not question teachers about what they would do if a student with SEN entered their class; but it does consider teachers' time as an important factor informing their behaviours towards the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream classes. The item 'students with disabilities will not monopolize the general classroom teacher's time' was reworded to shift the emphasis from students as the ones who 'monopolize' the time to be more positive and focus on whether the teacher feels she has adequate time to include the student effectively 'I feel that I have the time to implement inclusion effectively'.

The final section establishes the factors identified as influencing teachers' attitudes to investigate their significance. The research items selected for this section comprised of a set of eleven items. These statements were developed and designed from the literature review considering these factors in terms of 'child-related' variables, 'teacher-related' variables and 'educational environment-related' variables, which might affect teachers' attitudes towards inclusion (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Salvia & Munson, 1986). The scale ranged from; 1. strongly disagree, 2. disagree, 3. neither agree nor disagree, 4. agree, and 5. strongly agree to achieve the same range as the sections above. This section was designed and added in this study. Given the modifications made to the questionnaire, it was essential to ensure its reliability and validity. Therefore, it was piloted prior to commencing the empirical work. Thus, the following section explains the piloting and validity of the questionnaire.

A sensitive issue here concerns the problems the research addresses, in particular whether it is necessary to consider bias avoidance. Questionnaires do not allow the researcher to interfere

in the participants' responses, and so the participants can respond freely, thereby avoiding bias and making the decision to use a questionnaire more appropriate. The questionnaire items were further clarified based on the assumption that greater clarity, ease and simplicity would lead to better understanding by the participants (Adams, 2008). In addition, since teachers might be aware of the position towards inclusion expressed by the educational authorities in the KSA, this could influence their answers; thus, the following procedures were put in place to ensure honest responses. (1) The researcher emphasised to the participants that she is completing a PhD study and is not from authoritative organisation, and so any responses made would not be disclosed to anyone in authority, (2) the researcher stated clearly on the information sheet: "I assure you that I will deal with these opinions confidentially and will use them only to achieve the objectives of this research, and that the provided information will be used only to make the results more meaningful. Under no circumstances will this information be used to identify you in any way", (3) the researcher further ensured the anonymity of the respondents and did not collect any personal data that could be used to track the respondents to encourage them to answer freely and honestly. This ethical process was followed at all times, emphasising the preservation of participants' anonymity. Furthermore, the questionnaire used in the study was piloted with academics in the KSA and the UK in the field of education, and discussed at all the stages with the research supervisors. The obtained feedback informed adjustments, and helped reduce the impact of subjective bias (Patton, 1990). Thus, the following section explains in more detail the piloting and underlines the validity of the questionnaire.

4.5.1.2 Piloting and validity of the questionnaire

Cohen et al. (2000) and Mertens (1998) argued for the importance of piloting data collection tools, as a means of guaranteeing the validity of the tools. They also suggested that all aspects of a questionnaire should be piloted, as this process increases not only the validity, but also the reliability and practicality of the questionnaire. Considering this, the questionnaire used in this

study was piloted employing the following steps. The first involved designing the questionnaire to increase the probability of truthfulness and accurate responses. The second step involved piloting the questionnaire with experts in the field of education, two of whom were Saudi postgraduate students at the University of Birmingham and another who was a Professor in Special Education at King Saudi University in the KSA. The next draft of the questionnaire was then examined by the researcher's supervisor, who made some modifications, and then the final amended draft was produced, incorporating the suggested amendments. The amendments were minor but useful, and included rewording and reordering a few items. Overall, there were no significant issues concerning the nature of the questionnaire items.

The accuracy of the translation from English to Arabic was key to the reliability of the results, as the precise meanings needed to be preserved. Consequently, the process was undertaken with great care. Two professional translators were involved in translating the questionnaire from English to Arabic. The translators were acquaintances of the researcher, working as Assistant Lecturers Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) in the KSA. The Arabic version of the questionnaire was translated back into English to retain the meaning of the statements (Ercikan, 1998). The final amended draft was then produced, incorporating the amendments suggested for the Arabic version.

Once these stages were concluded and the Arabic version produced, the final questionnaire was sent to the relevant schools. A pilot sample of ten teachers was contacted to check the clarity and relevance of the questionnaire. The participants did not report any difficulties completing the questionnaire. In the following section, the process for determining reliability and internal consistency, that is, the degree to which the attitude test is consistent and stable in terms of measuring what it is intended to measure, will be described.

4.5.1.3 Reliability of the questionnaire

The reliability of the research instrument indicates the capacity of a particular instrument to produce analogous results when used with a comparable group of participants in a similar context (Cohen et al., 2000). According to Pallant (2001), this term refers to 'the degree to which the items that make-up the scale are all measuring the same underlying attribute' (p. 6).

To measure the internal consistency of the questionnaire, Cronbach's alpha was used. The higher the value of Cronbach's alpha, the greater the consistency of the questionnaire items. The value of Cronbach's alpha, therefore, reflects how well the items fit together to form a scale. Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient was computed for each attitude component on the questionnaire. The following explains the meanings of the different values achieved over the three sections relating to attitude and what they indicate.

The answers given by the ten teachers who participated in the pilot study were entered into the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) to store and process the numbers attached to every response. For each component, the questionnaire scoring took place as follows: A five-point Likert scale was used for the responses to the questions on the cognitive component and behavioural component, as well as the final section of the questionnaire, which deals with the factors that might have an impact on teachers' attitudes. The following scale was used for these sections: 'strongly disagree'=1; 'disagree'=2; 'neither agree nor disagree'=3; 'agree'=4; and 'strongly agree'=5. This was not applied to statements numbers 1, 2 and 3 in relation to the identified factors in the final section of the questionnaire because they were negatively worded and therefore the response labelling was reversed. For these points, 'strongly disagree'=5 and 'strongly agree'=1. The affective component was also measured with a five-point Likert scale, with values ranging from 'strongly uncomfortable'=1 to 'strongly comfortable' =5.

The value of Cronbach's alpha in the first component (cognitive component) was used to measure the cognitive component (0.837). This value illustrates a significant level of consistency between the five items used in this section. In addition, the abovementioned confirms the legitimacy of the decision to combine these items into one section. The value of Cronbach's alpha for the second component (the affective and emotional component) was (0.817). Again, such a value illustrates a significant level of consistency between the six items used in this section. Similarly, as was the case for the first component, this value of alpha underlines the suitability of putting the six items of this section together. The Cronbach alpha test conducted in the third component (the behavioural component) resulted in a value of (0.897), the highest value observed in this research. In addition, such a high value gives credibility to the decision to combine these items in one section. The following Table, 4.1, presents alpha values for each of the attitude components.

Table 4.1
Reliability coefficients for the components of attitude

Component	Cognitive	Affective	Behavioural
Cronbach's alpha	0.837	0.817	0.897

In Section 3 of the questionnaire, the value of Cronbach's alpha in the first factor affecting the teachers' attitudes (child) was (0.79), which was higher than the acceptable value (0.70). Such value illustrates a significant level of consistency between the three items used in this section. In addition, the aforementioned confirms the soundness of the decision to combine these items into one section. The value of Cronbach's alpha in the second factor (the educational environment) was (0.85), which again illustrates a significant level of consistency between the three items used in this section. The Cronbach's alpha value reached in the third factor (teacher-related variables) was (0.797). Such a value illustrates a significant level of consistency between the five items used in this section. Table 4.2 below present's values for each factor affecting teachers' attitudes.

Table 4.2
Reliability coefficients for the factors affecting teachers' attitudes.

Component	Child	Teacher	Educational environment
Cronbach's alpha	0.790	0.797	0.853

Once the pilot study, validity and reliability stages were concluded, the final questionnaire was distributed to the relevant teachers and schools, with an outline of the study and its aims. The researcher then set out to present the teachers with ethical guidance and offered to address any concerns or queries they may have had. As mentioned earlier, teachers were kept informed of the progress of the study in the weeks following, allowing the participants to raise questions and concerns, as well as reassuring them of the importance of their contribution.

4.5.2 Interviews

Thomas (2009) observed that interviews take the form of a conversation between an interviewer and a subject, with the aim of collecting data, such as attitudes, opinions or facts. It is crucial to note that interviews are typically conducted to establish how opinions clarify a given situation (Cohen et al., 2000). Interviews represent an important component of any research in which they are included, as they can richly illuminate central themes concerning the lives of their subjects. This means that the primary objective of interviewers is to understand and interpret the meaning of the information conveyed by interviewees (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). In addition, this method allows researchers to comprehend emotions, ideas and thoughts in a manner that is unavailable when using other methods. The interview is the only effective means of identifying differences between individuals relative to their experiences, using their own words and understanding (Silverman, 2010). For example, in this study, the principal aim is to understand the attitudes of general and special education teachers working in the same context. Interviews enable the researcher to obtain a broader range of detail than other research instruments, as participants can ask the interviewer for a more accurate understanding of the questions asked, allowing interviewers to use their knowledge and expertise to explore

interesting and unexpected ideas, themes or subthemes arising from participants during the interview process (Silverman, 2010).

The primary reason for selecting the interview as a tool for data collection for this research was the specificity of the study, that is, that generalisability of the results was not a priority. In this study, the researcher employed mixed methods to acquire both detailed qualitative data and supporting quantitative information. The interviews focused on establishing an in-depth understanding of teachers' attitudes, beliefs and feelings, along with further aspects of their experiences of inclusion of students with SEN, which offered a clear distinction between the two groups of teachers.

Despite the strengths outlined above, the interview method also has a number of weaknesses: (1) interviews are unhelpful when aiming to evaluate impact or determine whether a given intervention caused changes in a participant; (2) interviews are more intrusive than quantitative methods, as participants can find themselves offering more information than requested, resulting in subsequent regret or embarrassment (to avoid this, this study adheres to ethical standards as set out in Section 4.8 below); and (3) the interpretation of information gathered through the interview process is more time-consuming than analysis of that obtained through other methods, such as surveys (Silverman, 2010).

4.5.2.1 Interview design

When undertaking qualitative research, researchers can choose from three types of interviews. Firstly, the unstructured interview, for which questions are not prepared, and during which the researchers do not make presumptions concerning the outcomes of the research, allowing the interview to follow its natural course. Secondly, the semi-structured interview, which employs pre-determined questions (or a specific subject) for discussion during the interview. Finally,

the structured interview, which consists of specific questions that can be answered by a specific interviewee (Robson, 2002).

This study employs a semi-structured interview strategy, utilising predetermined, open-ended questions, which enables the researcher to establish the meaning expressed by the participants in relation to pre-prepared questions. These questions take the form of a guideline for the interviewer to follow, and incorporates comments to which the interviewee is prompted to respond. The incorporation of comments leaves both the interviewee and the interviewer unrestricted, thus enabling elaboration on the sub-themes that emerge during the interviews (Cohen et al., 2000). Thus, a key advantage of the semi-structured interview is that it offers flexibility, which permits the interviewee to ask questions and provide additional information (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009).

In this study, two criteria were followed when designing the interview questions: (1) provision of a literature review based on inclusive educational research (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Salvia & Munson, 1986); and (2) piloting of interviews which was beneficial as it allowed the researcher to assess her interview skills and ability to manage the conversation and gather information. No specific issues emerged at the pilot stage. Based on the above analyses, the following approach was used to formulate interview questions:

- Ensure the questions are open-ended, enabling participants to fully articulate their thoughts, attitudes, and views;
- Design questions with the awareness that follow-up questions might need to be asked to clarify certain aspects of the participants' response.

The semi-structured interviews lasted for up to an hour. The questions posed were divided into four broad themes. The focus of the interview was on: (1) teachers' knowledge and understanding of the concept of SEN inclusion; (2) teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of

learners with SEN in mainstream schools; (3) factors and requirements affecting the effective implementation of inclusive education; and (4) issues influencing teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. (see Appendix 5).

It is crucial to note that the majority of the questions and themes raised in the interviews had been previously prepared according to two sources, as stated above. The first source was the analysed literature, and the second was the findings of the pilot interviews conducted with Saudi teachers. The interviewer posed both predetermined questions and supplementary questions. The supplementary questions in some cases took a direct form, that is 'why?', 'why not?', and 'how?'; whereas the others were even more open questions, that is 'please explain...'. In practice, additional questions emerged during the interviews, which were based on the participants' responses to the main and supplementary questions, and contributed to the in-depth data to the study analysis. It is important to note that not all the participants were asked the same supplementary questions, as these were selected according to responses to previous questions.

In reference to the questions given in Appendix 6, one example of the above is the response to: "*could you explain how you feel about the inclusive education of students with SEN in mainstream schools*?" The teacher responded that including students with moderate disabilities in mainstream schools might be suitable and appropriate but that this does not necessarily apply to all students with SEN in mainstream schools. Her response needed greater justification in order to fully express her view, and so the researcher asked the teacher "*why do you think that?*" to acquire additional information. Another example is that when the teacher was asked: "*do you believe that pre-service and in-service teacher training would successfully bring SEN inclusion from theory to practice? Could you please explain?"* Part of her answer was "*… these aspects of pre-service contrast with general teacher, who do not have this. Such training can lead attitudes to differ*." The researcher felt it was important to press her: "*what do you*

mean by 'attitudes differ'?" for further clarification. (Please refer to Appendix 6 for examples of how the interview protocol is based not only on predetermined questions but also on supplementary questions asked based on individual responses).

The abovementioned questions and supplementary questions also helped sub-themes to emerge and added more detailed information to what have been obtained from the questionnaire findings. These data include sub-themes about teachers' views regarding collaboration between general and special education teachers in mainstream schools, the barriers preventing successful inclusion in Saudi mainstream schools. In addition, these supplementary questions helped not only when focusing on barriers hindering effective inclusion, but also by giving opportunities for recommendations to overcomes those barriers that was not gained using questionnaires.

4.5.2.2 Implementation

While conducting research, the first few minutes of each of the interviews included: (1) a presentation of the aims and objectives of the study; (2) an introduction of the interviewer as researcher, and (3) a disclaimer that the research would adhere to ethical standards, including a guarantee that all participants have the right to: (1) confidentiality; (2) informed consent; and (3) secure data storage. Every interviewee also received a letter detailing key information about the research. To enable the participants to prepare in advance, the letter also outlined the questions addressed during the interview (see Appendix 5). Furthermore, the participants were notified in advance that their participation was voluntary and anonymous, and that their names would only be known to the researcher and elsewhere reference codes would be used instead of their names (see Table 4.3), to protect their anonymity. The research participants comprised of teachers only, and the interviews were conducted face-to-face; the data was recorded and stored using a Dictaphone, providing an objective record for later-stage analysis. Prior to the

start of the interview, all the interviewees were asked whether they had any questions relating to how the research would be conducted. The participants were informed that the recordings of the entire interviews would be forwarded to them, and they were asked to reflect on the facts given and the interpretation provided. They were also informed that they would have an opportunity to make corrections and/or add comments if they were dissatisfied with the representation given. After each participant had received their entire interview they all confirmed that they had no further comments or corrections to make to their data.

4.6 Sampling procedures

This section deals with the sampling procedures for both the questionnaire and the interview stages of the research. For the questionnaire sampling, the researcher employed a simple random sampling technique, designed for sampling large samples representative of the entire population under investigation (Cohen et al., 2000). The value of this sampling technique is that every participant is selected randomly, and thus every member of the population has equal chance of being selected (Fraenkel & Wallen 2006). To ensure a random sample, ten schools were selected at random from a list of fifty primary mainstream schools, provided by the Administration of Special Education in the Ministry of Education. All the targeted schools were girls' mainstream primary schools in the city of Riyadh, in the central region of the KSA, and each was given an equal chance of being selected. The ten schools were selected by choosing every fifth school on the list of fifty schools. The questionnaire was administered to two hundred female Saudi teachers, comprising both general and special education teachers, working at the ten schools.

The Administration of Special Education in the Ministry of Education informed the researcher that each school had no more than ten special education teachers, and therefore, the researcher chose this as a maximum number for both special education teachers and general education

teachers from each school. This means that one hundred questionnaires were disseminated to special education teachers and one hundred general education teachers. Of the total questionnaires distributed (i.e. 200) 165 were returned (i.e. 82.5%), i.e. 35 teachers (i.e. 17.5%) did not return the questionnaires (see Chapter 5, Section 5.3 for more details).

In terms of the interview sampling, a number of different sampling techniques are available to qualitative researchers, including: (1) convenience sampling; (2) purposive sampling; (3) 'snowballing'; and (4) theoretical sampling (Cohen et al., 2000). This study employed purposive sampling to identify appropriate participants (Merriam, 2001). As the purpose of this research was to study the attitudes of both general and special education teachers in mainstream schools, the study sample was chosen from these schools. The central objective when choosing purposive sampling is to identify contexts to assist in answering the research questions (Bryman, 2008). The use of purposive sampling usually takes place in qualitative studies where the participant sample is small and the participants are conveying in depth information (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In addition, this type of sampling helps to maximize the discovery of heterogeneous patterns and problems which can arise in a participant's particular context (Erlandson et al., 1993).

The sample size and demographic for the interviews were teachers who had completed a questionnaire and were willing to be interviewed. Of those who returned questionnaires, eight teachers agreed to participate in the interview phase. After approaching those teachers, four were found to be comfortable taking part in the interview; two were general education teachers and two special education teachers. The small number of participants occurred because some teachers were short of time, and some had become concerned about expressing their perceptions and the expectations of the local Education Authority despite the researcher's efforts to reassure them that the interview data will be kept confidentially and only used to fulfil the requirements of the study. It is important to note that interview participation was

limited to those who had completed the questionnaires. It is also important to mention that participation was also affected by the implementation of a random sampling strategy, therefore, it would have been ethically inappropriate to ask other teachers directly to participate as they would have been outside of the original sample. Moreover, extending the study to conduct interviews with teachers from schools beyond the original ten schools was not practical due to issues of time and budget.

The researcher therefore contacted the four teachers to arrange the most convenient time for conducting the interviews. The questionnaires of the interviewees were not identified by the researcher either before, after or during the interviews, as their participation had been confirmed by an email to the researcher confirming their willingness to participate, and they could not be cross-referenced due to the anonymity provisions made on the questionnaires. The four teachers were coded as ST1, ST2, GT3 and GT4, and Table 4.3 outlines the interviewee sample with greater detail. The above procedures represents the implementation of the convergent parallel design.

Table 4.3
Interviewees (qualitative sample)

Code	Position of the teachers within the schools	Level and type of qualification	Pre -service training in special education	In-service training in special education	Experience in teaching students with SEN	Age
ST1	Special education teacher	Undergraduate and postgraduate in special education	Yes	No	10 years	45
ST2	Special education teacher	Undergraduate in special education	Yes	No	8 years	35
GT3	General education teacher	Undergraduate in mathematics	No	Yes	10 years	44
GT4	General education teacher	Undergraduate in history	No	No	8 years	33

4.7 Data analysis

Both quantitative and qualitative data were gathered during this study, and each category of data required a different analytical approach.

4.7.1 Quantitative data analysis (data analysis process)

To analyse the closed-ended questions, the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) was used to store and process the numbers attached to every response. For each component, the questionnaire was scored as follows:

- Cognitive component: This was measured with a Likert scale ranging from one to five, where 1 represented strong disagreement (namely, a negative attitude towards inclusion), 3 a neutral attitude, and 5 strong agreements (namely, a positive attitude towards inclusion). Hence, the participants who scored higher generally held attitudes that promoted inclusion for students with SEN in mainstream schools.

- Affective component: This was measured with a Likert scale ranging from 1 strongly uncomfortable to 5 strongly comfortable, where five indicates positive feelings and one negative feelings. To guarantee reliable responses when teachers are asked if a student with SEN can join their classrooms, using the idea of comfortable and uncomfortable is more appropriate than agree and disagree, because this section of the questionnaire addresses the emotional and feeling component of attitudes.
- Behavioural component: This was measured using the same Likert scale as cognitive component (namely, one to five moving from strong disagreement to strong agreement, with neutrality at three). A higher score indicated strong agreement, demonstrating alignment with inclusion; therefore, a high score indicated a positive attitude to inclusion. A high response on the scale meant the respondents had a stronger predisposition to take actions facilitating the inclusion of students with SEN.
- The final section of the questionnaire comprised eleven sentences relating to identifiable factors that might influence teachers' attitudes, as far as the 'child-related' variables, 'teacher-related' variables and 'educational environment-related' variables were concerned. For this reason, the five-point Likert scale was again used to identify responses ranging from one to five, where 5 represented strong agreement with those factors identified to influence teachers' attitudes, and the lowest score 1 indicated strong disagreement with factors identified to have an effect on teachers' attitudes. This weighting was not applied to statements number 1, 2 and 3, because these were negatively worded, and therefore the response labelling was reversed, to give strongly disagree=5 and strongly agree=1. Therefore, a crucial element of the data analysis was establishing the level of agreement according to a 5-point Likert scale, as shown in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4
Level of agreement according to 5-point Likert scale.

Levels	Score
Strongly Disagree	1
Disagree	2
Neither agree nor disagree	3
Agree	4
Strongly agree	5

Several analytical techniques were adopted, including descriptive and inferential statistics. When applying descriptive statistics, the researcher illuminated issues such as frequency (F), percentage (P), mean (M), and standard deviation (SD). A t-test was conducted for normally distributed variables in an independent sample, thereby facilitating identification of attitudinal disparities regarding the two groups' variables. A one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to examine the attitudinal disparities associated with groups numbering more than two. Additionally, a chi-square test was employed to determine the nature of the relationship between the variables in the two categories. The results of this process are displayed in the tables presented and analysed in Chapter 5.

4.7.2 Qualitative data analysis

Data analysis is defined as a 'process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data' (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p. 111). In this research, the qualitative data collected from the semi-structured interviews was used to answer predetermined research questions. The data was evaluated with the aim of understanding the attitudes of special and general education teachers towards the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools, and the factors influencing their attitudes.

When analysing qualitative findings, transforming data into findings that are both meaningful and relevant is not easy (Miles & Huberman, 1994). However, the data from interviews can be reduced and condensed to extract essential information (Kelle, 1999). When a researcher

gathers information from an interview, this is typically qualitative data, and, to some extent, its analysis is entirely dependent on the researcher's interpretation (Bryman & Teevan, 2005). In qualitative research, Miles and Huberman (1994) argue, data collection cannot be readily separated from data analysis. In this research, the data analysis phase began from the moment data collection was carried out in inclusive schools. After each interview, a preliminary analysis was performed using an initial reading of transcripts and post-interview analysis notes, with written notes prepared for subsequent questions (Maxwell, 1996).

There are two primary modes of thematic analysis. One is grounded theory, which is an inductive approach, in which the themes identified are clearly linked to the data (Patton, 1990). The second approach is driven by the researcher's theoretical or analytic interest in an area (Braun & Clarke, 2006), and employs a theoretical thematic analysis. A deductive approach derives from an existing interest in the importance of special and general education teachers' attitudes towards inclusion, and looks at the differences between the two groups, focusing on the predetermined themes mentioned earlier: (1) teachers' knowledge and understanding of the concept of SEN inclusion; (2) teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools; (3) factors and requirements affecting the effective implementation of inclusive education; and (4) issues influencing teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. This provided a focal point for the data coding process, and helped foster the emergence of sub-themes based on beliefs, attitudes, factors and issues, establishing how the latter could be overcome.

In qualitative research, there is no single correct technique for analysing data (Cohen et al., 2000; Robson, 2002). In this research, qualitative data was analysed using a theoretical thematic analysis. This was prepared and managed based on the general guidelines proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). The purpose of this part of the study was to examine the experiences and attitudes of participants in greater depth. To do this, the researcher transcribed

the audio-recorded interviews and filed them during the coding process, using the themes set out Table 4.5.

Table 4.5
Coding framework for thematic analysis

Pre-determined Theme	Sub-themes	Codes
1- Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the concept of SEN inclusion.	The meaning of inclusion of students with SEN.	Meaning of the concept of inclusion and integration.
2- Teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of learners with SEN in mainstream schools.	Inclusion in schools versus inclusion in classrooms. Types and severity of disabilities.	Negative attitudes. Unsupportive attitudes. Supportive attitudes with some conditions.
	The impact of inclusion upon students with SEN.	Effects of inclusion on: Social achievement; Academic achievement.
3- Factors and requirements affecting the effective implementation of inclusive education.	Training of teachers. Schools' facilities. Teachers' collaboration.	In-service training and skills. Human resources issues. Lack of resources. Lack of collaboration.
4- Issues influencing teachers' attitudes towards inclusion.	Barriers to inclusion.	Barriers related to: Teacher-related factors. Environment-related factors. Child-related factors.
	How to overcome these barriers.	How to overcome these barriers: Teacher-related factors. Environment-related factors.

The analysis of the interviews data followed a protocol described by Braun and Clarke (2006), which was designed for coding and analysing interview data. They suggested a guide of six

steps to conduct the thematic analysis. The six steps of the thematic analysis used in the study are described below.

For the analysis of the interviews, the first phase involved listening to the participants' recordings and then writing a transcript. Following this, the transcripts were read several times and the researcher attempted to read between the lines in order to become familiar with the interviews as a whole.

The second phase was the coding process. The researcher used tables divided into six columns: the first specifying the position of teachers in schools, the second the question, the third the answer, the fourth comments, the fifth coding, and the final column the themes. In order to achieve a clearer understanding of the interview process, visual tables of transcripts were used; this enabled the researcher to move quickly between different answers to highlight the codes. The coding process started after the completion of the management of qualitative data. Specific settings of codes were attached to 'chunks' of words, phrases or sentences of varying lengths (Cohen et al., 2000; Rubin & Rubin, 2005). One table was then translated into English to exemplify this process (see Appendix 16)**.**

The third phase involved searching for themes, collating codes according to potential themes and gathering all the relevant data for each potential theme. Each pre-determined theme comprised of different sub-themes and codes, and was, therefore, analysed in this way to determine any emerging patterns. The themes were selected in a deductive way in order to analyse the conversations. The deductive categories were the original questions from the interview schedules. The fourth phase consisted of a constant review, in the form of reading and re-reading the collated extracts for each theme to ensure the clarity of the themes, codes and sub-themes, along with their associated data. In order for the themes and codes to reflect

precisely their original data, defining and naming every individual theme and code was ensured (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

In the fifth phase, defining and naming the themes, it is important to note that most of the questions and themes mentioned in the interviews had been previously prepared according to two sources. The first related to an initial analysis of the literature, while the second was based on the results of the pilot interview made with Saudi teachers, as mentioned earlier in Section 4.4.2.2. Therefore, the naming of each base-theme clarified what each theme was about, illustrating what aspects of the data were best represented by each theme. The final phase is the discussion chapter that considers data from both the interviews and questionnaires.

It is important to mention that the qualitative data was analysed manually in this research, even though various computer software packages are available. However, the researcher believes that linguistic patterns are given more importance through computer-based analysis when data are reduced, which might not be as meaningful as when the data are analysed manually. This is because computer software analysis may group similar words together even if they do not relate to the main themes and hence less meaningful coding is expected. It is because software may not be able to understand the nuances of the meanings of the data which are significant for the qualitative analysis. Moreover, the researcher's thinking about the data cannot happen by software. Also, when presenting the narrative of the data, it is more effective when the researcher interacts with the data, and this cannot be the same when software is used. Therefore, the data was reduced with the help of manual analysis, as direct interaction with data is more meaningful than when it is reduced in computer analysis. Moreover, manual analysis and organisation of qualitative data describing participants' feelings, views and knowledge is more effective (Patton, 1990). The researcher also decided to analyse the data manually, as the mother tongue of all the participants was Arabic and the researcher felt more confident that manual analysis would not leave out any important data when translated to English. After

transcribing and analysing all the interviews in Arabic, one interview was then translated into English and is included as an example in this thesis (see Appendix 6).

4.8 Trustworthiness of qualitative data (interview)

The trustworthiness (or significance) of any research largely depends on its underlying 'validity' and 'reliability' (Devellis, 2003). This is particularly true of qualitative research, in which trustworthiness plays a key role (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This was confirmed by Seale (1999), who observed that validity and reliability are at the crux of research credibility. As illustrated below, a number of procedures have been taken into consideration to maximise the trustworthiness of the interview data and outline the findings of this research.

4.8.1 Credibility

Qualitative research focuses on establishing authentic and credible results, to generate a plausible or realistic interpretation of the phenomena being tested from the viewpoint of those involved in the study. This was achieved in this research by sharing data with the participants, enabling them to 'review' the information gathered, offer feedback and provide a critique. This approach was advocated by Lincoln and Guba (1985), who argued that trustworthiness can be enhanced by passing on information (e.g. data, interpretations and conclusions) to individuals involved in a study. The participants were happy with the interpretations of the transcripts, and did not report any issues. Furthermore, credibility was strengthened by the researcher through consultations with Saudi colleagues and academics, as well as discussions with her supervisors.

These measures resulted in several permutations of data analysis and minimised potential subjective bias (Patton, 1990). When research is 'qualitative' in nature, the role of the researcher and participants can be significant as a means of analysing and interpreting data (Bryman & Teevan, 2005). When the foundation of academic research is objective, the views, thoughts and feelings of the researcher are not permitted to over-influence either the process of

data analysis or the results, as this can undermine credibility and trustworthiness. The idea and success of this type of research lies in its ability to portray accurately the views and beliefs of the participants themselves - a factor also considered by the researcher in the data analysis conducted.

4.8.2 Transferability

Transferability can be used to describe the 'generalisability' of the research, that is, its applicability to analogous contexts and similar studies testing a broadly similar hypothesis (Hammersley, 2007). Merriam (2001, p.214) noted that accurately describing data can enable readers to 'determine how closely their situations match the research situation, and hence, whether findings can be transferred.' Proponents of this approach view the role of the reader, rather than the researcher, as pivotal when determining whether studies can be 'cross-compared' (Bryman, 2016; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). However, given this study is also qualitative in nature, it is unnecessary to form generalisations. Rather, the aim was to provide data that was: (1) distinct; (2) contextually specific; and (3) representative of the participants' attitudes. Therefore, as this study is a qualitative piece, generalisation of its findings is not the goal, as the researcher provided a detailed explanation of the data collection methods, the participants and the context, along with direct quotations to enable readers to understand the original data (Cohen et al., 2007; Hammersley, 2007).

4.8.3 Conformability

To gain a broad understanding of a subject, various methods of data collection and a number of sources need to be employed. Conformability refers to the degree to which any collected data can reliably support research findings (Cohen et al., 2007). Lincoln and Guba (1985) contended that triangulation contributes to trustworthiness and conformability in qualitative research. Triangulation can be employed when examining information resulting from different data sources (Denzin, 2009), as certain risks arise from dependence on a single method or

source, simultaneous provision of limited information, and a restricted view of human behavioural complexity (Creswell, 2013). This research employed methodological triangulation by combining data collection methods such as interviews and questionnaires. In addition, it used different data sources, viewing special education teachers as one source and general education teachers as another. This added to the richness of the collected data, and contributed to the research's quality and trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

4.8.4 Dependability

Dependability refers to results that are consistent and data that would be replicable by other researchers encountering the same set of variables and applying the same criteria (Hammersley, 2007). To achieve this objective, the researcher documented the data collection process thoroughly, and ensured measures were well maintained, i.e. digital recording, interviews and transcripts. This enhanced dependability, and provided an audit trail to confirm procedures, as well as enabling others to verify the correct steps had been taken during the study (Bryman & Teevan, 2005).

A further factor associated with dependability concerns the use of professional translators. This was a crucial aspect of the current study, due to its being written in English but undertaken in the context of the KSA, where Arabic is the language used. In order to achieve a sound translation, the process of translation involved a collaboration between two professional translators. The translators were acquaintances of the researcher, working as Assistant Lecturers Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) in the KSA. Both English and Arabic versions of the interview quotes were verified and compared, until agreement was reached.

4.9 Ethical considerations of the data collection

Primary research must be conducted ethically, which means protecting the privacy and interests of participants. Educational researchers must respect the ethical component of any research as it pertains to each participant, while also ensuring that the information received is stored securely and not communicated to any other party, or used for any other purpose than the identified research study (Denscombe, 2010).

The following procedures were applied to guarantee ethical guidelines were met. There were several steps involved in the data collection process, which ensured the ethical practical status of the research, beginning with the application for, and confirmation of, the Certificate of Ethical Approval from the University of Birmingham (see Appendix 1). An authorisation letter from the researchers' supervisor was also obtained and sent to the Ministry of Education in Riyadh (see Appendix 2). This letter informed the official body of the aim of the study and requested permission and assistance in accessing schools. The Ministry of Education accepted the authorisation letter and provided a permit to be taken to the selected schools (see Appendix 3).

It is essential to gain consent from participants before obtaining any data (Burton & Bartlett, 2009). This means ensuring that each participant is fully aware of the aims and requirements of the study, how the results might be used, and which tools will be utilised in the analysis. Prior to the distribution of the questionnaires and interview, each participant was fully informed about the research process, and consent was obtained allowing the researcher to use the data for this research only. In addition, all necessary information about the researcher was provided. Also, the participants were free to withdraw up to an agreed date given them personally, the Arabic date from the Arabic calendar, and all of the information provided by participants could then be kept private with absolute confidentiality respected.

Considering certain aspects of the cultural landscape in the KSA, and reflecting on the difficulties associated with open and honest discussions about sensitive issues, such as 'culture which makes it difficult for some to honestly discuss social problems objectively, sometimes for fear of state authority' (Cook, 1998, p. 98), interviews are rare in Saudi educational research. In view of this, the researcher was eager to ensure that every aspect of the study conformed to the ethical standards mentioned above. These ethical guidelines, as detailed by BERA (2011), state that for those participating in a research project, it is imperative that the researcher makes it clear that they can discontinue their participation at any point. One ramification of adherence to this guideline was that although eight teachers had been recruited into the researcher's sample at the outset of the research process, four subsequently withdrew, as explained above (Section 4.6). This explains why only 4 participants were interviewed in the present study.

A further point to make here is that the details of the findings will be shared with stakeholders in the KSA, including the Ministry of Education. This will be done following the procedures for completing a degree set out under the Ministry's system, which requires a copy of the thesis to be given to the Saudi Embassy, who will deposit it in the Ministry of Education's library. In addition, the researcher will deposit a copy of the thesis into the King Saud University library, where it will be accessible to interested parties.

4.10 Researcher Positionality

The factors informing the selection of this topic include the researcher's own previous experience as a special education teacher in the KSA, where she is in a position to observe a broad array of different, often opposing, attitudes and perceptions with respect to the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools. This personal perspective, combined with the lack of studies focusing on the attitudes of female teachers with different educational

backgrounds towards inclusion in the context of the KSA were the primary motivators for conducting this study. This motivation was further strengthened by the fact that such attitudes constitute a major hindrance or facilitator to effective implementation of inclusion in mainstream schools, and therefore should be investigated.

Given that ethical, reliable, and unbiased social and educational research can only be conducted after careful consideration of a lead researcher's positionality (Sultana, 2007, p. 380), the aim of this section is to outline the influence that awareness of positionality had on the research process. First, it should be noted that from the outset of the research, the researcher was already familiar with the research subjects' culture and context, primarily due to her previous experience as a special education teacher in the KSA. Having been made aware of this, teachers are likely to have thought of the researcher as an insider. Conversely, given the researcher's current role as a researcher student, others may have reasonably considered her an outsider. It is noteworthy that this combination of insider and outsider positionality yields both advantages and disadvantages influencing the research process (Merriam et al., 2001).

Once the researcher became familiar with the teachers at the start of the research process, she always felt welcome. This sense was bolstered by the way the participants were unreservedly helpful in supporting her during the interviews. Nevertheless, since the participants were aware of the researcher's prior knowledge, this influenced how some responded to some of the interview questions. This may have partially impeded the quality of the interviewee's contributions, as was apparent from their comments during the interview; for example, using phrases such as: "as you know". In this case the researcher tried to position herself as an outsider to motivate them to be more open and share further information, by asking questions such as "how?", "could you please explain?" and "what do you mean?". In line with predictions made by Bryman (2008) and Creswell (2003), this approach facilitated the collection of more comprehensive data than would have otherwise been possible.

Although the researcher observed steps to safeguard the study's objectivity and validity, it is important to recognise that no qualitative research project is value-free, as Bryman (2008) stressed. Another noteworthy point is that the study's utilisation of data and methodological triangulation reinforced objective/outsider positionality, especially in terms of data collection and interpretation (Creswell, 2003).

To conclude, the combination of insider and outsider positioning yielded advantages and disadvantages during the course of this research process. However, since the researcher informed all teachers about the nature of her positionality from the outset, transparency was preserved and accurately illuminated in the interview findings.

4.11 Summary of the chapter

This chapter has outlined the research methodology, discussing the motivation behind the selection of research tools, data collection and methods of analysis, as well describing key pilot stages. There are justifications given for the use of a mixed methods approach. Each method has, in turn, been outlined and discussed, including its benefits and drawbacks.

Methodology forms the foundation of the research, suggesting effective methods to answer the research questions and to meet study aims. This chapter has established that the most appropriate methodology for the current research is mixed methods, based on an interpretive paradigm, to explore and understand the attitudes of teachers, in particular those employed in mainstream schools, towards the inclusion of students with SEN. The main approach is qualitative, and the study's breadth is assured by the employment of two methods of data collection. One of these is quantitative, and aims to display a wider picture of teachers' attitudes. The other one is qualitative and aims to deliver both detailed qualitative data and an in-depth understanding of teachers' attitudes, beliefs and feelings, detailing further aspects of

their experience of inclusion of students with SEN, demanding clear distinction between the two groups of teachers.

The following chapter presents the research findings and data collected via the questionnaires, setting out the data for further discussion.

CHAPTER 5: QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter focused on the methodological framework of this study, and described the methods of collecting and analysing the data. This chapter presents the research findings and data collected through the questionnaires, with the aim of organising this data for further analysis in the discussion chapter. As explained in the previous chapter, due to the dual nature of the collection methods (consisting of closed-ended questionnaire and semi-structured interviews), quantitative and qualitative data were gathered, and each type of data required a different analytical approach. Therefore, the following chapter is the first of two chapters reporting the research findings of this study. I have chosen to present the findings based on the analysis of questionnaire data first, in order to establish a broad picture from a large number of participants, before reporting the qualitative data from the in-depth interviews, which had a smaller sample. Thus, this chapter will present and analyse the findings of the quantitative data.

This chapter is divided into six sections. The first section reports on the sample, response rates, and demographic description of the questionnaire sample including qualification, experience and training, while the second section reports on the characteristics of the sample related to working with students with SEN, moving on to the linear correlation between the components of attitude in the third section. The fourth section is divided into two sub-sections, according to the participant's position in the school (special education teacher or general education teacher), with each part demonstrating how the three components of attitude varied according to each of the three variables (length of experience in working with students with SEN, teachers' level of qualifications and in-service training). The fifth section, conducts a comparison in attitudes according to the teacher's position. Finally, it is important to examine factors that may have an influence on teachers' attitudes in terms of 'child-related' variables,

'teacher-related' variables and 'educational environment-related' ones.

5.2 Questionnaire sample of the research participants and demographic variables

Two hundred questionnaires were distributed to Saudi general and special education teachers working in mainstream schools, working at 10 primary girls' schools in Riyadh that include students with SEN. A total of 165 special and general education teachers participated in the study, which means that 82.5% of the teachers completed and returned the questionnaires, while 35 teachers (17.5%) did not return the questionnaire. The sampling techniques and school selection process have been discussed in more detail in the methodology chapter (Chapter 4). The demographic characteristics and other details of the sample, according to the categories on the questionnaire, are shown in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1
Characteristics of the study sample (n=165)

Variable	Frequency (%)
Position in School	
Special education teachers	83(50.3)
General education teachers	82(49.7)
Level of qualification	
Diploma (2 years)	17(10.3)
Graduate (4 years)	139(84.2)
Postgraduate (3-5 years)	9(5.5)
Experience (years) (n=160)	
None	28(17.5)
1-5	58(36.3)
6-10	22(13.7)
11-20	47(29.4)
21-30	5(3.3)
In service training (n = 163)	
Yes	94(57.7)
No	69(42.3)

This study included 165 teachers, of whom 82 were general education teachers and 83 special education teachers. Three of the variables investigated (teacher's level of qualifications, in-service training in special education and experience working with students with SEN) refer to all participating teachers. As evidenced in Table 5.1 above, the majority of teachers, 139

(84.2%) held a graduate degree in education, while 17 (10.3%) had completed a diploma. Only 9 of the 165 (5.5%) teachers held a postgraduate degree.

Table 5.1 shows that just over one-third of participants (58 teachers or 36.3 %) had 1 to 5 years of experience of working with students with SEN, just under one-third (47 teachers or 29.4 %) had 11 to 20 years of experience, and 22 teachers (13.7 %) had 6 to 10 years' experience of teaching students with SEN. 28 of the participants (17.5%) had no experience at all. Only, 94 of that number (57.7%) had received in-service training courses in special education.

Table 5.2
Characteristics of the study sample on experience and in-service training

	Frequency (%)	
Variable	General education teachers	Special education teachers
Experience (years)		
None	28(34.1)	-
1-5	43(52.4)	15(18.1)
6-10	8(9.8)	14(16.9)
11-20	3(3.7)	44(53.0)
21-30	-	5(6.0)
In service training		
Yes	24(29.3)	70(84.3)
No	58(70.7)	11(13.3)

As evidenced in Table 5 the majority of the general education teachers (43 teachers, 52.4 %) had 1 to 5 years of experience of working with students with SEN. On the other hand, only 3 teachers (3.7 %) had 11 to 20 years of experience of working with students with SEN, 8 teachers (9.8 %) had 6 to 10 years of experience in teaching students with SEN, and 28 of the participants (34.1%) had no experience at all. Moreover, 24 of that number (29.3%) had received in-service training courses in special education.

Table 5.2 also shows that more than half of special education teachers (44 teachers, 53.0 %) had 11 to 20 years of experience in working with students with SEN, while 5 teachers (6.0%) had 12 to 30 years of experience of working with students with SEN, and 15 teachers (18.1 %) had 1 to 5 years' experience of teaching students with SEN. None of the special education

teachers had no experience at all. However, 70 of special education teachers (84.3%) had received in-service training courses in special education.

5.3 Characteristics of the sample related to working with students with SEN

This data can be divided in to three categories: whether they have taught students with special educational needs, the nature of the students' disabilities, and the disabilities that respondents thought could be included in inclusive classrooms.

Table 5.3 shows that a small proportion of participants (17 %) had not taught students with SEN, while approximately 83% of participants had taught students with SEN. This high percentage may be attributed to the fact that the study was conducted in mainstream schools which included students with SEN, so participants were very likely to have taught them. Table 5.3 outlines the types of students' needs that teachers had taught in their classes. The most common was specific learning difficulties, contributing to approximately two-thirds of the sample; 68.5% reported that they had taught students with specific learning difficulties. This was followed by hearing impairment (52.1%). Only 12.1 % of teachers reported that they had taught students with multiple disabilities.

Table 5.3
Characteristics of sample related to working with students with SEN

Variable	Frequency (%)
Taught students with special educational needs (n=165)	
Yes	137(83)
No	28(17)
Types of students' impairment taught in the mainstream classroom	
Visual impairment	27(16.4)
Hearing impairment	86(52.1)
Mental disability	40(24.2)
Physical disability	40(24.2)
Speech and language disability	47(28.5)
Multiple disabilities	20(12.1)
Specific learning difficulties	113(68.5)

The following table, Table 5.4, divided the impairments that teachers thought could be included in mainstream classrooms between special education teachers and general education teachers. According to the special education teachers' responses, students with specific learning difficulties could be included in mainstream classrooms (73.5%), followed by students with hearing impairment (47%), and a third with visual impairment (33.7%). Only a small minority of teachers mentioned that students with multiple disabilities could be included in mainstream classroom (13.3%). However, according to the general education teachers' responses, students with physical disabilities could most likely be included in mainstream classrooms (63.4%), followed by students with hearing impairment (58.5%) and, in third place, visual impairment (45.1%). This is important to discuss later, in order to understand teachers' attitudes towards the type of disability they think could be included in mainstream classrooms.

Table 5.4
Disabilities that could be included in inclusive classrooms as perceived by special education teachers and general education teachers

	Frequency (%)		
Disabilities	General teachers	Special teachers	Total answers
Specific learning difficulties	18(22)	61(73.5)	79(47.9)
Visual disability	48(45.1)	28(33.7)	76(46.1)
Hearing disability	37(58.5)	39(47)	76(46.1)
Physical disability	52(63.4)	26(31.3)	78(47.3)
Speech and language disability	26(31.7)	25(30.1)	51(30.9)
Mental disability	2(2.4)	15(18.1)	17(10.3)
Multiple disabilities	1(1.2)	11(13.3)	12(7.3)

It should be noted that, in the previous two section, teachers were given a chance to select more than one disability they had taught or that could be included in mainstream classrooms. Therefore, the numbers of responses to the two sections in Table 5.3 and Table 5.4 are higher than the total number of participants.

5.4 Linear correlation results

To evaluate the nature of the linear correlation between attitudinal components (cognitive, affective and behavioural), thereby illuminating their relationship, Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated (see Table 5.5).

Table 5.5
Correlation coefficients between components of the attitude scale

Attitude component	*Cognitive*	*Affective*	*Behavioural*
Cognitive			
correlation (r)		*.645****	*.531****
p-value		*<.001*	*<.001*
Affective			
correlation (r)	*.645****	*1*	*.590****
p-value	*<.001*		*<.001*
Behavioural			
correlation (r)	*.531****	*.590****	*1*
p-value	*<.001*	*<.001*	

****Correlation is significant at the .001*

As illustrated in Table 5.5, a statistical relationship exists between the cognitive component and the other components of the attitude scale (p-value < .001). Furthermore, a significant positive correlation was found between the behavioural component and the cognitive and affective components (r = .531, p-value < .001; r= .590, p-value < .001 respectively). A statistically significant positive correlation was found between the cognitive component and the affective components (r= .645, p-value < .001).

The key implication of this is that the positive and negative beliefs of teachers towards inclusion of students with SEN were linked to positive or negative feelings about inclusion of students with SEN. Related to this, attitudes regarding inclusion of students with SEN among teachers were linked to in the level of suitability of behaviours towards students with SEN. Specifically, teachers who were more positive about the inclusion of students with SEN were

more likely to report on practices favourable to inclusion. In this way, each attitudinal component is closely interlinked with each other.

The following section will be divided into two sub-sections, according to the position in the school (special education teacher or general education teacher), where each section demonstrates the way the three components of attitude varied in relation to the following variables (teacher experience in working with students with SEN, teachers' level of qualification, and in-service training).

5.5 Results for each variable and differences between components of attitude

5.5.1 Special education teachers

Table 5.6 and Figure 5.1 display the means and standard deviations of the attitude component scores, as reported by the special education teachers.

Table 5.6
Special education teachers' attitude means and standard deviations

Attitude component	Mean(SD)
Cognitive	4.01(.41)
Affective	4.38(.41)
Behavioural	3.70(.67)

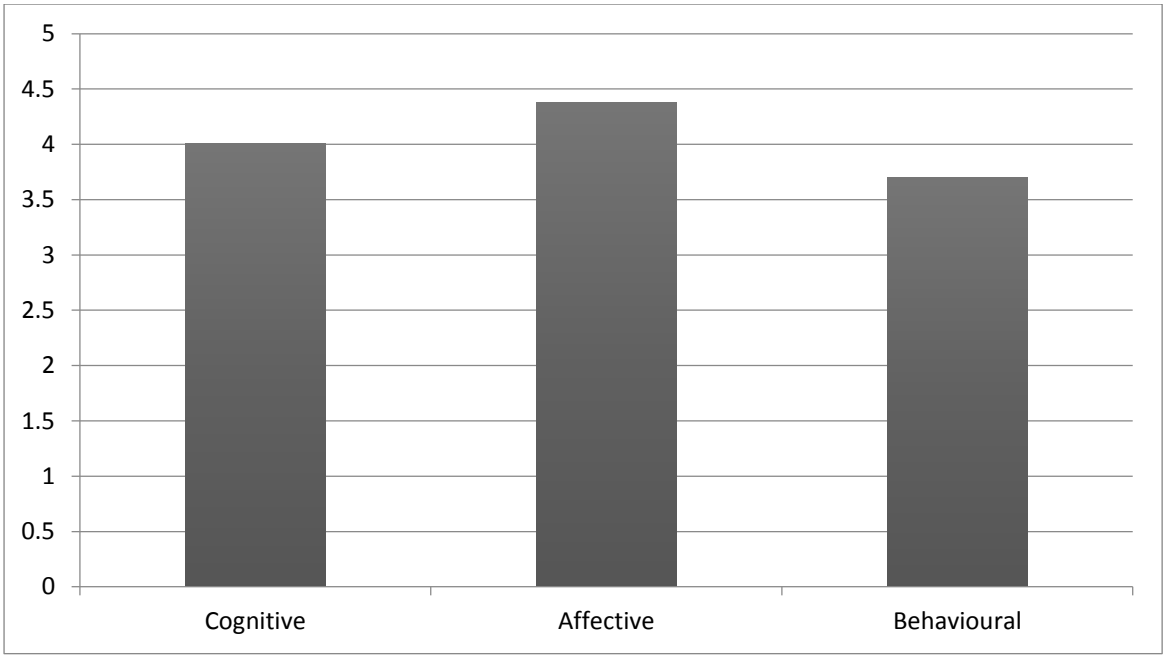


Figure 5.1. Bar chart of mean attitude component scores by special education teachers.
**Midpoint of the scale is 3.0.*

Table 5.6 presents the means and standard deviations of the three components of attitude towards inclusion for the special education teachers. The level of all three attitude components were above the mid-point of the scale (3.0), which indicates that special education teachers, on the whole, had positive attitudes about the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools. With regard to the cognitive component, the mean score was 4.01 with *SD* = .41, higher than the mid-point of the scale (3.0). Therefore, special education teachers' beliefs about inclusion of students with SEN were positive. The mean score of the affective scale was 4.38 with *SD* = .41, also higher than the mid-point (3.0) and nearer to the top of the scale (5.0); this indicates that special education teachers had very positive feelings regarding inclusion and felt happy and optimistic regarding the inclusion of students with SEN. Finally, with regard to the behaviour component of attitude, teachers were asked to assess their own behaviour through self-reporting on their inclusive practice. The mean for the behavioural component of attitude was 3.70 with *SD* = .67, higher than the mid-point of the scale (3.0). Therefore, the special education teachers were likely to use practices and behaviours conducive to inclusion to

improve their performance if there were any students with SEN in their class. Overall, Table 5.6 demonstrates that the special educational teachers had positive attitudes over the three components of the model. Further discussion on the special education teachers' attitude findings is presented in the discussion chapter.

5.5.1.1 Difference in attitudes by experience

The first theme of the second question considered the relationship between attitudes and the length of experience of special education teachers. The means and standard deviations were calculated for each age group of teachers and a one-way ANOVA was used to test for significant differences between these means, with the results shown in Table 5.7.

Table 5.7
Mean(SD) attitude component score by years of experience with p-value

Experience (years)	Cognitive	Affective	Behavioural
1 – 5	3.98(.47)	3.63(.41)	3.66(.57)
6 – 10	4.01(.43)	4.20(.33)	3.80(.76)
11 – 20	4.10(.38)	4.29(.39)	3.96(.69)
21 – 30	4.15(.20)	4.42(.28)	4.42(.37)
P – value	.640	.510	.473

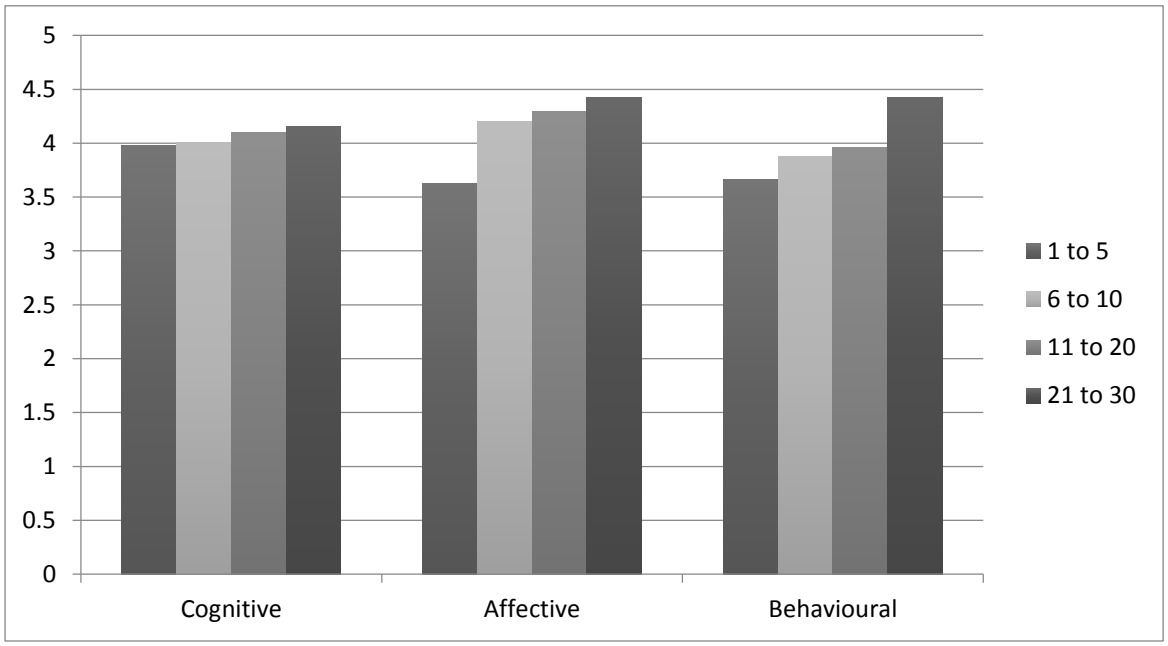


Figure 5.2. Bar chart of mean attitude scores by years of experience.
*Midpoint of the scale is 3.0.

Table 5.7 and Figure 5.2, above, present the attitude component scores by special education teachers' years of experience. As presented in Table 5.7, there were no significant differences between the scores on the cognitive component according to special education teachers' years of experience (F (3,73) = .566, *p-value* = .640). Similarly, differences by years of experience on the affective component were not statistically significant (F (3, 73) = .779, *p-value* = .510), nor on the behavioural component (F (3, 73) =0.847, *p-value* = .473). Thus, special education teachers' years of experience had no impact on any of the three components of attitude. It is necessary to examine this issue in the discussion chapter and provide possible explanations.

Table(5.7.1)
Median (min-mix) attitude component score by years of experience with p-value

Experience (years)	Cognitive	Affective	Behavioural
1 – 5	3.80(2.40-5.00)	4.00(3.00-5.00)	4.00(2.60-5.00)
6 – 10	3.90(1.80-4.80)	4.00(1.00-5.00)	3.50(1.00-5.00)
11 – 20	3.80(1.60-5.00)	4.20(3.40-5.00)	3.60(1.80-5.00)
21 – 30	4.10(3.80-4.40)	4.00(2.60-500)	4.20(3.40-5.00)
P – value	.474	.187	.957

As presented in Table (5.7.1), a Jonckheere trend test revealed no significant trend across the years of experience on the cognitive component (*Z=.716, p-value=*.474). Similarly, trend by years of experience on the affective component was not statistically significant (*Z=1.32, p-value=.187*), nor on the behavioural component (*Z=-.053, p-value=.957*). Thus, the three components of attitude had no systematic trend by special education teachers' years of experience.

5.5.1.2 Difference in attitudes by level of qualification

The second question regarded the relationship between attitudes and the level of qualification held by special education teachers and was investigated by comparing the means and standard deviations for level of teachers' qualification; a one-way ANOVA was used to test for any significant differences between these means. Table 5.8 reveals the impact of qualification level on attitude via the component scores. From the findings presented in Table 5.8, there were no significant differences between the scores on the attitude components according to level of qualification. Statistics for the cognitive component were (F (2, 78) = .112, *p-value* = .885), for the affective component (F (2, 78) = .879, *p-value* = .419) and for the behavioural component (F (2, 78) = 2.767, *p-value* = .069). Thus, level of qualification had no impact on any of the attitude components. Possible interpretations of these findings will be addressed in the discussion chapter.

Table 5.8
Mean (SD) attitude components scores by level of qualification with p-value

Level of education	Cognitive	Affective	Behavioural
Diploma	3.90(.14)	4.30(.14)	3.60(.28)
Graduate	4.01(.42)	4.36(.42)	3.64(.64)
Post graduate	4.07(.45)	4.57(.29)	4.26(.90)
P-value	.885	.419	.069

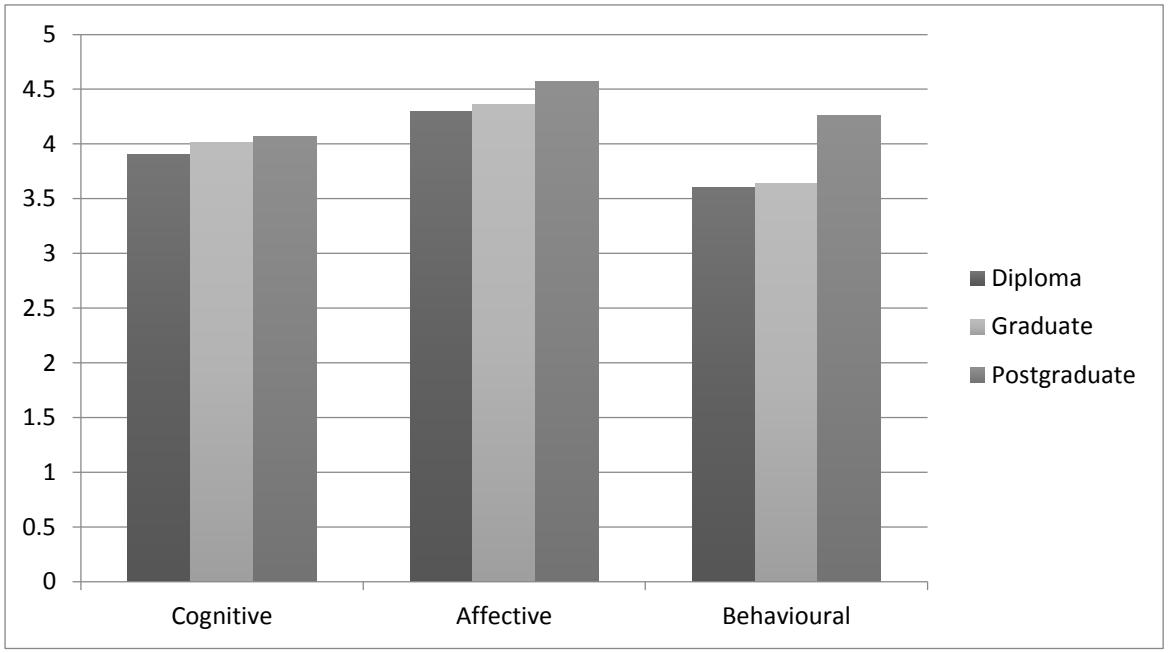


Figure 5.3. Bar chart of mean attitude scores by level of qualification.
*Midpoint of scale is 3.0

Table (5.8.1)
Median(min-mix) attitude components scores by level of qualification with p-value

Level of education	Cognitive	Affective	Behavioural
Diploma	3.50(3.40-3.60)	4.00(4.00-4.40)	3.30(2.60-4.00)
Graduate	3.80(1.60-5.00)	4.00(1.00-5.00)	3.60(1.00-5.00)
Post graduate	3.90 (2.80-4.80)	4.10(2.60-4.80)	4.20(1.80-5.00)
P-value	.925	.943	.318

As presented in Table (5.8.1), a Jonckheere trend test revealed no significant trend across the levels of qualification on the cognitive component (*Z=-.094, p-value=*.925). Similarly, trend by level of qualification on the affective component was not statistically significant (*Z=-.071, p-value=.9*43), nor on the behavioural component (*Z=.999, p-value=.318*). Thus, the three components of attitude had no systematic trend by special education teachers' levels of qualification.

5.5.1.3 Differences in attitude by in-service training

The final theme of the second question concerns the relationship between attitudes and the in-service training of special education teachers. The results can be found in Table 5.9, which presents the difference of teacher attitudes with respect to in-service training obtained. The means and standard deviations were computed for each group of teachers and a t-test was used to test for any significant differences between these means.

Table 5.9
Mean (SD) attitude scores by in-service training for special education teachers with p-value

Training obtained	Cognitive	Affective	Behavioural
Yes	4.04(.42)	4.36(.40)	3.74(.64)
No	3.80(.32)	4.47(.46)	3.53(.87)
P-value	.101	.461	.387

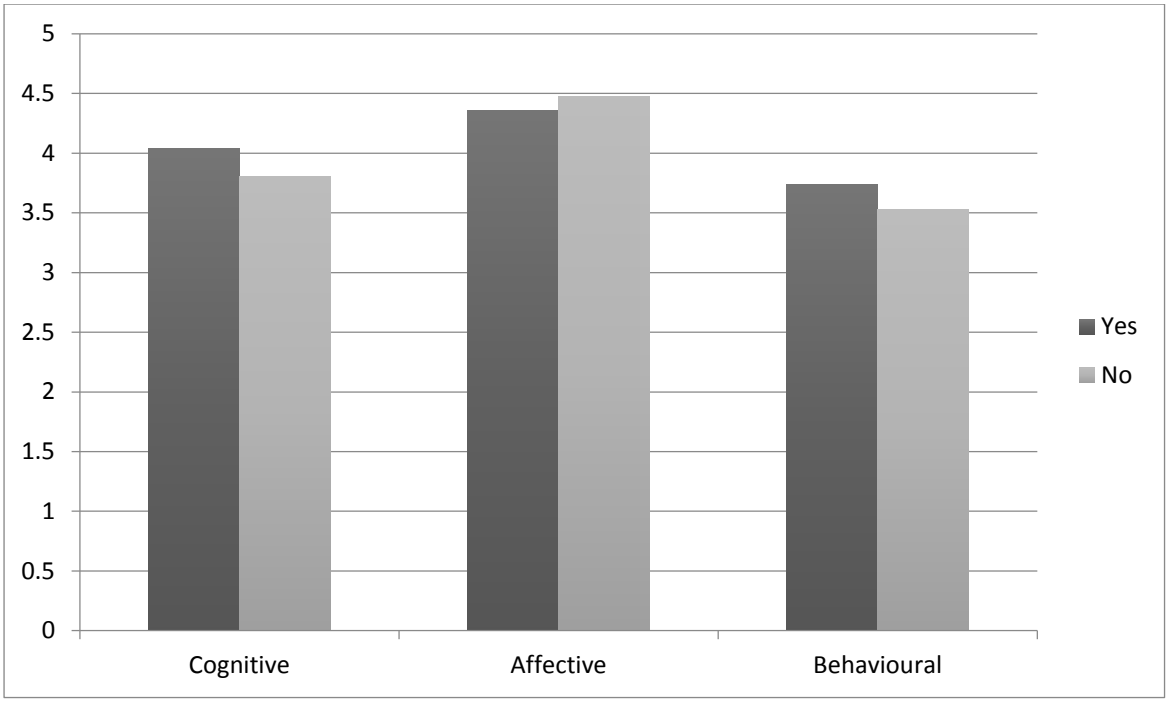


Figure 5.4. Bar chart of mean attitude scores by in-service training for special education teachers.
*Mid-point of scale is 3.0.

Table 5.9 demonstrates how attitude component scores varied with special education teachers' in-service training. From the findings presented in Table 5.9, there were no significant differences between the scores on the attitude components (*p-value* > .05) according to teachers' in-service training. The mean cognitive component score for teachers with special education in-service training was 4.04 with *SD* = .42 and for teachers without special education in-service training was 3.80 with *SD* = .32 (*t* (73) =1.663, *p-value*=.101). The mean affective component score for teachers with special education in-service training was 4.36 with *SD* = .40 and for teachers without special education in-service training was 4.47 with *SD* = .46 (*t* (75) = .742^{-}, *p-value*=.461). Finally, the mean behaviour component score for teachers with special education in-service training was 3.74 with *SD* = .64 and for teachers without special education in-service training was 3.53 with *SD* = .87 (*t* (75) =.870, *p-value*=.387). This indicates that the in-service training of teachers did not have an impact on any of the attitude components; hence the necessity to reflect upon this section of findings in the discussion chapter.

The next sub-sections repeat the above analyses according to the teachers' position in the school, looking at the general education teachers. Each part demonstrates how the three components of attitude varied according to each of the three variables (experience working with students with SEN, level of qualification, and in-service training).

5.5.2 General education teachers

Table 5.10 presents the means and standard deviations of attitude components as reported by general education teachers.

Table 5.10
General education teachers' attitude means and standard deviations

Attitude component	Mean(SD)
Cognitive	3.26(.79)
Affective	3.23(.74)
Behavioural	2.90(.99)

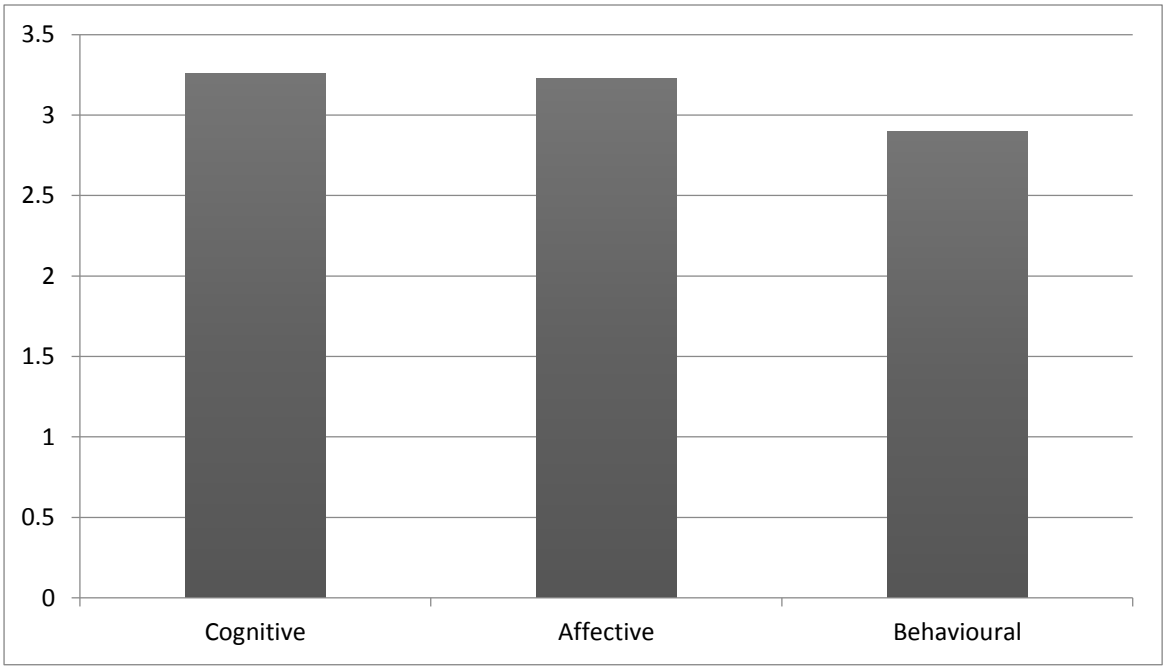


Figure 5.5 Bar chart of mean attitude component scores by general education teachers.
*Midpoint of scale is 3.0

Table 5.10 presents the means and standard deviations of the three attitude components towards the inclusion of students with SEN. The mean score on the cognitive scale was 3.26 with *SD* =.79, compared with the mid-point of 3.0; this indicates that general education teachers had slightly positive beliefs towards inclusion. The mean was 3.23 with *SD* = .74 for the affective

score, which indicated that general education teachers felt only slightly optimistic regarding inclusion of students with SEN. With regard to the behaviour component of attitude, teachers were asked to assess their own behaviour through self-reporting on their inclusive practice. The mean score of the behaviour component of attitude was 2.90 with *SD* = .99, which is lower than the mid-point of the scale. For example, general education teachers disagreed that they "would change their teaching process to accommodate students with SEN". This difference of attitude, especially in the behavioural component, indicates the potential impact on the general education teachers' practice.

5.5.2.1 Difference in attitudes by experience

The first theme of the second question centred on the relationship between attitudes and the length of experience of general education teachers. The means and standard deviations were calculated for the various experience levels of teachers and a one-way ANOVA was used to test for significant differences between these means, with the results presented in Table 5.11 and Figure 5.6.

Table 5.11
Mean(SD) attitude component score by years of experience with p-value

Experience (years)	Cognitive	Affective	Behavioural
0	3.36(.59)	3.34(.71)	2.80(1.20)
1 – 5	3.25(.86)	3.21(.77)	3.02(.84)
6 – 10	2.77(.81)	2.93(.52)	2.60(1.02)
11 – 20	3.87(1.02)	3.40(1.21)	3.00(.85)
P – value	.151	.554	.643

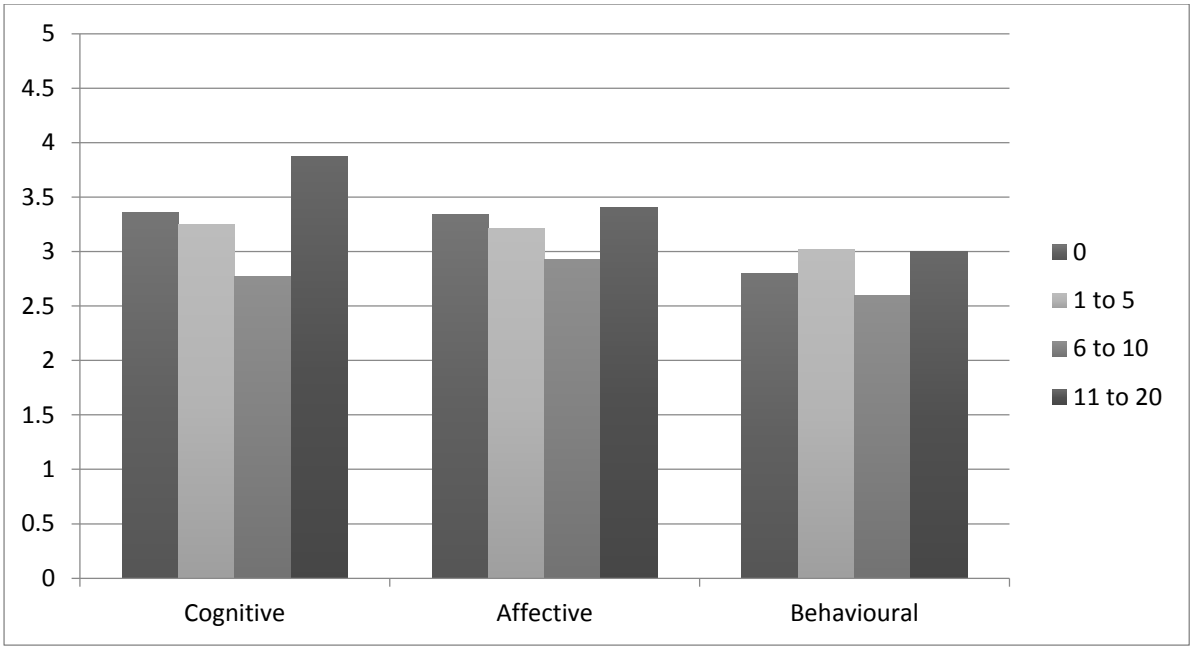


Figure 5.6. Bar chart of mean attitude scores by years of experience.
*Midpoint of scale is 3.0

From the findings, it is possible to conclude that attitudinal differences were not correlated with the year of experience held by general education teachers. In addition, no statistically significant differences were found regarding the cognitive component (F (3, 81) = 1.814, *p-value* =.151), the affective component (F (3, 81) =.701, *p-value* =.554), or the behavioural component (F (3, 81) =.560, *p-value* =.643). Thus, general education teachers' years of experience had no impact on any of the three components of attitudes as such, and will be discussed later.

Table(5.11.1)
Median(min-mix) attitude component score by years of experience with p-value

Experience (years)	Cognitive	Affective	Behavioural
0	3.40 (2.60-4.80)	3.60(1.00-4.20)	3.00(1.00-5.00)
1 – 5	3.40(2.00-4.60)	3.00(2.00-4.00)	3.00(1.00-5.00)
6 – 10	2.50(2.00-4.40)	2.60(2.60-4.00)	2.00(1.80-4.20)
11 – 20	3.60(3.00-5.00)	4.00(2.00-4.20)	3.00(2.40-3.60)
P – value	.309	.151	.953

As presented in Table (5.11.1), a Jonckheere trend test revealed no significant trend across the years of experience on the cognitive component (*Z=-1.107, p-value=.309*). Similarly, trend by years of experience on the affective component was not statistically significant (*Z=-1.44, p-value=.151*), nor on the behavioural component (*Z=-.059, p-value=.953*). Thus, the three components of attitude had no systematic trend by general education teachers' years of experience.

5.5.2.2 Difference in attitude by of level of qualification

The second theme of the second question, regarding the relationship between attitudes and the level of qualification held by general education teachers, was investigated by comparing the means and standard deviations for each level of teachers' qualifications; again, a one-way ANOVA was used to test for any significant differences between these means. Table 5.12 and Figure 5.7 present the data showing how attitude scores varied with level of teachers' educational qualification.

Table 5.12
Mean (SD) attitude components scores by level of qualification with p-value

Level of education	Cognitive	Affective	Behavioural
Diploma	3.53(.74)	3.25(.53)	2.84(1.19)
Graduate	3.19(.79)	3.22(.78)	2.91(.96)
Post graduate	3.80(-)	3.80(-)	3.00(-)
P-value	.259	.736	.966

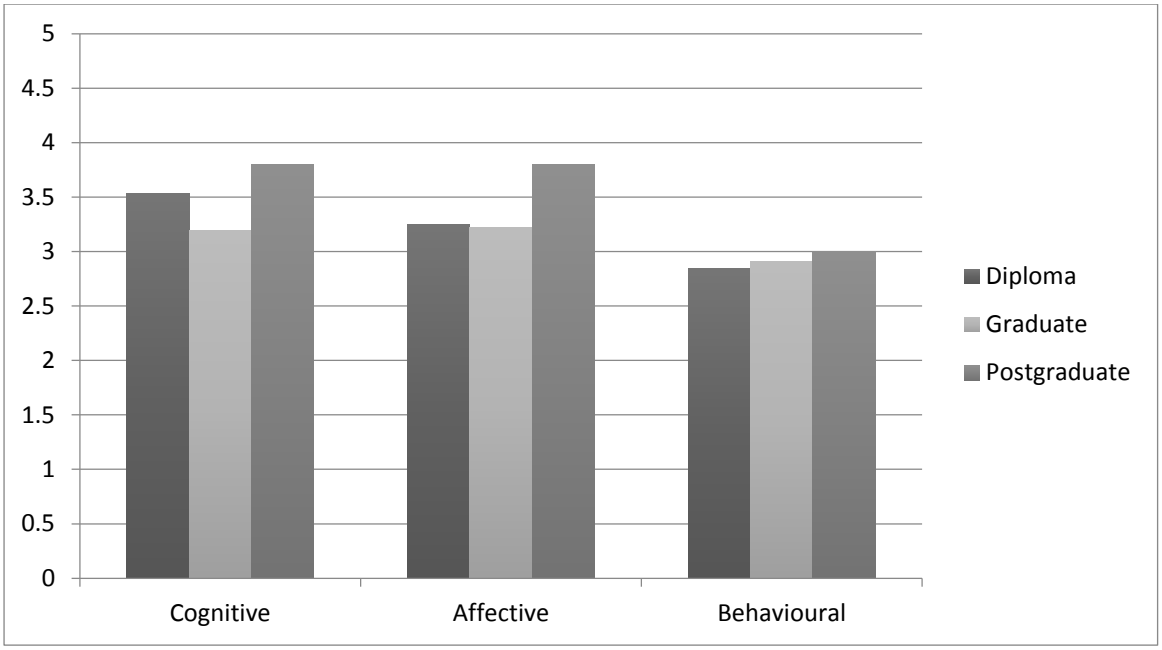


Figure 5.7. Bar chart of mean attitude scores by level of qualification.
*Midpoint of scale is 3.0.

The results indicate that there were no statistically significant differences in attitudes by general education teachers' qualification level. The ANOVA results for the cognitive component were (F (2, 81) = 1.37, *p-value* =.259), for the affective component (F (2, 81) = 0.308, *p-value* =.736), and for the behavioural component (F (2, 80) =.035, *p-value* =.966). Thus, level of qualification had no impact on any of the attitude components. However, it is necessary to examine this issue further in order to provide a possible explanation, which will be done in the discussion chapter.

Table (5.12.1)
Median (min-mix) attitude components scores by level of qualification with p-value

Level of education	Cognitive	Affective	Behavioural
Diploma	3.60(2.40-5.00)	3.00(2.60-4.20)	3.00(1.00-4.20)
Graduate	3.20(2.00-4.80)	3.20(1.00-4.60)	3.00 (1.00-5.00)
Post graduate	3.80(-)	3.80(-)	3.00(-)
P-value	.232	.995	.961

As presented in Table (5.12.1), a Jonckheere trend test revealed no significant trend across the levels of qualification on the cognitive component (*Z=-1.196, p-value=.232*). Similarly, trend by level of qualification on the affective component was not statistically significant (*Z=-.006, p-value=.995*), nor on the behavioural component (*Z=-.049, p-value=.961*). Thus, the three components of attitude had no systematic trend by general education teachers' levels of qualification.

5.5.2.3 Differences in attitude by in-service training

The final theme of the second question concerned the relationship between attitudes and whether the general education teachers had received in-service training in special education. Table 5.13 and Figure 5.8 show how teacher attitudes varied with receipt of in-service training. The means and standard deviations were computed for each group of teachers and a t-test was used to test for any significant differences between these means.

Table 5.13
Mean (SD) attitude scores by in-service training for general education teachers with p-value

Training obtained	Cognitive	Affective	Behavioural
Yes	3.57(.62)	3.47(.75)	3.33(.81)
No	3.13(.82)	3.13(.71)	2.72(1.01)
P-value	.021*	.001***	.01*

* p-value of .05 was considered the cut-off level for statistical significance

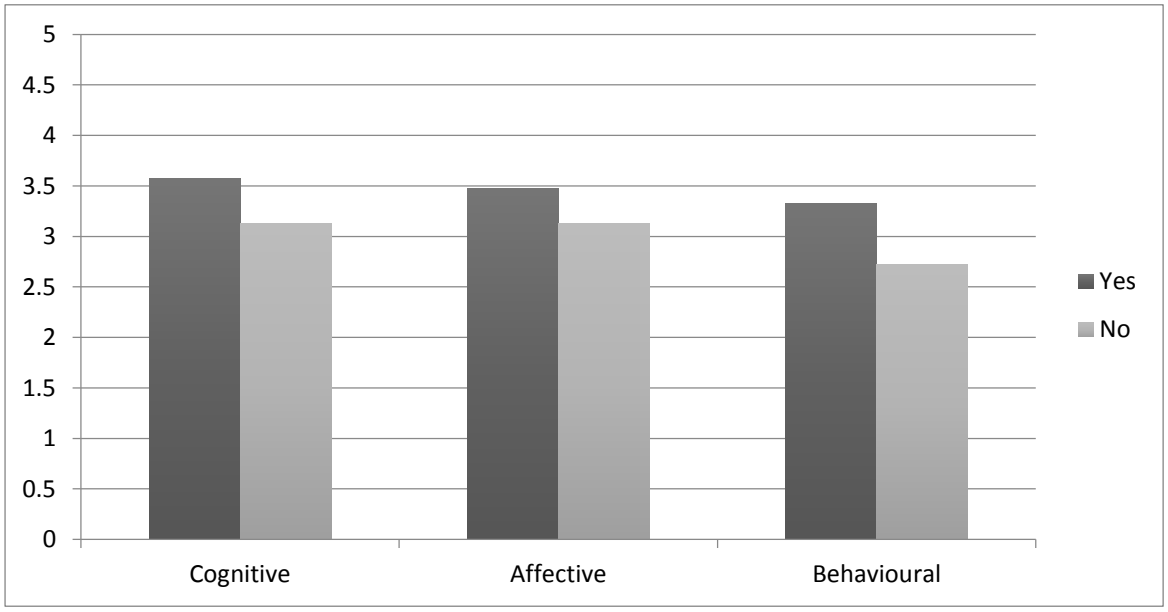


Figure 5.8. Bar chart of mean attitude scores by in-service training for general education teachers. Midpoint of scale is 3.0.

Table 5.13 demonstrates that there were statistically significant differences between general education teachers with and without special education in-service training with regards to the means of the cognitive, affective and behavioural components. Cognitive component scores were significantly higher (t (80) = 2.36, *p-value=.021)* for teachers with special education in-service training (*Mean* = 3.57, *SD* = .62) than for teachers without special education in-service training (*Mean* = 3.13, *SD* = .82). Affective component scores were significantly higher (t (80) = 3.39, *p-value=.001)* for teachers with special education in-service training (*Mean* = 3.74, *SD* = .75) than for teachers without special education in-service training (*Mean* = 3.13, *SD* = .71). Behaviour component scores, also, were significantly higher (t (79) = 2.63, *p-value=.01)* for teachers with special education in-service training (*Mean* = 3.33, *SD* = .81) than for teachers without special education in-service training (*Mean* = 2.72, *SD* = 1.01). This shows that there was a difference in attitudes between general education teachers who had received in-service training in special education and those who had not received such training. Therefore, in-service training had an impact on all the attitude components, indicating that this issue is of importance for the general education teachers.

The next section is the most important and most relevant to answering the research questions and pertinent to the discussion in subsequent chapters; it comprises a comparison of attitudes by the teacher's position in the school.

5.6 Differences in attitude according to position held in the school

Table 5.14 show how teachers' attitudes vary with their position in the school. The means and standard deviations were calculated for each group of teachers and a t-test was used to test for any significant differences between these means.

Table 5.14
Mean (SD) attitude scores by position in school with p-value

Position in the school	Cognitive	Affective	Behavioural
Special education teachers	4.01(.41)	4.38(.41)	3.70(.67)
General education teachers	3.26(.79)	3.23(.74)	2.90(.99)
P-value	< .001***	< .001***	< .001***

* p-value of .001 was considered the cut-off level for statistical significance

The results show that there were statistically significant differences between the mean scores on the three attitude components according to teacher position. Regarding the cognitive component, the scores were significantly higher (t (159) = -7.42, *p-value* <.001) for special education teachers (*Mean* = 4.01, *SD* = .41) than for general teachers (*Mean* = 3.26, *SD* = .79). Therefore, the cognitive component of special education teachers' attitude regarding the inclusion of students with SEN were, on the whole, more positive than those of general education teachers. Similarly, scores for the affective component were significantly higher (t (159) = -12.05, p-value<.001) for special education teachers (*Mean* = 4.38, *SD* = .41) than for general education teachers (M =3.23, *SD* =.74), which indicates that the special education teachers held more positive feelings and felt more comfortable regarding the inclusion of students with SEN. Similarly, with regard to the behavioural component, the mean score was significantly higher (t (158) = -5.93, *p-value*<.001) for special education teachers (M = 3.70, *SD* = .67) than for general education teachers (M = 2.90, *SD* = .99). Therefore, the special education teachers were more likely to use inclusive practices to improve their performance if they had a student with SEN in their class. It is relevant to examine why the responses of the special education teachers rated higher than those of general education teachers, in terms of their attitude towards the inclusion of students with SEN, as well as the implications of this clear divide.

Further, the mean scores were divided into three categories: lower than the mid-point of the scale (Mean<3), mid-point (Mean=3) and above the mid-point (Mean>3); the frequencies and percentages for each category were then calculated according to teacher position. After that, a Chi-square test (X^2) was carried out to determine if the distribution of teachers was significantly different to the attitude component scores. The results are presented in Table 5.15.

Table 5.15
Distribution of teachers by position in the school by attitude component score category

Attitude Component	General education teacher N (%)	Special education teacher N (%)	Total N (%)	P-value
Cognitive				<.001***
<3.0 (negative beliefs)	32(97.0)	1(3.0)	33(100)	
3.0 (neither positive nor negative)	4(57.1)	3(42.9)	7(100)	
>3.0 (positive beliefs)	46(36.8)	79(63.2)	125(100)	
Affective				<.001***
<3.0 (unhappy)	30(100)	0(0)	30(100)	
3.0 (neither happy nor unhappy)	9(90.0)	1(10.0)	10(100)	
>3.0 (happy)	43(34.4)	82(65.6)	125(100)	
Behavioural				<.001***
<3.0 (negative actions)	36(87.8)	5(12.2)	41(100)	
3.0 (neither positive nor negative)	14(51.9)	13(48.1)	27(100)	
>3.0 (positive actions)	31(32.3)	65(67.7)	96(100)	

*** A p-value of < .001 was considered the cut-off level for statistical significance

The distribution of participants was significantly related in the in terms of their position in the school (according to their attitude components score categories): cognitive (X^2 (2, N = 165) = 37.971, *p-value* <.001); affective, (X^2 (2, N = 165) = 48.564, *p-value* < .001); and behavioural, (X^2 (2, N = 164) = 35.449, p < .001). The three attitude components were found to be significantly related to the teachers' position in the school. Almost all of the participants who had negative beliefs were general education teachers. On the other hand, more than half of the teachers who had positive feelings and actions, and felt happy and comfortable regarding the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream classrooms, were special education teachers.

The findings presented in this section draw attention to the existence of differences in attitude between both groups of teachers, hence the necessity to reflect upon this section of findings in the following chapters.

5.7 Differences in response median about factors that affect the teachers' attitudes

This section is focused on difference in response about the factors that may influence teachers' attitudes in terms of 'child-related' variables, 'teacher-related' variables and 'educational environment-related' variables. Table 5.16 shows the effects of teachers' position on teachers' responses about the factors that influence their attitudes. The median was computed for each group of teachers and Mann-Whitney U-test was used to test for any significant differences between these medians. This non-parametric test was used because the responses were not normally distributed (Table 5.16).

Table 5.16
Mean score by position in the school and factors that affect the teachers' attitudes with p-value

Position in the school	Child	Teacher	Educational environment
Special education teacher	5.00	3.00	3.60
General education teacher	4.00	3.50	3.80
P-value	< .021*	< .001***	< .001***

* A p-value of.05 was considered the cut-off level for statistical significance
*** A p-value of .001 was considered the cut-off level for statistical significance

The results show that there are significant differences between the mean score of the 'child-related' (U = 2499, *p-value* = .021) also 'teacher-related' factors according to teacher position (U = 1685, *p-value* <.001) and education environment factors according to teacher position (U = 1680, *p-value* <.001). Regardless of teachers' positions, the mean score for the three variables was above the mid-point (median =3), which indicates that overall the sample had positive agreement.

5.8 Summary of the chapter

This chapter presented an analysis of the findings of the questionnaire. The results show that there were significant differences between the mean scores on the three attitude components according to teacher position, indicating that special education teachers had more of a positive attitude than general education teachers towards the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools. In addition, the present findings indicate that special and general education teachers' attitudes were not affected by either of the two variables (experience in working with students with SEN and level of qualification) which will be discussed later. While special education teachers were not affected by in-service training, there were statistically significant differences between general education teachers with and without special education in-service training with regard to the means of the cognitive, affective and behavioural components ($p < .05$). Finally, 'child-related', 'teacher-related' and 'educational environment-related' factors have indicated an influence on both group of teachers' responses.

In conclusion, it can be noted that the attitudes of teachers regarding inclusion of students with SEN cannot be captured using a questionnaire alone. Although the questionnaire provided quantitative data concerning different beliefs towards inclusion, this method alone is not able to evaluate the complexity of the matter completely. The questionnaire has played a key role in understanding teachers' attitudes in general, due to its ability to allow a large amount of data to be collected from a range of schools and teachers, which would be very difficult using other tools. In addition, without the possibility of gathering a large amount of data, the study would not be able to establish broad views regarding the attitude of teachers towards inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools. The interview was intended therefore, to gather more specific and deeper insight into teachers' attitudes. Therefore, the next chapter will present the qualitative findings of this study.

CHAPTER 6: FINDINGS OF QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter reports the findings that emerged from the thematic analysis of the four interviews. The themes were predetermined by reviewing the existing literature, and carrying out a pilot phase of the research. The '*a priori'* themes were:

1- Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the concept of SEN inclusion (Section 6.2);
2- Teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of learners with SEN in mainstream schools (Section 6.3);
3- Factors and requirements affecting the effective implementation of inclusive education (Section 6.4); and
4- Issues influencing teachers' attitudes towards inclusion (Section 6.5).

In addition to these four main themes, a number of sub-themes were emerged during the analysis. A qualitative analysis of each theme was conducted, and the findings presented according to guidelines listed in Braun and Clarke (2006). The four teachers interviewed were two special education teachers and two general education teachers. Special education teacher number one is referred to as ST1, and special education teacher two is referred to as ST2, general education teacher number three is referred to as GT3, and general education teacher number four is referred to as GT4. To improve the readability of this chapter, the quotes relating to each sub-theme are separated out and appear in the appendices. Each of the sub-themes in this chapter includes a thematic map based on the teachers' specialism, and is presented in figures to depict the major trends relating to the teachers' attitudes. A short summary of the most-significant findings precedes the discussion presented in Chapter 7.

6.2 Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the concept of SEN inclusion

This theme examines the background knowledge of ST1, ST2, GT3 and GT4 and their understanding of the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools in general, and in classrooms in the context of the KSA (in this case a girls' primary school). The sub-themes within this overarching theme concentrate on how the concept of inclusion of students with SEN is understood.

6.2.1 The meaning of inclusion of students with SEN

ST1, ST2, GT3 and GT4 were asked to reflect on meanings of inclusion; for example, by asking questions such as "*What does inclusion [of students with SEN] mean to you?*" ST1 expressed the following to explain what inclusion should mean: *"including students with SEN in the same environment with their ordinary peers..."* (Appendix 7, ST1.1.1). This teacher further stressed that educational inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream classrooms should be accompanied by the provision of appropriate services to allow inclusion to function (Appendix 7, ST1.1.2), whereas ST2 provided a similar definition focusing on removing barriers to learning and interaction between typically developing peers and students with SEN (Appendix 7, ST2.2.1).

ST1 and ST2 demonstrated an understanding and awareness of the concept of inclusion throughout their interviews; emphasizing the inclusion of students with SEN. In contrast, GT4 and GT3 understood inclusion to refer to the physical location of students with SEN in a mainstream school, rather than in mainstream classrooms. For instance, GT4 limited inclusion to: "*students with special needs being included in regular schools*", whereas GT3 limited inclusion to the option to share extracurricular activities only (Appendix 7, GT3.3.1). This understanding of inclusion for students with SEN suggested by GT3 and GT4 agrees with the right of access to mainstream schools rather than the right of all students, irrespective of their

disability, to gain opportunities and completely engage in the learning process in the classroom with their typically developing peers. In this case, the initial level of inclusion, namely accessing mainstream schools, was the concern of GT3 and GT4.

In addition, ST1 was more specific about highlighting "*giving them the same rights*" (Appendix 7, ST1.1.1). To have a right of inclusion for students with SEN in mainstream schools was not mentioned by other teachers. Moreover, the same teacher raised an important point that is worth mentioning; i.e. equality of opportunities for students with SEN. She further stated that students should be given "*...same learning opportunities...*" (Appendix 8, ST1.1.6) and "*...equal opportunities...*" (Appendix 8, ST2.1.7); possibly indicating that students with SEN in her schools do not have same opportunities as their typically developing peers. These will be discussed in greater detail later in the discussion (Chapter 7).

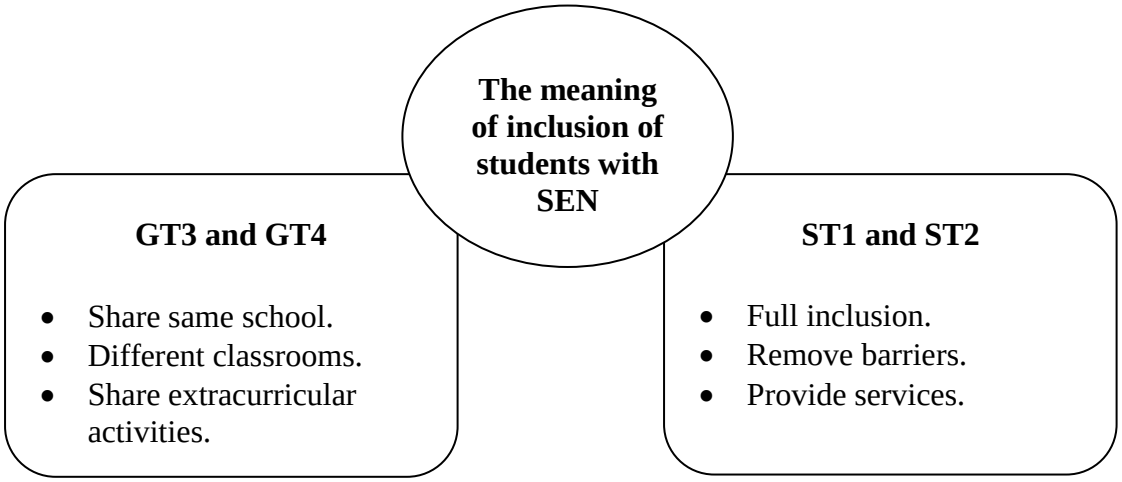


Figure 6.1. Thematic map of the sub-theme 'The meaning of inclusion of students with SEN' based on the responses of ST1, ST2, GT3 and GT4.

6.3 Teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of learners with SEN in mainstream schools

This theme collates information relating to ST1, ST2, GT3 and GT4's attitudes towards the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools. It should be highlighted here that teachers' attitudes and support are key in terms of creating effective practices in inclusive schools (Deisinger, 2000; Odom, 2000; Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996). Based on the analysis of ST1, ST2, GT3 and GT4's responses during the interviews, attitudes towards the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools can be divided according to the following three sub-themes: inclusion in schools versus inclusion in classrooms, the type and severity of disabilities, and the impact of the inclusion upon students with SEN.

6.3.1 Inclusion in schools versus inclusion in classrooms

To investigate and understand ST1, ST2, GT3 and GT4's attitudes toward the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools and classrooms, they were asked to share their opinions on this issue. The responses of GT3 and GT4 suggested their major concerns were that students with SEN require access to special education teachers and special classrooms, due to their disability. GT4, for example, noted that: "*students with SEN should be studying in special classes or in special schools, since they need more attention and special teachers*". However, GT3 stated that "*…the visually impaired, hearing impaired and those with physical disabilities could be included by joining special education classes within mainstream schools".* ST1 suggested "*inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream classes should be carried out under certain conditions based on the disability type and its severity*" (Appendix 8, ST11.1). This was also affirmed by ST2 (Appendix 8, ST2.2.1), and ST1 emphasised the important view that the "*level of intelligence*" of students with SEN should be "*similar levels of intelligence to their peers*" if inclusion is to be considered (Appendix 8, ST1.1.1). This seem to indicate that

the issue of individual differences between students is not considered by teachers where it is perceived that all students should be the same in their cognitive abilities; this point will be further discussed in the discussion chapter. Finally, ST2 welcomed the idea of special classrooms in mainstream schools as a first step towards inclusion of all students with SEN, even if not full inclusion (Appendix 8, ST2.2.2).

There is also a consensus that the current school environment, in terms of human resources and in-service training, environmental facilities, and teaching aids and resources, are and always have been, inadequate for the application of the advanced practice of inclusion in mainstream schools, for all types of students with SEN. As observed by ST2, "*special classes are much more feasible in light of the current school conditions.*" Furthermore, she advocates developing opportunities in education and engaging students with SEN in mainstream activities, but is aware of the impact of inclusion on the school's resources and the necessity to educate teachers and raise awareness of the needs of students with SEN (Appendix 8.ST2.2.4). In her opinion, "*…the lack of an appropriate school environment is in itself one of the factors that could essentially hinder the inclusion of students with SEN in classrooms*". Indeed, the views of this teacher, while advocating the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools, is conditioned on the availability of support for inclusion of students with SEN. The teacher was also sceptical about the provision of inclusion in the Arab world, compared to in developed countries (Appendix 8, ST2.2.6).

Interestingly, ST1 and ST2 echoed that, on some occasions, they feel the existing mainstream school structure and culture is unwelcoming, either to students with SEN or to special education teachers (Appendix 8, ST2.2.8). ST2 referenced an incident involving a general education teacher in the context of mainstream education, which reflected a negative attitude towards inclusion. This teacher would use a threatening voice when dealing with typically developing

students; for example, even saying, "*I am going to move you to another class with lazy students*", referring to special classes for students with SEN. ST2 seemed to have a positive attitude towards the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools as an objective in the future, especially for those with moderate disabilities, "*as they tend to have far fewer difficulties and challenges in terms of effective communication in the classroom*". ST1 and ST2 also asserted that this would be dependent on the learning environment and conditions in the classroom and the school in general.

Factors such as religion and culture were not considered barriers by the participants. On the contrary, Islamic religious views are very supportive of the inclusion of students with SEN. Some of the interviewees cited several verses from the Quran indicating that God's great reward would await those who support and provide assistance for students with SEN. ST1 described a sense of personal accomplishment when helping students with SEN, and such a sentiment was also consistently demonstrated when interviewing ST1, who commented:

> *Suffice to say that the reward is multiplied for those providing services for students with SEN, and there is also a sense of accomplishment when working with these students, a mix of praise and great reward.*

The researcher ascribes this to an uncompromising Islamic approach, which urges all individuals to help people with SEN, because doing so would be rewarded by God Almighty. In addition, GT3 reflected the teachings of Islam concerning the necessity of treating individuals with disabilities with respect, and helping them by any means possible (Appendix 8, GT3.3.4). It is also important to examine this issue in the discussion chapter, extending further explanations.

The views of those in favour and those against inclusion can be largely attributed to a combination of teachers' skills and the school environment being unprepared to accommodate

students with SEN. Unless such issues are resolved, vital support might not reach these students. ST1 and ST2 claimed there are a number of reasons for conflicting attitudes about the inclusion of students with SEN, including a lack of resources and training, and highlighting the fact that: "*general education teachers find it difficult to deal with students with SEN*" (Appendix 8, ST2.2.10). Thus, it is crucial that such teachers are trained intensively in how to teach students with SEN (Appendix 8, ST1.1.3).

In addition, the results confirmed a gap between policy and practice as far as teachers are concerned, with inclusion not being entirely based on active interaction between students with SEN and their typically developing peers in the context of mainstream education. ST2 confirmed, in their observations of students during break times and elsewhere, that students with SEN spend time on their own, and seem not to communicate with their typically developing peers. According to ST2: "*interactions between students with SEN placed in special classes in mainstream schools and other students is almost non-existent, as there is a sense of isolation*" (Appendix 8, ST2.2.11). In addition, ST1 added: "*...they need to be continuously encouraged to participate with other students in mainstream education*" (Appendix 8, ST2.2.11). These responses indicate an enthusiasm on the part of ST1 and ST2 about the idea of motivating students with SEN to interact with their typically developing peers in mainstream education during play time, and to engage more in activities that were provided during school breaks. The enthusiasm about inclusion was also seen, in that inclusion was perceived to be a right, not only to the school context, but also to society. This is clear from ST1's response where she stated that:

> *Inclusion is one of the integral rights of students with SEN ... once that right is acknowledged, they force society to accept them and take their needs into account, including learning how to deal with them on a larger scale outside the school confines.*

While this teacher supported full inclusion of students with SEN, the notion that acknowledging the rights of students with SEN will force society to accept them implies the teacher perceives society's present attitude to be negative regarding the inclusion of students with SEN. In addition, ST1 states "…*take their needs into account, including learning how to deal with them on a larger scale outside the school confines*" (Appendix 8, ST1.2.14); this indicates taking their needs into consideration outside the school context. This idea will be discussed further in the discussion chapter. ST1 further elaborated on this by the practical approach to inclusion, stating:

> *……these students need to feel part of the community and part of the school ... they need to be continuously encouraged to participate with other students in mainstream education.*

It is apparent that receipt of academic qualifications in special education enables special education teachers to play a key role in developing a positive attitude amongst teachers. This is because qualifications in special education entitle special education teachers to undertake courses and training in special education which is not the case with general education teachers. As discussed elsewhere in the thesis, learning about students with SEN, their needs and how to meet their needs plays a vital role in developing the attitudes of teachers towards inclusion of students with SEN. However, without training on these significant aspects, teachers' attitudes towards inclusion are likely to remain without change.

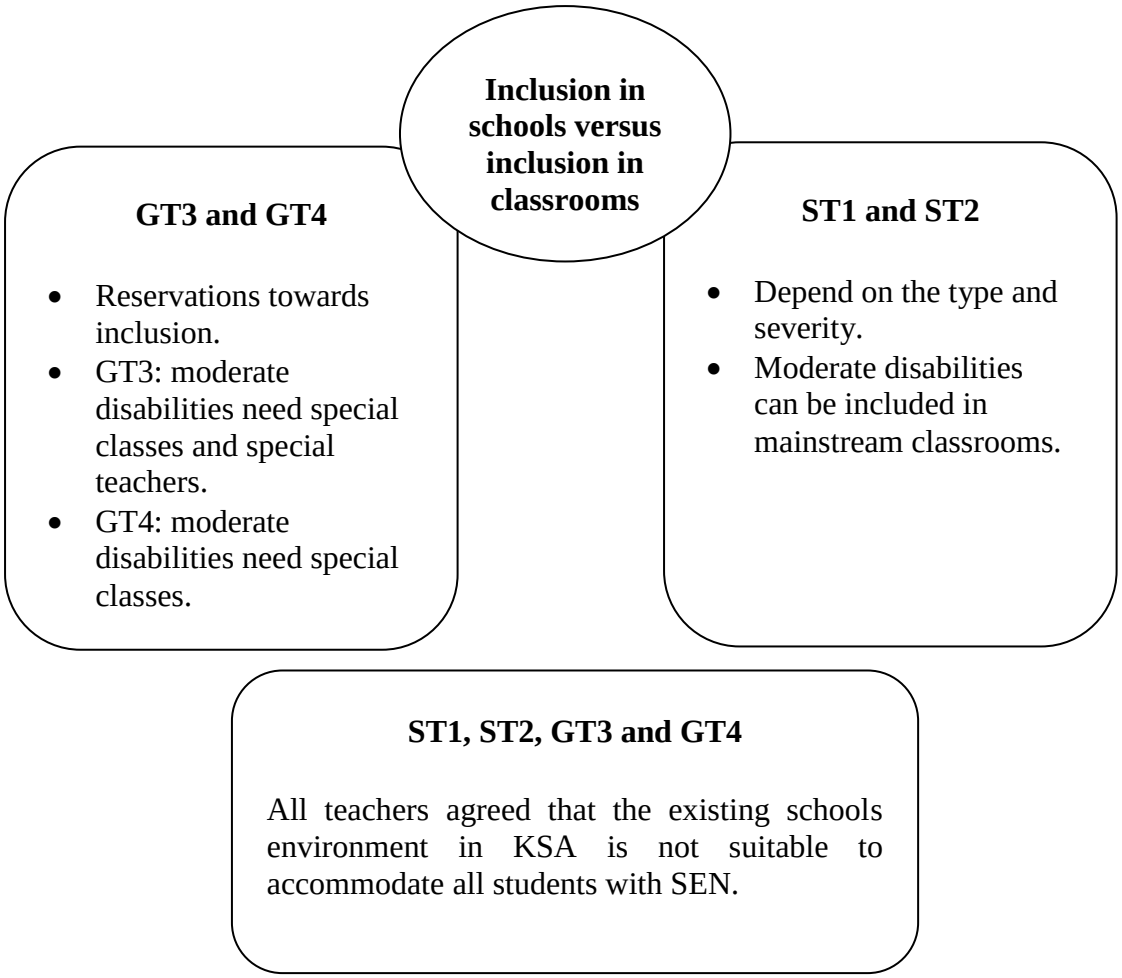


Figure 6.2. Thematic map of the sub-theme 'Inclusion in schools versus inclusion in classrooms' based on the responses of ST1, ST2, GT3 and GT4.

6.3.2 The types and severity of disabilities

When teachers were asked to assess the suitability of the school environment and mainstream classrooms for students with SEN, from an educational, psychological and social stance, they responded that they are unsuited to all types of SEN. The following question was then asked: "*Can all students with SEN be included in mainstream classes?*" GT3 and GT4 offered very similar responses to this question, citing the difficulty of including students with SEN, especially those with severe and visual disabilities; for example, GT3 said: "*it is very difficult to include students with SEN, especially those with severe disabilities, mental and visual disabilities…".* In addition, GT4 echoed the same view (see Appendix 8, GT4.4.2). GT3 and GT4's views tended to be negative towards the inclusion of students with severe disabilities.

Both teachers GT3 and GT4 opined that special schools for students with severe disabilities are preferable in the context of the KSA (Appendix 8, GT3.3.3) and (Appendix 8, GT4.4.1 and 4.2).

On the other hand, ST1 agreed that the inclusion of students with a severe disability is a challenge that can be accomplished if resources and support are available (Appendix 9, ST1.1.1). ST2 expressed a similar view to ST1, highlighting that lack of special provision for students with SEN as responsible for the resistance of mainstream schools to the inclusion of all students with SEN, especially those with severe disabilities (Appendix 9, ST2.2.1). Moreover, ST1 and ST2 agreed that students with moderate disabilities should be included in mainstream classrooms, as opposed to those with severe disabilities, who may be unable to access mainstream classrooms. Regardless of the level of experience and the teacher's special education qualifications, there was consensus between the teachers that the current learning environment in Saudi schools, in terms of human resources, training, facilities, teaching aids and financial resources, would lead to difficulty in accommodating students with severe disabilities, compared to students with moderate disabilities, in the absence of commitment from policymakers to training and resource provision. The findings reveal that teachers typically experience significant challenges in terms of teaching students with severe disabilities who have to adapt to a mainstream learning environment, although this could be a less challenging task for students with physical disabilities or hearing disabilities. The major barrier facing teachers is how best to teach particularly severe disabilities, as opposed to students with moderate disabilities, as confirmed by GT3, ST1 and ST2 (Appendix 9, GT3.3.2, Appendix 9, ST1.1.2, Appendix 8, ST2.2.9).

There is a contrast between ST1, ST2, GT3 and GT4 with regard to how successful they would be if asked to teach students with severe disabilities. GT3 and GT4 were adamant that they would struggle to teach students with severe disabilities (Appendix 9, GT3.3.2, Appendix 9,

and GT4.4.2), while ST1 and ST2 are more positive about doing so. However, ST1 pointed out that students with moderate disabilities are more likely to ultimately achieve academic and social success. Therefore, from the point of view of all the participants, severity and type of disability is a key factor in determining the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of inclusion for students with SEN in mainstream classrooms. It could be concluded, therefore, that the nature of a student's disability can influence teachers' attitudes. This will be discussed further in the discussion chapter.

Finally, ST1 provided a more comprehensive response about inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools and classrooms and its requirements. As such, and in order to ensure inclusion is effective, many factors should be addressed, for example:

- *providing the necessary facilities and tools for successful inclusion,*
- *teachers, the school administration and parents collaborate in the decision-making process.* (Appendix 9, ST1.1.3)

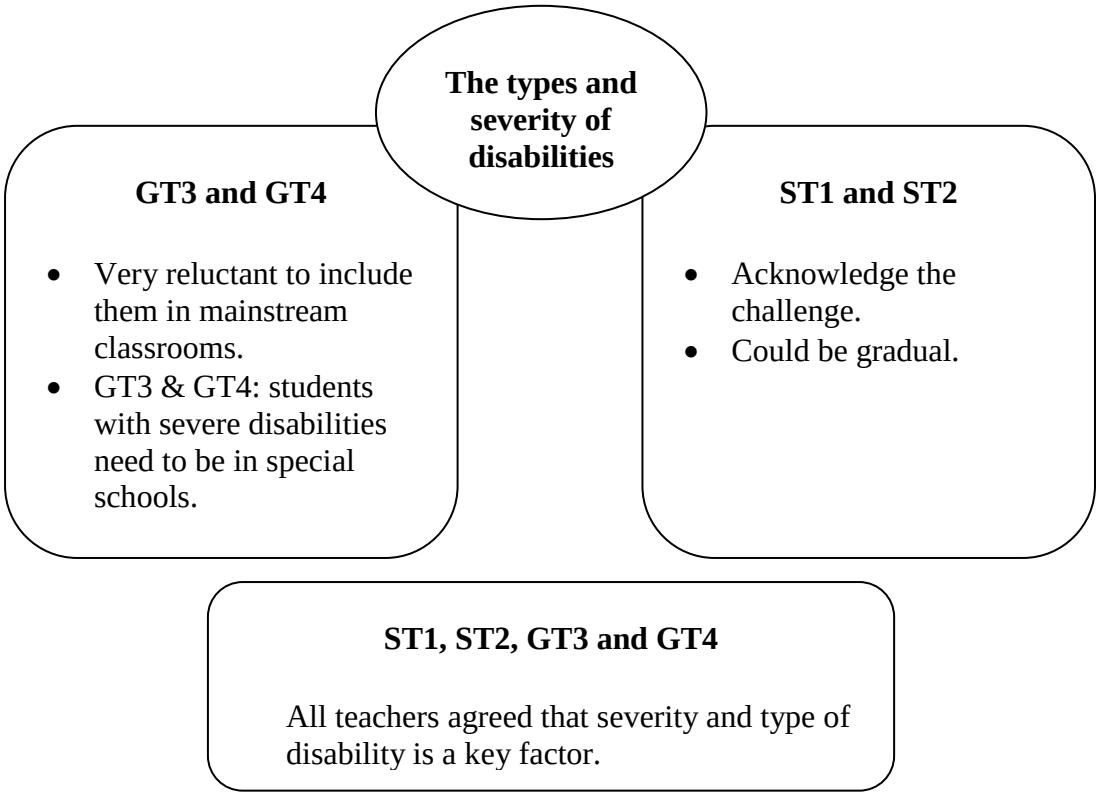


Figure 6.3. Thematic map of the sub-theme 'The types and severity of disabilities' based on the responses of ST1, ST2, GT3 and GT4.

6.3.3 The impact of inclusion upon students with SEN

Teachers were divided regarding the benefits of inclusion of students with SEN, particularly when asked about the academic development of students with SEN between ST1, ST2 and GT3, GT4. Nevertheless, ST1, ST2, GT3 but not GT4 agreed there were benefits, especially at a social and behavioural level, and in terms of the development of communication skills by students with SEN.

GT3 and GT4 confirmed that it is extremely difficult for students with SEN to progress academically, especially when included in a mainstream classroom. GT4 opined that general education teachers, in general, lack the necessary skills to help students with SEN to improve "*academically*" (Appendix 10, GT4.4.1). In addition, GT3 observed that, because inclusion is a new policy in the KSA, "*it would be very difficult to apply it straight away because of the various requirements*" (Appendix10, GT3.3.1). In contrast, ST1 and ST2 claimed inclusion would have a positive impact on students with SEN, both academically and socially, if all requirements were met for classroom resources (Appendix 10, ST1.1.1 and Appendix 10, ST2.2.1).

In terms of the social element, GT4 indicated that the inclusion of students with SEN sometimes has undesirable implications for those students. According to GT4, a number of issues can arise, including: "*...fear and loathing of school, absenteeism, truancy, absent-mindedness, stubbornness and introversion…*". By comparison, ST2 confirmed that "*interaction between mainstream students and students with SEN is more than likely to increase*" (Appendix 10, ST2.2.3) in an inclusive setting. ST1 commented:

> *… in fact, success is not only confined to academic performance but also to social interaction ... it is also noted that students with moderate disabilities are in a better position to make friends with other peers with disabilities and even with ordinary peers, which helps and encourages them to engage socially in regular schools.*

Similarly, GT3 indicated that students with SEN

> *…interact with their peers without SEN, which would enhance their social and communication skills and allow them to feel a lot safer and more self-confident, as well as empowering them to strike up friendships, either in schools and outside schools.*

ST1, ST2 and GT3 indicated that the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools has considerable social impact on students with SEN, including in terms of engaging them with their typically developing peers. Based on these teachers' responses, it can be said that inclusion encourages social interaction between all students. In addition, both communication and collaboration skills were also highlighted, and ST2 classified these as social skills which "*Can release students with SEN from their isolation*", as they gain acceptance from other students. An increased level of interaction can be observed both during classes and when students are engaged in extracurricular activities.

Therefore, it can be concluded that ST1, ST2 and GT3 perceived more benefits from inclusion than GT4, although with certain reservations. These reservations principally centre on type and severity of disabilities, the suitability of mainstream classrooms and schools, and teachers' lack of expertise and skill in teaching students with SEN, rather than on the principle or idea of inclusion itself.

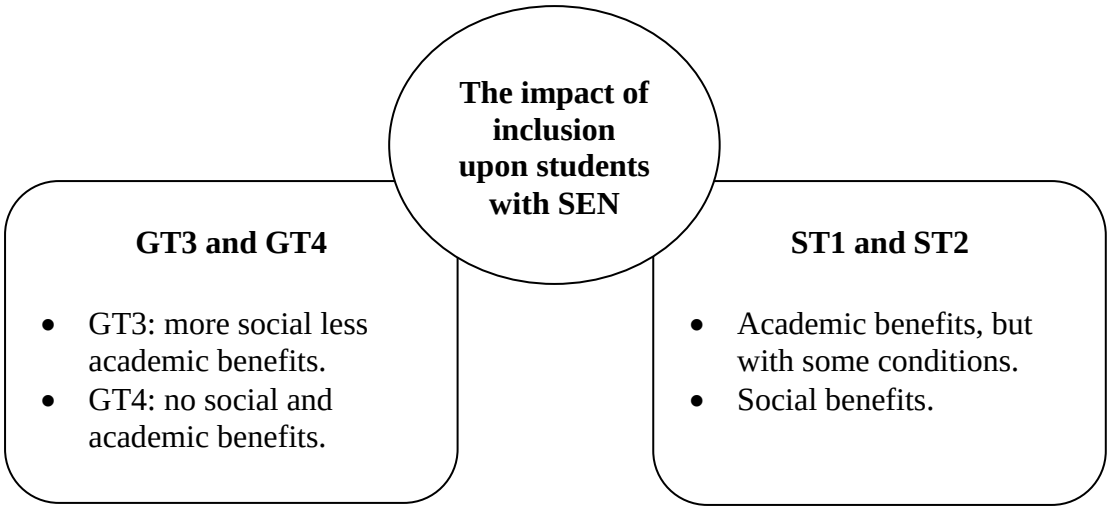


Figure 6.4. Thematic map of the sub-theme 'The impact of inclusion upon students with SEN' based on the responses of ST1, ST2, GT3 and GT4.

6.4 Factors and requirements affecting the effective implementation of inclusive education

This theme focuses on the support and resources that should be in place to guarantee effective implementation of inclusive education, concentrating on how best to improve teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. The interview findings highlighted the significance of ensuring the presence of certain elements in order for inclusion in mainstream schools to be effective. Factors affecting the effective implementation of inclusive education for students with SEN include: training of teachers; the provision of adequate resources and tools; effective collaboration between general and special education teachers; and, finally, availability of human resources. It should be noted that criticisms from ST1, ST2, GT3 and GT4 focused on these factors, and not on the concept of inclusion itself. These requirements will be described in the following three sections, which address: training of teachers, schools' facilities, and teachers' collaboration.

6.4.1 Training of teachers

A major concern that attracted teachers' attention was training, which is considered the main barrier to the inclusion of students with SEN. There is a sharp contrast in terms of the training of special education teachers and their counterparts in mainstream schools, with special education teachers having an advantage due to their pre-service training. Special education training is usually given during the final stage of an undergraduate teacher's university studies and lasts for approximately one academic year. ST1 and ST2 were both university undergraduates, who had completed one-year of training.

By contrast, GT3 and GT4 observed there are currently no pre-service training programmes in special education, and they are not required as part of a teacher's routine undergraduate study (see Chapter two). They also highlighted the limited availability of in-service training programmes, a problem also identified by ST1, who confirmed: "*we do not have any training for general education teachers...*" (Appendix 11, ST1.1.1). GT4 further noted, "*I do not have any skills when it comes to teaching students with SEN*". In addition, ST2 also explained that there is a lack of in-service training for general education teachers and, in-service training for special education is still inadequate (Appendix 11, ST2.2.1).

ST1 highlighted the severe shortage in in-service training courses for general education teachers' in the mainstream context, as well as the limited professional in-service training for special education teachers (Appendix 11, ST1.1.2). The same teacher considered it a problematic misconception that being a special education teacher means she does not need further professional training. In her opinion, to be a successful special education teacher it is essential to keep pace with new developments and understandings about how to teach students with SEN, particularly in mainstream schools (Appendix 11, ST1.1.3).

GT3 also stressed the value and importance of in-service training, reflecting on her positive experience when attending a two-week training course on teaching students with SEN (Appendix 11, GT3.3.1). GT3 added: "*one of the foremost priorities of the special education administration is to provide the opportunity for general education teachers to receive such training*". Emphasizing the importance of this, GT4, who had not received in-service training, admitted to having no skills to teach students with SEN explaining that this made it extremely hard for her to teach students with SEN (Appendix 11, GT4.4.1).

Comparing the experiences of GT3 and GT4, and based on the interview findings, it emerged that even shortages in in-service training courses relating to how to teach students with SEN can change general education teachers' attitudes. Furthermore, for ST1 and ST2, pre-service training seemed to be a catalyst, as it helped special education teachers develop the requisite skills to educate students with SEN. Predictably, teachers with no training, such as GT4, remain more sceptical and less receptive to the value of inclusion. GT4 indicated*:* "*... I think that special education teachers are far better than I in terms of experience and training and qualifications in special education*" (Appendix 11, GT4.4.1). This suggests that due to lack of in-service training, GT4 is not confident about her capacity to teach students with SEN when compared to special education teachers; she therefore seems less confident.

ST2 and ST1 expressed a similar view (Appendix 11, ST2.2.6) regarding "*… the need for more in-service training for all teachers*". ST1 further concluded that in-service training plays a significant role in the success of inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools:

> *Training will certainly assist teachers in providing the necessary support for students with SEN... as enhancing teachers' professional skills enable them to grow in confidence, particularly general education teachers*... (Appendix 11, ST1.1.5).

It can be argued here that the reason for the less receptive attitudes of GT3 and GT4 regarding the inclusion of students with SEN proceeds from their lack of necessary training. This is a

pressing concern, which must be taken into account. Thus, it can be said that ST1, ST2, GT3 and GT4 believe, to a large extent, in the importance of specialised, intensive and professional teacher training.

The role of training in changing the attitudes of teachers was one of the main points made by ST1. Based on her own experiences, she assigned significance to the influence of training courses; stating:

> *I have noticed a drastic change in the attitudes of general education teachers before and after attending the training sessions ... the attitudes tend to be negative before a training session... there are a lot of things which have obviously changed for the better (*Appendix 11, ST1.1.7).

Based on this response, the researcher requested a further explanation of the ways in which she had noticed this change in attitudes. This change, according to ST1, was noticed in that, when general education teachers develop self-confidence and adopt a more positive view, they show more engagement with the students. They keep asking the special education teachers questions regarding the students with SEN and show willingness to join other courses, if available (Appendix 11, ST1.1.7).

This opinion should be viewed in reference to ST1's many years in the profession (ten years' experience teaching students with SEN in mainstream schools). She added:

> *... I am saying this because of the lengthy experience I have had in the field ... I cannot stress enough the importance of training and the positive impact it can have on teachers' attitudes…* (Appendix 11, ST1.1.5)

This might indicate that training equips teachers with the sufficient knowledge, skills and information regarding special education and students with SEN, which will result in their having more-positive attitudes when teaching students with SEN and managing issues related to them. The following chapter discusses the impact of training on teachers' attitudes. ST2 gave a comprehensive view of the key requirements related to training, which she believes can help

ensure that the process of teaching students with SEN is both a positive and successful experience. These requirements include:

> *The provision and improvement of educational tools in schools for students with SEN… offering the necessary training for teachers before the mainstreaming process; i.e. introducing students with SEN into normal classes…ensuring that there is collaboration between general and special education teachers in the preparation of educational plans…the identification of strengths and weaknesses, as well as skills that need to be acquired by students with SEN.* (Appendix 11, ST2.2.5)

In terms of the responses and findings discussed above, it can be concluded that training plays a significant role in promoting teachers' positivity around the inclusion of students with SEN. It can also be deduced that GT4 had a negative attitude about inclusion, when contrasted with the ST1, ST2 and GT3; this is most likely related to lack of access to training, and not to the concept of inclusion itself. This experience is not presented here as an example of current attitudes towards inclusion in all mainstream education contexts in the KSA, as a range of different experiences might exist. However, it can be concluded that training is a key factor shaping teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of students with SEN in the study context.

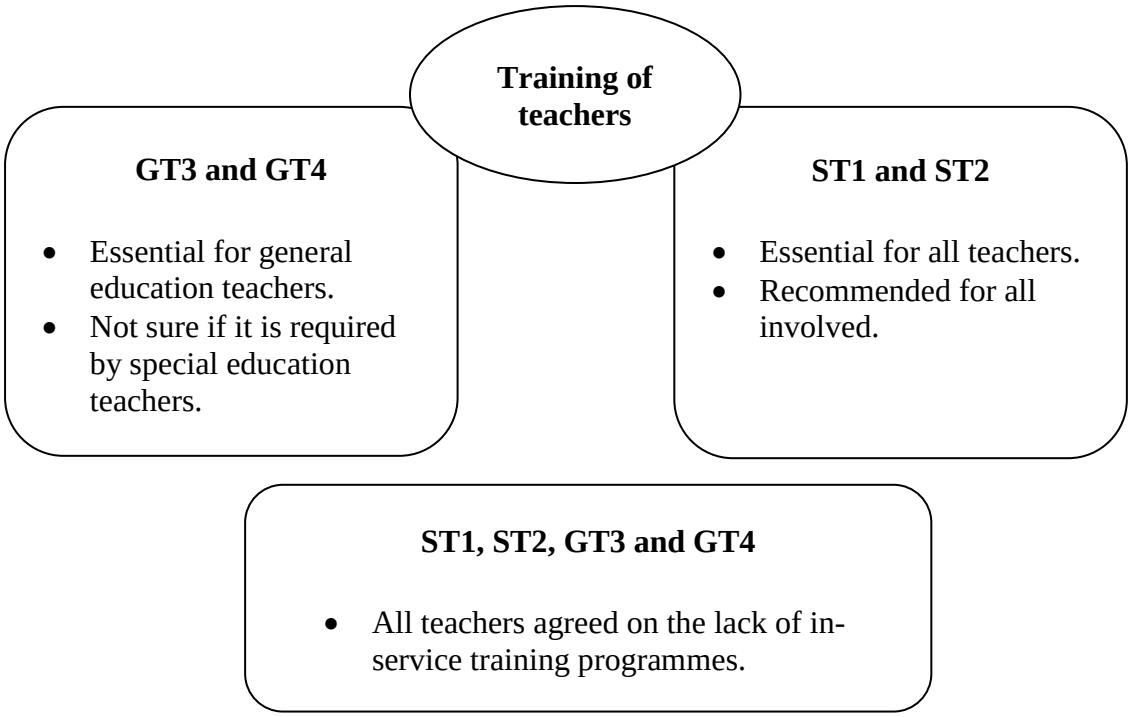


Figure 6.5. Thematic map of the sub-theme 'Training of teachers' based on the responses of ST1, ST2, GT3 and GT4.

6.4.2 Schools' facilities

All the interviewees complained about the lack of resources in their schools. According to ST2: "*our schools are not quite ready, and there is no funding allocated to the inclusion of students with SEN...*" (Appendix 12, ST2.2.8). ST1 added: "*the school environment is not appropriate, and the learning tools and preparation of teachers are not adequate to achieve successful inclusion …*" (Appendix 12, ST1.1.1). GT3 echoed this sentiment stating that:

> *… school funding is a fundamentally major problem …. in general, classrooms and the school need to be made into suitable environments for students with SEN.* (Appendix 12, GT3.3.1)

These teachers agreed on the lack of resources and the poor availability of funding to accommodate students with SEN in the mainstream setting. Participants' accounts lead to the conclusion that the inadequate provision of resources is a critical barrier to the success of the inclusion of students with SEN.

When teachers were asked about SEN provision, such as learning and assistive tools, special classrooms and resources, ST1 and ST2 reported that they try to prepare materials they think are appropriate with the limited resources available. Moreover, they assigned the responsibility for providing resources to the Department of Special Education: "*the Department of Special Education must provide the necessary educational resources to facilitate the education…*" (Appendix 12, ST2.2.3 and Appendix 12, ST1.1.5).

GT4 highlights the problems caused by lack of resources. She claimed:

> *… the problem with students with SEN and their teachers, whether general or special education teachers, is that they are desperately in need of support, in terms of the assistive tools and learning methods that would best suit students with SEN.*

Teachers gave generally negative responses when questioned about the provision of vital assistance and learning resources for students with various disabilities. Whilst expressing discontent over the meagre support, ST1 stressed the need to develop a complete set of learning tools for each classroom (Appendix 12, ST1.1.1). On the topic of resources, ST2 was vocal about requesting funds and resources, including books, and classroom materials relevant to all the mainstream schools in which inclusion programmes are underway (Appendix 12, ST2.2.5, Appendix 15, GT4.4.1, Appendix 12, GT3.3.1).

It is apparent that lack of resources, especially when classrooms are being taught by general education teachers, contributes to negativity towards inclusion in general, and students with SEN in particular. It exacerbates weak understanding and knowledge on the part of school head teachers, and school administrators, regarding the significance of financial support and the provision of necessary resources, and in terms of promoting inclusion and more positive attitudes towards inclusion of students with SEN.

Another significant issue raised by GT4 relates to classrooms size; specifically, the number of students. She stated that: "*classrooms are not equipped to accommodate students with SEN in addition to the large number of other students in the classroom, which can sometimes exceed 30 students*". ST2 echoed the significance of classrooms size thus: *"before taking on any students with SEN into mainstream classrooms, the school administration should focus on the number of children which can be included …*" (Appendix 12, ST2.2.6).

The interview findings discussed in this section highlight an important issue regarding the number of students in mainstream classrooms. Participants ST2 and GT4 pointed out that the greater the number of students in the classroom, the more difficult it is to accommodate students with SEN. There appears to be a consensus that the number of students, both students with SEN and their typically developing peers, play a huge role in influencing teachers' attitudes. Thus, it can be inferred that all four teachers were generally dissatisfied with school facilities, and the lack of available resources, suggesting these are major influencing factors hindering the promotion of inclusion.

A further issue raised by ST1 and ST2 concerned the importance of human resources; particularly the availability of a multidisciplinary team to provide support within schools that adopt inclusion programmes. ST1 and ST2 confirmed that the employment of such a team would constitute a step in the right direction. ST2, recommended that schools should have: "*a multidisciplinary team to help us achieve, successful inclusion*" (Appendix 12, ST2.2.7). Similarly, ST1 stated:

> *I hope to have such a team in our school, because we really need their expertise ... also, the school should provide specialists to help teachers, whether special education teachers or general education teachers ... they will definitely play a key role in our schools.* (Appendix 12, ST11.3)

She specifically listed the different types of expertise needed: "*such a team should include a social worker, psychologist, communication specialist and physical therapist…"* (Appendix 12, ST1.1.4). The interview findings show ST1 and ST2 confirmed the need for a multidisciplinary team to support inclusion within mainstream schools. To illustrate this point more clearly, ST2 reported:

> *... there is no multidisciplinary team available on a regular basis in schools, but what tends to happen is that they have visits to the school by specialists ... in fact, these visits are limited at best.* (Appendix 12, ST2.2.6)

It should be pointed out here that human resources play an important role in effective inclusion, and failing to take account of this key factor could have a negative effect on teachers' attitudes. As such, one of the major priorities of the Ministry of Education must be to ensure sufficient physical and human resources, including a multidisciplinary team, for all mainstream schools, to effectively manage and implement inclusion of students with SEN.

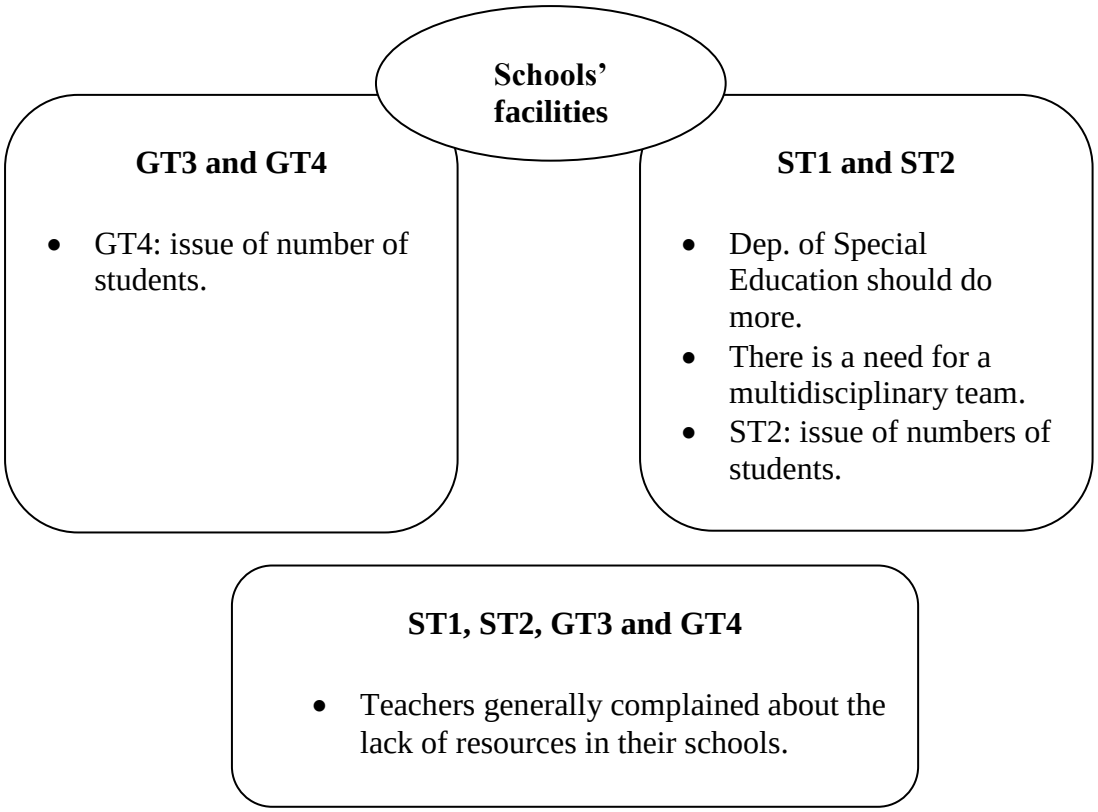


Figure 6.6. Thematic map of the sub-theme 'Schools' facilities' based on the responses of ST1, ST2, GT3 and GT4.

6.4.3 Teachers' collaboration

Another key issue raised by ST1 and ST2 concerned the lack of collaboration between special education teachers and the general education teachers in their schools; ST2 stressed that: *"the problem facing us in schools applying inclusion practice is the lack of collaboration on the part of general education teachers and special education teachers".* She further explained that they rarely meet:

> *We never meet, except very occasionally when there is a specific problem which needs to be given attention by all of us ... sometimes, we arrange a number of meetings at the beginning of the school year, which are usually focused on organisational issues, such as organising the student timetable...* (Appendix 13, ST2.2.4)

In addition, ST1 stated:

> *...there is hardly any collaboration between the general education teachers and special education teachers when it comes to identifying and dealing with the difficulties faced by students with SEN in the schools.*

She further explained, "*there are no meetings whatsoever between us and the general education teachers ... in fact, there isn't any form of collaboration...*". The interviews conducted with ST1 and ST2 revealed the value of establishing collaborative relations between general education teachers and special education teachers as a means to promoting inclusion of students with SEN. As ST2 explained:

> *In any inclusion programmes adopted by mainstreams schools, there ought to be strong collaboration between general and special education teachers, in terms of preparing individual educational plans and identifying the strengths and weaknesses of each student.* (Appendix 13, ST2.2.2)

Another crucial point raised by ST1 related to the need to encourage general education teachers to acknowledge that successful inclusion relies heavily on their willingness to collaborate (Appendix 13, ST1.1.3). ST1 and ST2 confirmed there was an issue with lack of collaboration in reference to general education teachers, and that this seems to be a systemic problem. The interview findings revealed that the two special education teachers who participated in this study recognised the significance of collaboration in the success of inclusion programmes in mainstream schools. Unfortunately, according to them, collaboration is not routine in mainstream schools in Riyadh.

GT3 admitted there is a low level of collaboration between the two groups of teachers. However, she attributes this limited collaboration to a number of factors, including the large classroom size, the teachers' busy schedules, students with SEN having their timetables designed by special education teachers, the shortage of adequate training, and the failure to specify the role of general education teachers in relation to the inclusion of students with SEN (Appendix 13, GT3.3.1).

By contrast, when the same question was posed to GT4, she responded:

> *I do not think that general education teachers' opinions are considered important or taken into account in terms of the inclusion of students with SEN, because they have a distinct lack of knowledge about students with SEN and inclusive education.*

She added, "*this should be the task of special education teachers*"; suggesting a lack of clarity over the specific roles of each group of teachers. This was further emphasised by ST2, who offered some recommendations about how to enhance collaboration between special education teachers and general education teachers in mainstream schools. She reported the need for "*...highlighting the role of general education teachers in schools that adopt inclusion; ...determining the role of general education teachers in the inclusion of students with SEN ...*" (Appendix 13, ST2.2.3).

To conclude, it is apparent that a number of factors contribute to the lack of collaboration between special education teachers and general education teachers in mainstream schools; this is of concern as collaboration is crucial to ensure successful inclusion. The most important barrier to collaboration is the lack of mutual understanding regarding general and special education teachers' roles. Although the Saudi educational policy emphasises the importance of collaboration and assigned collaboration as one of the duties of each group of teachers, what seems to be missing in this policy is practicality. This will be further discussed in the discussion chapter.

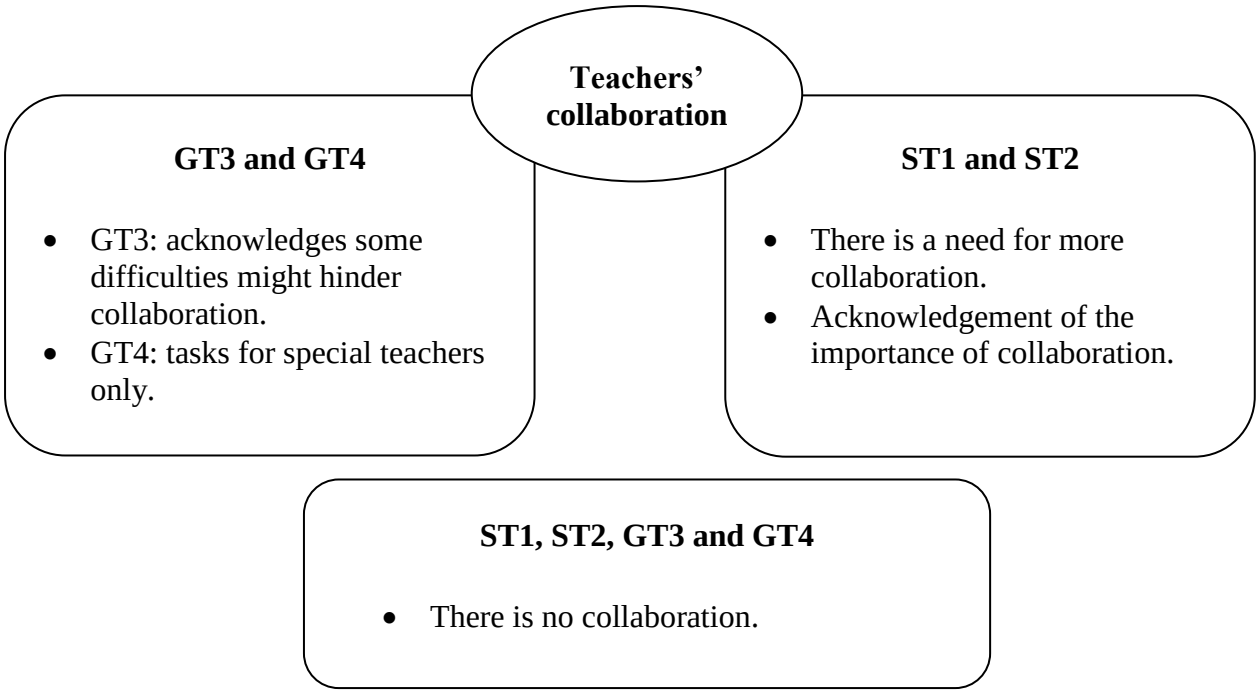


Figure 6.7. Thematic map of the sub-theme 'Teachers' collaboration' based on the responses of ST1, ST2, GT3 and GT4.

6.5 Issues influencing teachers' attitudes towards inclusion

The evidence collected from the interviewees reveals that the teachers consider teacher-related and environmental-related barriers as potential impediments to the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools. The sub-themes below relate to the barriers identified; the first sub-section details the barriers to inclusion, and the second suggests how to overcome these barriers.

6.5.1 Barriers to inclusion

The interview data clarify that barriers relating to teachers and the school environment itself have the potential to limit promoting inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools. The importance of the teacher and the environment were repeatedly stressed by all four interviewees. Moreover, they did not distinguish between these two factors, as each plays a

major role in influencing the attitudes of teachers regarding the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools.

They agreed that the major barriers to successful inclusion are teacher-related, in particular lack of training. For example, according to ST1, to improve the current situation, training is a foremost priority, especially for general education teachers who have no previous training about how to teach students with SEN:

> *It is important to provide training as one of the foremost priorities, especially for teachers in general education who are currently dealing with students with SEN...* (Appendix 14, ST1.1.1)

This teacher also highlighted that training should not only be for general education teachers, but should also include special education teachers where she stated that:

> *Training should not be restricted to general education teachers but has to also involve special education teachers, as they need to keep abreast of the latest developments and be engaged in advanced levels of preparation by attending more sophisticated and specialised special education programmes and courses...* (Appendix 14, ST1.1.2)

Expanding on this point, the same teacher outlined a broad hierarchical classification of key barriers to enhancing inclusion as:

> *Teacher-related factors largely associated with training and the creation of an appropriate school environment as well as the provision of the necessary resources and student-related factors.*

This opinion should be considered carefully, especially because ST1 has had ten years' experience teaching students with SEN in mainstream schools. This teacher confirmed: "*yes, given my long experience in the field, I can really say that these are the main issues and barriers to the inclusion* [of students with SEN]".

ST2 cited three key barriers to enhancing inclusion: training, school environment and the type and the severity of the students' disability (Appendix 14, ST2.2.1). Further barriers facing

schools that adopt inclusion programmes, are "*...the negative attitudes of general education teachers... teachers' difficulty accepting students with SEN...*" (Appendix 14, ST1.1.2). Additionally, ST2 mentioned: "*...the lack of awareness and knowledge among school members, such as general education teachers, administrative staff and students, is a big issue*". The same teacher confirmed the importance of promoting the inclusion of students with SEN in society overall, "*to ensure the level of people's understanding of inclusion*". She further opined that this is a process that must be initiated by teachers, as they are in regular and direct contact with students with SEN. GT4, also claimed knowledge is a major barrier to inclusion: "*...general education teachers do not have adequate information or knowledge regarding students with SEN, types of disabilities and their causes*". GT3 echoed the significance of lack of training as a barrier to the effective implementation of inclusion.

The interviewees agreed regarding other barriers hindering the success of inclusion; namely the school environment, specifically the poor availability of educational and learning resources. ST2 argued that: "*...the school environment and facilities should be reassessed before applying inclusion programmes in schools*". Referring to her own school, she observed: "*educational tools and activities to promote and facilitate the inclusion of students with SEN within the school in general and classrooms in particular are not available*" (Appendix 14, ST2.2.3). Similarly, ST1 stated: "*one of the main barriers which we are faced with lies in the absence of the right tools which could help us meet the needs of students with SEN in our schools*".

Moreover, GT3 noted that her school had not adapted to smooth the implementation of inclusion. She claimed that: "*...learning environment, classrooms and regulations have not changed since inclusion programmes have been introduced into mainstream schools..."* (Appendix 14, GT3.3.3). In terms of materials and resources, GT4 explained: "*the learning resources room in our school is considered the perfect example of a model classroom, but it seems that it has been looked after by special education teachers alone*" (Appendix 14,

GT4.4.2). GT3 explained that the provision of such resources is essential, as preparing the school environment is critical to the successful inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools (Appendix 15, ST3.3.3). When ST2 was asked which of the two factors she believed to be the most important, teacher-related-, or school-environment-related, she responded:

> *Both factors have the same importance and weight in terms of affecting teachers' attitudes ... when they are not appropriately addressed, they can also have a very negative impact in terms of achieving successful inclusion and teacher attitude.*

ST2, GT3 and GT4 all echoed this response, and ST2 claimed:

> *... it is not possible to compare the attitudes of teachers who have all the resources and educational tools at their disposal to cater for students with SEN and those who seem to be lacking such tools…* (Appendix 14, ST2.2.9)

In conclusion, teacher-related factors and environmental factors represent the greatest hindrances to effective inclusion in the mainstream schools in which ST1, ST2, GT3 and GT4 work.

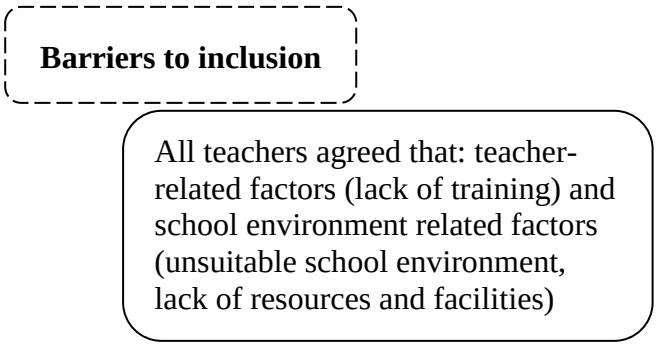


Figure 6.8. Thematic map of the sub-theme 'Barriers to inclusion' based on the responses of ST1, ST2, GT3 and GT4.

6.5.2 How to overcome these barriers

Based on the interview findings discussed above, ST1, ST2, GT3 and GT4 believe teachers' skills development, and the creation of a suitable educational environment should be top priorities for decision-makers. In addition, there is a pressing need to improve, redesign, prepare and create effective interactive learning opportunities and resources for students with

SEN in mainstream schools. Important first steps would be to ensure that training is available to all teachers, and to provide resources and a suitable school environment for students with SEN. Arguably, for students with SEN to be successfully included in mainstream schools, teacher-related- and environmental-factors must be overcome as a matter of urgency. How this can be achieved involves discussion of two main areas.

First, on the issue of barriers relating to the school environment, GT3 proposed a number of recommendations, as follows:

1- *Prepare the school environment to suit the basic requirements of the inclusion.*
2- *Provide all the necessary facilities, equipment, and resources to meet the needs of students with SEN in the school.*
3- *[Provide]Full, substantial and effective support from the Ministry of Education to prepare all mainstream schools before including any students with SEN, both fully and partially.*
4- *Encouraging the Department of Special Education to provide and improve educational tools and equipment.* (Appendix 15, GT3.3.1, 2, 3)

Similarly, ST2 raised a further important point, stressing that discussing barriers and criticizing the status quo without providing a solution is not enough (Appendix 15, ST2.2.1). She suggested the Ministry of Education should:

1- *Provide all the learning tools and resources prior to the transfer and registration of students with SEN into mainstream schools.*
2- *Modify the schools, classrooms and restrooms to take into account the capabilities and needs of students with SEN.*
3- *[Modify] class size, whereby the school administration must determine the number of ordinary students in each class and also the number of students with SEN to be included, either in mainstream classes or in classes attached to mainstream schools. (Appendix 15, ST2.2.2)*
4- *Create a multidisciplinary team in each school that adopt inclusion and special education programmes. (Appendix 15, ST2.2.3)*

The teacher further elaborated that multidisciplinary teams must ensure that the needs of students with SEN in mainstream schools are well catered for, which is only possible through the establishment of a coherent, multifaceted decision-making process, and with the consideration of educational, psychological, social and behavioural factors that enhance

student learning, and assist teachers to adapt their attitudes and provide effective and immediate support. GT4 supported the idea of financing schools directly, and making funds available to school administrators to meet future needs for inclusion. She suggested: *"... providing a sum of money at the start of each academic year to be at the disposal of the school administration ..."* (Appendix 15, GT4.4.1). Finally, ST2 added, it is important to "*provide an environment conducive to student learning*" which can be attained through financial support and with various learning aids. Such factors will ultimately promote the inclusion of students with SEN in the mainstream setting.

Regarding the other barriers, which relate to teachers, these must be given due consideration. Specifically, teachers should be given opportunities to develop their skills, by providing them with training and continuing professional development programmes. For example, ST1 proposed that training for teachers is a significant factor in successful inclusion, suggesting that "*general education teachers should seek to acquire a diploma in special education*". ST2 echoed this view (Appendix 11, ST2.2.4). GT3 also mentioned the "*requirement for schools adopting inclusion programmes to provide the necessary training for teachers.*" Noting that in other words, there should be more in-service training programmes in mainstream schools for school teachers. Thus, as clearly expressed in the interviews, there is a growing need to strengthen the abilities, skills and knowledge of teachers, both general education teachers and special education teachers. ST2 on the other hand made another interesting recommendation, specifically regarding improving collaboration between special education teachers and general education teachers, and delegating a collaborative team to ensure challenges are dealt with effectively (Appendix 15, ST2.2.4).

According to ST1 and ST2, before allocating a student with SEN to a mainstream school, the school should address potential lacks and attempt to promote positive attitudes, not only through the provision of financial motivations, but also through the provision of "*...regular*

awareness programmes which help change the negative attitudes of all school members…" (Appendix 15, ST1.1.2). In addition, ST2 confirmed:

> *…it will not be possible for us to fully achieve inclusion in terms of its aim and objectives if teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of students with SEN, as well as those of the school's members are negative.*

According to the interview findings, there are a number of key contributors to overcoming barriers and dealing with the challenges associated with the accomplishment of successful inclusion. These factors include the provision of adequate funding to support and facilitate effective inclusion. The second factor is the provision of training for special education teachers and general education teachers alike, although training should be appropriate with individual's respective abilities and responsibilities. A further factor is enhancing collaborative team work by establishing a multidisciplinary team to supervise activities and ensure the implementation of educational plans, according to the individual needs of students with SEN. Finally, based on this finding, it is important to try to address the negative attitudes that are prevalent in mainstream schools, by providing awareness programmes.

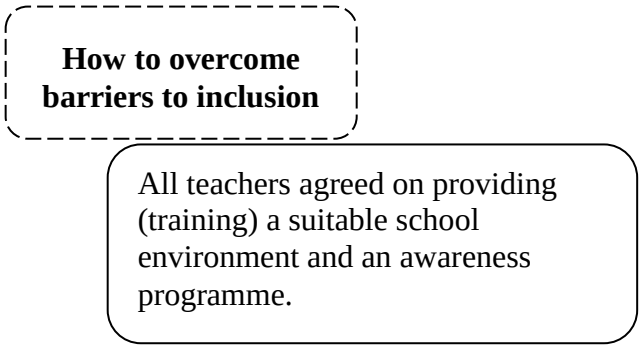


Figure 6.9. Thematic map of the sub-theme 'How to overcome barriers to inclusion' based on the responses of ST1, ST2, GT3 and GT4.

6.6 Summary of the chapter

This chapter has presented the findings regarding all the themes and emergent sub-themes that relate directly to teachers' knowledge and understanding of the concept of SEN inclusion; concentrating on teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools, and the factors and requirements affecting the effective implementation of inclusive education and providing an account of the barriers to the inclusion of students with SEN and how to overcome these barriers. As was made clear in the analysis of the findings, ST1 and ST2, GT3 and GT4's attitudes were not consistent.

The findings of the interviews show a difference between the teachers, specifically GT3 and GT4 versus ST1 and ST2 teachers, in terms of how they understand inclusion. The results demonstrate that the concept of inclusion is clear to ST1 and ST2, whose responses revealed understanding and knowledge of the notion of including students with SEN, both at school level and within the wider society. In the cases of GT3 and GT4, the concept of inclusion was not so clearly understood, with the findings suggesting their understanding of the concept of inclusion is restricted to the placement of students with SEN in special classrooms within mainstream schools. Hence, it can be concluded that ST1 and ST2's understanding is a consequence of their academic specialization, which they selected as a field of study at university. GT3 and GT4 have different qualifications and education backgrounds, and have not been given any access to pre-service training.

Further, the teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools differed. GT3 and GT4 were generally inclined to demonstrate slightly negative attitudes, especially towards accommodating students with SEN within mainstream classrooms. In addition, GT3 and GT4 did not foresee any academic benefits from including students with SEN. In contrast, ST1 and ST2 favoured the inclusion of students with SEN in

schools in general, and in classrooms in particular, deeming this to be a right for students with SEN.

However, the results of the interview analysis suggest that, from ST1and ST2's perspective, the current conditions in KSA schools do not lend themselves to the effective inclusion of students with severe disabilities in mainstream classrooms. Thus, the most appropriate approach would be to include them in special classrooms within mainstream schools, depending on the severity of the students' needs (ST1 and ST2). This would allow them the opportunity to benefit from learning in a similar environment to their typically developing peers. This locational inclusion is particularly useful when building social ties and enhancing students' interactional and communication opportunities, and hence their self-confidence. GT3 and GT4 were more opposed to such inclusion than ST1 and ST2, who believed that it could be achieved effectively only if certain terms and conditions were taken into account. These positive attitudes support the belief that ST1 and ST2 are comfortable with working with students with SEN, providing that effective measures are in place.

Training is an essential element of inclusion, and GT3 and GT4 expressed their dissatisfaction in this area, explaining their lack of knowledge and inability to effectively teach students with SEN. A further point that must be highlighted is that general education teachers in the KSA are often graduates in other disciplines or subjects that have little to do with the teaching students with SEN, special education in general. Therefore, training is a paramount concern, and in the case of general education teachers it needs to be intensive and focused on the requirements of their respective classrooms and schools. The results did, however, find that ST1 and ST2 demonstrated a more positive attitude to the inclusion of students with SEN, most likely as a result of their pre-service training, which enables them to perform the several tasks required when teaching students with SEN in mainstream settings. The positive attitudes of ST1 and

ST2 were demonstrated in their statements regarding access to pre-service training. They further noted that they had the necessary knowledge and ability to teach students with SEN. However, they were equally eager to engage in more professional in-service training courses, commenting that these would engage them in continuous development in their field, ensuring that they keep up-to-date with all developments in the several aspects of special education. ST1, ST2, GT3 and GT4 confirmed that in-service training opportunities in the KSA were limited.

Qualitative analysis of the interview data presented in this study revealed a pressing need for resources and a suitable learning environment for students with SEN. ST1, ST2, GT3 and GT4 criticised the lack of resources in their schools, stating that this contributes to problems delivering effective inclusion. This should be considered a key factor when looking at how to improve the success of inclusion of students with SEN within mainstream schools. ST1 and ST2 also highlighted another important issue; namely human resources and the establishment of a multidisciplinary team, which are also fundamental within the domain of special education. ST1 and ST2 approved the idea of assigning a diverse multi-disciplinary team to provide support within those schools implementing inclusion programmes. In the interviews, ST1 and ST2 confirmed that such a team would contribute immensely to the successful inclusion of students with SEN, and that potential decision-makers and stakeholders should, therefore, take this into consideration. If all of the above elements were put in place, this would contribute to the implementation of successful inclusion in mainstream schools.

Finally, the quantitative and qualitative data analysis sections in the current and previous chapters have presented several findings for discussion in the next chapter, to attain a fuller picture of the participants' understanding and attitudes towards inclusion of students with SEN

in mainstream schools. The next chapter will also compare and contrast the findings presented with those reported in the relevant literature.

CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION

7.1 Introduction

The previous two chapters presented the findings from the questionnaires completed by special and general education teachers in mainstream girls' primary schools in Riyadh, KSA, and from the interviews with four teachers, two of whom were special education and two general education teachers. In total, 165 teachers were involved in the questionnaires: 82 general education and 83 special education teachers.

The researcher considered that the thematic analysis approach was most effective to present her reflections on the findings. The initial analysis of the data collected through the two main data collection methods identified three themes with their sub-themes. These are discussed in terms of their overall meaning, and possible interpretation, as follows:

- Theme one: teachers' understanding of inclusive education (Section 7.2);
- Theme two: the attitude of teachers towards the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools and classrooms (Section 7.3);
- Theme three: factors affecting teachers' attitudes regarding the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools (Section 7.4).

These themes are broken down into sub-themes, according to the data and the emerging factors identified during the analysis of the questionnaire and interview answers. These sub-themes are discussed in relation to the wider literature review. All the selected themes and sub-themes present the attitudes of the general and special education teachers towards the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream girls' primary schools in the KSA.

7.2 Theme one: Teachers' understanding of inclusive education

As previously noted, this theme corresponds with the findings of the questionnaire and the interviews, as presented in previous chapters. Prior to discussing the teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools, it is important to establish the teachers' understanding of the concept of inclusion. The importance of this theme was clarified by the findings, which highlighted differences between the understanding of the concept of inclusion between the general and special education teachers.

It was important to establish the level of understanding the teachers had towards inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools. The findings illustrated that teachers saw differing levels of inclusive practices, i.e. ST1 viewed inclusion as guaranteed for all students with SEN "*giving them the same rights*" (Appendix 7, ST1.1.1) to an education as their typically developing peers. There is one possible explanation of the ideal of inclusion as a 'right' as coming from the Saudi legislation, which states that all students with SEN have the right to be taught to the best of their ability. An example of this legislation is the Saudi Provision Code for Persons with Disabilities (2000). The Code guarantees the rights of students with SEN to access free and appropriate healthcare, as well as social, educational and rehabilitation services. It further establishes the need for public agencies to assess an individual's eligibility for education, health and allied services (Princess Salman Centre for Disability Research, 2004). ST1 linked this not only to a student's right to be included, but also to participate and become an active member in her school and classroom (Appendix 7, ST1.1.1). ST2, on the other hand, focused on the removal of barriers to learning and interaction between typically developing peers and students with SEN (Appendix 7, ST2.2.1).

As well as an understanding of inclusion, teachers should be aware of equality and equity. The moral paradigm of inclusive education should be that of educational equity, which takes into

account the need to give fair and appropriate learning opportunities to these students, due to the multiple factors affecting their ability (Curcic et al., 2011; Sen, 2004). However, ST1 remarked that students with SEN should be given the "same learning opportunities" (Appendix 8, ST1.1.6) and "equal opportunities in education and to fully participate in all mainstream curricular activities" (Appendix 8, ST1.1.7), indicating that students with SEN are not currently accorded the same opportunities in mainstream schools as their typically developing peers. This teacher demonstrated little awareness of the subtle differences between equality of education and equity of education. The above teacher advocated educational equality, in which all students should have the same opportunities, regardless of ability. However, it is important to note that ensuring equality when teaching students with SEN does not mean that equitable learning will be achieved. An interesting example elaborating the difference between equity and equality, as suggested by Hill (2014), is that ensuring a fair start to all runners in a race, which is equality, does not mean they are all given a fair finish as some runners may have different needs and require assistance during the course of the race, where equity is the case. This means that access to learning for students with SEN should not only be equal, but rather that more learning opportunities should be given to those in need to ensure meeting the needs of all students in their learning. In addition, it is vital that the students themselves feel that are valued by the school community, including teachers, particularly when their results might be different to those from their typically developing peers. Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011) suggest the necessity of two important elements that need to be taken into account in inclusive schools. One is that teachers and schools value all students equally, and the second is the importance of students' acceptance of the teaching and learning process in the classroom to ensure meeting their needs. This also implies that teachers need to understand the differences between students so their pedagogical approach can be adjusted to ensure every student learns based on their individual needs. This is certainly an area where improvements could be made.

The research confirmed that there are differences in attitude between special education teachers and general education teachers, with a more positive overall view of inclusion from the special education teachers. In the discussion with the general education teachers, GT3 viewed special classrooms as a beneficial alternative setting for students with SEN to gain access to mainstream schools, as she tended to focus on locational inclusion and separation, limiting inclusion to extracurricular activities (Appendix 7, GT3.3.1). Similarly, GT4 perceived inclusion as integration, i.e. "students with special needs being included in regular schools" (Appendix 7, GT4.4.1). ST1 and ST2 demonstrated an understanding and awareness of the concept of inclusion in relation to students with SEN. However, GT3 and GT4 limited inclusion to the acceptance of students with SEN into mainstream schools. The replies regarding awareness and understanding of the concept of inclusive education reveal that ST1 and ST2 demonstrated a greater theoretical knowledge of inclusive education than GT3 and GT4.

Having understood the view of general education teachers as different from their special education colleagues in regard to this issue, it could be said that, although general education teachers still defined inclusion as meaning acceptance in mainstream schools, they could not define how students with SEN should be taught. This should be related to issues such as pedagogies, equity and equality of inclusion. So, an explanation for this variation between teachers concerns their academic background and qualifications. In the KSA, special education teachers are required to specialise in special education and in teaching students with SEN, whereas general education teachers are not. This background knowledge and understanding of the concept of inclusion, as well as how it should be implemented, played a crucial role in the different attitudes towards inclusion of special education teachers and general education teachers. This is supported by the findings of a number of studies (Boyle et al., 2013). Thus, the understanding of inclusion forms a key factor with a considerable influence upon attitudes, i.e. teachers with greater knowledge of inclusion tend to hold more positive attitudes

(Leatherman & Niemeyer, 2005; Vaz et al., 2015). This is confirmed by GT4, who noted that a lack of knowledge is a major barrier to inclusion: "*general education teachers do not have adequate information or knowledge regarding students with SEN, (including) types of disabilities and their causes*" (Appendix 14, GT4.4.1). This, in fact, strongly indicates a need for preparing teachers adequately by providing information and knowledge about inclusion and students with SEN. This could be through providing training and awareness workshops prior to introducing inclusion in mainstream schools.

ST1 and ST2 also suggested the need to raise awareness, based on their observation of a number of non-inclusive practices by general education teachers in their schools, which they considered as being due to a lack of awareness. These practices included ST2's report that her school had suggested dividing breaks into separate times for typically developing students and students with SEN (Appendix 8, ST2.2.11). ST2 further reported (Appendix 8, ST2.2.13) that some of the general education teachers in the school referred to the special classrooms as a place of punishment, including threatening typically developing students who failed to do their homework with being sent to the special classrooms. This practice appeared to result from a lack of awareness of inclusion, including its requirements and implementation. This was confirmed by both ST1 (Appendix 15, ST1.1.2) and ST2 (Appendix 15, ST2.2.6).

Such actions indicate exclusionary practices, thus contradicting the policy of inclusion. This requires the Ministry of Education to both conduct regular inspection visits to schools to observe practices of inclusion, and also increase awareness of inclusion and improve inclusive practices. ST1 also stated that an acknowledgement of the rights of students with SEN would force their acceptance by society in general (Appendix 8, ST1.2.14). This suggests that ST1 perceives that there remains a wider barrier to overcome in relation to inclusion, i.e. a social lack of awareness of the rights of students with SEN. The issue of increasing awareness is of a

particular importance in the Saudi context, due to evidence of a low level of awareness of inclusion and students with SEN (Al-Fahily, 2009). This is further supported by Oliver (1996, p.43) who stated that "society, and not people with impairment, should be the target for professional intervention and practice". According to this view, when the attitudes of teachers and their societies fail to change for the good in this respect, inclusion is likely to remain an unreachable – or at least difficult to attain – goal. In contrast, when attitudes towards inclusion of students with SEN eventually do change positively, this tends to lead to the promotion of diversity, equal participation, and human rights, as well as a sense of belonging.

It should be stressed that such awareness can be addressed through appropriate collaboration between staff, including teachers, which is one way of raising awareness towards issues such as equality, equity and pedagogy. This is especially important in a culture where some people believe students with SEN always need to attend special schools where their particular learning needs could be addressed more appropriately than in ordinary schools and that those students always need specific teaching approaches. However, a prior action from the top level is required, as it is the policy itself that defines inclusion of students with SEN and its surrounding issues, such as equality of access, equity of education, pedagogy, provision of training for teachers, and guidance on the implementation of inclusion. It has been learnt that the historical and cultural stance has an impact on the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools and that the policies themselves are affected accordingly and so these actions are significant to foster changes in this area.

7.3 Theme two: The attitude of teachers towards the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools and classrooms

Given the conclusions drawn within the first theme identified in this study, it is necessary to discuss teachers' attitudes regarding inclusion of students with SEN, the quality of

collaboration between the two groups of teachers, and their attitudes towards the benefits of inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools. For this purpose, both the quantitative and the qualitative findings will be interpreted and linked to the previous literature in the field of inclusive education. After an analysis of the relevant findings, three important sub-themes emerged that are discussed below.

7.3.1 Differences in attitudes between teachers

The majority of the general education teachers demonstrated a positive attitude towards inclusion in relation to the cognitive and affective components, but not the behavioural component. It became evident that, of the two groups, the special education teachers revealed a more positive attitude in all the three components of attitude. This conclusion was drawn from the responses given in Section 5.6 (see Table 5.14 and Table 5.15 of the quantitative findings), which reveal that all the special education teachers demonstrated more positive attitudes in comparison to their general education counterparts. The same conclusion can be drawn from Table 5.14, which demonstrates a number of significant differences between the responses of the two groups in terms of the three components of attitude, thus confirming that special education teachers have a more positive attitude than general education teachers.

In addition, the findings reported in Table 5.15 confirm that almost all of the participants expressing negative beliefs were general education teachers. On the other hand, over half of the teachers demonstrating positive feelings, and who stated that they felt happy and comfortable with the concept of inclusion of students with SEN, were special education teachers. The findings from the interviews concur with the findings from the questionnaire. Given their knowledge of the purpose, and the advantages, of inclusion, ST1 and ST2 were strongly in favour of the inclusive approach, in contrast to GT3 and GT4. This finding that special education teachers have a more positive attitude in comparison to general education teachers is consistent with the findings of similar studies (Alahbabi, 2009; Alghazo, 2002;

McLeskey & Waldron; 2002). However, although these studies were in agreement with the current study (i.e. that special education teachers hold more positive attitudes than general education teachers towards inclusion of students with SEN in inclusive settings) the current study differs, in that it investigated teachers' attitudes by specifically observing three components, i.e. cognitive, affective and behavioural.

These findings raise the issue of why the special education teachers in this study held significantly higher levels of positive attitudes than general education teachers. This finding could result from the participating special education teachers having been in receipt of pre-service training. This training is university based and forms part of their undergraduate degree. At the same time, it is a specific and intensive course aimed at the teaching of students with SEN by enhancing their skills and building their knowledge. This differs from the training of general education teachers, who did not follow any training course relating to special education prior to their teaching career. Both Avramidis et al. (2000) and Carroll et al. (2003) argued that this form of training is a key factor in promoting the positive attitudes of teachers.

This finding about training from the interviews thus revealed that special education teachers require professional, advanced and continuous in-service support and training. Avramidis (2006) argued for such access to professional, advanced and continuous support and training in the appropriate areas and skills to enhance teachers' involvement in inclusive education. Furthermore, Al-Sartawi (1995), Elhoweris and Alsheikh (2006), Olson (2003) and Van Reusen et al. (2000) confirmed the existence of a positive relationship between teachers' attitudes and specialised knowledge and training in this field. Such specialised knowledge, understanding and skills in special education contributes to the cognitive component of attitudes, which, in turn, plays a key role in enhancing positive attitudes (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993).

This study identified that training has a positive influence on the attitude of teachers. This accords with a number of previous studies (e.g. Al-Gomah, 2009; Avramidis & Kalyva, 2007; Leyser et al., 1994; Martha et al., 1999; Salend, 2001; Shade & Stewart, 2001; Smith, 2010; Subban & Sharma,2001). However, the researcher acknowledges that this may not be the only factor in promoting positive attitudes. For example, special education teachers may have held positive attitudes prior to undertaking their training, which may have led them to wish to become special education teachers, i.e. a professional interest in special education or personal experience with individuals with SEN. This observation leads to a potential for future research in the area of inclusive education.

Another unexpected finding in this research is, despite special education teachers demonstrating more positive attitudes, the significance of 'othering' that still occurred both in teachers' attitudes and in the language that teachers used to describe students with SEN. For example, all the interviewed teachers (i.e. ST1, ST2, GT3 and GT4) employed the phrase "deal with them" to indicate working with students with SEN (Appendix 12, ST2.2.7, Appendix 14, ST1.1.1, Appendix 8, GT4.4.2 and Appendix 11, GT3.3.1). The analysis of the findings indicates that there is a culture of separation, in which students with SEN remain as 'other' (Dunne, 2008). Considering the Saudi context in particular, the idea of inclusion has not been thought of beyond the physical attendance of students with SEN in mainstreams schools. As a result, differences clearly exist between how students with SEN and other students are perceived. Such conceptualisation and use of language need to be changed. This is because language does not only reflect the teachers' attitudes but it also shapes it and maintains it (Villa & Thousand, 2005).

A more positive interpretation, however, is that the use of the phase 'deal with them' may also reflect an attempt to find ways to foster the inclusion of individuals with SEN, not only in schools but also in wider society, i.e. by seeking means of facilitating their inclusion. This is

evidenced from ST1's statement of a wish to "*take their needs into account, including learning how to deal with them on a larger scale outside the school confines*" (Appendix 8, ST1.2.14). This could include providing facilities required for individuals with SEN in the wider community, for example considering the accessibility of buildings other than schools and providing a sign language translator when required, in order to fulfil their right to choose the life they value, and to ensure their equality with others (Sen, 1993). The provision of such services could contribute to increasing social awareness of the rights of individuals with SEN, an issue raised in this study by ST1.

A vital aspect in promoting inclusion is effective collaboration between both general education teachers and special education teachers, in order to enhance students' learning and promote inclusion. This study found that teachers' attitudes towards inclusion and students with SEN have a considerable impact on their collaboration, with those holding more negative attitudes being less likely to co-operate. As noted by Avramidis et al. (2000, p.192), "the success of innovative and challenging programmes must surely depend upon the collaboration and commitment of those most directly involved".

Given the importance of the collaboration between teachers in promoting inclusion of students with SEN, it needs to be discussed in greater detail. Therefore, the following sub-theme considers the issue of collaboration between teachers, including the requirements for its promotion and aspects that may prevent it from succeeding.

7.3.2 Collaboration between general education teachers and special education teachers

Collaboration between general education teachers and special education teachers is essential to the promotion of inclusion within mainstream schools. The findings of this study establish that, although special education teachers acknowledged the value of establishing collaborative relations between general education teachers and special education teachers as a means of

promoting inclusion, one of the main issues was their low level of collaboration. The participants stated that this tends to be inadequate in the KSA, being limited to "*organising the student timetable*" (Appendix 13, ST2.2.4). This has also been documented in various previous studies, including that of Cohn and Safran (1981), as cited in McNamara (1989). Based on the literature review in Chapters 2 and 3, and the findings of this current study, this can be explained by continuing gaps in understanding between the general and special education teachers regarding the process of teaching students with SEN, including their respective roles. As discussed in Chapter 2, Saudi educational policy emphasises the importance of collaboration between each group of teachers, but at the same times lacks practical applicability, including a failure to discuss the sharing of roles or why (and how) collaboration should take place. It has been globally acknowledged that inclusion policy is a response to the agenda of human rights, including equality and equity in education (Florian, 2008). However, it has been suggested that the human rights of those with SEN has been misunderstood as meaning students with SEN simply attending mainstream schools but studying separately. Nowadays, the global trend is shifting from giving students with SEN the right to attend mainstream schools towards ensuring that these student are fairly and equally taught, to ensure their rights are met the same as others'. However, while such agendas are presently documented, in the present practice the preceding issues are still areas of concern which means that concrete implementation interventions are required. For example, there are many issues a policy needs to clarify as to how such an agenda could be addressed. For example, the lack of clarity, when it comes to understanding the role played by each group when teaching students with SEN and enhancing inclusion, has frequently been reported to result in the emergence of a communication gap and thus considerable disagreement between special education teachers and general education teachers (Ali et al., 2006). This is particularly significant as both sets of teachers now work alongside each other within the same school/classroom and with the same

students. This was also noted by Griffin et al. (2008), whose study maintained that one of the most challenging problems encountered by special education teachers is the confusion surrounding their role, alongside the capacity in which they are expected to carry out their teaching tasks. Therefore, it is important to establish a framework for collaborative working, in which the respective roles are clearly defined, so enabling both groups of teachers to understand their responsibilities.

Friend et al. (2010), argued that school culture should include collaboration, along with the sharing of resources, accountability and joint decision-making, in order to meet the needs of all students. The lack of collaboration in this study could be due to a lack of this collaborative culture in the school. This could be explained by the fact that previously there was a physical separation between teachers of general and special education as they worked in different settings and did not work together collaboratively in the same school. Robinson and Buly (2007) suggested that the differences in their approach and the lack of collaboration arose as consequences of their being separated. This can be seen as leading to a failure to collaborate, as some general education teachers believe that they bear no responsibility towards students with SEN, as it is solely the role of special education teachers (Tilstone & Rose, 2003). This was observed in the findings of this current study, i.e. GT4's response that *"... [collaboration] should be the task of special education teachers*" (Appendix 13, GT4.4.2). As the provision of education is always a shared responsibility now, this view needs to be challenged. This is supported by the SEND Code of Practice (2015), which states that "all teachers are teachers of pupils with special educational needs" (Tutt & Williams, 2015, p.111). However, in order to improve this situation, teachers need equal provision of the necessary resources, as well as equal opportunities to develop their knowledge of teaching students with SEN in inclusive classrooms. This is significant when taking into account the fact that one of the crucial problems facing the assurance of equity in education can be attributed to teachers' preparation

for inclusive education (Florian, 2008). As argued in this thesis, without knowing the different needs of all students, the attitudes of teachers towards inclusion will not change and they need to be appropriately prepared for an inclusive environment in which everyone is treated equally and where every child is worked with based on their needs to ensure full learning opportunities for all students.

Given the above, the issue of collaboration between teachers could also be mitigated by following the recommendations of Leyser and Tappendorf (2001), i.e. the importance of ensuring in-service training for both special and general education teachers, in order to promote a shared working environment, in which ideas are exchanged and new skills acquired. Therefore, in the case of Riyadh, the Ministry of Education needs to assist schools in taking part in open discussions with teachers working in all-inclusive schools. In addition, policy makers and academics should promote an open debate on inclusion, including its policies and practices and teachers' access to relevant training. This may lead to the acquisition of contemporary and innovative skills, resulting in positive methods of teaching students with SEN and the development of more positive attitudes towards inclusion.

One of the participating teachers in this current study attributed the lack of collaboration to a number of factors, including: (1) large classes; (2) teachers' busy schedules; and (3) the shortage of adequate training (Appendix 13, GT3.3.1). This finding corresponds with previous research identifying factors hindering collaboration between teachers within inclusive schools (Conderman & Johnston-Rodriguez, 2009; Jones & Vail, 2014). Sisalem (2006) proposed that effective and successful collaboration between teachers is determined by their level of interaction and communication at the start of, or prior to, the academic year, when a multidisciplinary team (including both general and special education teachers) plans how to meet the students' needs and sets out timelines for working collaboratively towards achieving

goals that are both specific and mutually agreed. Such levels of collaboration have not yet been created in mainstream schools in the KSA, resulting in a need to set up meetings between general and special education teachers, in order to agree on a number of issues, including: (1) students' abilities; (2) progress and timetabling; (3) the need for (with the principal's agreement) regular meetings to review any issues related to students; and (4) seminars given by teachers with the relevant experience, in order to propagate awareness of inclusive education among both the teaching and administrative staff. Such a meeting could also be useful in discussing the pedagogies employed in the classroom and how to identify the unique differences between students to ensure equitable learning for all.

7.3.3 Teachers' attitudes towards the benefits of inclusion

The main social benefits of inclusion include enhancing social and communication skills, the promotion of self-confidence and the ability to build friendships. The findings of this study found that teachers shared this view. For example, ST1 reported that inclusion helps students to "*make friends with other peers with disabilities and even with ordinary peers, which helps and encourages them to engage socially in regular schools*" (Appendix 10, ST1.1.3). In addition, ST2 reported that "*interaction between mainstream students and students with SEN is more than likely to increase*" (Appendix 10, ST2.2.3). GT3 also combined a number of benefits in a single response, noting that inclusion "*enhances their [students with SEN] social and communication skills and allows them to feel a lot safer and more self-confident, as well as empowering them to strike up friendships, in schools and outside schools*" (Appendix 10, GT3.3.2).

Hadjikakou (2002), Fryxell and Kennedy (1995) and Ward (2003) have also reported similar social benefits from inclusion, both for students with SEN and their typically developing peers. This appears to indicate that teachers hold generally positive attitudes towards the social

benefits resulting from inclusion. However, inclusion is not always perceived as beneficial, with some educators arguing that these positive social impacts can occur within special schools (Powers, 2002). Furthermore, Warnock (2005) argued that the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools may lead to the emergence of challenging behaviours, including aggression, school avoidance and disobedience. This view was reflected in this current study by GT4, i.e. that there are "*no particular academic benefits for students with SEN*" (Appendix 10, GT4.4.1), and that inclusion might result in "*fear and loathing of school, absenteeism, truancy, absent-mindedness, stubbornness and introversion*" (Appendix 10, GT4.4.2). GT4's views appeared, to some extent, to reflect a medical point of view, i.e. she perceived the students' isolation as related to their inability to socialise and learn, as seen in the following response:

> W*e cannot do without special schools ... this is because each disability has its own severity level, and for each student with SEN, there is a particular need and approach for how to deal with them.*

Despite the importance of the social side of inclusion, as argued by Powell and Tutt (2002), inclusion requires that a child experiences a feeling of social participation. However, it is also important to focus on their academic achievement, since this could result in students being excluded. Jarvis (2002) suggested that exclusion from educational and social opportunities could result from students with SEN being educated in mainstream schools. However, the distinctive educational level of children with SEN can be directly associated with their social participation, and vice versa. Thus, students can achieve equality with their peers if they possess the ability to engage with thinking processes, discussions, interactions and the exchange of ideas in an academic setting. Interviewees in the current study expressed various attitudes concerning academic attainment. ST1 reported specific academic benefits in the areas of writing and reading (Appendix 10, ST1.1.1). This corresponded with previous research,

including that of Waldron and Mcleckey (1998, cited in Spencer et al., 1999) who found that students with SEN placed in mainstream classrooms showed an improvement in skills of reading and writing. In addition, ST1 and ST2 viewed the academic attainment of students with SEN as being linked to their specific conditions (for details see Appendix 10, ST1.1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 and Appendix 10, ST2.2.2).

ST1 and ST2 agreed that some elements may play a crucial role in the academic achievement of students with SEN in mainstream classrooms, i.e. the type and severity of their disability. This was made clear by both ST1 and ST2. For example, ST2 stated that "*the academic development of students with SEN highly depends on the specific criteria related to those students, such as type and* severity *of disability*" *(*Appendix 10, ST2.2.2). The issue of the type and severity of disabilities has an impact on the academic performance of students with SEN has also been established by Alghazo and Gaad (2004) and Avramidis et al. (2000).

Notably, ST1 also considered that "*students with SEN should have similar levels of intelligence*". This view appears to indicate that no priority is currently given to the issue of unique differences between students (Norwich & Lewis, 2001) and that students who are not the same in terms of cognitive ability are unlikely to be included. The notion of unique difference, as argued by Norwich and Lewis (2001), rejects distinctive teaching strategies for students with SEN, accepting the existence of common pedagogic principles relevant to the unique differences between all pupils, including those designated as having SEN. They further argued that "*what works with most pupils, would also work for all pupils*" (Norwich & Lewis, 2001. p. 324). This position is qualified by a recognition of the need for more intense and focused teaching for those with SEN, and that teaching strategies can be considered to lie along a continuum from high to low intensity, rather than according to their association with a distinct group of students with SEN (Norwich & Lewis, 2001). In addition, all students are considered to be able to learn effectively using the strategies that work for the majority. Cook and Schirmer

(2003) agreed with this viewpoint, stating that it is the level of intensity that distinguishes one pedagogic strategy from another, rather than its degree of relevance for a specific category of students with SEN.

ST1 and ST2 also related academic attainment to the preparation of the educational environment for students with SEN. They also noted that the appropriateness of classrooms, along with the level and type of support in the learning environment, plays a significant role in enhancing students' academic performance, i.e. "*appropriate learning environments, assistive technology, support services*" *(*Appendix 9, ST1.1.1) and "*support services and schools and classroom environment*" *(*Appendix 9, ST2.1.2). This view can, to some extent, reflect a social model viewing the issues as being with the environment rather the child (Oliver, 1990). Thus, Hyde and Power (2004) argued that a supportive environment can assist students with SEN to make considerable advances in their academic attainment. Hyde and Power (2004) further argued that it is only when suitable resources are provided, and the required support services are in place, that schools are in a position to help students with SEN to be more actively engaged and to demonstrate improved performance within mainstream schools. However, provision of support is needed to address questions of equality and equity by meeting the needs of both teachers and students and the school itself. The lack of required resources, such as teachers' training, their professional development, classroom size and overall environment, and teachers' adequate time, are all important elements, as found in this study, to improve teachers' attitudes towards inclusion and consequently prepare them for an inclusive educational environment for learners.

By contrast, the general education teachers in this study tended to discount the academic benefits of inclusion in mainstream classrooms, emphasising the difficulties experienced by students with SEN in developing academically. Further to GT4's a comment about there being "*no particular academic benefits for students with SEN*", which she attributed to "*lacking the*

skills to help students with SEN to improve academically" (Appendix 10, GT4.4.1). This issue has also been reported in previous studies, including Beacham and Rouse (2012), Olson (2003), and Martha et al. (1999), on the impact of a lack of skills and professional engagement on the ability to promote inclusive education. Avramidis et al. (2000) related this aspect to the three-component model of attitudes (i.e. cognitive, affective and behavioural), arguing that these are significantly linked to the possession of such skills. Therefore, those teachers who perceive themselves as sufficiently competent to cater for students with SEN tend to demonstrate more positive attitudes towards the inclusion of students with SEN.

As confirmed in these statements, inclusion has a number of potential logistical and academic issues relating to: (1) the provision of services within the classroom and (2) the relevant professional development of teachers. Both issues are also interconnected with issues of equity and equality, as discussed earlier. It is therefore vital that policymakers review the allocation of human and physical resources, in order to assist teachers to move towards an active facilitation for all school activities, both academically and socially that equally meet the needs of all learners. This is due to teachers' acknowledgement of the value of inclusion, as noted by Cornwell (2000, p.84), to be a "*huge advantage for the inclusion movement that can, and should, be capitalised upon*". This concept could, in practical terms, be doomed to failure, if teachers fail to recognise or appreciate the educational benefits of inclusion, as this will result in teachers lacking the necessary skills and resources to take on this role.

7.4 Theme three: Factors affecting teachers' attitudes regarding the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools

This theme is closely related to the first two themes discussed, since it defines the factors which have a decisive impact on teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools. The findings of this current study confirm that the factors influencing such

attitudes are as those proposed by Salvia and Munson (1986). These are termed by the researcher as the 'factors triangle': (1) child-related factors; (2) teachers-related factors; and (3) education/environment-related factors, as illustrated in figure 7.1.

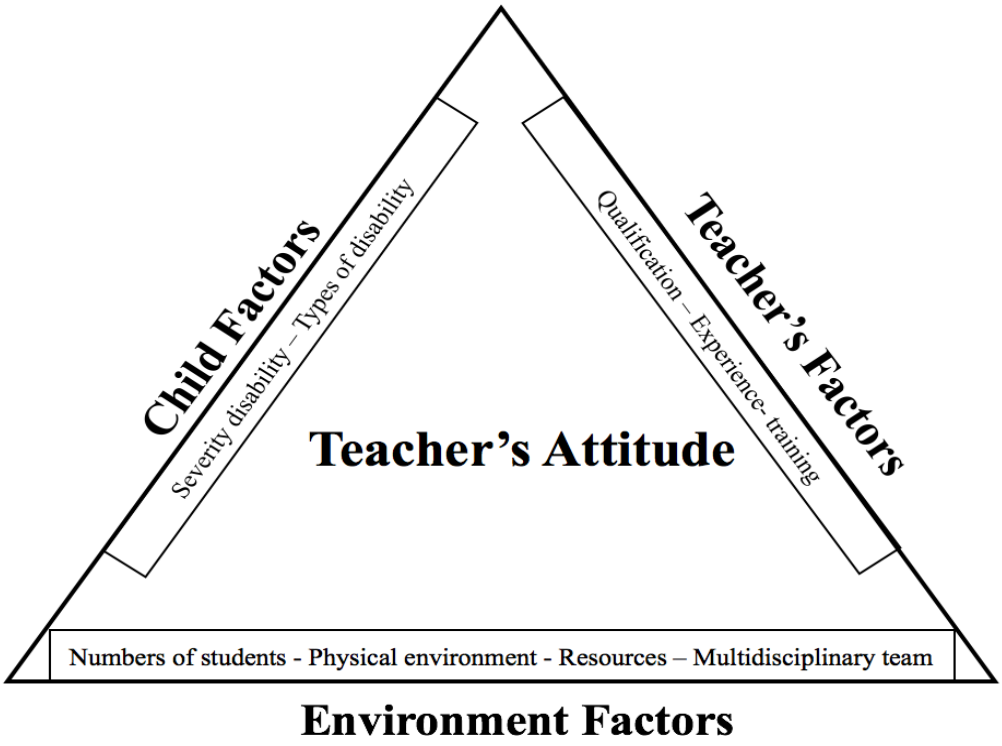


Figure 7.1. Factors affecting teachers' attitudes regarding the inclusion of students with SEN.

As noted in Chapter 5 (Section 5.7) and Chapter 6 (Sections 6.3.2; 6.4 and 6.5), these factors have been highlighted as a result of their significant influence on teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of students with SEN. Each is therefore given a separate focus in the following themes.

7.4.1 Teacher-related factors

There are various factors that may influence teachers' attitudes regarding the inclusion of students with SEN. This sub-theme discusses three specific factors related mainly to both groups of teachers, namely: level of qualifications, teachers' experience and in-service training as seen in Figure (7.1).

7.4.1.1 Teachers' level and type of qualifications

As stated in Chapter 5 (Sections 5.5.1.2 and 5.5.2.2), during the examination of the relationship between the attitudes of special and general education teachers and their level of qualifications, this study found no statistically significant differences in the cognitive, affective and behavioural components of attitude regarding the inclusion of students with SEN. Thus, the findings in relation to both groups of teachers (i.e. a total of 165 participants) indicated that their level of qualification had no impact on these three components.

This result contradicted that of Dupoux et al. (2006), Stoiber et al. (1998) and LeRoy and Simpson (1996), who identified a positive impact on teachers' attitudes resulting from their level of qualification. Nevertheless, this major difference between the findings of these previous studies and the current study suggest that the previous studies may have assessed other facets of attitudes and beliefs. It is also possible that the sample number and/or the sampling strategy used in those studies influenced their results. In addition, it could be because the systems in those contexts and the level of training were different to the context of the present study. Therefore, those aspects seem to have influenced the results of those studies. A further important point is that half the participants of this study (i.e. 83 out of 165) were special education teachers, who had graduated from the Special Education Department, and therefore held qualifications in special education.

Previous studies have revealed inconsistent findings when it comes to the relationship between teachers' attitudes and level of qualifications. A number of studies have highlighted a negative relationship, i.e. with higher education being linked to more negative attitudes regarding inclusion (Antonak & Larrivee, 1995; Stoler, 1992). However, others identified a positive association (LeRoy & Simpson, 1996; Villa et al., 1996). A third group reported a lack of any identified link between the level of qualifications and attitudes regarding inclusion (Heiman,

2001). Likewise, this current study found no statistically significant relationship between the level of qualification and attitudes in the context of the KSA. This is in keeping with the concept that teachers' level of qualifications cannot be taken as a signifier of their attitude towards the inclusion of students with SEN.

Different forms of qualification, however, may have an impact on teachers' attitudes. Al-Abduljabbar and Masoud (2002) and Al-Sartawi (1995) found that those with qualifications in special education displayed more positive attitudes. They reported that, on occasion, general education teachers did not completely understand the characteristics of students with SEN, including their needs and communication preferences. However, understanding the characteristics of students with SEN cannot be exclusively a challenge to general education teachers but also to special education teachers. There is evidence that the characteristics of the students themselves in their learning had an influence on the attitudes of their teachers (Leatherman & Niemeyer, 2005). This is to say that teachers need to be qualified and skilled in practical approaches to dealing with differentiation in the characteristics of students' learning in order to develop their attitudes towards students with SEN.

In addition, Boyle et al. (2013) found that the completion of a module and/or course in special education significantly increases a teacher's positive attitude regarding inclusion. During the interviews for the current study, GT4 specifically noted that a lack of any qualifications in special education leads to the difficulties experienced by general education teachers in accommodating students with SEN: "*I think special education teachers are far better than me in terms of experience and training and qualifications in special education*" (Appendix 11, GT4.4.1). In addition, the importance of qualifications in special education was also emphasised by ST1, ST2 and GT3. Thus, general education teachers need be provided with in-service training and workshops on the required knowledge and skills to teach students with

SEN. This also applies to undergraduates. Saudi universities could achieve this by providing general education teachers (particularly those aiming to work in inclusive schools) with at least one or two terms of training in the education of students with SEN, combined with ongoing in-service training. These actions would increase teachers' knowledge of special education, along with the issue of inclusion and the needs of students with SEN. This would also help to form positive attitudes towards inclusion and develop skills for teaching students with SEN. This suggestion was supported by the teachers interviewed for this current study. ST2 stated that "*training has to be at least one school term for the teachers in mainstream schools, especially for those who constantly work with students with SEN*" (Appendix 11, ST2.2.6). In addition, ST1 stated that "*general education teachers should seek to acquire a diploma in special education*" (Appendix 15, ST1.1.1). This view accords with Avramidis (2000), who found that teachers in receipt of university-based training have significantly greater confidence in their own skills than teachers who receive in-service or short term training. In this instance, 'training' refers to long-term training, i.e. university-based. Linking this to the three-component model confirms that being in possession of training for teaching students with SEN (i.e. the cognitive component) leads to improved confidence and more positive attitudes towards teaching students with SEN (i.e. the behavioural component) (Avramidis, 2000).

To conclude, it could be said that, although level of qualification was found to be significant in other studies, this study did not find it to have an impact on teacher attitudes. However, this does not mean the qualification should be regarded as unimportant as it is known that speciality and further studies are features that form excellent employees, including teachers. So, teachers need those characteristics for more positive attitudes toward inclusion. This is especially applicable in education environments such as that in the KSA where teachers' in-service training is still at a low level or even absent. The teacher interview data revealed that what teachers learned in their degree and training were important factors in their attitudes towards

inclusion of students with SEN. Therefore, this study has put forward a number of recommendations to be considered in the education of teachers, whether during their university study or in-service training, to reduce the differences among the attitudes of teachers and to induce more positive attitudes towards the teaching of students with SEN in inclusive schools. This is to say, if general education teachers are not taught about teaching students with SEN their qualifications in different subjects cannot make any difference towards the development of their attitudes towards those students.

It is significant to note that the qualifications held by special education teachers have a financial implication which could be behind the difference in attitudes between general and special education teachers. Perhaps the pay increment earned by special education teachers made general teachers feel less recognised and valuable, especially given the fact of their lack of training and the challenging expectations of dealing with the inclusion of students with SEN. This is something significant and it is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education to consider because the role of teachers from both groups are equally valuable in the educational process, including students' learning.

7.4.1.2 Years of experience in teaching students with SEN

Chapter 5 (Sections 5.5.1.1 and 5.5.2.1) examined the relationship between the attitudes of special and general education teachers and their years of experience. No statistically significant differences were found for the cognitive, affective and behavioural components of attitude regarding inclusion of students with SEN. Thus, the findings relating to both groups of teachers indicate that length of experience in teaching students with SEN has no impact on these three components. Studies concerning teachers' attitudes regarding inclusion have generally not been conclusive as to whether experience has any impact on teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of students with SEN.

Abbas and Al-Qaryouti (2009), Leyser et al. (1989) and Stephens and Braun (1980) have all reported that length of teaching experience does not significantly relate to teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. Furthermore, a study by Kalyva et al. (2007) (which examined the length of experience of 72 Serbian teachers and their attitudes towards the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools) did not establish any statistically significant relationship. Similarly, Al-Ahmadi (2009) in the KSA also reported a lack of any statistically significant relationship between the length of teaching experience and teachers' acceptance of students with SEN within mainstream schools. The findings of those studies are confirmed in the current study. However, a number of further researchers have found a significant relationship between experience and attitudes towards inclusion, in particular during a teacher's early years working in their profession (Elhoweris & Alsheikh, 2006; Forlin, 1995; Koutrouba et al., 2008; Leyser et al., 1994). The conflicting results between these studies and the current study can be ascribed to previous research failing to differentiate between the three components of attitude. This is highlighted in the current study by the agreement of both groups of teachers that, within the Saudi context, no connection can be found between years of experience and the three components of attitude.

A further explanation of the relationship between experience and attitude could relate to the issue of training, i.e. special education teachers are taught many skills, which are subsequently enhanced by their experience, and therefore their attitudes are not influenced by their years of teaching experience. At the same time, general education teachers lack this training, and are thus lacking in the skills required for teaching students with SEN, while their attitudes also remain unchanged by their number of years of experience. It could be considered that the attitude of an experienced general education teacher may be changed through special training, but again the impact would not have related to their number of years of experience.

An additional explanation is given by Lampropoulou and Padelliadu (1997), in relation to the nature and the quality of the teaching experience, i.e. that negative experiences can strengthen negative attitudes and positive encounters may lead to more positive attitudes. This could thus result in the lack of a rich and positive experience in teaching students with SEN leading to a failure to change existing attitudes. This view is supported by Koutrouba et al. (2008), who found that a large percentage of teachers had a negative experience of working with students with SEN, resulting in a correspondingly negative attitude towards any plans for inclusion. These findings identify the importance of enhancing positive experiences of inclusion, as well as addressing any obstacles that may arise, in order to prevent teachers from maintaining any negative views.

It is worth noting that, although this study statistically found no impact from experience, this feature, as found in many studies, still plays a very important part in developing the attitudes of teachers towards inclusion. It comes from the notion that having worked with students with SEN in whatever type of inclusion cannot be compared to the experience of new teachers or teachers whose experience has not involved students with SEN, whatever the length of their experience.

However, the findings of the current study (as well as those in the literature) suggest that the quality of teachers' experience is more important than its quantity, i.e. teachers' attitudes can be influenced by the whole educational system. Thus, if the educational system lacks appropriate provision, motivation and specialist support, while at the same time demanding teachers take on an additional workload, their attitudes will more likely to be less positive, even if they have taught, or worked with, students with SEN over a long period of time.

7.4.1.3 The issue of the lack of training and its low quality

There may have been an effect on attitude due to in-service training. However, as discussed in Chapter 5 (Section 5.5.1.3), the results of the current study identified no statistically significant differences between special education teachers with, or without, in-service training, in relation to their mean responses to the three components of attitude. It should be pointed out that this finding was not predicted, given that it does not agree with the findings of the majority of previous studies (e.g. Al-Gomah, 2009; Avramidis & Kalyva, 2007; Leyser et al., 1994; Martha et al., 1999; Salend, 2001; Shade & Stewart, 2001; Smith, 2010; Subban & Sharma, 2001), i.e. that the creation of a positive attitude towards the inclusion of students with SEN resulted from the provision of adequate training.

The inconsistency between the results obtained by this current study and those reported in the literature can be explained by the findings based on the interview data. Firstly, the responses from teachers indicated that the available in-service training is both insufficient and limited. The special education teachers attributed this to the widely-held belief that special education teachers were mostly graduates, who must have therefore already acquired all the necessary competences to teach students with SEN, and thus were in no need of any further training. While some may assume that this is correct, Winter (2006) argued that the completion of a teacher training programme and pre-service training is insufficient in itself, and forms only the first step in ensuring teachers are able to teach students with SEN and manage an inclusive classroom. It is therefore important that teachers continue to develop their professional skills during their careers, by means of in-service professional development schemes. Such practice is not only important for the teachers themselves, but is also necessary if inclusion of students with SEN is to assist in addressing the issues of equal access to education and equitable learning opportunities for all students. As argued before, without knowledge about the needs of every student, the content to be taught, and how to teach students appropriately to ensure meeting

their needs, the attitudes of teachers towards inclusion will remain the same and hence addressing such central issues is expected to be challenging.

Secondly, the quality of training was a key issue in explaining this finding. According to Akcamete and Kargin (1994), the outdated and/or repetitive short courses do not lead to more positive attitudes. This is reflected in the finding of the current study, that special education teachers working within the mainstream context are in need of more professional, long-term and advanced in-service training. According to the teachers participating in this study, such training should be academically accredited, as well as provided on a professional and regular basis, since short courses may not prove adequate to address educators' negative attitudes regarding inclusion, while also promoting more positive attitudes. This was explicitly reported by ST1 and ST2 during their interviews. For example, ST2 stated that: "*training has to be at least one school term for the teachers... it is paramount that these courses are provided by highly experienced people in this field"* (Appendix 11, ST2.6.2).

This is also supported by the response of ST1, who highlighted the importance of providing ongoing training and keeping teachers updated with current knowledge "*to provide special education teachers with ongoing training and on the most recent methods applied in the teaching students with SEN*" (Appendix 11, ST1.1.11). It is without doubt that continuing professional development is beneficial for teachers in their careers but is also important for ensuring fairness for all learners in inclusive schools. Best practices could be learned and then implemented in the classroom, taking into consideration examples and lessons from the diversity of research in the field of inclusion, despite its short history in the KSA context. It is therefore crucial to highlight the importance of training courses and workshops, as emphasised throughout the thesis, both for special education teachers and those who are untrained or in possession of limited qualifications in special education. The former are also required to continuously develop their professional knowledge and skills by attending regular training

sessions, in order to keep abreast of any developments in the field of special education, including the appropriate practices that assist in student learning, regardless of their condition, and to familiarise themselves with emerging issues related to inclusion of students with SEN.

On other hand, this study has found statistically significant differences between general education teachers with and those without in-service training in special education. This was identified in all three components of general education teachers' attitudes, i.e. (1) affective; (2) behavioural; (3) cognitive. This finding highlighted the importance of creating opportunities for general education teachers to participate in training courses and workshops on the teaching of students with SEN, in order to enhance their professional skills and understanding, along with their ability to adapt materials and the curriculum and provide individual assistance (Al-Gomah, 2009; Al-Hadidi, 2003; Barnett et al., 1999; Cheuk & Hatch, 2007; Lambe & Bones, 2006; Martha et al., 1999; Smith, 2010). It is equally important to provide this training to general as to special education teachers as they are all supposed to be in an inclusive environment to create equitable learning opportunities for all learners. This is consistent with the results of the interviews in the current study, which confirmed that the participating teachers believed that training had improved their professional skills in teaching students with SEN, as expressed by GT3:

> *I got to train for two weeks on how to deal with students with SEN ... there is no denying the fact that this course helped me to develop my skills to meet the needs of students with specific learning difficulties, to the best of my ability.* (Appendix 11, GT3.3.1)

The importance of training was also asserted by Avramidis and Norwich (2002), who suggested that there may be initial resistance among teachers who had not received in-service training. Nevertheless, their attitudes could become more positive after receiving training, and gaining sufficient practical experience, which would allow them to observe the benefits of the required

skills. This is in line with the findings of Dickens-Smith (1995), who used an attitude survey prior to, and following, staff development, to examine the attitudes of general education teachers regarding inclusion. Dickens-Smith (1995) noted that the participating teachers revealed more positive attitudes regarding inclusion following their in-service training. The study concluded that staff development can be a major determinant of the effective application of inclusion policies. These findings were also supported by the data gathered through the interviews, with ST1stating:

> *I have noticed a drastic change in the attitudes of general education teachers before and after attending the training sessions ... For example, they seem a lot more enthusiastic than before. They are more positive and engaged and keep asking special teachers questions.* (Appendix 11, ST1.1.7)

A comparison between both groups of participating teachers (i.e. general education teachers and special education teachers) reveals that, statistically speaking, the variable of in-service training had no impact on the attitudes of special education teachers. This can be explained by the argument presented previously in Section 7.3.1, that (unlike general education teachers) the special education teachers had received pre-service university based training. This finding is supported by Avramidis et al. (2000), who observed that teachers in receipt of long term and specialised training in special education hold more positive attitudes towards inclusion than those who have not. Thus, due to special education teachers having already experienced pre-service training, any subsequent in-service training has little impact on their attitudes.

By contrast, it was found that, statistically, in-service training influenced the attitudes of general education teachers. This could have been due to their lack of any prior knowledge, skills or training in the areas of special education and inclusion, which resulted in their in-service training enabling them to develop knowledge and skills and therefore a having positive attitudes towards inclusion. As a result, it is often accepted that general education teachers

require in-service training and courses to better equip them to teach students with SEN and manage inclusive classrooms. A number of studies, including those of McLeskey and Waldron (2002) and Shade and Stewart (2001), have reported that general education teachers frequently require additional in-service training and dedicated training programmes to enable them to acquire the knowledge and skills to teach students with SEN. This case was supported by Avramidis (2000), Avramidis et al. (2000) and Debetterncourt (1999), who discovered that emotional and behavioural change towards inclusion and students with SEN can only be achieved through appropriate information (i.e. the cognitive component of attitudes), together with practical experience. Training can therefore be viewed as an important factor, capable of significantly impacting on the attitude of general education teachers in relation to inclusion, and is the determining factor in improving the attitude of one group of teachers in the KSA.

In general, both groups of teachers reported a need for training to enhance inclusion. A number of attitudinal studies in the literature have stressed the impact of training on creating positive attitudes to inclusion (Avramidis et al., 2000; Avramidis & Kalyva, 2007; Elhoweris & Alsheikh, 2006; Lifshitz et al., 2004). All the participants supported the findings of the studies mentioned above, agreeing that it is important for training to be available to teachers, as it can lead to the development of more positive attitudes.

It has been mentioned in this thesis that Islam teaches positive attitudes to disabilities (see page 243), but this does not mean that all teachers have the same attitudes. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that Islam spiritually teaches positive attitudes to disabilities but in practice different attitudes can be held and so more actions need to be taken to enact what Islam really teaches if the attitudes of teachers are to be improved. The controversial allowing of women to drive in the KSA is a recent example that could illustrate the topic discussed above. Although, Islam strictly emphasises the necessity and obligation of giving women full respect and rights, including their independence on travel and transportation, for example, they were never banned

from riding camels when it was the main travel transport in the Arabian Peninsula, Saudi attitudes towards giving women their right to drive are still relatively divided. So, regardless of what Islam teaches, people's attitudes differ towards the issue in the example given. Therefore, it is significant to clarify that Islam is a faith which has principles set to guide and teach Muslims to live the appropriate and peaceful life, including the life of people with disabilities. However, the actions of its followers do not necessarily comply with those principles, and the attitude of teachers towards students with SEN is an example of that. It is rather the teachers themselves who have different attitudes that do not reflect the teaching of Islam, as is the case in this present research. It is significant to recall that, as Islam supports and emphasises education and encourages gaining knowledge and doing research, it is the Ministry of Education's responsibility to learn from other experiences in the field of SEN education alongside the relevant principles of Islam to implement the best practices in this field, including the attitudes of teachers towards students with SEN. This is to say, reflecting what Islam really wants from us is a vital approach to enhancing teachers' attitudes towards students with SEN.

In light of the preceding discussion, there could be other factors influencing the attitudes of both groups of teachers towards inclusion that should be addressed in teacher training. One of these factors could be the role teachers play in school. For example, the research conducted by Coelho, Blázquez and Cubo (2017) found that teachers given special education duties had more positive attitudes than did teachers given other tasks or those assigned administration duties. The authors also found other factors associated with training needs. The issues found include the relationship between pedagogies, lesson planning, design of classroom activities, changes in curriculum, and teacher skills in managing their time and classes. The main findings of this study reveal the importance of training. However, if training is to make a change towards more

positive attitudes among teachers, then the above factors should necessarily be addressed in training programmes.

Other significant factors that need to be included in training include teachers' knowledge and skills concerning disabilities. For example, it was evident that teachers who had received training in these aspects showed more positive attitudes than those teachers who had not (Pham, 2008). However, the author stresses the importance of critical training instead of fixed content-based training. This is to say, the nature and focus of training should address issues such as those mentioned earlier which are significant in developing the attitudes of teachers towards inclusion of students with SEN. So, whilst this present research emphasises the significant need for training, it does not specify the factors that need to be considered in training, as these were not discussed in depth in this research because of its scope and focus. However, when a training issue is referred to in this study, it means training that addresses issues relevant to developing teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. This training is an important requirement for teachers of both groups to develop their attitudes towards inclusion of students with SEN. Therefore, since training has been found in many studies, including this research, to be one of the top factors influencing the attitudes of teachers, the specific factors that should be considered in training should be investigated in future research. This is because, as this research found, the main difference between the two groups of teachers was related to the issue of training and so, by ensuring the provision of integrated training, teachers' attitudes are likely to develop, given what the teachers revealed in this study as well as what the literature has demonstrated in regard to this issue.

While this thesis has suggested the importance of training, it is important to argue that many studies in education, including in special education needs, have attributed any failure in educational initiatives, such as inclusion of students with SEN, to the lack of training provided

to teachers, such as works conducted by Hodkinson (2006) and Avramidis and Norwich (2002). However, offering teachers training programmes does not necessarily mean teachers will learn and receive an appropriate training. Training programmes and courses either in pre- or in-service need to focus on substantial aspects that can foster and develop the attitudes and practices of teachers when working with students with SEN. For example, Shulman (1987) suggested that teachers require particular knowledge as a cornerstone in their teaching which he called *Pedagogical Content Knowledge* (PCK). This kind of knowledge implies that teachers needs to be prepared to gain knowledge of how to teach a particular subject with an appropriate approach. Acquiring such knowledge is significant not only when teaching typically developing students but in particular when teaching their peers with SEN, as understanding the needs of those pupils is one significant way for teachers to improve their attitudes towards SEN students and accommodate their needs. It is not expected that teachers will facilitate the educational process if they do not have knowledge of what is being taught or how it should be delivered. Similarly, as discussed in this thesis, as teachers need to understand differentiation between students and their needs, including those with SEN, their understanding of the topic they teach could assist teachers' anticipation of the difficult parts of the content for different students or, failing that, their attitudes towards teaching students with SEN are not likely to improve and, consequently, they would not be able to teach them as they should. This is difficult for teachers to meet without having had proper training covering the above-mentioned aspects. It is also important to stress that training courses should not be limited to those of initial or pre- and in-service only but rather a continuous professional development training is also required to update teachers' abilities when working with students with SEN in inclusive settings (Verlaan et al., 2018).

Therefore, this should lead to a conclusion that training courses cannot make any change in teachers' attitudes when working with students with SEN unless the conditions and elements

that the training courses consist of (as discussed throughout the thesis) are addressed and applied. So, it is the Ministry of Education's responsibility to draw an appropriate plan that ensures that student teachers, before being appointed to work in actual practice, have proper training that considers practical educational approaches, for example *Pedagogical Content Knowledge* (PCK), about teaching a diversity of students that meets all their needs, as stressed by Hodkinson and Vickerman (2009). In fact, it is critical that the Ministry of Education improves, within their developmental plans, the trainers themselves and the way they train teachers, as it is evident, from the findings of this study, that the issue of inclusion is still a challenging one in the context of the KSA and that both groups of teachers require appropriate training, as suggested above.

7.4.2 Environment-related factors

Several studies have asserted that successful inclusion requires the restructuring of school and classroom facilities, along with the provision of support and the availability of resources to meet students' diverse needs. As seen in Figure 7.1, in the current research, the findings of both the questionnaires (Chapter 5, Section 5.7) and the interviews (Chapter 6, Sections 6.4.2 and 6.5.2) confirmed the school environment as a factor in teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of students with SEN. The availability of support services at both the classroom and school levels has been consistently found as having a positive influence on teachers' attitudes (Center & Ward, 1987). The participants of this current study identified a number of issues in their schools' environment relating to the inclusion of students with SEN.

Firstly, there was the issue of the physical setting, including inaccessibility. A consensus was found among the teachers in this research of a need to adequately prepare schools, and classrooms in particular, prior to students with SEN being included. For example, ST2 confirmed that: "*the school environment and facilities should be reassessed before applying*

inclusion programmes in schools" *(*Appendix 14, ST2.2.4). This can be ascribed to mainstream schools in the city of Riyadh (in which this study took place) being originally built prior to the establishment of inclusion programmes (Alquraini, 2010), and thus not designed to take into account the needs of students with SEN. The teachers found this to be unsatisfactory, and therefore highlighted the importance of modifying schools and classrooms to cater for the different needs of students. For example, ST2 claimed that "*it is important to modify the schools, classrooms and restrooms to take into account the capabilities and needs of students with SEN*" (Appendix 15, ST2.2.2). This clarifies that KSA is currently focussing on making schools more accessible for all students, including those with SEN (Al-Mousa, 2010). The Prince Salman Centre for Disability Research has developed the Universal Accessibility Built Environment Guidelines Manual (UABE), a guideline focused on assessing the current accessibility level of the built environment, as well as transportation (both on land and at sea), and destinations and accommodation, and how this can be further improved (Prince Salman Centre for Disability Research, 2007). This guideline provides information for legislators, ministers, planners, and all those involved with infrastructure, on the needs of the disabled (Prince Salman Centre for Disability Research, 2010). This is a positive step in making the physical environment more accessible for those with disabilities, with a potential to enhance the inclusion of students with SEN into mainstream schools in the KSA (Prince Salman Centre for Disability Research, 2010). This demonstrates a shift away from assessing disability through a medical model to the use of a social model (Smith et al., 2004). It is hoped that the introduction of UABE will assist in making schools more physically accessible and socially inclusive.

Secondly, the teachers proposed that the process of adapting the physical environment should also include improved classrooms and teaching facilities, along with tools for teachers and students with SEN. For example, ST2 highlighted an important issue for all schools with an

inclusion programme in place: "*all the necessary tools should be provided …these tools should include books, and classroom materials*" (Appendix 12, ST2.2.5). According to Avramidis and Kalyva (2007), access to resources and support in the classroom and the school level, strongly contribute to a positive attitude of inclusion on behalf of the teachers. The findings of the current research, alongside those of Avramidis and Kalyva (2007), confirm the importance of providing the necessary support and resources to enhance the positive attitudes of teachers.

Thirdly, the teachers raised the issue of an insufficient budget being available for school inclusion programmes. This could explain the reported limited availability of resources, tools and materials. GT4 made a number of recommendations to tackle this issue, including that the Ministry of Education should provide a specified budget for each school with an inclusion programme, specifically to address the requirements of inclusive education (Appendix 15, GT4.4.1). Thus, the provision of the budget and resources (alongside the establishment of a prepared physical environment) has the potential to improve attitudes. The literature, including Avramidis and Norwich (2002), places considerable emphasis on how the availability of resources in the classroom can influence teachers' attitudes towards inclusion, alongside a school's physical environment and human support service.

The factors relating to physical inaccessibility and the lack of support could explain the reservations of general education teachers towards the inclusion of students with SEN, in particular where they perceive schools to be inadequately equipped to accommodate students with SEN. This view is supported by Hemmingson and Borell (2002), who argued that access to resources and support (both in the classroom and at school level) contribute to shaping the attitudes of teachers towards inclusion. In addition, although the special education teachers expressed an interest in the inclusive approach and its benefits for students with SEN, their positive attitude remained bound to a number of conditions, i.e. (1) sufficient preparation; (2) a well-equipped school; and (3) classrooms dedicated to inclusive education.

In addition, all the special education teachers interviewed stressed the importance of the availability of a multidisciplinary team to support the inclusion process within schools. For example, ST2 stressed the need of a multidisciplinary approach to the provision of support within schools adopting inclusion programmes, stating that, in order to promote inclusive education, "*our schools need a multidisciplinary team*" (Appendix 12, ST2.2.7). It is therefore vital to bring together specialist human resources (i.e. professionals such as speech therapists, social workers and physiotherapists), which tends to be the responsibility of the Ministry of Education. A similar issue was also reported by Ainscow et al. (2006), who criticised the current educational policies, particularly the lack of effort on behalf of policy-makers to respond to these issues, thereby hindering the allocation of a professional team within inclusive schools.

A further important point highlighted by both sets of teachers related to the number of students in mainstream classrooms. The participants of this study pointed out that a larger number of students in each classroom resulted in increased difficulties in accommodating students with SEN in such classrooms. GT4 made the following point:

> *Classrooms are not equipped to accommodate students with SEN in addition to the large number of students in the classroom, which can sometimes exceed thirty students.*

Bender et al. (1995) also noted that teaching a large number of students with SEN resulted in more negative attitudes toward the inclusion of students with SEN. This is due to the large number of students in classrooms being frequently associated with an additional workload, thus leading to teachers' negative attitudes. This is consistent with the previous literature, which has reported teachers as struggling to meet the needs of different kinds of students in their classrooms, in particular following the increase in students with SEN (Forlin & Hopewell, 2006; Lambe & Bones, 2006). Sisalem (2006) drew up a policy of inclusion and determined

the number of children with SEN who should be allowed to join a mainstream class, taking into account the number of students without SEN in the class, along with the space available, and the grade and level of the school. He confirmed that there should be no more than three students with SEN in a mainstream class, which is in accordance with the recommendations of Avramidis et al. (2000). However, this proportion could prove problematic in the KSA, which has in excess of thirty students in each class (Appendix 12, GT4.4.2). The addition of students with SEN to such a large number could potentially further disadvantage both types of students, i.e. typically developing students would experience more crowded classrooms, while those with SEN may experience difficulties in coping, in particular if they have severe learning disabilities.

The Ministry of Education is responsible for resolving such issues with the schools' principals, including the provision of additional classrooms to reduce the number of students in each classroom. For example, general education teachers emphasised in the study that a decrease in the number of students in each mainstream classroom to twenty would facilitate the inclusion effort (Al-Amri, 2009).

7.4.3 Child-related factors

It is important to understand whether there are differences in the way teachers view types of disability, and the type of inclusion each is afforded. Indeed, the participants of this study stated that (as shown in Figure 7.1) an underlying factor shaping their attitudes towards inclusion related to the type and severity of students' disabilities. The findings concerning the types of disabilities teachers view as being capable of inclusion into mainstream classrooms is presented in Chapter 5 (Section 5.3, Table 5.4) and Chapter 6 (Section 6.3.2). Both groups noted that students with moderate disabilities, hearing and visual disabilities, should be given the opportunity to be included in a mainstream classroom. However, only a few teachers from both

groups suggested the inclusion of students with severe disabilities, mental or multiple disabilities in mainstream classrooms.

Nevertheless, the general education teachers also prioritised their preference for including students with moderate disability based on their type of disability. They would prefer students with physical disabilities over students with hearing or visual disabilities to be included in mainstream classes. This could be because these teachers linked the nature of the disability to their own existing abilities and so felt they could make use of their abilities when teaching students with physical disabilities but not when teaching students with hearing or visual disabilities. This may be the case, especially when taking into account the absence of general education teachers' training concerning teaching students with SEN. This corresponds with other studies, including that of Habayeb and Othman (2005), who share the researcher's belief that general education teachers are relatively more prepared to accept students with physical disabilities than with other disabilities, due often to students with physical disabilities having the same hearing, visual and cognitive ability as other typically developing students. Thus, when the appropriate facilities are available, such children are accepted as capable of full access to mainstream classrooms. This view can be explained by the fact that general education teachers in the KSA tend to be unfamiliar with other disabilities, and are therefore unaware of how they should be taught, as well as how to plan for their development. Thus, when related to the three component model of attitudes, it can be seen that planning and preparing for the education of the students with SEN forms an aspect of the cognitive component of attitudes, enabling teachers to be cognitively aware of students' individual goals and therefore confident of their ability to plan. Hence, this knowledge of students' needs is an outward display of a teacher's attitudes towards inclusion (Leatherman & Niemeyer, 2005).

The special education teachers in this study expressed a much stronger acceptance of students with specific learning disabilities (i.e. 73.5%), in contrast to the acceptance expressed by the

general education teachers (i.e. 22%). Research in the KSA has found that students with specific learning disabilities are frequently excluded by general education teachers (Abd-Aljabbar, 1999) but are accepted by special education teachers (Qaraqish, 2008). The findings of the current study reveal that special education teachers in the KSA are generally accepting of the inclusion of students with specific learning disabilities in mainstream classrooms. This could possibly result from their pre-service training in special education, as well as their considerable experience in implementing inclusion.

However, what is interesting from Table 5.4 is that, where there is agreement from both groups, general education teachers largely surpass special education teachers in accepting students with moderate disabilities, visual disability in the mainstream classroom. Only 28 special education teachers agreed on the inclusion of this type of disability, while 48 general education teachers chose this type. In addition, unexpectedly, the number of general education teachers almost equals the number of special education teachers in choosing another moderate disability, hearing disability, as one of the top choices. These anomalies raise the question of what could be behind such results.

The answer could be around the qualifications and training of special education teachers. To illustrate this, since general education teachers did not undertake any special education course and/or training, they took an apparently more inclusive line of thinking than that of the special education teachers. This is to say, it could be that the training of special education teachers and the courses they studied might have focused on particular types of disabilities more than others. If this is the case, it means there are roots of the Ministry of Education connected to this as it is the body responsible for assigning teachers to schools throughout the country based on the schools' needs for new teachers to teach particular subjects. Special education teachers are also assigned based on their specialty in particular or multiple types of disabilities, such as teachers

who specialize in specific learning difficulties. So, it could be that special education teachers, in the comparison above, were faced with the fact of teaching different types of disabilities in which they were not specialised, and so focussed on some specific learning difficulties more than others. The surprising results from general education teachers then could indicate that they felt more comfortable with moderate than with other types of disabilities because their needs were less severe. Therefore, the training of teachers and the courses they undertake should be for all types of disabilities, with no special focus on one type over another in order to develop a thorough acceptance of all teachers towards teaching students with SEN in mainstream schools regardless of their types of disabilities.

In addition, only a limited number of special education teachers (13.3%) and general education teachers (1.2%) agreed that students with severe disability, multiple disabilities should be included in mainstream classrooms. The interview findings also highlighted that teachers' attitudes towards which disabilities should be permitted in mainstream schools and classrooms related to the severity of the students' needs (see Chapter 6, Section 6.3.1 and Section 6.3.2). This is consistent with the findings of Al-Zyoudi (2006), who identified that teachers' attitudes are influenced by a number of factors, i.e. the nature and severity of each disability. As noted above, the special education teachers in the current study also stated that students with moderate disabilities should be included in mainstream classrooms.

All the participants in the current study suggested that students with severe disabilities might face difficulties in keeping pace with their typically developing peers. This indicates that the willingness of teachers to include students with SEN decreases in relation to the severity of the disability. This is consistent with the findings of a number of studies (Avramidis et al., 2000; Lanier & Lanier, 1996; Opdal & Wormenæs., 2001; Smith, 2000; Yuen & Westwood, 2001). In addition, although the special education teachers were strongly in favour of inclusion, they

also felt that special classrooms would, for the time being, provide the most effective alternative for students with severe disabilities. ST2 stated that "*special classes should be the first choice for all students with SEN, instead of special schools*" *(*Appendix 8, ST2.2.2). She attributed this to the current status of mainstream classrooms, i.e. "*special classes are much more feasible in light of the current school conditions*" (Appendix 8.ST2.2.3), i.e. mainstream schools currently have more resources and equipment for students with SEN in their special education classrooms than mainstream classrooms.

This finding is supported by Al-Mousa (2007), who identified that mainstream schools and classrooms in the KSA tend to be inadequately equipped to meet the needs of students with SEN. This indicates that inclusion necessitates a substantial restructuring of mainstream schools and classrooms to cater for all students, irrespective of their specific needs. The analysis of the responses of the special education teachers also suggests that they tend to favour the integration approach for severely disabled students, and the inclusion approach for students with moderate disabilities. However, general education teachers in the KSA reported that inclusion is only practical if limited to students with a specific SEN, i.e. those with physical disabilities and visual and hearing disabilities. The findings of the teachers' interviews imply that this is linked to the difficulties experienced by general education teachers in teaching students with SEN, in particular those with severe disabilities. This reinforces the need to provide the relevant awareness and training programmes.

The data highlights that all the teachers in this study, regardless of their type of education and qualifications, considered students with severe disabilities as falling into a separate category from those with moderate disabilities. In general, the results concluded that teachers' attitudes are influenced by the severity and type of disability of the students with SEN, and considered severity to play a significant role in this process. This factor was noted under each theme, in

terms of its influence on either individual characteristics, or the school environment. The attitudes of the respondents reveal that they viewed students with moderate disabilities as having a greater potential for success in mainstream schools, while children with severe disabilities, on the other hand, could be faced with a more negative experience. Therefore, from the point of the view of the participants, the level of severity and type of disability are key elements in determining the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of inclusion.

7.5 Attitudes and religion

This section discusses the attitudes towards inclusion in relation to religion due to the significance of Islam as a factor in the study context. Overall, it was considered that the differences in attitude between general education teachers and special education teachers in the KSA towards the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools were unlikely to result from religious or cultural factors. This is due to the close interlinking of Saudi culture with religion, drawing heavily on Islamic teachings, which strongly encourage the education and inclusion of every individual in Islam, who is seen as having the right to receive education, regardless of disability, caste, gender, or status (Al-Salloum, 1996). In this current study, this was confirmed by both general and special education teachers. For example, ST1 and GT3 both cited verses from the Quran, implying the great rewards that can be reaped by helping those with disabilities (Appendix 8, ST1.1.2. Appendix 8, GT3.3.4). Al-Aoufi et al. (2012) argued that, despite Muslims sharing the same beliefs and principles, people's attitudes and understanding regarding the concept of inclusion (and their attitudes to individuals with a disability) may vary depending on a number of individual factors, i.e. socio-economic status, level of education and awareness. This is evident in this current research, in which the quantitative findings revealed that child-related, teacher-related and educational environment-related factors all have an impact upon teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of students with SEN. This was also supported by the qualitative findings, in which all four participants in

the interview reported the importance of such factors for the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools, as follows: (1) a prepared physical environment; (2) the availability of resources; (3) the availability of training, knowledge and awareness relating to inclusion and students with SEN; and (4) possessing skills in teaching students with SEN.

Further evidence in this research has established that, due to the consistency of the education system throughout KSA, both sets of teachers have the same religion, and received an identical education from primary school to high school. As noted in Chapter 2, the training of student teachers in universities in the KSA is separated according to whether they wish to specialise in general education or special education. This separation includes the pre-service training during their final year, during which they acquire practical teaching skills under the supervision of the university module tutor. General education teachers complete their training in regular schools, teaching typically developing students, whereas special education teachers train in either special schools or mainstream schools, according to the type of disability in which they wish to specialise (International Bureau of Education, 2011). Therefore, special education teachers have specific education qualifications and pre-service training, considered to be a key reason for special education teachers having more positive attitudes than general education teachers. This is supported by the findings of this current study, which identified that the attitudes of general education teachers who had received in-service training differed significantly from their non-trained peers from the same group. This may indicate that training is of considerable importance for general education teachers, due to the only variable between the teachers in this research being identified as having received training in special education. This therefore suggests that differences in attitudes are unlikely to stem from religion, but rather from the type of qualifications and training in the area of special education and inclusion.

These key factors should therefore be considered by the Ministry of Education when dealing with issues concerning special education as the provision of similar opportunities for a greater

number of general education teachers could enable the Ministry of Education to transform the educational culture in the KSA, leading to more positive attitudes towards students with SEN and inclusion, which would subsequently become self-propagating and influence others working within the educational system.

7.6 Summary of the chapter

This chapter discussed the research findings presented in the previous chapters, comparing and relating them to the review of the relevant literature. The conclusions we can draw from this suggest that governments and other stakeholders should address the matter of teachers' attitudes towards inclusion of students with SEN. The educational system would benefit from increasing efforts made to raise teachers' awareness about inclusion and students with SEN, and at the same time, to encourage their positive attitudes. Therefore, this study contributes with an in-depth knowledge concerning the attitudes adopted by general and special education teachers within mainstream schools, and the educational background factors that both influence and divide their attitudes towards the inclusion of students with SEN. This could be beneficial to future researchers, as they might become aware of any knowledge gaps, as to why special education teachers are more accepting of the concept of inclusion than general education teachers, and the attitudes governing the social life of primary mainstream schools in the KSA.

The primary objective of this study was to understand the attitudes of both special and general education teachers. In addition, it sought to understand the impact of various background factors on the attitudes of both groups of teachers towards the inclusion of students with SEN (i.e. length of experience, teachers' level of qualifications, and in-service training). Finally, it compared the attitudes of the general and special education teachers towards the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools. This was through the use of the three-component model of attitudes. This model was employed due to its capacity to encompass the anticipated

complex character of teachers' attitudes regarding inclusion students with SEN. Therefore, this model was deemed the most appropriate one to use when understanding and comparing teacher attitudes towards inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools. This is particularly important because this model has not previously been employed in comparing teachers' attitudes in the context of the KSA. This therefore forms a significant contextual contribution for this research.

From the findings of this study, it can be concluded that the special education teachers demonstrated a more positive attitude to the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools. At the same time, they expressed a number of reservations regarding the implementation of inclusion, especially in relation to students with severe disabilities. The findings suggest that general education teachers' practice of inclusion of students with SEN is primarily directed towards the physical (and possibly functional) inclusion of students with physical or moderate disabilities, rather than at those with severe disabilities. However, it was found that special education teachers hold different views of inclusion and the benefits of inclusive practices, and they therefore suggested an approach of inclusion rather than locational inclusion. This difference in attitude regarding the inclusion of students with SEN was attributed to differing educational background factors, i.e. the type of teacher qualifications and pre-service training. This suggests therefore that the educational authorities should develop and implement training and awareness programmes for all members of staff, in order to provide them with the essential knowledge and understanding of the inclusion approach. This study also confirms that teachers' attitudes are influenced by a number of factors. These factors were termed by the researcher as the 'factors triangle' which include: child-related factors, teacher-related factors and education/environment-related factors. These factors have been highlighted as a result of their significant influence on teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of students with SEN, as argued by Salvia and Munson (1986).

In addition, a considerable number of barriers have been identified from the findings of this study which, in turn, play a pivotal role in the overall development of attitudes. This study found that a significant barrier towards further progress with inclusion was the lack of collaborative working between general and special education teachers. The findings further reveal that it is essential that significant attention be paid to the creation of a suitable inclusive learning environment, i.e. a location in which there is a consistently adequate provision of required resources, including specialist human resources.

To conclude, it is significant that, although this research did not find a difference between the two groups of teachers in terms of teacher origins (as all participating teachers came from the same capital city where the research was conducted), years of teaching experience or qualifications, the interpretation of the data has allowed the researcher to come up with the potential meanings and indications discussed earlier in this chapter. This includes exposing that when teachers are deprived of proper training, such as the case in the KSA, their special qualifications and experience related to teaching students with SEN could reflect their attitudes toward those students in inclusive settings. Therefore, as mentioned earlier, this study concludes with the importance of training. It considers the factors required in training which may have an impact on the attitudes of teachers, including the factors discussed and the qualifications, experience, interest and willingness of teachers to accept inclusion more positively. This is to say, the training factor is seen in this study as a broad umbrella that covers many issues, including those mentioned above, and considers how to address them for the development of inclusion of students with SEN. Therefore, provision of training programmes is an issue that has to be considered by policy makers and this will require a policy reform to be enacted in actual practice.

The complex nature of the concept and practice of inclusion requires consideration not only of shared beliefs and opinions about this approach (although this is highly significant), but also a

serious reconsideration of current practice. As well as recommendations to improve the general attitude towards students with SEN in general, and inclusion in particular, this study highly recommends the undertaking of such a review, in order to provide suitable environments for both teachers and students.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

8.1 Introduction

The aim of this study was to understand the attitudes of general and special education teachers towards the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools. It focused on the variables that shape teachers' attitudes towards inclusion that might be preventing the successful implementation of inclusion of students with SEN in female mainstream primary schools in the KSA. It aimed to present a comparison of the attitudes of the general and special education teachers towards the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools. In addition, it aimed to reveal the challenges that both groups of teachers face in promoting the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools. This chapter provides an overview of the study, explains its limitations, and presents some clear recommendations.

8.2 Summary of the study

The study was conducted in mainstream primary girls' schools in Riyadh, KSA. In order to collect the data, questionnaires were distributed to 200 female Saudi general and special education teachers. 165 questionnaires were returned, 82 from general education teachers and 83 from special education teachers. Additionally, four teachers were interviewed, two general education teachers, and two special education teachers. To fulfil the aims of the study, a mixed methods design was used in this research based on an interpretive paradigm.

Interviews were appropriate as the study aimed to collect in-depth data; and the use of a questionnaire, as a tool for collecting quantitative data, was able to provide a wider context and larger sample base to support, or clarify, the data collected in the interview stage. These two methods were combined within this research, in order to generate the fullest possible picture of the issue under study, in order to answer the research questions. The results of the analysis revealed the number and extent of the various factors that affect teachers' attitudes. These

factors have been thoroughly described, analysed and contrasted with the findings of other studies. At this point, answers can be given to the study's research questions:

- **What are the attitudes of special and general education teachers towards the inclusion of learners with SEN?**

The findings revealed that special education teachers have more positive attitudes than general education teachers towards the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools. This emerged from the responses to the questionnaires, which clearly showed significant differences between the two groups' responses in terms of the three components of attitude, confirming that special education teachers have a more positive attitude than general education teachers. In addition, the findings confirmed that almost all the participants with negative beliefs were general education teachers. On the other hand, more than half of the teachers who had positive feelings and actions, and who felt happy and comfortable with the concept of inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream classes, were special education teachers. The findings from the interviews concurred with findings from the questionnaires. Given their knowledge about the advantages and purposes of inclusion, the special education teachers who were interviewed strongly favoured an inclusive approach, in contrast with the general education teachers.

The differences in attitudes regarding the inclusion of students with SEN was found to be largely due to factors associated with the teachers' different educational backgrounds, i.e. type of qualifications and pre-service training received. As discussed previously, Elhoweris and Alsheikh (2006), Al-Sartawi (1995), Olson (2003) and Van-Reusen et al. (2000) confirmed a positive relationship between teachers' attitudes and having received specialised knowledge and training in the field. Specialised knowledge, understanding and skills in special education contribute to the cognitive component of attitudes which, in turn, plays a key role in enhancing positive attitudes (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). In this study, differences emerged in terms of the attitudes held by general education teachers who had received in-service training in special

education and those teachers who had not received such training (Section 5.5.2.3; Table 5.13). As stated above, the former group were generally more positive than those who had not had received training. As observed in a number of studies, including Shade and Stewart (2001) and McLeskey and Waldron (2002), general education teachers require in-service training and dedicated training programmes if they are to acquire sufficient knowledge and skills to enable them to teach students with SEN. As the special education teachers had already received training to support the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools in the KSA, this seems to be borne out by this study. However, there might be other factors playing a role in promoting positive attitudes. For example, special education teachers might have positive attitudes prior to taking this training, leading them to choose to be special educators in the first place. They may have a professional interest in special education or personal experience with individuals with SEN. These considerations create rich opportunities for future research.

- **What is the impact of the background factors on the attitudes of special education teachers and general education teachers towards the inclusion of learners with SEN?**

The study found no statistically significant differences between the cognitive, affective and behavioural components of attitude regarding the inclusion of students with SEN based on both groups of teachers' level of qualification. In addition, the findings from both groups of teachers revealed that years of experience of working with students with SEN had no impact upon the three attitudinal components. The study results similarly found no statistically significant differences between special education teachers with or without in-service training, relative to their mean responses to the three components of attitude. However, the study did find statistically significant differences between general education teachers with and without in-service training in special education. This significant difference emerged in relation to all three components of general education teachers' attitudes; i.e. cognitive, affective and behavioural.

Finally, the study results also found teacher-related factors, child-related factors and environmental-related factors influenced both general and special education teachers' attitudes.

- **What are the differences between the attitudes of general education teachers and special education teachers towards the inclusion of learners with SEN?**

The differences in attitudes to inclusion observed between general and special education teachers were twofold. The first difference related to the teachers' level of understanding of the practice of inclusion, while the second related to the type of inclusion being implemented. In terms of the first difference, the study findings revealed that general education teachers do not have a satisfactory level of theoretical knowledge concerning the concept of inclusion, which influences their attitudes towards the inclusion of students with SEN. Furthermore, general education teachers feel insufficiently equipped and inadequately prepared to teach students with SEN, citing lack of adequate training. As a result, we can conclude that general education teachers, require in-service training to build confidence, knowledge, understanding and thereby positive attitudes. This finding further supports the recommendation that, if inclusion is to be implemented successfully, general education teachers should be trained to promote positive attitudes. In contrast, the data analysis showed special education teachers are more accepting of inclusion students with SEN in mainstream schools, and better equipped to help students with SEN to learn, relative to general education teachers. This suggests the differences in attitudes towards inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools between general and special education teachers were largely due to their educational backgrounds, which inform their knowledge and understanding of the concept of inclusion. In the KSA special education teachers take special educational qualifications and engage in pre-service training settings with students with SEN, and it is apparent that knowledge and awareness regarding the inclusion of students with SEN is essential to enhance inclusion. Moreover, it emerged that knowledge about inclusive education is one of the most important factors influencing teachers' practices.

Thus, the complex nature of the concept and practice of inclusion requires teachers to undertake targeted practical training. That is to say, for inclusion to be successful, professional pre-and in-service training is crucial.

In this study a difference was noted between the attitudes held by general education teachers who had received in-service training in special education contexts, and those of general education teachers who had not received such training (Section 5.5.2.3; Table 5.13). Moreover, the data shows that special and general education teachers were concerned about the lack of in-service training courses available, as both require training on how to teach students with SEN in mainstream schools, and how best to encourage students with SEN to interact actively with their typically developing peers. The study also found that, in general, continuing professional development and training courses reviewing the significance of the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools can provide general education teachers with essential theoretical and practical knowledge. From the research findings, it could possibly be concluded that, were general education teachers offered training, then they would be more likely to engage effectively with students with SEN, to fulfil their learning needs. Thus, continuous professional development courses should be provided to both groups of teachers to keep them updated on knowledge and further enhance their skills.

The second difference observed concerned the type of inclusion that special and general education teachers think should be implemented to meet certain types of special needs. For example, the findings suggested that general education teachers' practice of inclusion of students with SEN is mainly directed at physical, and possibly functional, inclusion for students with physical or moderate disabilities, rather than at those with severe disabilities. However, special education teachers suggest more benefit is to be gained from full inclusion rather than locational inclusion.

Although special education teachers responded more positively to inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools than the general education teachers did, they did express some reservations regarding the implementation of inclusion for students with severe disabilities. The participants, both general and special education teachers, suggested students with severe disabilities would encounter difficulties and challenges as a result of being unable to keep up with their typically developing peers. This indicates that the willingness of teachers to include students with SEN increases with a reduction in the severity of disabilities, and vice versa. A key reason for this, according to teachers, was because mainstream classrooms and schools do not always provide the most beneficial educational alternatives and resources for all students with SEN. The special education teachers in this study stressed the fact that special classrooms can be a good alternative setting for students with severe disabilities, prior to the process of accessing mainstream education. This explains why Saudi special education teachers favoured an integrated approach for severely disabled students, and an inclusive approach for moderate students. A further point to note here is that inclusion necessitates a substantial restructuring of mainstream schooling to cater for all students, irrespective of their specific needs.

From reviewing the data, it is apparent that, regardless of type of education and qualifications held, all teachers consider students with severe disabilities to fall into a different category from students with moderate disabilities, in terms of the appropriateness of inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools. They agree on the difficulty of accommodating students with severe disabilities, in contrast with those with moderate disabilities, which reinforces the need to provide awareness and training programmes for teachers. In addition, the most important factors highlighted by the special and general education teachers refer to the school environment and the unsuitability of mainstream classrooms for students with SEN when managing the inclusion of all students with all types of disabilities, especially severe disabilities.

- **What are the challenges facing successful inclusion in the context of this study?**

This study found that the major challenges facing special and general education teachers in implementing successful inclusion and improving attitudes towards inclusion are, firstly, lack of collaboration between special and general education teachers. The issue of collaboration between special and general education teachers is a very significant factor that can lead to the enhancement and successful implementation of inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools. The findings of this study show that there is a perceived lack of collaboration between special and general education teachers, and that collaboration is required in order to help students with SEN integrate into mainstream schools. To this end, general and special education teachers, as mentioned in the previous chapter, should organise regular meetings to identify the issues associated with the inclusion of students with SEN, in order to identify and develop suitable teaching skills so that they can meet the requirements of all students with SEN. Furthermore, inclusive education requires that all school staff, including principals and teachers, should work as a team in collaboration to create educational programmes that can benefit students with SEN. In order to address all of the special needs of students in inclusive schools, the involvement of all teaching staff is critical.

Secondly, the findings of this study revealed that there is a lack of adequate resources in mainstream schools and classrooms, which affects teachers' attitudes towards inclusion; special and general education teachers confirmed that a challenge for successful inclusion in mainstream schools is the school environment and a lack of resources. Moreover, adequate resources and facilities in mainstream schools are crucial in order to meet the requirements of students with SEN and enable them to use all of their senses. Resources and facilities in mainstream schools are thus imperative so that students with SEN can exercise their skills, communicate with other students and participate in learning activities.

The present study has highlighted the fundamentally challenging nature of the process of including students with SEN in mainstream schools in the KSA, along with the need for personal professional development on the part of teachers, and environmental changes. These changes include enabling teachers to adopt new educational practices and to foster an inclusive ethos. In addition, before sending students with SEN to mainstream schools, the Saudi Ministry of Education should work on removing barriers related to resources and facilities, and also provide teachers with training on how to teach students with SEN. The current situation in mainstream schools, the buildings, resources, facilities, level of SEN awareness, and efficiency of communication must be understood and addressed within the Saudi social and educational context. The next section of this chapter will present the limitations of this research, as well as the final recommendations.

8.3 Limitations of the study

Although this study has afforded an understanding and comparison of the attitudes of general and special education teachers towards the inclusion of students with SEN, in the context of mainstream girls' primary schools in Riyadh, KSA, it is important here to highlight its limitations. One of the limitations is in terms of the number of participants in the interviews. The original intention was to interview ten participants to collect qualitative data. However, only eight replied to the researcher and agreed to participate. After that, two participants were restricted in terms of time, and therefore later apologised for being unable to participate. Another two teachers later refused to participate in the interviews, as they became concerned about their perceptions and the expectations of the Local Education Authority, regardless that the interview data were retained confidentially and used only to fulfil the requirements of the study. This left an interview sample of four teachers. Nevertheless, they had four different views, knowledge and experience and, through intensive examination of their contributions, they provided different and valuable knowledge to this research. Moreover, the small number

of participating teachers was acceptable in light of the fact, as mentioned previously, that interviews in educational research in the KSA context are rare. This is because of the Saudi 'culture which makes it difficult for some to honestly discuss problems objectively, sometimes for fear of state authority' (Cook, 1998: 98). The questionnaire response rate, however, was 165 out of 200 questionnaires which, at 82%, was acceptable. Qualitative research does not seek generalisation, instead gathering data that is distinct, contextually specific, and representative of the participants' attitudes (Cohen et al., 2007; Hammersley, 2007). Therefore, if the findings of this research were to be generalised, they could only be tentatively applied to female primary school teachers in primary mainstream schools in the same cultural and organisational context.

Another limitation of the research was the use of a Likert scale in the questionnaire. The questionnaire did not include any open-ended questions to allow participants the opportunity to describe their attitudes and ideas more fully. One reason for not including any open-ended questions was that the questionnaire comprised 35 items, and the addition of an open-ended question might have been off-putting for many participants. Another reason was that participants were too busy to complete a long survey. The length of the survey was restricted to ten minutes, and the open-ended questions were posed in the interviews instead.

Another limitation is that the study only includes a female sample. This, as previously mentioned, is due to religious restrictions where genders are educated separately; it was therefore not possible to study mainstream boys' schools and to conduct interviews with male participants. Secondly, the majority of research studies on the inclusion of students with SEN, and teachers' attitudes in KSA have been undertaken by male researchers studying boys' schools. To the researcher's knowledge, there is a significant lack of research surrounding the perspectives of female teachers, hence the contribution of this research.

A final limitation was influenced by practical considerations, such as conducting the study in a single city. Furthermore, the study sample could include policy-makers, students, or principals (from the Local Education Authority and the Ministry of Education) in the future research.

8.4 Recommendations

Based on the results of the study, the researcher presents the following recommendations that aim to improve teachers' attitudes towards inclusion to help overcome existing challenges and thereby to effectively support the provision of special educational services for students with SEN in mainstream schools. In this regard, the researcher would recommend:

At the Ministry of Education level, this study recommends the following:

- Teacher training:

1. It is the duty of the Ministry of Education to provide specialised ongoing training for both general and special education teachers. Based on the findings of this research in the form of the voices of the teachers themselves, there is a need for appropriate training and awareness workshops to give teachers the knowledge and skills required to implement inclusion in an effective manner, in order to meet the needs of students with SEN in mainstream schools. Such training is likely to enable them to develop a thorough professional understanding of the needs of students with SEN and their inclusion in mainstream schools. This recommendation is supported by Shade and Stewart (2001) and McLeskey and Waldron (2002) who pointed out that the success of inclusion demands a combination of various factors, i.e. providing directions and sufficient training to teachers regarding inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools.
2. From this research, it is also recommended that the need for appropriate training also applies to undergraduate general education teachers, who should be provided with pre-

service training giving them the required knowledge and skills for teaching students with SEN. The Ministry of Education could achieve this by allocating at least one or two terms of the undergraduate degree to train teachers to teach students with SEN as suggested by teachers in this study. This action would have the potential to increase the teachers' knowledge about special education, inclusion and students with SEN and further the notion that the role of the teacher in the Saudi classroom is to support *all* students with heterogeneous needs. Both Avramidis et al. (2000) and Carroll et al. (2003) argued that this form of training, which is university based, would be a key factor in promoting the positive attitudes of teachers.

- Availability of support services:

1. The Ministry of Education should focus on the modification of the physical environment of schools, including removing all potential physical barriers to inclusion prior to allocating any students with SEN to mainstream schools. This would prepare schools and classrooms to enable students with SEN to actively participate in the school and classroom. The creation of accessible classroom spaces also sends a signal to both students with and without disabilities that the classroom is a public place of learning for all students.
2. It is further recommended that all reasonable procedures and measures should be undertaken to improve classrooms, including the resources room, to prevent any barrier to the participation of students with SEN. At the classroom level, the Ministry of Education should provide the required teaching materials and resources to support diverse students' needs in a mainstream setting, including differentiated materials and universally-designed curriculum. According to Avramidis and Kalyva (2007), having access to resources and support in the classroom, and at school level generally, strongly contributes to positive teacher attitudes towards inclusion of students with SEN.

However, as we learnt from the literature and the finding of this study, providing resources in the classroom is important to enhance the positive attitudes of teachers towards inclusion of students with SEN, but this does not necessarily mean that teachers will take them up or even use them appropriately but, rather, that teachers need to have the ability and knowledge of the available tools and resources so they can use them when appropriate. This, of course, can be taken up within the enhanced teacher training mentioned above. It is worth noting that, given the global trends towards maximising the participation of students, including those with SEN, in mainstream schools, it is significant then to move from simply accommodating students with SEN in those schools, including the provision of resources, to teachers' practices in their actual teaching in classrooms (Lewis and Norwich, 2005). So, teachers need to be able and knowledgeable in what, how and when to choose and employ a pedagogy that all students can find useful in their learning, as suggested in PCK by Shulman (1987); so they can also be prepared to employ an appropriate pedagogy and decide whether or not specific tools and resources are to be used in the educational process. As suggested in the literature, the central issue when teaching students with SEN in mainstream schools is not connected to specific pedagogies that should be used when teaching them as "*what works with most pupils, would also work for all pupils*" (Norwich & Lewis, 2001. p. 324), but rather the intensity of the pedagogy itself and the ability of teachers in recognising and dealing with the unique differences between students. Lewis and Norwich (2005) argue that when teachers acquire knowledge about students with SEN and their needs, they can teach all students without need for specific pedagogies for students with SEN. The knowledge referred to here does not imply the special knowledge about SEN types but rather the knowledge about how to teach them in inclusive pedagogy (Lewis and Norwich, 2005). While there are different research

stresses on the necessity for special pedagogies when teaching special education, this present research does not support this ideology, and it also does not agree with it in mainstream schools, and therefore, this research echoes the suggestion of Lewis and Norwich. The findings of this study revealed that teachers had issues when teaching different types of students with SEN and they did not know how to teach them at the same time as their typically developing peers. However, the interpretation of the findings concludes that one of the reasons for this is related to the issue of pedagogy, which is centrally related to teachers' training. Therefore, teachers should acquire, through training, the ability and knowledge of a variety of pedagogical approaches that support differentiated instruction and learning in the classroom. Thus, when teachers are trained for that purpose, their confidence in supporting students with SEN can be developed.

3. Furthermore, in order to meet the needs of all students with SEN, the Ministry of Education should provide special support services, including a multidisciplinary team consisting of physiotherapists, speech therapists, social workers and psychologists. This study has identified such provision as currently lacking in schools. The provision of such human support services has been confirmed to have an impact upon teachers' attitudes towards inclusion of students with SEN, as argued by Avramidis & Norwich (2002).
4. The Ministry of Education should provide a special budget for each inclusive school, to be specifically available for the requirements of inclusive education and students with SEN.
5. It is further recommended that the Ministry of Education should also consider the issue of reducing the large numbers of students in each class, which is an issue faced by teachers in this study. The number of students could be reduced possibly by opening

additional classrooms, thereby reducing the number of students in each class for the benefit of all parties. Al-Amri (2009) suggested that a decrease in the number of students in each class to twenty would facilitate the inclusion effort.

At the school level, this study recommends that:

1. It is recommended from this research that teamwork between teachers should be established and encouraged, in order to ensure the success of inclusion in mainstream schools. Both general and special education teachers should develop their skills of communication and collaboration. Both general and special education teachers should acknowledge the importance of their role in the facilitation of successful inclusive education. This is because, through collaboration, teachers exchange experiences and knowledge, thereby promoting positive attitudes, encouraging students' positive outcomes and enhancing inclusive education. This collaboration can be further encouraged by the schools' principals. According to Olson (2003), the role of the principal in this respect is crucial in encouraging collaboration between teachers. It is important, for example, that the principals arrange regular school meetings between special education teachers and general education teachers to discuss issues related to students with SEN in the school, and to share expertise and solutions across all teachers. This may also provide a mechanism, whereby the difficulties faced in achieving successful inclusion for students with SEN in mainstream schools could be reported to the Ministry of Education, who may be in a better position to solve these difficulties. However, such meetings could be enhanced if the Ministry of Education provided training for all teachers in this regard, so such training could provide guidance to teachers in developing a promising collaboration among themselves if their attitudes towards inclusion were promoted. It should be noted that simply providing training does not mean teachers' collaboration will happen but rather training courses need to

be effective so that teachers can be well prepared when working with students with SEN in practice. Simply exchanging conversation does not mean collaboration is achieved but rather teachers need to gain the skills of how to collaborate in actual practice, learn about SEN and be knowledgeable in their teaching subjects. However, it also means that enhancing collaboration is not limited to training solely but other complementary resources should be addressed if teachers' collaboration is to be effective. For example, another way the Ministry of Education could encourage collaboration between teachers would be to develop online resources, for example a portal platform or discussion forum, including inclusive education relevant resources available to download so that teachers could access them and learn from them. This way they could discuss issues around inclusive education whenever and wherever they wished. Another important approach that should be considered is that teachers need to be trained in how to reflect on their practice and how they can evaluate whether it is being inclusive. In addition, the school management should provide sufficient support for all teachers to enhance their collaboration. This includes addressing the issue of time because teachers' collaboration can be affected if teachers' time is limited due to workload and commitments to administrative tasks. The large classroom size is also challenging as this can affect the attention given to all students, particularly students with SEN. So, the school management should minimise teachers' workload, decrease the number of students in every class and the other administration jobs and pre-determine a fair responsibility for every teacher and plan teachers' meetings in an adequate time to allow appropriate time for teachers' collaboration.

It is also important to suggest that the school environment as a whole is very significant in gearing a great collaboration among all actors, including special and general education teachers. When everyone is given value and recognition in the school, a better

work environment is expected. This is a very important element of enhancing collaboration, not only for teachers, but for the whole school.

Finally, it can be reiterated that the culture of Saudi Arabia is influenced by its religion, Islam. The study has highlighted that the Islamic religion teaches the importance and rights of people with disabilities and their inclusion in every aspect of life without discrimination. However, this does not necessarily mean that everyone understands all the values of their culture, and therefore their reactions and practices in life could be different. For example, although all participants in this study were Muslim and from one culture, they were different in their attitudes towards inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools since they had different values in their understanding of inclusion of students with SEN. The history of inclusion in the KSA shows the cultural background of Saudis was challenging, including the segregation of students with SEN, the issue of openness and freedom and the loyalty to the tribal societies that isolate disabled people in their homes or special settings. This had influenced policy makers to segregate those students in special schools; even after inclusion was established people understood inclusion of SEN in mainstream schools as locational rather than inclusive education. So, cultural issues cannot be neglected when trying to understand the attitudes of teachers working in mainstream schools, both special and general education teachers, as they are part of the same society, and the cultural background could be one influential element of the attitudes of those teachers towards inclusion. Therefore, since the culture is formed by social and individual values, these values are nevertheless affected by a number of factors, such as training as found in this research.

It was noted earlier in this study that inclusion in the KSA has come late, following an era in which students with SEN received their education in separate settings by special teachers. The relatively short history of inclusion in the KSA could be one reason why the attitudes of teachers towards inclusion is still at unsatisfactory level, given the differences in attitudes

found in this study. This could be because, when implementation of inclusion commenced, general education teachers were not qualified to implement it properly. However, the present research, along with other studies, found that the nature of the training of these teachers was behind this issue. This is to say that the history and culture of inclusion in the KSA is surrounded by problems that need careful consideration.

To sum up, this study has revealed a number of factors influencing teachers towards the inclusion of students with SEN. Having noted that Saudi polices regarding the inclusion of students with SEN are derived from what Islam stresses, as well as commitments to external organisations and institutional initiatives, there is need for careful consideration in designing inclusion policies, given the differences among teachers found in this study. To illustrate this, it is possible that consideration has not been given to those issues that are most vital when formulating relevant policies. This is especially true when learning from and adopting examples from other contexts without considering the factors and issues that are different to those contexts. Therefore, addressing relevant issues, such as those found in this study, is vitally important if the attitudes of teachers towards the inclusion of students with SEN are to develop.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: The Ethical Research Approval

Dear Dr Hodges

Re: "Comparison between Special and General Teachers' Attitudes towards Inclusion of Learners with Special Educational Needs (SEN) in primary Mainstream Girls schools in Saudi Arabia (Riyadh)"
Application for Ethical Review ERN_15-0168

Thank you for your application for ethical review for the above project, which was reviewed by the Humanities & Social Sciences Ethical Review Committee.

On behalf of the Committee, I can confirm the conditions of approval for the study have now been met and this study now has full ethical approval. Please note that this approval has been granted on the basis that the supervisor's contact details are also added to the information sheet for questionnaires.

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 bought 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.

If you require a hard copy of this correspondence, please let me know.

Thank you,

Gemma Williams
Deputy Research Ethics Officer
Research Support Group
Finance Office
Aston Webb, B Block
Edgbaston, Birmingham
B15 2TT

Appendix 2: The Authorisation Letter from my Supervisor



UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

School of Education

3.12.14

Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia
Cultural Bureau in London
630 Chiswick High Road
London
W4 5RY
United Kingdom

To whom it may concern,

I am the PhD supervisor of Liyla Alamri who are currently doing her PhD program in Inclusion and Special Educational Needs at the University of Birmingham.

As part of Liyla's research, I can confirm that she has my permission and recommendation to go to Saudi Arabia for the purpose of study and data-collection for her theses titled with (Comparison between Special and General Teachers' Attitudes towards Inclusion of Learners with SEN in Saudi Arabia.). Liyla will need permission to curry out her study in special and general education teachers in primary schools in Saudi Arabia as they are the sample in her research.

The main aim for this research is to investigate teachers' attitude towards inclusion of students with especial education need SEN in mainstream schools, and to analyse the impact of a number of variables that shape teachers' perceptions of inclusion in order to highlight those factors that might contribute to the development of positive and pro-active attitudes towards inclusion.

The data collection to be used in this study will be mainly questionnaire and interviews with teachers who are in primary schools that are running inclusion programs. This will enable her to collect a sample of quantitative data in order to find information to answer her research questions. She will also need to carry out more in depth interviews, following from the questionnaire and with smaller sample of the teachers, in order to gain more qualitative data.

.

Yours faithfully

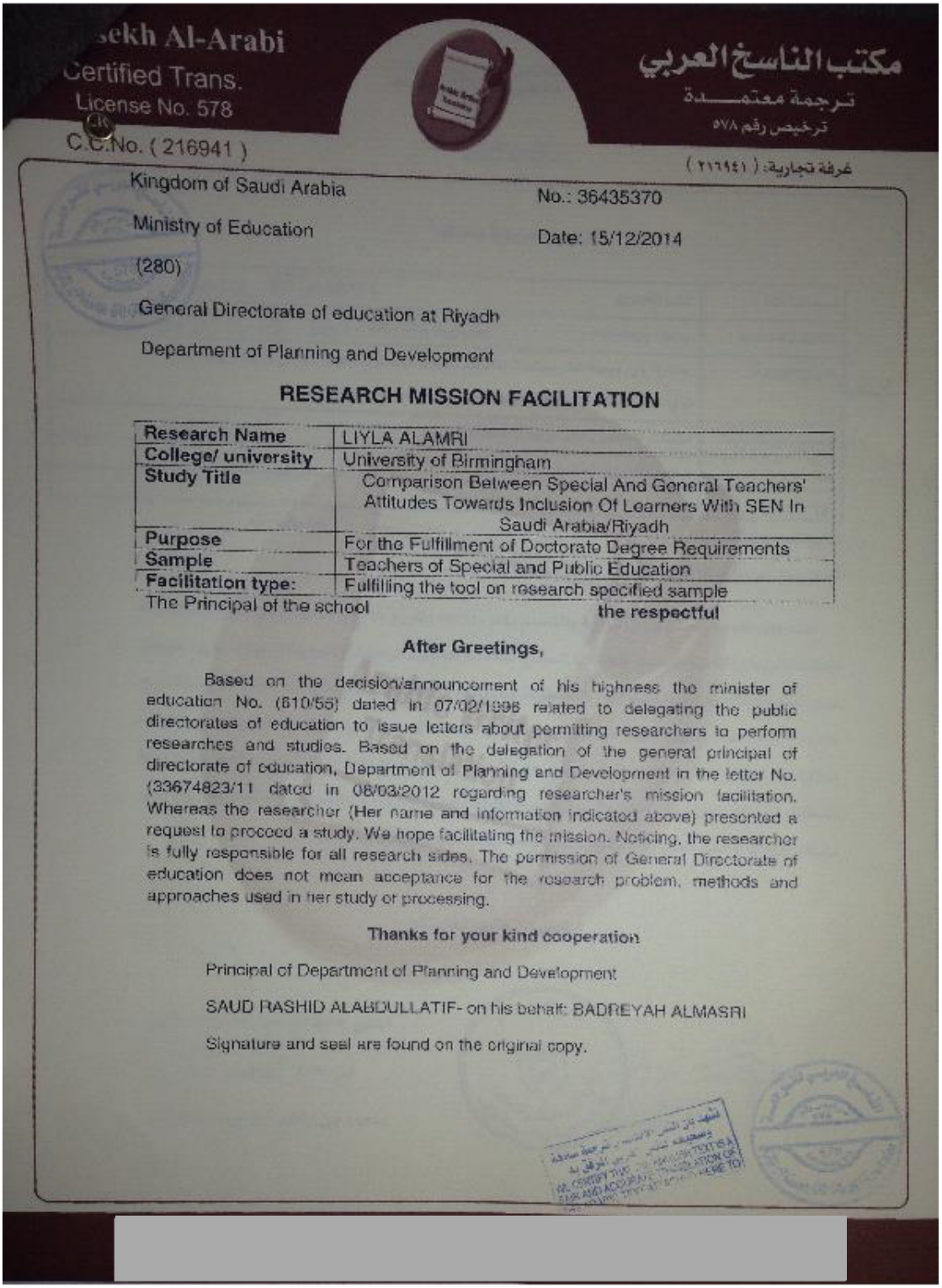


Penny Lacey PhD
Senior Lecturer in Education



University of Birmingham Edgbaston Birmingham B15 2TT United Kingdom
T: 0121 414 4866 F: 0121 414 4865 E: education@bham.ac.uk W: www.education.bham.ac.uk

Appendix 3: The Permission Letter from the Ministry of Education



sekh Al-Arabi
Certified Trans.
License No. 578
C.C.No. (216941)

مكتب الناسخ العربي
ترجمة معتمدة
ترخيص رقم ٥٧٨
غرفة تجارية: (٢١٦٩٤١)

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Ministry of Education
(280)
General Directorate of education at Riyadh
Department of Planning and Development

No.: 36435370
Date: 15/12/2014

RESEARCH MISSION FACILITATION

Research Name	LIYLA ALAMRI
College/ university	University of Birmingham
Study Title	Comparison Between Special And General Teachers' Attitudes Towards Inclusion Of Learners With SEN In Saudi Arabia/Riyadh
Purpose	For the Fulfillment of Doctorate Degree Requirements
Sample	Teachers of Special and Public Education
Facilitation type:	Fulfilling the tool on research specified sample

The Principal of the school **the respectful**

After Greetings,

Based on the decision/announcement of his highness the minister of education No. (610/55) dated in 07/02/1998 related to delegating the public directorates of education to issue letters about permitting researchers to perform researches and studies. Based on the delegation of the general principal of directorate of education, Department of Planning and Development in the letter No. (33674823/11 dated in 08/03/2012 regarding researcher's mission facilitation. Whereas the researcher (Her name and information indicated above) presented a request to proceed a study. We hope facilitating the mission. Noticing, the researcher is fully responsible for all research sides. The permission of General Directorate of education does not mean acceptance for the research problem, methods and approaches used in her study or processing.

Thanks for your kind cooperation

Principal of Department of Planning and Development

SAUD RASHID ALABDULLATIF- on his behalf: BADREYAH ALMASRI

Signature and seal are found on the original copy.

المملكة العربية السعودية
وزارة التربية والتعليم
٢٨٠
الإدارة العامة للتربية والتعليم بمنطقة الرياض
إدارة التخطيط والتطوير

وزارة التربية والتعليم
Ministry of Education

الرقم: ٣٦٤٣٥٣٤
التاريخ: ١٤٣٦/٠٢/٢٢
المرفقات:

"تسهيل مهمة بحث "

اسم الباحثة	ليلى العمري
الكلية / الجامعة	جامعة برمنجهام .
عنوان الدراسة	مقارنه بين وجهة نظر معلمات التعليم العام ومعلمات التعليم الخاص نحو دمج طالبات ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة في المملكة العربية السعودية/ الرياض.
الغرض من الدراسة	متطلب للحصول على درجة /الدكتوراه
عينة البحث	معلمات التربية الخاصة
نوع التسهيل	استيفاء الأداة على عينة البحث المحددة.

المكرمة مديرة المدرسة ... حفظها الله

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته وبعد ،،

بناءً على تعميم معالي وزير التربية والتعليم رقم ٥٥/٦١٠ وتاريخ ١٤١٦/٩/١٧هـ بشأن تفويض الإدارات العامة للتربية والتعليم بإصدار خطابات السماح للباحثين بإجراء البحوث والدراسات . وبناءً على تفويض مدير عام إدارة التربية والتعليم إدارة التخطيط والتطوير في الخطاب ذي الرقم ١١/٣٣٦٧٤٨٢٣والتاريخ ١٤٣٣/٤/١٤هـ بشأن تسهيل مهام الباحثين والباحثات . وحيث تقدمت إلينا الباحثة (الموضحة بياناتها أعلاه) بطلب إجراء الدراسة . نأمل تسهيل المهمة . مع ملاحظة أن الباحثة تتحمل كامل المسؤولية المتعلقة بمختلف جوانب البحث . ولا يعني سماح الإدارة العامة للتربية والتعليم موافقتها بالضرورة على مشكلة البحث أو على الطرق والأساليب المستخدمة في دراستها ومعالجتها .

شاكرين طيب تعاونكم .

مدير إدارة التخطيط والتطوير

[redacted]

سعود بن راشد آل عبداللطيف

وزارة التربية والتعليم
إدارة التخطيط والتطوير
الإدارة العامة للتربية والتعليم بمنطقة الرياض

ص/ قسم الدراسات والبحوث .

[redacted]

Appendix 4: The Questionnaire - English Version:

CONSENT FORM

Title of Project: **Comparison between Special and General Teachers' Attitudes towards Inclusion of Learners with Special Educational Needs (SEN) in primary Mainstream Girls schools in the kingdom Saudi Arabia (Riyadh)**

Name of Researcher: **Liyla Alamri**

Please initial all boxes

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet dated for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information and ask questions, and have had these answered satisfactorily. ☐

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason, without being affected. ☐

3. I understand that relevant data collected during the study will be used for the purpose of the study only and I give my permission to the researcher to use it. ☐

4. I agree to take part in the above study. ☐

Name of Participant: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Dear Teacher,

I intend to perform a field study as a part of a research project entitled **Comparison between Special and General Teachers' Attitudes towards Inclusion of Learners with Special Educational Needs (SEN) in primary Mainstream Girls schools in the kingdom Saudi Arabia (Riyadh)** in fulfilment of the requirements set for obtaining a PhD degree in special education at the University of Birmingham, United Kingdom.

This study aims to understand general and special education teachers' attitudes towards inclusion of students with special educational needs in primary mainstream schools in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (Riyadh).

I assure you that I will deal with these opinions confidentially and will use them only to achieve the objectives of this research, and that the provided information will be used only to make the results more meaningful. Under no circumstances will this information be used to identify you in any way.

If you would like to participate in an interview, please provide your contact details bellow, otherwise you can contact me on the email bellow if you rather prefer not to provide your contact details.

Your email address:

Mobile number:

Thank you for time and cooperation. God bless!

For more information or to make an enquiry concerning the clarification of any question, please contact:

Liyla Marzouk Alamri, PhD student .University of Birmingham/United Kingdom.

Email address: [redacted]

Section A

General Background Information

1. **Age**
   - ❑ 22-30
   - ❑ 31-40
   - ❑ 41-50
   - ❑ 51-60

2. **Have you ever taught students with special educational needs in your classes?**
   - ❑ Yes
   - ❑ No

3. **I have…….. years of experience working with students with disabilities.**
   - ❑ None
   - ❑ 1-5
   - ❑ 6-10
   - ❑ 11-20
   - ❑ 21-30

4. **Have you received any in-service training on teaching students with special educational needs?**
   - ❑ Yes
   - ❑ No

5. **What types of impairment do the students you are teaching have? (You may select more than one statement.)**
   - ❑ Visual impairment
   - ❑ Hearing impairment
   - ❑ Mental disability
   - ❑ Physical disability
   - ❑ Speech and Language disability
   - ❑ Multiple disabilities
   - ❑ Specific learning difficulties

6. **What is your position in the school?**
   - ❑ A special education teacher
   - ❑ A general teacher

7. **What is your qualifications?**
   - ❑ Diploma in special education
   - ❑ Bachelor's degree in special education
   - ❑ Hight degree (Master's degree, PhD in special education)
   - ❑ Diploma degree teacher
   - ❑ Bachelor's degree
   - ❑ Hight degree (Master's degree, PhD)

8. **From your point of view, what are the type of disabilities that should be included and you may accept into inclusive classrooms? (You can choose more than one.)**

- ❑ Visual impairment
- ❑ Hearing impairment
- ❑ Mental disability
- ❑ Physical disability
- ❑ Speech and Language disability
- ❑ Multiple disabilities
- ❑ Specific learning difficulties

Section B

Beliefs and cognitive component

In this section, please carefully read each of the following statements about inclusion, and then choose the appropriate opinion that best represents your level of agreement with each statement:

1. Strongly disagree (*SD*)

2. Disagree (*D*)

3. Neutral- neither agree nor disagree (*N*)

4. Agree (*A*)

5. Strongly agree (*SA*)

	Statement	**SA**	**A**	**N**	**D**	**SD**
1	Isolation in a special class has a negative effect on the social and emotional development of students with special educational needs.					
2	During breaks, students with special educational needs gather together apart from ordinary students.					
3	Inclusion helps to change the negative perception of non-SEN students towards their peers with special educational needs.					
4	Teaching students with special educational needs in the mainstreaming classroom will promote their academic growth.					

5	All students with special educational needs should have the right to receive their education in mainstream classes.					

Section C

Emotions component

In this section, please read each of the following statements carefully, and then choose the appropriate opinion that best represents your level of agreement with the statement:

1. Strongly uncomfortable

2. Uncomfortable

3. Neutral – neither uncomfortable nor comfortable

4. Comfortable

5. Strongly comfortable

If a student with special educational needs was about to join your classroom, either full-time or part-time, how would you feel? Please tick the appropriate number on each line.

Pessimistic	1	2	3	4	5	**Optimistic**
Uncomfortable	1	2	3	4	5	**Comfortable**
Negative	1	2	3	4	5	**Positive**
Insecure	1	2	3	4	5	**Confident**
Nervous	1	2	3	4	5	**Calm**
Unhappy	1	2	3	4	5	**Happy**

Section D

Behavioural component

In this section, please carefully read each of the following statements about what you would do if a special educational needs student was to be integrated into your classroom, and then choose the appropriate opinion that best represents your level of agreement with the statement:

1. Strongly disagree (*SD*)

2. Disagree (*D*)

3. Neutral -neither agree nor disagree (*N*)

4. Agree (*A*)

5. Strongly agree (*SA*)

	Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD
1	I would change my teaching processes to accommodate a student with special educational needs.					
2	I would engage in developing skills for managing the behaviour of a student with special educational needs.					
3	I would make use of technology to assist in teaching a student with special educational needs.					
4	I would slow down the pace of lessons to enable a student with special educational needs to have the chance to learn at the same level as their peers.					
5	I feel that I have the time to implement inclusion effectively.					

Section E

In this section, please carefully read each of the following statements about the multiple factors that have been identified that may influence teachers' attitudes in terms of 'child-related' variables, 'teacher-related' variables and 'educational environment-related' variables, and

then choose the appropriate opinion that best represents your level of agreement with the statement:

1. Strongly disagree (*SD*)

2. Disagree (*D*)

3. Neutral- neither agree nor disagree (*N)*

4. Agree (*A*)

5. Strongly agree (*SA*)

	Statement	**SA**	**A**	**N**	**D**	**SD**
1	The older children with special educational needs become, the more difficult it is to include them.					
2	Students with severe and profound learning disabilities can be difficult to include in mainstream schools.					
3	It is difficult to include all students with special educational needs in mainstream classrooms.					
4	I receive the necessary support and assistance from the staff to implement inclusion successfully.					
5	I have sufficient resources at my disposal to implement inclusion successfully.					
6	Students with special educational needs can benefit from additional support services such as Braille, teaching assistants or speech therapy.					
7	All members of the school take responsibility for making the school inclusive.					
8	General education teachers have undertaken sufficient training to teach students with special educational needs.					
9	Special education teachers can best meet the needs of students through significant modifications of the curriculum.					
10	Special education teachers and general education teachers cooperate in planning, teaching and preparing revision sessions for students with special educational needs.					
11	Skills and experience are important factors for general and special education teachers in					

	working with students with special educational needs.					

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire ☺

The Questionnaire – Arabic Version :

نموذج الموافقة

عنوان البحث:

"مقارنة بين وجهه نظر معلمات التعليم العام ومعلمات التعليم الخاص نحو دمج الطالبات ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة في المملكة العربية السعودية- الرياض"

اسم الباحث: **ليلى مرزوق العمري**

يرجى التوقيع بالأحرف الأولى في كل المربعات

1. أقر بأننى قرأت وفهمت صحيفة المعلومات المؤرخة للدراسة المذكورة أعلاه. وأنه قد أتيحت لي الفرصة للنظر في المعلومات، وطرح الأسئلة، وحصلت على إجابات مرضية على هذه الأسئلة. ☐

2. أدرك أن مشاركتي طوعية وأنا حر في الانسحاب في أي وقت دون إبداء أي أسباب، دون أن يؤثر ذلك عليّ. ☐

3. أدرك أن البيانات ذات الصلة التي يتم جمعها خلال هذه الدراسة سوف تستخدم لغرض الدراسة فقط وهذا إذن مني للباحث باستخدامها. ☐

4. أوافق على المشاركة في الدراسة المذكورة أعلاه. ☐

_____	_____	_____
التوقيع	التاريخ	اسم المشارك

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

سعادة الأخت الفاضلة / **حفظها الله**

السلام عليكم ورحمه الله وبركاته وبعد

إني أقوم بدراسة ميدانية موضوعها كالتالي **"مقارنة بين وجهه نظر معلمات التعليم العام ومعلمات التعليم الخاص نحو دمج الطالبات ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة في المملكة العربية السعودية- الرياض"**

تهدف الدراسة إلى معرفة وتحديد اتجاهات معلمات التربية العامة والخاصة نحو دمج ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة في مدارس التعليم العام الإبتدائي في مدينة الرياض وحيث تهدف أيضا لمعرفة العوامل التى قد تساهم في بناء هذه الاتجاهات.

ومن خلال عملك في الميدان وخبرتكم في التعامل مع طالبات التربية الخاصة، فإنني آمل إبداء رأيكم في جميع بنود الاستمارة المرفقة، وأؤكد حرصي على التعامل مع هذه الآراء بسرية تامة واستخدامها لتحقيق البحث العلمي فقط.

إذا كنت ترغبين في المشاركة في إجراء مقابلة، الرجاء كتابة بيانات التواصل في الاسفل أو يمكنك التواصل معي عن طريق الايميل الموضح ادناه.

ايميلك الشخصي:

رقم الهاتف:

أشكر للجميع حسن التعاون،وأسأل الله أن يوفقنا لكل خير،،

للتواصل في حاله لديك أيه استفسارات أضافية أو احتجت لتوضيح اي من الاسئلة

ليلى مرزوق العمري, طالبة دكتوراه. جامعة برمنقهام:المملكة المتحدة

المعلومات الشخصية

ا الفئة العمرية: - 22 - 30 31 - 40 41 - 50 51 - 6

هل قمتي بتدريس طلبات تربية خاصة من قبل:

ب) لا أ) نعم

إذا كانت الاجابة بنعم كم المدة الزمنية.....عام.

سنوات الخبرة: - لايـــــوجـــد 1 - 5 6 - 10 11 - 20 21 - 30

هل حصلت على دورات تدربية اثناء الخدمة في تعليم ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة؟

ب) لا أ) نعم

اختر نوع الإعاقة التي تعاملت معها خلال خبرتك السابقة (بإمكانك اختيار أكثر من إعاقة): -

أ) إعاقة بصرية.
ب) إعاقة سمعية.
ج) إعاقة عقلية.
د) إعاقة جسدية.
هـ) اضطرابات نطق وكلام.
و) متعدد الإعاقة.
ي) صعوبات تعلم.

موقعك ضمن نطاق المدرسة:

أ) معلمة تعليم عام. ب) معلمة تربية خاصة.

التخصص:.....

المؤهل العلمي:

أ) دبلوم في التربية الخاصة.

ب) بكالوريس في التربية الخاصة.

ج) ماجستير في التربية الخاصة.

د) دبلوم تعليم عام.

ح) بكالوريس تعليم عام.

ج) دراسات عليا (ماجستير ـ دكتوراه)

من وجهة نظرك ما هي الإعاقات التي يجب دمجها والتي من الممكن أن تتقبلها في فصلك (بإمكانك اختيار أكثر من إعاقة):

أ) إعاقة بصرية.

ب) إعاقة سمعية.

ج) إعاقة عقلية.

د) إعاقة جسدية.

هـ) اضطرابات نطق وكلام.

و) متعدد الإعاقة.

ي) صعوبات تعلم.

القسم الثاني

ماهو رأيك نحو دمج طالبات التربية الخاصة في المدرسة العادية؟

اقرأي الجمل التالية ثم ضعي الرقم المناسب استنادا على شدة الموافقة أو شدة الرفض:

1 - لا أوافق بشدة 2 - لا أوافق 3 - محايد 4 - اوافق 5 - اوافق بشدة

الرقم	العبارات	اوافق بشده	اوافق	محايد	لا اوافق	لا اوافق بشده
1	عزل طالبات التربية الخاصة له تأثيرات سلبيه على تطورهن من النواحي الاجتماعية والعاطفية.					
2	تجتمع طالبات التربية الخاصة في فترة الفسحة مع بعضهم البعض بمعزل عن اقرانهم العاديين.					
3	الدمج يساعد على تغير النظرة السلبية للطالبات العاديين تجاه أقرانهم ذوي الإحتياجات الخاصة.					
4	دمج طالبات التربية الخاصة في الفصول العادية يساعد على تطوير مهاراتهم الأكاديمية.					
5	من حق جميع طالبات التربية الخاصة أن يتلقو تعليمهم في الصفوف العادية.					

القسم الثالث

اقرأي الجمل التالية ثم ضع الرقم المناسب استنادا على شدة الموافقة أو شدة الرفض:

استلمت رسالة من المعلم المتخصص في مجال التربية الخاصة في المدرسة تفيد بأن أحد الطلاب ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة سوف يكون في أحد فصول التعليم العالم التي تقوم بتدريسها، كيف ستكون ردة فعلك؟

ضع لنفسك الرقم المناسب حسب ردود الأفعال الآتية:

1- غير مرتاح 2 - مرتاح قليلا 3 - شعور مختلط بين الراحه وعدمه 4 - مرتاح كثيرا 5 - مرتاح بشدة.

متفائل	5	4	3	2	1	متوتر
مرتاح	5	4	3	2	1	غير مرتاح
ايجابي	5	4	3	2	1	سلبي
واثق من قدراتي	5	4	3	2	1	غيرواثق
متوتر	5	4	3	2	1	غير متوتر
سعيد	5	4	3	2	1	غيرسعيد

القسم الرابع

كيف تتعاملين مع دمج الطالبات في المدرسة العادية؟

اقرأي الجمل التالية ثم ضع الرقم المناسب استنادا على شدة الموافقة أو شدة الرفض:

1 - لا أوافق بشدة 2 - لا أوافق 3 - محايد 4 - اوافق 5 - اوافق بشدة

الرقم	العبارات	اوافق بشده	اوافق	محايد	لا اوافق	لا اوافق بشده
1	أنا على استعداد أن أغير طريقة التدريس لكي تتلائم مع طالبات التربية الخاصة.					
2	أنا على استعداد أن أطور المهارات النمائية لكي أدير سلوكيات الطالبات ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة.					

3	أحسن استخدام التكنولوجيا للمساعدة في تدريس طالبات التربية الخاصة.					
4	ابطى من سرعة القاء الدرس لاتاحة الفرصة امام الطالبات لكى يتعلمو اكبر عدد ممكن من محتويات الدرس.					
5	اشجع الطالبات العاديات وطالبات التربية الخاصة لكى يتفاعلوا ويتعلموا معا.					

القسم الخامس

اقرأي الجمل التالية عن بعض العوامل التى ممكن أن تؤثر على اتجاهات المعلمات نحو دمج طالبات التربية الخاصة

ثم ضعي الرقم المناسب استنادا على شدة الموافقة أو شدة الرفض:

1 - لا أوافق بشدة 2 - لا أوافق 3-محايد 4 - أوافق 5 - أوافق بشدة

	العبارات	موافق بشدة	موافق	محايد	لا أوافق	أ لا أوافق بشدة
1	كلما زاد عمر الطفل ذوي الإحتياجات الخاصة كان من الصعب دمجه في مدارس التعليم العام.					
2	من الصعب دمج الطالبات ذوي الإحتياجات الخاصة الشديدة مثل متعددين العوق وخاصة في الفصول الدراسية .					
3	لا نستطيع دمج جميع طالبات التربية الخاصة في الفصول الدراسية.					
4	أتلقى الدعم والمساعدة الكافية من المعلمات المتخصصات لإنجاح عملية الدمج.					
5	لدي ما يكفي من الموارد تحت تصرفي لتطبيق الدمج بنجاح.					
6	يتوفر الدعم والخدمات الإضافية لدمج ذوي الإحتياجات الخاصة مثل أدوات التعلم كبرايل					

	وتوفير المصادر الإضافية كمعلم مساعد وأخصائي نطق وغيرها.					
7	تسعى جميع منسوبات المدرسة ألى جعل المدرسة أكثر دمجا.					
8	معلمات التعليم العام لديهم التدريب الكافي لتعليم ذوي الإحتياجات الخاصة.					
9	المعلمات المتخصصات في مجال التربية الخاصة هم الأكثر ملائمة لتلبية حاجات الطالبات ذوي الإحتياجات الخاصة من خلال غرف مصادر التعلم .					
10	يتعاون معلمات التربية الخاصة والعامة في تعليم ذوي الإحتياجات الخاصة.					
11	يتمتع معلمات التربية العامة بالخبرة والمهارة للتعامل مع الطالبات ذوي الإحتياجات الخاصة في مدارس الدمج.					

نشكرك على الوقت الذي أمضيته في استكمال هذا الاستبيان

Appendix 5: The Semi-Structured Interview Schedule – English Version:

The interview will last one hour. It will be divided into four parts with each part lasting 15 minutes. The interview covers the research's four themes. The first few minutes of each interview will be devoted to:

1. Presenting the aims and objectives of the study and the researcher as an interviewer.

2. Stressing that all information obtained through the interview is strictly confidential and, as research data, it is well protected and will be utilised only for the purpose of accomplishing the given research project. A letter providing all necessary information regarding the present research, particularly its significance in the context of the ongoing educational research in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (Riyadh), will be given to each interviewee. The letter also presents points that will be discussed during the course of the interview in order to provide interviewees with enough time to familiarise themselves with these points. Interviewees will be informed that their participation is absolutely voluntary and anonymous.

3. Receiving the interviewee's agreement regarding their participation in the present research project

CONSENT FORM

Title of Project: **Comparison between Special and General Teachers' Attitudes towards Inclusion of Learners with Special Educational Needs (SEN) in primary Mainstream Girls schools in the kingdom Saudi Arabia (Riyadh)**

Name of Researcher: **Liyla Alamri**

Please initial all boxes

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet dated for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information and ask questions, and have had these answered satisfactorily. ☐
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason, without being affected. ☐
3. I understand that relevant data collected during the study will be used for the purpose of the study only and I give my permission to the researcher to use it. ☐
4. I agree to take part in the above study. ☐

Name of Participant: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Dear Teacher,

I intend to perform a field study as a part of a research project entitled **Comparison between Special and General Teachers' Attitudes towards Inclusion of Learners with Special Educational Needs (SEN) in primary Mainstream Girls schools in the kingdom Saudi Arabia (Riyadh)** in fulfilment of the requirements set for obtaining a PhD degree in special education at the University of Birmingham, United Kingdom.

This study aims to understand general and special education teachers' attitudes towards inclusion of students with special educational needs in primary mainstream schools in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (Riyadh).

I assure you that I will deal with these opinions confidentially and will use them only to achieve the objectives of this research, and that the provided information will be used only to make the results more meaningful. Under no circumstances will this information be used to identify you in any way.

Thank you for time and cooperation. God bless!

For more information or to make an enquiry concerning the clarification of any question, please contact:

Liyla Marzouk Alamri, PhD student, University of Birmingham/United Kingdom.

Email address: [redacted]

General information:

Interviewer:

Interviewee:

Location:

Time:

Information about interviewee

Your position with the schools:

1. A general teacher
2. A special teacher

Qualification (Saudi qualification names may be used):

1. Teacher College Degree
2. University Degree
3. Higher Degree (Master's, PhD)
4. Other……

Could you please identify the age group you belong to from the following?

22-30 31-40 41-50 51-60

- Have you taught students with disabilities before?

- If yes, for how many years?

Theme one: knowledge and understanding of the concept of SEN inclusion

What is your understanding about inclusion?

What does inclusion mean to you?

What is your understanding about the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools?

Theme two: Teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of learners with SEN in mainstream schools

What do you think about including students with SEN in mainstream schools?

Do you believe that there will be no need for special schools in the future because of the movement towards inclusion in Riyadh?

Could you explain how you feel about the inclusive education of SEN in mainstream schools?

Do you support the concept of inclusive education for students with SEN in general schools? Why? Why not?

Do you think all students can be included? Why/why not? And, does the severity of the disability make a difference? How?

What do you perceive to be the benefits of including students with SEN in your class?

What do you perceive to be the disadvantages of including students with SEN in your class?

Theme three: Factors and requirements affecting the effective implementation of inclusive education

Have you received per-service training in special education? How much? And when?

Have you received in-service training in special education?

Do you believe that pre-service and in-service teacher training would successfully bring SEN inclusion from theory to practice? Could you please explain?

Do you have any previous experience of teaching students with SEN?

Do you think that general teachers in regular schools have the necessary abilities and skills to teach students with SEN?

To what extent do you think schools are resourced and ready for inclusion?

Do you receive any support from the MOE or local education authorities regarding the education of students with SEN?

What kind of support do you need to implement inclusion successfully in all schools?

Could you please mention some important factors that could contribute to successful inclusion?

Theme four: Issues influencing teachers' attitudes towards inclusion

In your view, what do you think is the main barrier to the inclusion of students with SEN in ordinary schools and in ordinary classrooms?

From your personal experience/perspective, how could these barriers be overcome?

The Semi-Structured Interview Schedule - Arabic Version:

سوف تستغرق المقابلة ساعة واحدة تُقسّم إلى أربعة أجزاء، كل جزء مدته 15 دقيقة. وتغطّي المقابلة الأربع محاور الخاصة بالبحث. والدقائق القليلة الأولي من كل مقابلة سوف تخصّص لـ:

1- تقديم أهداف الدراسة وتقديم الباحث كمحاور.

2- التأكيد علي أنّ كل المعلومات التي يتم الحصول عليها أثناء المقابلة سرّية للغاية، وتماماً كبيانات البحث، فهي محمية جيداً وسيتم استخدامها فقط من أجل تحقيق غرض البحث المطروح. كلّ من تُجري معه المقابلة سوف يحصل علي خطاب يحتوي علي كل المعلومات اللازمة بخصوص البحث الحالي وخصوصاً أهمّيته بالنسبة البحث التعليمي الجاري في المملكة العربية السعودية (الرياض). وسيعرض الخطاب أيضاً النقاط التي سوف يتم مناقشتها خلال المقابلة لكي يحصل المتحاورون علي وقت كافي لتأهيل أنفسهم لمناقشة تلك النقاط. وسوف يتم إخبار المتحاورين أنّ مشاركتهم أمر تطوّعي وغير مسمّي بالكامل.

3- استلام الموافقة من المرشّحين بخصوص مشاركتهم في مشروع البحث الحالي.

نموذج الموافقة

عنوان البحث:

"مقارنة بين وجهه نظر معلمات التعليم العام ومعلمات التعليم الخاص نحو دمج الطالبات ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة في المملكة العربية السعودية- الرياض"

اسم الباحث: **ليلى مرزوق العمري**

يرجى التوقيع بالأحرف الأولى في كل المربعات

1. أقر بأنني قرأت وفهمت صحيفة المعلومات المؤرخة للدراسة المذكورة أعلاه. وأنه قد أتيحت لي الفرصة للنظر في المعلومات، وطرح الأسئلة، وحصلت على إجابات مرضية على هذه الأسئلة. ☐

2. أدرك أن مشاركتي طوعية وأنا حر في الانسحاب في أي وقت دون إبداء أي أسباب، دون أن يؤثر ذلك عليّ. ☐

3. أدرك أن البيانات ذات الصلة التي يتم جمعها خلال هذه الدراسة سوف تستخدم لغرض الدراسة فقط وهذا إذن مني للباحث باستخدامها. ☐

4. أوافق على المشاركة في الدراسة المذكورة أعلاه ☐

التوقيع	التاريخ	اسم المشارك

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

سعادة الأخت الفاضلة / **حفظها الله**

السلام عليكم ورحمه الله وبركاته وبعد

إني أقوم بدراسة ميدانية موضوعها كالتالي **"مقارنة بين وجهه نظر معلمات التعليم العام ومعلمات التعليم الخاص نحو دمج الطالبات ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة في المملكة العربية السعودية- الرياض"**

تهدف الدراسة إلى معرفة وتحديد اتجاهات معلمات التربية العامة والخاصة نحو دمج ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة في مدارس التعليم العام الإبتدائي في مدينة الرياض وحيث تهدف أيضا لمعرفة العوامل التى قد تساهم في بناء هذه الاتجاهات.

ومن خلال عملك في الميدان وخبرتكم في التعامل مع طالبات التربية الخاصة، فإنني آمل منكم المشاركة في اجراء المقابله وتجدون في المرفق جميع بنود المقابلة المرفقة، وأؤكد حرصي على التعامل مع هذه الآراء بسرية تامة واستخدامها لتحقيق البحث العلمي فقط.

أشكر للجميع حسن التعاون، وأسأل الله أن يوفقنا لكل خير،

للتواصل في حاله لديك أيه استفسارات أضافية أو احتجت لتوضيح اي من الاسئلة

ليلى مرزوق العمري، طالبة دكتوراه. جامعة برمنقهام: المملكة المتحدة

معلومات عامّة

المحاوِر:

الضيف:

المكان:

الوقت:

معلومات عن المحاور

موقعك في المجمع التعليمي:

1. معلّم عام
2. معلّم خاص

المؤهّلات (يمكن استخدام أسماء المؤهّلات السعودية):

1- دبلوم
2- بكالوريس
3- درجة أعلي (ماجستير، دكتوراه)
4- أخرى.....

هل يمكنك تحديد الفئة العمرية التي تنتمي إليها؟

22-30 31-40 41-50 51-60

هل سبق ودرَّستِ لطالبات الإحتياجات التعليمية الخاصة من قبل ؟

لو نعم، كم عدد السنوات؟

الدمج المحور الأول:معرفة وفهم مصطلح

ما الذي تعرفينه عن الدمج؟

ماذا يعني الدمج بالنسبة لك؟

ما مدى تفهّمك لعملية دمج الطالبات ذات الاحتياجات الخاصّة في المدارس العامة ؟

المحور الثاني: المواقف أو الاتجاهات تجاه دمج الطالبات ذات الاحتياجات التعليميّة الخاصة في المدارس العامة ؟

ما رأيك في دمج الطلالبات ذات الاحتياجات التعليميّة الخاصة مع الطالبات العاديات في المدارس العامة ؟

هل تعتقدين أننا لسنا بحاجة لمدارس خاصّة في المستقبل نتيجة لعملية الدمج في الرياض؟

هل يمكنك توضيح ما هو شعورك حيال الدمج الشامل لطالبات الاحتياجات الخاصة؟

هل تؤيّدين فكرة دمج الطالبات من ذوي الاحتياجات التعليميّة الخاصّة مع أقرانهن في المدارس العامة؟ ولماذا؟

هل تعتقدين أنّ كل الأطفال يجب أن يتم دمجهم؟ لم ولم لا؟ وهل درجة الإعاقة تحدث فرقاً؟ وكيف؟

ما الفوائد التي ترينها في دمج الطالبات ذات الاحتياجات التعليميّة الخاصة في فصلك؟

ما الأضرار التي ترينها في دمج الطالبات ذات الاحتياجات الخاصّة في فصلك؟

المحور الثالث: العوامل والمتطّلبات المؤثّرة على فعالية عملية التعليم الشامل؟

هل تلقّيتِ تدريبات لتعليم الطلالبات ذات الاحتياجات الخاصّة؟ كم عددها؟ ومتى؟

هل حصلتِ على دورات تدريبية في التعليم الخاص؟

هل تعتقدين أنّ التدريب ما قبل وأثناء الخدمة للمعلمين يمكن أن ينقل فكرة الدمج من النظرية إلى التطبيق؟ وَضِّح من فضلك؟

هل لديكِ أي خبرة سابقة في مجال تعليم الأطفال من ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة؟

هل تعتقدين أنّ معلّمات التعليم العام في المدارس العادية لديهن القدرات والمهارات الضرورية لتعليم الأطفال من ذوي الاحتياجات التعليميّة الخاصة؟

إلى أي مدى تعتقدين أن المدارس معَدّة وجاهزة للدمج؟

هل تحصلون على أي دعم من وزارة التعليم أو السلطات المحلية بخصوص تعليم الطالبات ذات الاحتياجات الخاصة؟

ما نوع الدعم اللازم لتنفيذ الدمج الناجح في كل المدارس العامّة؟

هل يمكنك ذكر بعض العوامل الهامّة التي قد تساهم في عملية دمج ناجحة؟

المحور الرابع: المشاكل والعوائق التي تحول دون نجاح عملية الدمج للطالبات ذات الاحتياجات الخاصّة.

من وجهة نظرك، ما هو العائق الأساسي ضد دمج الطالبات ذات الاحتياجات الخاصّة في المدارس العادية وفي الفصول الدراسية العادية؟

من واقع خبرتك/منظورك الشخصي، كيف يمكن تخطي تلك الحواجز؟

Appendix 6: Example of an Interview Transcript with a Teacher– English Version:

General information:

Interviewer: Liyla Alamri

Interviewee: special education teachers (number1)

Location: mainstream school in Riyadh

Time: 11 am

Information about interviewee

Your position with the schools:

1. A general teacher
2. **A special teacher**

Qualification (Saudi qualification names may be used):

1. Teacher College Degree
2. University Degree
3. **Higher Degree** (**Master's**, PhD)
4. Other……

Could you please identify the age group you belong to from the following?

22-30 31-40 **41-50** 51-60

- Have you taught students with disabilities before?

Yes.

- If yes, how many years?

10 years

Theme one: knowledge and understanding of the concept of SEN inclusion

What is your understanding about inclusion?

Throughout my years of teaching, the approach to inclusive education adopted differs from that studied and known about in developed countries. This is because of the lack of training for both groups of teachers, the lack of resources or unavailability of resources for each disability in schools, and the lack of collaboration between special education teachers, general education teachers and school staff as a whole. It is necessary to work on what has been learned in the

classroom. Students with SEN need to have access to the same learning opportunities as their regular peers within mainstream schools, hence the idea of 'mainstreaming'. I argue that inclusion is one of the integral rights of students with SEN. Once that right is acknowledged, society is forced to accept them and to take their needs into account, including learning how to deal with them on a larger scale outside of the confines of school.

What does inclusion mean to you?

It is means that including students with SEN in the same environment with their ordinary peers and equally giving them the same rights and duties without restrictions. Also the inclusion of students with SEN with their ordinary peers in normal classes, but providing services for them inside and outside of the classroom.

What is your understanding about the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools?

It is the right for students with SEN to be educated in mainstream schools. I am in total agreement with this right; in particular, students with moderate disabilities should be included in a mainstream classroom. However, for students with severe disabilities, the best place would be a special classroom in a mainstream school, rather than a special school, in order to offer them the chance of interaction with their peers in some mainstream school activities. Schools and mainstream classes are not well prepared for them, and general education teachers need training if they are to be able to teach students with SEN, especially those with severe disabilities. Therefore, my opinion is that special classes are preferable to current school conditions. Although students with SEN have the right to equal opportunities in education and to fully participate in all mainstream curricular activities, the process of doing so would require tremendous school resources, in addition to better preparation of all school staff, as well as increasing collaboration between the school and the students' parents, which does not seem to be available in many of our schools.

Theme two: Teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of learners with SEN in mainstream schools

What do you think about including students with SEN in mainstream schools?

Including students with SEN is important and benefits but it should be remembered that other aspects are [also] important, such as providing appropriate school buildings with good facilities and suitable devices, and preparing teachers, especially general teachers, to teach students with SEN. Therefore, the successful inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream education requires human resources support in all schools that practise inclusion.

Do you believe that there will be no need for special schools in the future because of the movement towards inclusion in Riyadh?

It should be 'yes', but consider [that] the above-mentioned point regarding the prior provision of appropriate school buildings with good facilities and suitable devices should be borne in mind. Secondly, it is necessary to prepare teachers, especially general teachers.

Could you explain how you feel about the inclusive education of SEN in mainstream schools?

Suffice to say that the reward is multiplied for those providing services for students with SEN, and there is also a sense of accomplishment when working with these students, a mix of praise and great reward. Second, I argue that including students with SEN in schools can be suitable and appropriate for those with moderate disabilities; although not all SEN students would be suited to learning in mainstream school. (*Why do you think that?*) This is because students with SEN require special care because of their disability. In fact, the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream classrooms requires further study by the Ministry of Education. From my point of view, the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream classrooms needs more acceptance, with different categories of special needs for more severely affected students. Whilst, as previously stated, it is their right, schools need to be able to accept all students with SEN.

Do you support the concept of inclusive education for students with SEN in general schools?

Yes, of course.

Why?

Because it is their right to be educated in general schools. It is necessary to help students with SEN, as they need to feel part of the community and part of the school. They need to be continuously encouraged to participate in mainstream education with other students.

Do you think all students can be included? Why/ why not? And, does the severity of the disability make a difference? How?

Whilst not all students with disabilities should [be] in mainstream classrooms, it really depends on the student ... From personal experience in schools adopting inclusion, there are students who have shown great ability to adjust and keep up with the rest of their peers … But this also depends on the students' level and their particular needs ... Some students with moderate disabilities can learn well and achieve academic success if they are offered the right kind of help and services ... In fact, success is not only confined to academic performance, but also to social interaction ... It is also noted that students with moderate disabilities are in a better position to make friends with other peers with disabilities, and even with ordinary peers, which helps and encourages them to engage socially in regular schools. Severity of disability makes a big difference, and whilst it is the right of special [needs] students to be in classrooms in mainstream schools, this is not the best place for them. Including students with SEN into mainstream classrooms should be carried out under certain conditions, based on the type of disability and its severity, including hearing impairment, learning difficulties, visual impairment and physical disabilities. In order to be included with their mainstream peers, students with SEN should have similar levels of intelligence to their peers. Similarly, the teaching method should be suitable for both categories of learners in terms of curricular activities.

What do you perceive to be the benefits of including students with SEN in your class?

It is very beneficial for students with and without disabilities, especially in terms of social interaction, collaboration and communication between all children. In fact, there can be positive impacts on students without SEN, such as providing assistance, accepting individual differences and thus accepting others. In addition, I can confirm that it has a positive impact ... my own experience, I noticed a quantum leap in SEN students' reading and writing skills and

the way they interact and learn within a mainstream class ... This is particularly the case for the hearing impaired and students learning difficulties.

What do you perceive to be the disadvantages of including students with SEN in your class?

I would say it is difficult when teaching students with severe disabilities in terms of academic skills. Especially as there is a lack of resources, and classrooms and teachers themselves are not well prepared for students with SEN. So, the best place for them to be is in special classes in mainstream schools, because it is their right to be with their peer group to benefit from social interaction.

Theme three: Factors and requirements affecting the effective implementation of inclusive education

Have you received per-service training in special education? How much? And when?

Yes, special education teachers have to train for a year in the final year of their undergraduate degrees.

Have you received in-service training in special education?

Unfortunately, no; in-service training for teachers is lacking or limited in Saudi Arabia. People believe that special education teachers do not need to have in-service training, which is wrong. It does not mean that being a special education teacher excludes me from having more in-service professional training ... This is a common misconception ... I mean education and learning tools are developing constantly, which also means that teachers need to get used to the new material and keep abreast of any developments in the field, in order to achieve the successful inclusion of SEN students ... We should not stick to one method for too long when teaching this particular category of students ... But the one thing that helps me here is my qualifications in educational needs, years of experience, and training that I received before I started working in this area ... I must confess, however, that occasional professional training should be given to keep up with educational developments. Furthermore, we are very annoyed about the quality of training provided, which so far has not been adequate in terms of achieving the basic requirements of teachers ... I do not think a one or two-week period can cover the training needs of general education teachers, or provide them with the required and relevant content when teaching special education students in particular, and in the process of accommodating inclusion in general.

Do you believe that pre-service and in-service teacher training would successfully bring SEN inclusion from theory to practice? Could you please explain?

The most important factors that help to make mainstream schools very successful is pre- service and in-service teacher training, especially for general education teachers, because the training first gives teachers more knowledge and understanding of inclusion, and of how to deal with students with SEN in classrooms. Special education teachers have a year for training to study all the above information in more depth, and in the final year have to incorporate all the theory into their work in mainstream schools or special schools. These aspects of pre-service contrast with general teachers, who do not have this. Such training can lead attitudes to differ.

What do you mean by attitude difference?

I mean the special education teachers' attitude towards teaching students with SEN in mainstream schools is better because they are fully qualified and trained. For example, there is a serious lack of training for general education teachers. We do not have any training for general education teachers because there is a serious dearth in this department ... We also lack training." Also I hope attention will be paid to teacher training, and the importance of ensuring teachers in [their] school are given the special education training programmes that they very much need ... Attitudes tend to be negative before joining any training session, but, once these teachers attend, they grow in self-confidence and adopt a more positive outlook. "For example, they seem a lot more enthusiastic than before ... Also, they are more positive and engaged and keep asking special education teachers questions, in addition to their willingness to join other courses in the future.

More explanation please?

OK: Training helps teachers in many ways. Training will certainly help teachers provide the necessary support for students with SEN ... the teachers' professional skills help them grow in confidence, in particular general education teachers, in terms of dealing with students with SEN ... This training-based support will inevitably change teachers' attitudes for the better ... I am saying this because of the lengthy experience I have had in the field ... I cannot stress enough the importance of training and the positive impact it can have on teachers' attitudes.

Do you have any previous experience of teaching students with SEN?

Yes, about 10 years' experience.

Do you think that general teachers in regular schools have the necessary abilities and skills to teach students with SEN?

Unfortunately, no. They need [an] intensive course to be able to teach students with SEN in mainstream classrooms, and before that to understand the concept of inclusive education. Training is important, not just in terms of what was stated earlier, but also in order to improve teachers' attitudes towards inclusion and students with SEN. Thus, if general education teachers seek training and develop a good understanding, I am fully confident of a quick change in their attitudes for the better.

To what extent do you think schools are resourced and ready for inclusion?

They are not; there are many needs that are not met and educational facilities that are not available in schools; therefore, if support is not available, it is impossible to ensure continuity or any potential investment in inclusion in schools. Furthermore, it is important to note that the school environment is not appropriate, while the learning tools and preparation of students and teachers are not adequate to achieve successful inclusion. Finally, intensive programmes should be planned and provided to modify the school environment and provide training to teachers and all school members, as well as to maintain a high level of awareness of the issues surrounding the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools. My opinion [is] that in-service training is not available, and I think training is not good enough because is not compulsory for all general teachers who work in mainstream schools ... In fact, the whole process of training is not well-planned or easy to carry out, due to several shortcomings like

lack of funding and human resources, or even the time required to cater for such training programmes.

***Can I ask you: Who is responsible for the provision of services in your classroom*?**

Teachers, for example, I prepared this room myself in order to teach my students and meet their needs in the best way I can ... I do this by supplying all the necessary learning materials to teach students who have specific learning difficulties, as this is the disability inclusion in my school ... But we still need more in this respect.

Do you receive any support from the MOE or local authorities regarding the education students with SEN?

There are few simple and few resources and facilities, but not all that is needed in mainstream schools. (Do you know why?) I do not know why, but can guess that these facilities and resources, they may not be available due to the lack of financial resources.

What kind of support do you need to implement inclusion successfully in all schools?

We need, as I discussed with you before, a focus on teacher training, providing resources in all inclusion schools, we need more support and good environment in schools. ***What else do you think you need?*** Teams in schools. ***What do you mean by teams?*** I mean that "I hope to have such a team in our schools because we really need their expertise ... Also, the school should provide specialists to help teachers, whether special education teachers or general education teachers ... They will definitely have a key role in our schools." ***Who would you like to be involved in this team?*** Such a team should include a social worker, psychologist, communication specialist, and a physical therapist ... We need to actually have these professionals to support us and help provide counselling for all employees in the school ... The current misconceptions held in our schools should be rectified, and one of them is that all responsibilities should be placed on the special education teachers' shoulders ... In my opinion, a multidisciplinary team can help build an appropriate learning environment for all students in the school.

Could you please mention some important factors that could contribute to successful inclusion?

Yes, the important factor is the collaboration between special and general education teachers. Actually there is hardly any collaboration between general education teachers and special education teachers when it comes to identifying and dealing with the difficulties faced by students with SEN in schools. Also, there are no meetings whatsoever between us and the general education teachers. In fact, there is no form of collaboration.

Why do you think there is no collaboration?

This is because of the lack of understanding of their role; it is necessary to make general education teachers aware of the importance of their role. These teachers should also know that successful inclusion depends to a large extent on their collaboration.

Theme four: Issues influencing teachers' attitudes towards inclusion

In your view, what do you think is the main barrier to the inclusion students with SEN in ordinary schools and in ordinary classrooms?

The biggest challenge facing successful inclusion in schools is teachers. It is important first to provide training as one of the foremost priorities, especially for teachers in general education who are currently dealing with students with SEN ... I have to stress the need for training on teaching strategies for students with SEN, in addition to communication methods and approaches on how to deal with students with SEN students ... It is also paramount to explain to these teachers how important inclusion is for the education process and how it is a legitimate education right for all students with SEN. Second, training should not be restricted to general education teachers but has to also involve special education teachers, as they need to keep abreast of the latest developments and be engaged in advanced levels of preparation by attending more sophisticated and specialised special education programmes and courses ... I think it is pointless to have them attend basic courses, as they have already graduated from this specialty ... What they need, then, is more advanced teaching approaches for students with SEN. Also one of the most important difficulties that we are faced with lies in the absence of the right tools that could help us meet the needs of students with SEN in our schools. Because if the appropriate school environment is provided to accommodate inclusion, this would allow teachers to give more to those students.

Which are more difficult, teacher-related factors or school/environmental-related factors? Both of them are important and should be considered if inclusion is to be successful in schools. Given my long experience in the field, I can really say that these are the main obstacles to the inclusion process. Furthermore, the three main difficulties to achieving successful inclusion are teacher factors largely associated with training and the creation of an appropriate school environment, as well as the provision of the necessary resources and other student factors.

From your personal experience/perspective, how could these barriers overcome? MoE has a very important role to play in overcoming these barriers, as [it] should provide, prepare mainstream schools by providing special education teachers with ongoing training on the most recent methods applied in the teaching students with SEN, in order to enhance their experience ... Such training should be carried out by experts in teaching and learning approaches who will ensure teachers are aware of recent developments and various aspects of disabilities, and to hone their skills in dealing with different situations ... Any useful experience can thus be passed on by the special education experts, who should aim to perpetuate such learning and ensure that it is lifelong for all those working with students with SEN and those concerned with their inclusion in mainstream schooling. I believe that teacher attitudes play a key role in overcoming obstacles that prevent the achievement of successful inclusion in schools.

Example of an Interview Transcript with a Teacher – Arabic Version:

معلومات عامّة
المحاور: ليلى العمري
الضيف: رقم 1
المكان: مدارس التعليم العام بلرياض
الوقت: 11 صباحاً

معلومات عن المحاور:
موقعك في المجمع التعليمي:
3. معلّم عام
4. معلّم خاص

المؤهّلات (يمكن استخدام أسماء المؤهّلات السعودية):
5- دبلوم
6- بكالوريس
7- **درجة أعلي (ماجستير**، دكتوراه)
8- أخري.....

هل يمكنك تحديد الفئة العمرية التي تنتمي إليها؟

22-30 31-40 **41-50** 51-60

هل سبق ودرَّستِ لطالبات الاحتياجات التعليمية الخاصة من قبل ؟

نعم

لو نعم، كم عدد السنوات؟

10 سنوات

المحور الأول: معرفة و فهم مصطلح الدمج

ما الذي تعرفينه عن الدمج؟

خلال سنوات تدريسي، يختلف الدمج عمّا تعلّمناه داخل فصول الدراسة وكذلك يختلف عن ذلك الذي يدرّس والمعروف عنه في الدول المتقدّمة. ويرجع ذلك إلى نقص التدريب والخبرة من جانب المعلّمات ونقص الموارد المتاحة لسدّ حاجة المدارس، ونقص التعاون بين معلّمات التعليم الخاص من ناحية، ومعلّمات التعليم العام من ناحية أخرى وهيئة التدريس بالمدرسة بصفة عامّة. ومن الضروري تطبيق ما تمّ تعلّمه داخل فصول الدراسة. فالطالبات ذات الاحتياجات التعليميّة الخاصّة يجب أن تتوفّر لديهن نفس فرص التعلّم التى تتاح للطالبات العاديات في المدارس العامة ومن ثم تتحقّق فكرة "الدمج". وكما أومن بأن الدمج حقّ من حقوق الطالبات ذوي الاحتياجات التعليميّة الخاصة. وبمجرّد الاعتراف بهذا الحق، يلتزم المجتمع بتقبّلهن والأخذ باحتياجاتهن في الحسبان بالإضافة إلى تعلّم طريقة التعامل معهن على نطاق واسع خارج حدود المدرسة.

ماذا يعني الدمج بالنسبة لك؟

يتخطّى مفهوم دمج الطالبات ذات الاحتياجات التعليميّة الخاصة مجرّد نقلهن إلى المدارس العامّة إلي ما هو أعمق من ذلك. حيث يشير إلى دمج ذوي الاحتياجات التعليميّة الخاصة مع أقرانهم العاديين ممن يعيشون في نفس البيئة وإعطائهم نفس الحقوق والواجبات دون أيّ قيود.

ويعرف دمجهن في المدارس العامة أو الدمج التعليمي في المدارس بـ" دمج الطالبات ذات الاحتياجات الخاصّة مع أقرانهن في الفصول العامّة وتوفير الخدمات لهن داخل وخارج الفصل". ومع ذلك، فإنّ عملية الدمج الشامل تتألّف من عدة مراحل، والتي تراعي حالة الطالبة ومستواها، وبناء عليه يتم تحديد نقل الطفلة ضمن فصل عام.

ما مدى تفهّمك لعملية دمج الطالبات ذات الاحتياجات الخاصّة في المدارس العامة؟

يقرّ دمج الطالبات ذات الإحتياجات الخاصّة مع أقرانهن العاديات بحقوقهن في التعليم في المدارس العامة. وأنا شخصياً أنحاز تماماً لهذا الحق؛ وبالأخص الطالبات ذات الإعاقات البسيطة أو المتوسطة يجب دمجهن في الفصول العامة. ومع ذلك، بالنسبة للطالبات ذات الإعاقات الشديدة فإن أفضل مكان لهن سيكون في الفصول الخاصّة الملحقة بالمدرسة العادية فضلاً عن المدراس الخاصّة بهن من أجل منحهن فرصة المشاركة والتفاعل مع أقرانهن في الأنشطة المدرسية المختلفة، فالمدارس والفصول العامة ليست مهيّأة جيداً لهن، وتحتاج معلّمات التعليم العام إلي تدريب إضافي ليتم تأهيلهن للتدريس لذوي الاحتياجات التعليميّة الخاصّة، وخاصّة ذوي الإعاقات الشديدة. ومن ثمّ، من وجهه نظري أنّه من الأفضل دمجهن في الفصول الخاصّة مقارنة بظروف المدارس الحالية. على الرغم من أن الطالبات ذات الاحتياجات الخاصّة لهن كامل الحق في الحصول علي فرص متساوية في التعليم والمشاركة الكاملة في كل الأنشطة الخارجية للمدارس العامة، "إلا أن عملية كهذه تتطلّب موارد مدرسية باهظة، بالإضافة إلى إعداد أفضل لكامل هيئة التدريس وأيضاً زيادة التعاون بين المدرسة وأولياء الأمور، والذي لا يبدو متوفّراً في العديد من المدارس."

هل يمكنك أن تخبريني عن نموذج الإعاقة من منظورك الخاص؟

هل تقصد النموذج الطبي أوالإجتماعي؟ **(نعم، ماذا تعتقدين؟)** يحتاج الدمج الشامل لطالبات التعليم الخاص كلاً من النموذجين الطبي والاجتماعي، على الرغم من أهمية النموذج الطبي، إلا أن النموذج الاجتماعي أكثر أهمية. **كيف؟**

حيث أنه في النموذج الاجتماعي: " الإعاقة جزء من الأقدار الإلهية وعلى الأفراد تقبّلها" وأستطيع القول أن كل الطالبات ذات الاحتياجات التعليميّة الخاصة يمكنهن تلقّي تعليمهن من خلال مراحل التعليم المختلفة كالابتدائية والمراحل الأخري المتقدّمة للتعليم. وبالتالي يصبح من السهل عليهن التواصل بثقة أكبر مع الآخرين في المجتمع. حيث لا تكمن المشكلة في الإعاقة نفسها فلكل واحدة منهن طريقة خاصّة تستطيع من خلالها الطالبة الحصول على أعلى النتائج والأهداف المرجوّة. ولكن تكمن المشكله في كيفية مواجهة الإعاقة من قبل أفراد المجتمع، علاوة علي الإعاقة نفسها. لذا فإنه من الضروري بناء مجتمع يساعد على تقبّل الطالبات ذات الاحتياجات التعليميّة الخاصة في المدارس العامة وخاصّة تلك التى يطبّق فيها نظام الدمج، وكذلك المجتمع ككل، تأكيداً على أهمية وقدرة أي مجتمع على دمج أو عزل هؤلاء الأفراد من ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة.

المحور الثاني: المواقف أو الاتجاهات تجاه دمج الطالبات ذات الاحتياجات التعليميّة الخاصة في المدارس العامة ؟

ما رأيك في دمج الطلالبات ذات الاحتياجات التعليميّة الخاصة مع الطالبات العاديات في المدارس العامة ؟

لعلّ دمج طالبات الاحتياجات التعليميّة الخاصّة مع الطالبات العديات أمر مهم ومفيد لتلك الطالبات، ولكن يجب التنبيه على جوانب مهمّة أخرى، مثل توفير المباني المدرسيّة المناسبة وتجهيزها بمرافق جيّدة وأجهزة مناسبة وكذلك تجهيز المعلّمات، وخاصّة معلّمات التعليم العام. لذا فإنّ عمليّة الدمج الناجحة تتطلّب توفير موارد بشرية في كل المدارس التي تدعم مثل هذا الإجراء.

هل تعتقدين أننا لسنا بحاجة لمدارس خاصّة في المستقبل نتيجة لعملية الدمج في الرياض؟

لا بدّ أن تكون الاجابة نعم، ولكن مع الأخذ في الاعتبار ما سبق وذكرناه بخصوص أولويّة تجهيز المنشآت المدرسية الملائمة بالتجهيزات اللازمة والأجهزة المناسبة. ثانياً: من الضروري إعداد المعلمات، و خاصة معلّمات التعليم العام .

هل يمكنك توضيح ما هو شعورك حيال الدمج الشامل لطالبات الاحتياجات الخاصة؟

أولاً: توفير الخدمات للطالبات ذات الاحتياجات التعليميّة الخاصّة عمل مجزي، ويصاحبه أيضاً شعور بالإنجاز أثناء العمل مع الطلبة في صورة مزيج من المدح والثناء.

ثانياً: أن إلحاق الطالبات ذات الاحتياجات التعليميّة الخاصة بالمدارس العامة يمكن أن يكون مناسباً لذوات الإعاقات البسيطة والمتوسطة، ومع ذلك فلن تكون الدراسة في المدراس العامّة مناسبة لكل الطالبات ذات الاحتياجات الخاصّة. ***(لماذا تعتقدين ذلك؟)*** يرجع ذلك إلي أنّ الطالبات ذات الاحتياجات الخاصة الشديدة يتطلّبون عناية خاصة بسبب إعاقتهن. في الحقيقة، تتطلّب عملية دمجهن المزيد من الدراسة من قبل وزارة التربية والتعليم. من وجهة نظري، تحتاج عملية دمج الطالبات ذات الاحتياجات التعليميّة الخاصّة لمزيد من القبول، مع مختلف انواع الإعاقات لدى الطالبات ذات الإعاقات الشديدة. في حين أنّه، وكما ذكرنا سابقاً، من حقهن. ولذلك فعلى المدارس أن تكون قادرة على استقبال كل طالبات التربية الخاصة.

هل تؤيّدين فكرة دمج الطالبات من ذوي الاحتياجات التعليميّة الخاصّة مع أقرانهن في المدارس العامة؟ ولماذا؟

بالطبع نعم، فهذا حقهن، ومن الضروري مساعدة طالبات التربية الخاصة ، فهن بحاجة للشعور أنّهن جزء من المجتمع و المدرسة. إنهن بحاجة للتشجيع المستمر على المشاركة في التعليم العام مع الطالبات الأخريات.

هل تعتقدين أنّ كل الأطفال يجب أن يتم دمجهم؟ لم ولم لا؟ وهل درجة الإعاقة تحدث فرقاً؟ وكيف؟

في حين أنّه من حقهم بالتأكيد، لكن لا يجب دمج كل طالبات التربية الخاصة في الفصول العامة. رغم أنّ الطلبة ذوى الإعاقات البسيطة والمتوسطة قادرون بطبيعة الحال على التواجد مع أقرانهم العاديين في الفصول المدرسية، ولكن يعتمد ذلك على درجة الإعاقة وأعمار الطلاب." إنها حقا مسألة متوقّفة على الطلاب ... فمن واقع الخبرة الشخصية في مجال المدارس المتبنّية لعملية الدمج، هناك بعض الطالبات أظهرن قدرة فائقة على التكيّف والتواكب مع باقي زملائهن ... ولكن يتوقّف هذا أيضاً على مستوى الطالبات واحتياجاتهن الخاصّة ... بعض الطالبات ذات ذوي الإعاقات البسيطة يمكنهن التعلّم بشكل جيد وتحقيق نجاح أكاديمي إذا ما مُنحوا المساعدات والخدمات المناسبة ... في الواقع حقيقةً لا يقتصر النجاح على الأداء الأكاديمي فقط، ولكن أيضاً على التفاعل الاجتماعي ... ومن الملحوظ أيضاً أنّ الطالبات ذات الإعاقات البسيطة لديهن فرص أفضل للتواصل مع أقرانهن من صاحبات الإعاقات الأخرى. وأيضاً مع أقرانهن العاديات، مما يساعد على تشجيعهن علي الإندماج اجتماعياً في المدارس العادية."

ويشكّل التنوّع في درجة الإعاقة فرقاً كبيراً، حيث يكون في حين أنّه من حق الطالبات الدراسة في الفصول العادية، إلا أنّ ذلك ليس المكان الأفضل لهن. ولهذا، يستمرّ النقاش حول أن عملية الدمج يجب أن تتم تحت ظروف معينة. بناءً على نوع الإعاقة وشدّتها كضعف السمع أو النظر، أو صعوبات التعلّم، أو ضعف البصر، أو الإعاقات البدنية. يجب أن تكون للطالبات ذات الاحتياجات التعليميّة الخاصة في نفس مستوى الذكاء مقارنة بأقرانهن العاديات كي يتم دمجهن معاً، ويجب أن تكون الوسائل التعليمية مناسبة للنوعين بالنسبة للأنشطة الخارجية."

ما الفوائد التي ترينها في دمج الطالبات ذات الاحتياجات التعليميّة الخاصة في فصلك؟

عملية الدمج مفيدة جدا لكل من الطالبات ذوات الإعاقات أو دونها، وخاصة من ناحية التفاعل الاجتماعي والتعاون والتواصل بين الأطفال. في الحقيقة، يمكن أن يكون لها نتائج إيجابية على الطالبات العاديات مثل توفير المساعدة وتقبّل الاختلافات الفردية ومن ثم تقبّل الآخرين. بالإضافة لذلك، يمكن القول: *"أنّ لها تأثيراً إيجابياً ... ومن واقع خبرتي الشخصية، لاحظت تطوّراً هائلاً في مهارات القراءة والكتابة لدى الطالبات من ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة وطريقة تفاعلهم داخل الفصول العادية ... هذا بالنسبة لحالات ضعف السمع وضعف الحركة وصعوبات التعلّم تحديداً"*

ما الأضرار التي ترينها في دمج الطالبات ذات الاحتياجات الخاصّة في فصلك؟

حسناً، سأقول أنّه من الصعب وليس ضرار تدرّسي الطالبات ذات الإعاقات الشديدة وتحقيق نجاح بالمهارات الأكاديمية. خاصة وأن هناك نقص في الموارد والفصول، غير أنّ المعلّمات أنفسهن غير مجهّزات للتدريس للطالبات ذات الاحتياجات التعليميّة الخاصّة. لذا فلعلّ المكان الأنسب لهن هو فصول خاصّة ضمن المدارس العادية، حيث أنّه من حقّهن التواجد في المدارس العادية للاستفادة من التفاعل الاجتماعي على الأقل.

المحور الثالث: العوامل والمتطّلبات المؤثّرة على فعالية عملية التعليم الشامل؟

هل تلقّيتِ تدريبات لتعليم الطلالبات ذات الاحتياجات الخاصّة؟ كم عددها؟ ومتى؟

نعم، يجب على معلّمات التعليم الخاص التدرّب لمدة سنة كاملة في آخر سنواتهن الدراسية قبل التخرج.

هل حصلتِ على دورات تدريبية في التعليم الخاص؟

للأسف لا، فالدورات التدريبية لمعلّمات التعليم الخاص محدودة أو تكاد تكون معدومة في المملكة العربية السعودية. يعتقد الناس أن معلّمات ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصّة لسن بحاجة إلى دورات تدريبية، وهو خطأ بالطبع. "فكوني معلّمة ذوى احتياجات خاصّة لا يعنى إعفائي من الحصول على المزيد من التدريب. وهذا سوء فهم شائع ... أعني أنّ أدوات التدريس والتعليم تتطوّر باستمرار، مما يعني أيضاً أنّ المعلّمات بحاجة للتعوّد على هذه الأدوات الجديدة والبقاء على دراية بأيّ تطوّر في هذا المجال من أجل تحقيق تفاعل ناجح مع الطالبات. وعلينا ألا نقتصر علي طريقة واحدة لفترة طويلة أثناء تعليم هذا النوع من الطالبات تحديداً. ومع ذلك، لعلّ الشيء الوحيد الذي يساعدني هنا هو مؤهّلاتي وسنوات الخبرة والتدريب التي حصلت عليها قبل البدء في العمل بهذا المجال. ورغم كل ذلك، يجب أن أعترف بضرورة الحصول على تدريب من حين لآخر حتى أستطيع مواكبة التطوّر التعليمي. ويجب أيضاً أن أقول أنه وبرغم عملي في هذا المجال لمدة 10 سنوات على الأقل، إلا أنني لم أتلقَّ أي دورات تدريبية احترافية تتعلق بهذا المجال."

وعلاوة على ذلك، نحن كمعلّمات لذوي احتياجات خاصّة، "منزعجات للغاية حول مدة وجودة التدريب المهني المتوفّر، و الذي لم يكن أبداً كافياً لتحقيق المتطلبات الأساسية للمعلّمات. لا أعتقد أن أسبوعاً أو اثنين مدة كافية لتدريب المعلّمات أو تزويدهن بالمتطلّبات والمحتوى اللازم لتعليم الأطفال من ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصّة بشكل خاص ودمجهم المتكامل بشكل عام."

هل تعتقدين أنّ التدريب ما قبل وأثناء الخدمة للمعلمين يمكن أن ينقل فكرة الدمج من النظرية إلى التطبيق؟ وَضِّح من فضلك؟

يعدّ التدريب في فترة ما قبل وأثناء الخدمة أهمّ العوامل التى تساعد على جعل المدارس العامّة ناجحة جداً للدمج، خاصة بالنسبة لمعلّمات التعليم العام، لأنّ التدريب يمنح المعلّمات أوّلاً مزيداً من المعرفة والفهم لعملية الدمج وكيفية التعامل مع الطالبات ذات الاحتياجات الخاصّة في الفصول. لدي معلّمات التعليم الخاص سنة واحدة للتدريب ودراسة كل تلك المعلومات السابق ذكرها بتعمّق أكثر، كما أنّ عليهم تطبيق النظرية التعليمية بأكملها سواء في المدارس العامّة أو الخاصّة (مرحلة التطبيق قبل التخرج). وتتعارض جوانب تدريبات ما قبل الخدمة مع معلّمات التعليم العام حيث أنهن لا يتلقّونها. فتدريبات كهذه لمعلّمات التعليم الخاص يمكن أن ينتج عنها اختلاف في الاتجاهات بين معلّمات التعليم الخاص والعام.

ماذا تقصدين باختلاف الاتجاهات؟

هذا يعني أن سلوك معلّمات التعليم الخاص تجاه الطالبات ذات الاحتياجات التعليميّة الخاصّة في المدارس العامّة أفضل لأنهن مدرّبات ومؤهّلات كلّياً. فعلى سبيل المثال، هناك نقص حاد في تدريب معلّمات التعليم العام. ولذا فمن المرجُوّ إيلاء المزيد من الاهتمام لتدريب المعلّمات. علاوة علي ذلك، فإنّه من الضروري التأكيد على ضرورة حصول المعلّمات على برامج التدريب الخاصة والتي يحتاجونها بشدة. وفي ضوء تلك القضايا، ومن خلال خبرتي في المدرسة يمكن القول أن تلك التدريب يحدث تغييرات جذرية في اتجاهات معلّمات التعليم العام بين ما قبل وبعد حضور الدورات التدريبية.
قبل تلقّي أي دورات تدريبية، تميل سلوكيات المعلّمات إلى أن تكون سلبية، ولكن بمجرد حضور المعلّمات، فإنّهن يزددن ثقة بأنفسهن ويتبنّين نهجاً أكثر إيجابية. "على سبيل المثال فهن يبدين حماساً أكثر من قبل... كذلك يصبحن أكثر إيجابية وتفاعلاً مع الطالبات من ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة بالإضافة لرغبتهن في الانضمام لدورات تدريبية أخرى في المستقبل."

المزيد من التوضيح من فضلك؟

حسناً: "يساعد تدريب المعلّمات في عدة نواحٍ." فمن المؤكّد أن التدريب سيساعد المعلّمات على توفير الدعم اللازم للطالبات ذات الاحتياجات التعليميّة الخاصّة. وكما يتّضح من البيانات، فإن المهارات المهنية للمعلّمات، وخصوصاً معلّمات التعليم العام تساعد على زيادة ثقتهن في قدرتهن على التعامل مع الطالبات ذات الاحتياجات التعليميّة الخاصّة. ذلك الدعم القائم على التدريب سيعمل بلا شك علي تغيير سلوكيات المعلّمات للأفضل. ومن خلال خبرتي الكثيفة في هذا المجال يمكنها التأكيد على أهمّية التدريب وكيف يمكن أن يؤثّر على المعلّمات على نحو إيجابي."

هل لديكِ أي خبرة سابقة في مجال تعليم الأطفال من ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة؟

نعم، حوالي 10 سنوات من الخبرة.

هل تعتقدين أنّ معلّمات التعليم العام في المدارس العادية لديهن القدرات والمهارات الضرورية لتعليم الأطفال من ذوي الاحتياجات التعليميّة الخاصة؟

للأسف لا . إنّهن بحاجة لدورة مكثّفة حتى يتمكّنوا من تعليم الأطفال من ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة في مدراس التعليم العام، وقبل هذا فهُم بحاجة إلى فهن مبدأ التعليم الشامل. التدريب مهم، ليس فقط بالنسبة لما سبق ذكره، ولكن أيضاَ من أجل تحسين مواقف واتجاهات المعلّمات تجاه فكرة الدمج والطالبات ذات الاحتياجات التعليميّة الخاصّة. ومن ثمّ، فإن معلّمات التعليم العام يجب أن يحصلن على دورات تدريبية مما سيفيد اتجاهاتهن بشكل كبير، وكما اثق تماماَ بالتغيير السريع في سلوكيّات معلّمات التعليم العام للأفضل إذا ما حرصن دوماَ على التدريب وتطوير فهم جيد للموضوع."

إلى أي مدى تعتقدين أن المدارس معّدة وجاهزة للدمج؟

إنها ليست جاهزة، فهناك العديد من الاحتياجات التي لم يتم تلبيتها والمرافق التعليمية التي لم تتوفّر بعد في المدارس؛ وتمثّل هذه الجوانب الصعوبات الأساسية التي تواجه التعليم العام. ولعلّ صناع القرار بحاجة لفهم أنّ المدارس يجب أن تكون ملائمة للطالبات ذات الاحتياجات الخاصّة. ولهذا، إذا لم يتوفّر الدعم فمن المستحيل ضمان الاستمرار أو احتمالية أي استثمار في عمليّة الدمج في المدارس. علاوة على ذلك، لابد من ملاحظة أن البيئة المدرسية ليست مناسبة، في حين أن أدوات التعليم وإعداد الطالبات والمعلّمات العاديات ليست كافية لتحقيق عملية دمج ناجحة.
وفي النهاية، لا بد وضع برامج لتعديل البيئة المدرسيّة وتوفير التدريبات للمعلّمين وكافة أعضاء المدرسة، بالإضافة إلى الحفاظ على مستوى عالٍ من الوعي بالمشاكل التي تحيط بدمج الطالبات ذات الاحتياجات التعليميّة الخاصّة في المدارس العادية. وكما ارى أنّ التدريب ليس جيداَ كفاية لأنه غير متاح وغير إلزامي لكل معلّمات التعليم العام. في الحقيقة، عملية التدريب كلّها لم يتمّ التخطيط لها جيداَ وليس من السهل تنفيذها بسبب العديد من أوجه القصور مثل نقص التمويل والموارد البشرية وحتى الوقت اللازم لتلبية احتياجات برامج التدريب."

هل يمكن أن أسألك: من المسؤل عن توفير الخدمات في فصلك؟

المعلّمات على سبيل المثال؛ "لقد أعددت هذا الفصل بنفسي لتعليم الطالبات وتلبية احتياجاتهن بأفضل طريقة ممكنة ... وأقوم بهذا عن طريق توفير كل المواد التعليمية اللازمة لتعليم هؤلاء الطالبات اللاتي يعانين من صعوبات في التعلّم، حيث أن هذا هو الإجراء المتّبع للتعامل مع الإعاقة في مدرستي ... ولكننا مازلنا بحاجة إلى المزيد في هذا الصدد."

هل تحصلون على أي دعم من وزارة التعليم أو السلطات المحلية بخصوص تعليم الطالبات ذات الاحتياجات الخاصة؟

هناك القليل من المساعدات والمرافق البسيطة ولكن ليس كل ما تحتاجه المدارس العامة. ***(هل تعرفين السبب؟)*** لا أعرف السبب، ولكن يمكنني التخمين أن هذه الموارد والمرافق ليست متاحة نتيجة لنقص الموارد المالية.

ما نوع الدعم اللازم لتنفيذ الدمج الناجح في كل المدارس العامّة؟

كما ذكرت معك سابقا، فنحن بحاجة للتركيز على تدريب المعلّمات، وتوفير الموارد في كل المدارس العامّة، كما نحتاج إلى المزيد من الدعم والتشجيع في المدارس. **برأيك ما الذي نحتاج إليه أيضا؟** نحتاج إلى فريق متعدد التخصصات. **ماذا تعنيين بذلك؟** أعني "أني آمل أن نملك مثل هذه الفريق في مدارسنا لأننا بحاجة فعلاً إلى خبراتهم ... أيضاً، يجب على المدرسة توفير متخصّصات لمساعدة المعلّمات، العادية منهم أو الخاصّة... هؤلاء بالطبع سيكون لهم دور رئيسي في مدارسنا." **من تفضّلين أن يكون ضمن هذا الفريق؟** أري أنه "يجب أن يضم الفريق أخصائية اجتماعية، وأخصّائية نفسية، وأخصّائية تواصل، وأخصّائية علاج طبيعي ... ونحن بحاجة في الواقع إلى هؤلاء المهنيين لتقديم الدعم لنا وتوفير المشورة لجميع العاملين في المدرسة ...
يجب تصحيح المفاهيم الخاطئة التي مازالت محفوظة ومتداولة في مدارسنا، واحد منها هو وضع كل المسؤوليات على عاتق معلّمات الطالبات ذات الاحتياجات التعليميّة الخاصّة ... في رأيي، يمكن لفريق متعدد التخصّصات المساعدة على بناء بيئة تعليمية مناسبة لكل الطالبات في المدرسة."
هل يمكنك ذكر بعض العوامل الهامّة التي قد تساهم في عملية دمج ناجحة؟
نعم، العامل الأهم هو التعاون بين معلّمات التعليم الخاص والعام. للأسف، "لا يكاد يكون هناك أي تعاون بين معلّمات التعليم العام والخاص عندما يتعلق الأمر بتحديد الصعوبات التي تواجهها الطالبات ذات الاحتياجات التعليميّة الخاصّة في المدارس والتعامل معها. وهذا يسبّب بعض الإحباط. "لا توجد اجتماعات على الإطلاق بيننا وبين معلّمات التعليم العام. في الواقع، ليس هناك أي شكل من أشكال التعاون.
لماذا تعتقدين أنّه ليس هناك تعاون؟

يرجع ذلك إلى عدم فهمهن لدور كل منهن "فمن الضروري جعل معلّمات التعليم العام على علم بأهمية دورهن. يجب أن تعرف تلك المعلّمات أيضاً أن الدمج الناجح يعتمد إلى حد كبير على تعاونهن واتجاهتهن. "

المحور الرابع: المشاكل والعوائق التي تحول دون نجاح عملية الدمج للطالبات ذات الاحتياجات الخاصّة.

من وجهة نظرك، ما هو العائق الأساسي ضد دمج الطالبات ذات الاحتياجات الخاصّة في المدارس العادية وفي الفصول الدراسية العادية؟

المعلّمات هن التحدّي الأكبر الذي يواجه الدمج الناجح في المدارس. كلا الفرقين بحاجة إلى التدريب، والذي بدوره ليس متوفّراً أو محدوداً في أحسن الأحوال. وكذلك تعد اتجاهات المعلّمات من العوامل الهامّة جداً. ولذلك، "من الضروري توفير التدريب باعتباره أحد الأولويّات قبل كل شيء، وخصوصاً للمعلّمات في التعليم العام اللاتي تتعاملن حالياً مع طالبات الاحتياجات التعليميّة الخاصّة. ولابد من التأكيد على الحاجة إلى التدريب على استراتيجيات التدريس لطالبات الاحتياجات التعليميّة الخاصّة، بالإضافة إلى وسائل الاتّصال والمناهج المتعلّقة بكيفية التعامل مع الطالبات. كذلك من الضروري للغاية التوضيح للمعلّمات كيف أنّ تحقيق الدمج مهم للعملية التعليمية، وكيف أنه حق شرعي في التعليم لكل الطالبات ذات الاحتياجات الخاصة."

وبالإضافة إلى ذلك، لابد من استيعاب أن التدريب ليس فقط لمعلّمات التعليم العام لأنّهن غير مؤهّلات، ولكن أيضاً لمعلّمات التعليم الخاص، لأنهن بحاجة إلى مواكبة أحدث التطوّرات والمشاركة في مستويات متقدمة من الإعداد من خلال حضور برامج ودورات أكثر تطوراً والمتخصّصة في مجال تعليم الطلاب ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصّة. وأعتقد أنه من غير المجدي لهن حضور الدورات الأساسية لأنهن تخرجن بالفعل من هذا التخصّص. ما يحتاجونه هنا هو أساليب تدريس أكثر تقدّماً مع الطالبات ذات الاحتياجات التعليميّة الخاصّة."

يتمثّل الجانب الآخر من الصعوبة في أن "واحدة من أهم الصعوبات التي نواجهها تكمن في غياب الأدوات الصحيحة التي يمكن أن تساعدنا في تلبية احتياجات الطالبات ذات الاحتياجات الخاصّة في المدارس." كما سبق وذكرت، فإن البيئة المدرسيّة أيضاً بحاجة إلى مزيد من الدعم لتكون قادرة على مساعدة الطالبات. توفير الموارد اللازمة لمساعدة الطالبات ذات الاحتياجات التعليميّة الخاصّة، ومساعدة المعلّمات على تقديم المعلومات لهن أمر ضروري من أجل تغيير موقفهن، حيث أن البيئة المدرسية مهمّة جداً. "فإذا تكيّفت البيئة المدرسية المناسبة مع عملية الدمج، فإن هذا من شأنه أن يسمح لهن بتقديم المزيد للطالبات، حيث أنه لديهم الخبرة والمؤهلات اللازمة لمساعدتهن على القيام بذلك."

ما هي العوامل الأكثر صعوبة، تلك التي تتعلق بالمعلّمات، أم التي تتعلق بالبيئة المدرسية؟

كلاهما مهم وينبغي أخذه بالاعتبار إذا أردنا أن نحقّق دمجاً ناجحاً في المدارس. "وبناءً علي خبرتي الطويلة في هذا المجال، يمكنني أن أقول حقاً أن هذه هي العقبات الرئيسية التي تعترض عملية الدمج ." علاوةً على ذلك، العوائق الرئيسية الثلاثة لتحقيق الدمج الناجح هي "العوامل المتعلّقة بالمعلمات والتي تتعلّق بشكل كبير بالتدريب، و خلق بيئة مدرسيّة مناسبة، بالإضافة إلي توفير الموارد اللازمة وغيرها من العوامل التي تتعلّق بالطالبات." ونظراً لخبرتي الواسعة في هذا المجال فإن هذه هي العقبات الرئيسية التي تعترض عملية الدمج."

من واقع خبرتك/منظورك الشخصي، كيف يمكن تخطي تلك الحواجز؟

وزارة التعليم العام له دور هام جداً في التغلب على هذه العقبات، حيث ينبغي أن يقوم بتوفير وإعداد وتجهيز فرص تعليمية تفاعلية للطالبات ذات الاحتياجات التعليمية الخاصّة في المدارس العادية. وينبغي لهذا أولاً ضمان أنّ التدريب متاح لكل المعلّمات. ويجب أن يوفّروزارة التعليم العام لمعلمي ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصّة تدريباً مستمراً على أحدث الأساليب التي تم تطبيقها في تعليم الطلاب ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة من أجل تعزيز خبراتهن وتجاربهن. وينبغي أن يتم هذا التدريب من قبل خبراء في أساليب التدريس والتعليم، والذي سيضمن أن تكون المعلّمات على معرفة بالتطورات الأخيرة وجوانب الإعاقة المختلفة، وصقل مهاراتهن في التعامل مع المواقف المختلفة. وبالتالي يمكن نقل أي تجربة مفيدة عن طريق خبراء تعليم ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة الذين ينبغي أن يهدفوا إلى استمرار هذا العمل مدى الحياة لكل من يتعامل مع الطلاب ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة وهؤلاء المعنيين بدمجهم في المدارس العامة." هناك جانب آخر مهم، وهو نوع وجودة التدريب؛ "ينبغي أن يهدف معلّمات التعليم العام للحصول على دبلوم في التعليم الخاص."

ثانياً، قبل إدراج أي طفلة من ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة في المدرسة العامّة يجب أن تكون البيئة المدرسية عامة والفصول المدرسية خاصة جيّدة، بالإضافة إلى أنّ كلا الفريقين من المعلّمات يجب أن يكونوا مجهّزين جيداً. وهذا يجب أن يتم من خلال وزارة التعليم العام.

كيف؟

ينبغي تعزيز المواقف الإيجابيّة، وليس فقط من خلال توفير الحوافز الماليّة، ولكن أيضاً من خلال برامج توعويّة منتظمة تساعد على تغيير المواقف السلبية من قبل جميع أعضاء المدرسة وأقران الطالبات ذات الاحتياجات التعليمية الخاصّة نحو دمج تلك الطالبات في مدارس التعليم العام." وكما اعتقد أن سلوكيات المعلّمات واتجاهاتهن تلعب دوراً رئيسياً في التغلّب على العقبات التي تحول دون تحقيق الدمج الناجح في المدارس."

Appendix 7: Translated Quotes from the Arabic Transcript in Support of the Findings:

(The meaning of inclusion of students with SEN)

Teachers	Teachers quotes
ST1	**1.1** *Including students with SEN in the same environment with their ordinary peers and equally giving them the same rights and duties without restrictions.* **1.2** *… the inclusion of students with SEN with their ordinary peers in normal classes, but providing services for them inside and outside of the classroom.*
ST2	***2.1*** *When students with SEN are given the opportunity to learn with their ordinary peers, as an attempt to remove any barriers between the two groups, and to create academic and social opportunities for students with SEN.*
GT3	**3.1** *Inclusion means children with SEN in general schools share their peers without SEN the extracurricular activities.*
GT4	**4.1** *Students with special needs being included in regular schools.*

Appendix 8: Translated Quotes from the Arabic Transcript in Support of the Findings:

(Inclusion in schools versus inclusion in classrooms)

Teachers	Teachers quotes
ST1	**1.1** *Inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream classes should be carried out under certain conditions based on the disability type and its severity, including hearing impairment, learning difficulties, visual impairment and physical disabilities. In order to be included with their mainstream peers, students with SEN should have similar levels of intelligence to their peers. Similarly, the teaching method should be close and suitable for both categories of learners in terms of curricular activities.* ***1.2*** *Suffice to say that the reward is multiplied for those providing services for students with SEN, and there is also a sense of accomplishment when working with these students, a mix of praise and great reward.* **1.3** *Because if the appropriate school environment is provided to accommodate inclusion, this would allow them to give more to those students, as they have the training to help them do so.* **1.4** *Inclusion is one of the integral rights of students with SEN ... once that right is acknowledged, they force society to accept them and take their needs into account, including learning how to deal with them on a larger scale outside the school confines.* **1.5** *... these students need to feel part of the community and part of the school ... they need to be continuously encouraged to participate with other students in mainstream education.* **1.6** *We need to work on what we have learned in the classroom ... students with SEN need to have access to the same learning opportunities as their regular peers within mainstream schools; hence, the idea of mainstreaming* **1.7** *... equal opportunities in education and to fully participate in all mainstream curricular activities …*
ST2	**2.1** *It would be better to include some types of disabilities within special classrooms in mainstream schools.* **2.2** *... a special classroom is a step towards inclusion, even if not full inclusion, for the time being. There also appears to be consensus on the need to end isolation and on the fact that special classes should be the first choice for all students with SEN, instead of special schools.*

	2.3 *Special classes are much more feasible in light of the current school conditions.* **2.4** *... the process of doing so would require tremendous school resources in addition to better preparation of all school staff as well as increasing collaboration between the school and the students' parents, which does not seem to be available in many of our schools.* **2.5** *... the lack of an appropriate school environment is in itself one of the reasons that could essentially hinder the inclusion of students with SEN in classrooms.* **2.6** *The inclusion of students with SEN in these classrooms is not appropriate unless strong support and additional services are provided ... it should be noted that even though this model might be well-advanced and successful in developed countries, this is not necessarily the case in the Arab world or the Gulf countries in particular. It should further be noted that there are a number of factors in developed countries which have helped with their success in these efforts, an awareness of the development and progress of education.* **2.7***... the reason for special education schools being best suited to accommodate severe disabilities is that they are well-prepared and designed especially for those with severe and multiple disabilities, as opposed to the lack of resources and funding in mainstream schools.* **2.8** *We sometimes feel as if we are not welcomed by our general teachers, and the same goes for the students, which I would ascribe to the lack of human resources in the school and to the lack of prepared of general education teachers and the school environment.* **2.9** *Students with moderate disabilities tend to have far fewer difficulties and challenges in terms of effective communication in the classroom.* **2.10** *The provision of the appropriate school environments ... offering the right resources ... and giving the right training ... also, there is the issue of general education teachers finding it difficult to deal with students with SEN cases ... another issue is that general teachers have graduated from other disciplines which have nothing to do with students with SEN.* **2.11** *Interactions between students with SEN placed in special classes in mainstream schools and other students is almost non-existent, as there is a sense of isolation and bias against them. Even at break times, they are released before their peers, which conflicts sharply with the core principles of inclusion. It is certainly evident that general education teachers do not have a clear understanding of the significance of encouraging students with SEN to communicate with other students. It is also clear that it is extremely important to provide support in the form of awareness courses and continuous development sessions on the topic of inclusion, both as a theory and how to take advantage of any opportunities for application. As such, it is important to raise awareness amongst general education teachers of the objectives of the inclusion process*

	and its features as well as the most appropriate approach to adopt in order to achieve the desired outcomes for students with SEN in mainstream schools. **2.13** *I am going to move you to another class with lazy students.* **2.14** *As they tend to have far fewer difficulties and challenges in terms of effective communication in the classroom.*
GT3	**3.1** *... students with severe disabilities, deafness or autistic and mental disabilities ... should remain in special education schools, because this is the best place for them.* **3.2** *... the visually impaired, hearing impaired and those with physical disabilities could be included by joining special education classes within mainstream schools.* **3.3** *... without any doubt, severe disabilities are difficult to be included in the mainstream classes, so the best place for them is special education schools.* **3.4** *We have to be lenient and forbearing when dealing with them, and these qualities are traits of a sincere and caring Muslim, who should seek to exhaust all possible methods to deliver information to them.*
GT4	**4.1** *Students with SEN should be studying in special classes or in special schools, since they need more attention and special teachers.* **4.2** *... we cannot do without special schools ... this is because each disability has its own severity level, and for each student with SEN, there is a particular need and approach for how to deal with them, which may not be available in mainstream schools and, even if found, might be too costly to justify.*

Appendix 9: Translated Quotes from the Arabic Transcript in Support of the Findings:

(The types and severity of disabilities)

Teachers	Teachers quotes
ST1	**1.1** *... depends on the type of disability and support services that could be provided for them, such as appropriate learning environments, assistive technology, support services and so on. If these services are provided, then we can talk about including them in mainstream classes.* **1.2** *It really depends on the student ... from personal experience in schools adopting inclusion, there are students who have shown great ability to adjust and keep up with the rest of their peers ... but this also depends on the students' level and their particular needs ... some students with moderate disabilities can learn well and achieve academic success, if they are offered the right kind of help and services.* **1.3** *Identifying groups of children that can benefit from inclusion programme ... providing the necessary facilities and tools for successful inclusion, which could be in the form of a resources room in regular schools, meaning students with SEN are catered for through the provision of such facilities ... creating a school environment in which parents can accept the idea of inclusion, where teachers, the school administration and parents can all participate in the decision-making process ... collaboration between general education and special education teachers, especially if the students are given inclusive status in mainstream classes.*
ST2	**2.1** *There are concerns about finding it difficult to include all students with SEN, especially those with severe disabilities, which can be ascribed to the general education teachers' inability to cope with the issue of a lack of services for those students ... teachers in mainstream schools also struggle and find it difficult to teach students with SEN and accept them as they are within their classrooms.* **2.2** *Depends on the type of disability, support services and schools and classroom environment.*
GT3	***3.1*** *It is very difficult to include students with SEN, especially those with severe disabilities, mental and visual disability, for example, because they need special attention from a special education teacher.* ***3.2*** *I cannot take control of the classroom when I have students with severe or multiple disabilities, as I struggle to communicate the content ... I find it difficult to use a variety of teaching approaches to deliver information in the*

	classroom ... I still think that moderate disabilities pose far fewer barriers compared to severe disabilities.
GT4	**4.1** *It is very difficult to include students with SEN, especially those with severe disabilities, mental and visual disability, for example, because they need special attention from a special education teacher.*

Appendix 10: Translated Quotes from the Arabic Transcript in Support of the Findings: (The impact of inclusion upon students with SEN)

Teachers	Teachers Quotes
ST1	**1.1** *The inclusion of students with SEN has a positive impact ... from my own experience, I noticed a quantum leap in SEN students' reading and writing skills and in the way, they interacted and learned within a mainstream class ... this is particularly the case for the hearing impaired and for students with physical disabled and learning difficulties.* **1.2** *If support is not available, it is impossible to ensure continuity or any potential investment in inclusion in our schools.* **1.3** *In fact, success is not only confined to academic performance but also to social interaction ... it is also noted that students with moderate disabilities are in a better position to make friends with other peers with disabilities and even with ordinary peers, which helps and encourages them to engage socially in regular schools.*
ST2	**2.1** *... academic development is not only confined to students with SEN but also involves ordinary peers, especially if all requirements are met for that classroom.* **2.2** *The academic development of students with SEN highly depends on the specific criteria related to those students, such as type and severity of disability ... therefore, improving their academic level should be based on well-thought-out plans which take into account the students' specific needs but also the preparation of appropriate classrooms, a supportive environment, and the tolerance of general education teachers regarding having ordinary students and students with SEN in the classroom.* ***2.3*** *Although it is difficult to accept them right away, with time, interaction between mainstream students and students with SEN is more than likely to increase.* ***2.4*** *Students with SEN should be given support to become actively engaged in the school in particular, and in society in general.* ***2.5*** *Can release students with SEN from their isolation.*
GT3	**3.1** *The concept of educational inclusion in the classroom is a relatively recent one ... in fact, it would be very difficult to apply it straight away because of the various requirements ... We need to ensure that all the basics are catered for in*

	the school generally, and in the classrooms in particular, before moving on to application. **3.2** *Inclusion gives them the opportunity to engage and interact with their peers without SEN, which would enhance their social and communication skills and allow them to feel a lot safer and more self-confident, as well as empowering them to strike up friendships, either in schools and outside schools.*
GT4	**4.1** *There are no particular academic benefits for students with SEN; as general education teachers, we find ourselves lacking the skills to help students with SEN to improve academically.* **4.2** *... fear and loathing of school, absenteeism, truancy, absent-mindedness, stubbornness and introversion.*

Appendix 11: Translated Quotes from the Arabic Transcript in Support of the Findings: (Training of teachers)

Teachers	Teachers quotes
ST1	**1.1** *We do not have any training for general education teachers, because there is a serious dearth in this department ... we also lack training.* **1.2** *I have to say that I have been in the teaching practice for at least ten years, but I have yet to receive any professional in-service training courses in relation to inclusion.* **1.3** *It does not mean that being a special education teacher excludes me from having more in-service professional training ... this is a common misconception ... I mean, education and learning tools are developing constantly, which also means that teachers need to get used to the new material and keep abreast of any developments in the field in order to achieve the successful inclusion of students with SEN ... we should not stick to one method for too long when teaching this particular category of students...but the one thing which helps me here is my qualification in special education, years of experience and the training which I received before I started working in this area ... I must confess, however, that occasional professional training should be given to keep up with educational developments.* **1.4** *As special education teachers, we are very annoyed about the quality of training provided, which so far has not been adequate in terms of achieving the basic requirements of teachers ... I do not think a one- or two-week period can cover the training needs of general education teachers or provide them with the required and relevant content when teaching students with SEN in particular and in the process of accommodating inclusion in general.* **1.5** *Training will certainly assist teachers in providing the necessary support for students with SEN ... as enhancing teachers' professional skills enable them to grow in confidence, particularly general education teachers…this training-based support will inevitably change teachers' attitudes for the better ... I am saying this because of the lengthy experience I have had in the field ... I cannot stress enough the importance of training and the positive impact it can have on teachers' attitudes.* **1.6** *Training is not compulsory for all general teachers who work in mainstream schools.* **1.7** *I have noticed a drastic change in the attitudes of general education teachers before and after attending the training sessions ... the attitudes tend to be negative before a training session, but once these teachers attend these training courses on offer, they become more positive about inclusion and grow in self-confidence … there are a lot of things which have obviously changed*

	for the better … for example, they seem a lot more enthusiastic than before ... also, they are more positive and engaged and keep asking special teachers questions, in addition to their willingness to join other courses in the future. **1.8** *… if general education teachers seek training and develop a good understanding, I am fully confident of a quick change in their attitudes for the better.* **1.9** *I hope attention will be paid to teachers training.* **1.10** *… the importance of ensuring teachers in [their] school are given the special education training programmes that they very much need.* **1.11** *… general education teachers should be given training sessions, as they will have a significant influence on their attitudes.* **1.12** *… to provide special education teachers with ongoing training on the most recent methods applied in the teaching students with SEN, in order to enhance their experience ... such training should be carried out by experts in teaching and learning approaches who will ensure teachers are aware of recent developments and various aspects of disabilities, and to hone their skills in dealing with different situations ... any useful experience can thus be passed on by the special education experts, who should aim to perpetuate such learning and ensure that it is lifelong for all those working with students with SEN and those concerned with their inclusion in mainstream schooling.*
ST2	***2.1*** *There is no proper training for general teachers in mainstream education however, in-service for special education training is still not sufficient.* ***2.2*** *… the need for more in-service training for all teachers according to their needs.* ***2.3*** *… some general education teachers teach students with SEN even though they do not have the basic skills to deal with them.* ***2.4*** *… training should be for both general and special education teachers.* ***2.5*** *The provision and improvement of educational tools in schools for students with SEN, in keeping with their respective disabilities … offering the necessary training for teachers before the mainstreaming process; i.e. introducing students with SEN into normal classes … ensuring that there is collaboration between general and special education teachers in the preparation of educational plans … the identification of strengths and weaknesses, as well as skills that need to be acquired by students with SEN.* ***2.6*** *Training has to be at least one school term for the teachers in mainstream schools, especially for those who constantly work with students with SEN ... one key component of the training course involves teachers preparing to*

	welcome students both to the school in general and the classrooms in particular ... it is also important to try various teaching methods and to diversify the tools used in the teaching of special education students ... other essential tasks include explaining key points, such as demonstrating that every child has strengths and weaknesses which a well-trained teacher will be able to identify, so as to develop areas of strength and deal with areas of concern ... it is paramount that these courses are provided by highly experienced people in this field.
GT3	**3.1** *I got a training for two weeks on how to deal with students with SEN, more specifically, specific learning difficulties ... there is no denying the fact that this course helped me to develop my skills to meet the needs of students with specific learning difficulties to the best of my ability.* **3.2** *One of the foremost priorities of the special education administration is to provide the opportunity for general education teachers to receive such training.* **3.3** *... special education administration should offer the opportunity for general education teachers to receive such training.*
GT4	**4.1** *I do not have any skills when it comes to teaching students with SEN ... I find it extremely hard to teach them ... I think that special education teachers are far better than I in terms of experience and training and qualifications in special education.*

Appendix 12: Translated Quotes from the Arabic Transcript in Support of the Findings: (Schools' facilities)

Teachers	Teachers quotes
ST	**1.1** *The school environment is not appropriate, and the learning tools and preparation of teachers are not adequate to achieve successful inclusion … intensive programmes should be planned out and provided in terms of modifying the school environment and providing training to teachers and all school members as well as maintaining a high level of awareness of the issues surrounding the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools.* **1.2** *I prepared this room myself in order to teach my students and meet their needs in the best way I can ... I do this by supplying all the necessary learning materials to teach students who have specific learning difficulties, as this is the type of disability included in my school ... but we still need more in this respect.* **1.3** *I hope to have such a team in our schools, because we really need their expertise ... also, the school should provide specialists to help teachers, whether special education teachers or general education teachers ... they will definitely play a key role in our schools.* **1.4** *Such a team should include a social worker, psychologist, communication specialist and physical therapist ... we need to actually have these professionals to support us and help provide counselling for all employees in the school ... the current misconceptions held in our schools should be rectified, and one of them is that all responsibilities should be placed on the special education teachers' shoulders ... in my opinion, a multidisciplinary team can help build an appropriate learning environment for all students in the school.* **1.5** *The Ministry of Education should provide the all the resources to successful inclusion in mainstream schools.*
ST2	***2.1*** *… teaching aids and other assistive technologies for students with SEN do not seem to cover the needs of the school for this category of student.* **2.2** *Our schools are not quite ready, and there is no funding allocated to the inclusion of students with SEN ... I do not think schools are even ready to welcome the idea of inclusion.* **2.3** *The department of special education must provide the necessary educational resources to facilitate the education and training of special education for teachers, department officials should also ensure the provision of support facilities and learning, human, and financial resources as and when they are necessary.*

	2.4 *... as special education teachers in this school, we have to prepare the resources room for our students (for students with SEN), and we have to equip it in the best way possible to cater for the various learning needs of our students.* **2.5** *In schools where inclusion is adopted, all the necessary tools should be provided for each special education category which can be mainstreamed. These tools should include books, and classroom material.* **2.6** *Before taking on any students with SEN into mainstream classrooms, the school administration should focus on the number of children which can be included ... the number of students should also be taken into account as well as the physical size of the classroom and the educational level, not to mention the type of inclusion to be adopted, be it a partial inclusion, as is the case in special classes attached to mainstream schools, or full inclusion, as is the case in mainstream classes.* **2.7** *Our schools need a multidisciplinary team to help us achieve successful inclusion ... it would not suffice to only recruit special education teachers in mainstream schools ... the members of this team can help us work better and give us valuable advice in teaching students with SEN.* **2.8** *This team may be associated more with special schools, but unfortunately, they may not be available in all mainstream schools ... even when they are available, this is usually in the form of periodic visits ... there is no multidisciplinary team available on a regular basis in schools, but what tends to happen is that they have visits to the school by specialists ... in fact, these visits are limited at best.*
GT3	**3.1** *... school funding is a fundamentally major problem...there ought to be strong financial support which can be used to ensure regular training is provided and that classrooms are better equipped in terms of resources ... in general, classrooms and the school need to be made into suitable environments for students with SEN.*
GT4	***4.1*** *... the problem with students with SEN and their teachers, whether general or special education teachers, is that they are desperately in need of support, in terms of the assistive tools and learning methods that would best suit students with SEN.* ***4.2*** *Classrooms are not equipped to accommodate students with SEN in addition to the large number of students in the classroom, which can sometimes exceed 30 students.*

Appendix 13: Translated Quotes from the Arabic Transcript in Support of the Findings: (Teachers' collaboration)

Teachers	Teachers quotes
ST1	**1.1** *Actually, there is hardly any collaboration between the general education teachers and special education teachers when it comes to identifying and dealing with the difficulties faced by students with SEN in the schools.* **1.2** *There are no meetings whatsoever between us and the general education teachers ... in fact, there isn't any form of collaboration ...* **1.3** *... [The] need to make general education teachers aware of the importance of their role ... these teachers should know that successful inclusion depends to a large extent on their collaboration.*
ST2	**2.1** *The problem facing us in schools applying inclusion practice is the lack of collaboration on the part of general education teachers and special education teachers.* **2.2** *In the inclusion programmes adopted by mainstream schools, there ought to be strong collaboration between general and special education teachers in terms of preparing individual educational plans and identifying the strengths and weaknesses of each student as well as coordinating a specific timeframe for each student ... collaboration should also involve the acquisition of the right skills in the resource room and regular classrooms to help students with SEN ... in other words, I am saying that two hands are better than one ... therefore, fostering well-planned and structured collaboration between general and special education teachers should be made our number one priority.* **2.3** *Highlighting the role of general education teachers in schools that adopt inclusion; determining the role of general education teachers in the inclusion of students with SEN; [Another recommendation was to] arrange regular school meetings between special education teachers and general education teachers to discuss issues related to students with SEN in the school.* **2.4** *We never meet, except very occasionally when there is a specific problem which needs to be given attention by all of us ... for example, when there is consistent student underperformance, or a particular student continuously exhibits improper conduct, which is quite normal. Then, an informal and spontaneous meeting is called, which can be anywhere in the school ... it is often initiated by special education teachers ... sometimes, we arrange a number of meetings at the beginning of the school year, which are usually focused on organisational issues, such as organising the student timetable ... this is a very*

	important point, which should be taken into account in the schools which apply inclusion.
GT3	**3.1** *[These factors include:] crowdedness (class size), i.e. the large number of students taught in any one classroom; teachers' busy schedules, in terms of the tight timetable and curricular workload; students with SEN have their timetables designed by special education teachers only, without reference to and consultation with general education teachers; shortage of adequate training; failure to specify the role of general school teachers when it comes to the inclusion of students with SEN; difficulty in terms of dealing with all types of disabilities and lack of training on the appropriate teaching methods; and lack of support for general teachers, that would enable them to understand the characteristics of students with SEN, based on the individual differences and stages of growth that each student may progress through.*
GT4	**4.1** *I do not think that general education teachers' opinions are considered important or taken into account in terms of the inclusion of students with SEN, because they have a distinct lack of knowledge about students with SEN and inclusive education.* **4.2** *… this should be the task of special education teachers.*

Appendix 14: Translated Quotes from the Arabic Transcript in Support of the Findings: (Barriers to inclusion)

Teachers	Teachers quotes
ST1	**1.1** *It is important to provide training as one of the foremost priorities, especially for teachers in general education who are currently dealing with students with SEN ... I have to stress the need for training on teaching strategies for students with SEN, in addition to communication methods and approaches on how to deal with students with SEN students ... it is also paramount to explain to these teachers how important inclusion is for the education process and how it is a legitimate education right for all students with SEN.* **1.2** *... training should not be restricted to general education teachers but has to also involve special education teachers, as they need to keep abreast of the latest developments and be engaged in advanced levels of preparation by attending more sophisticated and specialised special education programmes and courses ... I think it is pointless to have them attend basic courses, as they have already graduated from this specialty ... what they need, then, is more advanced teaching approaches for students with SEN.* **1.3** *... teacher-related factors largely associated with training and the creation of an appropriate school environment as well as the provision of the necessary resources and student-related factors.* **1.4** *Yes, given my long experience in the field, I can really say that these are the main issues and barriers to the inclusion.* **1.5** *One of the main barriers and issues which we are faced with lies in the absence of the right tools which could help us meet the needs of students with SEN in our schools.*
ST2	**2.1** *Issues related to teachers (training, support, attitudes, efficiency, experience and skills) ... issues related to the school environment (provision of resources, provision of educational tools, infrastructure (physical buildings), resource rooms) and issues related to the students (student age, the type of disability, severity of disability).* **2.2** *... the negative attitudes of general education teachers ... teachers' difficulty accepting students with SEN ... and clear lack of training as far as general education teachers are concerned.* **2.3** *... the lack of awareness and knowledge among school members, such as general education teachers, administrative staff and students, is a big issues.*

	2.4 *... the school environment and facilities should be reassessed before applying inclusion programmes in schools.* **2.5** *Educational tools and activities to promote and facilitate the inclusion of students with SEN within the school in general and classrooms in particular are not available.* **2.6** *... [A]shortage in resources and equipment in mainstream schools is one of the most notable difficulty and issue hindering the achievement of successful inclusion.* **2.7***... once the appropriate school environment has been created, comprehensive training for teachers should start from scratch in terms of describing the types of students with SEN ... only then can we look forward to creating positive attitudes amongst general education teachers regarding the inclusion of students with SEN.* **2.8** *Both factors have the same importance and weight in terms of affecting teachers' attitudes ... when they are not appropriately addressed, they can also have a very negative impact in terms of achieving successful inclusion and teacher attitudes.* **2.9** *... it is not possible to compare the attitudes of teachers who have all the resources and educational tools at their disposal to cater for students with SEN and those who seem to be lacking such tools.*
GT3	**3.1** *To ensure the level of people's understanding of inclusion.* ***3.2*** *... because of the lack of training, we encounter multiple issues and difficulties, leading to the rejection of students with SEN ... in other words, they are not made welcome in school and are not respected or given the opportunity to participate in school activities on a regular basis.* **3.3** *... in terms of the learning environment, classrooms and regulations have not changed since inclusion programmes have been introduced into mainstream schools ... before applying the idea of inclusion, due consideration should be given to the fundamentals and requirements of the inclusion process ... as general education teachers, we are aware of these requirements, especially the provision of suitable classrooms and assistive learning materials and tools ... it is like having model classrooms as opposed to the normal classrooms, which seem to be lacking in all departments and have failed miserably to meet the needs of students with SEN ...* **3.4** *Lack of training provided for us*

GT4	**4.1** *... general education teachers do not have adequate information or knowledge regarding students with SEN, types of disabilities and their causes.* **4.2** *The Learning Resources Room in our school is considered the perfect example of a model classroom, but it seems that it has been looked after by special education teachers alone ... this goes to show that there is an acute shortage in terms of learning and assistive tools for students with SEN.*

Appendix 15: Translated Quotes from the Arabic Transcript in Support of the Findings: (How to overcome barriers to inclusion)

Teachers	Teachers quotes
ST1	**1.1** *General education teachers should seek to acquire a diploma in special education.* **1.2** *... regular awareness programmes which help change the negative attitudes of all school members and also students without SEN regarding the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools.* **1.3** *... teacher attitudes play a key role in overcoming obstacles which prevent the achievement of successful inclusion in our schools.*
ST2	**2.1** *The need to acknowledge the problems relating to the school environment in mainstream schools and come up with the right solutions ... to only talk about or criticise such problems is not enough.* **2.2** *... provide all the learning tools and resources prior to the transfer and registration of students with SEN into mainstream schools ... second, it is important to modify the schools, classrooms and restrooms to take into account the capabilities and needs of students with SEN ... this should become the norm in any future school planning, design and decision-making ... the third suggestion which needs to be taken into consideration is related to class size, whereby the school administration must determine the number of ordinary students in each class and also the number of students with SEN to be included, either in mainstream classes or in classes attached to mainstream schools* **2.3** *... the local education authority should also seek to provide a multidisciplinary team in each school, which adopts inclusion and special education programmes ... such teams play an important role, in terms of reducing the challenges facing school teachers, and contribute greatly to the design and setting up of Individualised Education Programmes, which currently seem to rest on the shoulders of special education teachers alone.* **2.4** *... improving collaborative work and delegating a collaborative team to ensure that any challenges are dealt with effectively ... it should be pointed out that special education teachers cannot act alone in mainstream schools, while successful inclusion might be too difficult to achieve by depending alone on special education teachers in the school ... it will be almost impossible to attain any strategic objectives of the inclusion process without the full support not only of the general education teachers but of all members of staff in the school*

	2.5 *... it will not be possible for us to fully achieve inclusion in terms of its aim and objectives if teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of students with SEN, as well as those of the school's members are negative.* **2.6** *... there must be a shared awareness among staff members in the school in terms of the benefits of inclusion, for both students with SEN and ordinary peers.* **2.7** *provide an environment conducive to student learning.*
GT3	**3.1** *... preparing the school environment to suit the basic requirements of the inclusion before engaging in any inclusion programmes ... also, it is important to update the methods used and provide all the necessary facilities, equipment, and resources to meet the needs of students with SEN in the school ...* **3.2** *Full, substantial and effective support from the Ministry of Education to prepare all mainstream schools before including any students with SEN, both fully and partially ..., which would eventually guarantee the success of the inclusion process.* **3.3** *Department of special education has to also seek to provide and improve educational tools and equipment.* **3.4** *Requirement for schools adopting inclusion programmes to provide the necessary training for teachers.*
GT4	**4.1** *... providing a sum of money at the start of each academic year to be at the disposal of the school administration ... this funding resource can then be used to cover educational activities or learning tools for students with SEN.* **4.2** *Training is very important for all teachers who are in mainstream schools.*

Appendix 16: Example of Coding Process for Interview Transcript

Position of teachers in schools	Question	Answer	Comments	Codes	Themes
Special education teacher (ST1).	What does inclusion mean to you?	- It is means that including students with SEN in the same environment with their ordinary peers and equally giving them the same rights and duties without restrictions. - Also, the inclusion of students with SEN with their ordinary peers in normal classes, but providing services for them inside and outside of the classroom.	- Inclusion in school and classroom. - Inclusion as right. - Inclusion rather than integration.	- Meaning of the concept of inclusion and integration.	- Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the concept of SEN inclusion.
Special education teacher (ST2)	What does inclusion mean to you?	- Inclusion means that when students with SEN are given the opportunity to learn with their ordinary peers, as an attempt to remove any barriers between the two groups,	- Inclusion students with SEN in schools and classroom. - Increase participation academically and socially.	- Meaning of the concept of inclusion and integration.	

		and to create academic and social opportunities for students with SEN.	- Removing barriers to interactions between students. - Inclusion also.		
General education teacher (GT3).	What does inclusion mean to you?	- Inclusion means children with SEN in general schools share their peers without SEN the extracurricular activities.	- Integration in extracurricular activities only. - Integration also.	- Meaning of the concept of inclusion and integration.	
General education teacher (GT4).	What does inclusion mean to you?	- Inclusion means to me that students with special needs being included in regular schools.	- Integration of students with SEN in mainstream schools. - Integration also.	- Meaning of the concept of inclusion and integration.	