

**Teachers' Attitudes towards the Inclusion of Students
with Special Education Needs in Saudi Primary Schools**

Abstract

In many countries throughout the world, children with special educational needs (SEN) are increasingly being educated in mainstream school environments. Furthermore, the successful implementation of any inclusion policy is dependent in the first place on teachers and educators being positive about it. There have been studies and heated debates for many years, and no ultimate conclusion has been reached. Teachers' beliefs, attitudes and judgments play a part in ensuring the success of inclusion practices in schools (Norwich, 1994). In this context, this study is focused on understanding inclusion, teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of students with special education needs in Saudi schools and the factors that may facilitate or impede efforts towards inclusive education.

The research involved conducting a survey in 20 primary schools with a sample of 213 teachers. The sample consisted of 67 teachers drawn from 7 regular schools, 105 teachers drawn from 8 schools with special needs units and 41 teachers drawn from 5 schools with full inclusive provision. In general, an analysis of the results showed that teachers have positive attitudes towards inclusive education, but there is no evidence of acceptance of total inclusion. Moreover, there was no statistically significant difference between different types of school. Male and female respondents had very similar attitudes towards inclusion, but female teachers were slightly more positive. The analysis also demonstrated teachers with different degrees of teaching experience achieved similar scores, and again there was no significant difference between teachers in different age groups. However, the youngest teachers' group held the most positive attitudes. Teachers who had been actively involved in teaching students with SEN held more positive attitudes than their colleagues with no such experience. Teachers' attitudes were found to be influenced by the nature and severity of the disability. The paper concludes with recommendations for future research into the factors surrounding the formation of positive attitudes towards inclusion.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1: The Concept of "SEN" and the Move towards Integration.

Education is the right of every human being regardless of their abilities and talent, and this is one of the themes adopted by human rights associations. Students with a SEN or disability should have a place in education in public schools. These schools should work to modify the curricula, methods, concepts and premises in line with the special needs of these students. 'Special needs' refers to children who might require more assistance because of medical, emotional and/or learning difficulties. These children have special needs as they may need medicine, therapy and further assistance in school when compared to other children who do not need particular help to manage the activities of normal life. The needs of the child become 'special' when there is a mismatch between the learner's characteristics and the other interacting forces in the classroom (Montgomery, 1990).

Philosophies regarding the education of students with SEN and disabilities have changed from those held a few years ago. The idea of inclusion in regular schools was a major development for children with special needs. Avramidis *et al* (2000) argue that, internationally, a new and radical conceptualisation of the relationship between the education of children with special education needs and the nature of mainstream schools has taken place under the aegis of the inclusive schools movement. Many countries have made an effort to implement policies which foster inclusion. Several laws have recommended the opening up of regular schools to students with special educational needs. For example, in the United States, the principle of integration was formalised in the form of federal legislation in Public Law 94-142, the

Education for All (1975). As a result of this legislation, more than 70 percent of children with disabilities were mainstreamed fully or partially into regular classrooms by the 1990s. In the United Kingdom, there was the Warnock Report and the Education Act (1981). In addition, UNESCO (1988) prepared a survey of many member states (43-58). It reported that the principle of integration was a declared education policy.

In Saudi Arabia, the concept of the 'least restrictive environment' (which is 'inclusion' today) was started in public schools 18 years ago (1990-1992). The General Secretariat of Special Education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia looked for students with special needs and identified their locations in order to provide suitable education programmes (Al-Mosa, 1999).

1.2: Understanding Inclusion

There have been several attempts to explain what is meant by inclusion. Inclusive education is a concept in which students with special education needs and disabilities are enabled to be placed and receive education in regular schools. The ideology of inclusive education meets the needs of all students in public schools (Al-Rossan, 2003). The educational system is responsible for including students with special needs for appropriate education for all. Supporters of inclusive education believe that students with special education needs should be educated in a regular school with the provision of aids and service.

The good inclusion produces a feel of membership for both teachers and students. For children, the sense of inclusion is that they feel that they are suitable; they need to feel wanted, successful and pleased. Cheminais (2001) asserts that "inclusion is the keystone of current government education policy". One of the primary meanings of inclusion, which has led to social and educational integration for children with special needs in ordinary classes, requires the availability of two conditions. First, those students should be in the classroom for at least part of the school day. Second, those social arrangements should be followed. These require the integration of educational planning.

Loreman and Deppeler (2001, in Loreman *et al*, 2005) mention that full inclusion means the inclusion of children with diverse abilities in all aspects of schooling. They should be able to enter and enjoy such schooling with other children. This involves mainstream schools and classrooms changing to meet the needs of all children. Children with special needs should be included, not only in regular schools, but, if it is possible, in everything. Bayliss (2003: 152) noted that "inclusion is the state of being a valued member of a community".

In education "'inclusion' has become the term that is used to describe the right of parents and children to access mainstream education alongside their peers, where parents want it and children's needs can be met" (Devon Council, 2009). In addition, it has been argued that inclusion is seen as a "universal human right"; the aim of inclusion is to accept all people regardless of race, gender, disability or other need. Inclusion requires the 'removal of all barriers' that might affect children with SEN in school and in society at large.

Inclusion, which has led to the social and educational integration of children with special needs in ordinary classes, requires the placement of special students in the classroom, or for them to be with ordinary students for at least part of the school day. There is now a general consensus that inclusion is not simply a matter of placing special needs students in mainstream schools, but that appropriate planning and material resources are required if it is to be successful. The education of special needs students requires thought by the entire teaching staff on how best to adapt the school curriculum in all subject areas and at every stage of the education process and also how best to physically organize the school's structure (Cambra & Silvestre, 2003). "Inclusive education describes the process by which a school attempts to respond to all pupils as individuals by reconsidering and restructuring its curricular organization and provision and allocating resources to enhance equality of opportunity" (Frederickson and Cline, 2002: 66).

Regarding special schools and inclusion, Norwich and Kelly (2005: 46-47) mention that the term 'inclusion' is a new one which has replaced the term 'integration'. It includes not only children with special needs but also "all aspects of diversity, in particular those who are considered to be vulnerable and at risk of exclusion from schools and other social activities". Kauffman and Hallahan (1995: 98) maintain that full inclusion is like a "bandwagon that offers an attractive platform for merging of special and general education into a seamless and supple system that will support all students adequately in general schools and general education classrooms, regardless of any student's characteristics".

Bayliss (2003) argues that the "inclusion practice which supports a structure of interactions which is self-defining and self-regulating to build an inclusive community, needs to reconcile the inherently contradictory nature (in the case of a school) of education and care". In the field of education, inclusion includes a process of correction and restructuring of schools. This process aims at ensuring that all pupils can have access to the whole range of educational and social opportunities offered by the school (Mittler, 2000, in Macconville, 2007). It is necessary to understand the meaning and aims of inclusive education, while at the same time taking into consideration the increase in the value of inclusion and influence on pupil learning. The Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education (CSIE, 2000: 1) explains what inclusion in education involves:

- ✓ Considerate valuing of all students and staff equally;
- ✓ Increasing the participation of students in, and reducing their exclusion from, the culture and communities of local schools;
- ✓ Restructuring the cultures and policies in schools so that they respond to the diversity of students in the locality;
- ✓ Reducing barriers to learning and participation for all students, not only those with impairments or those who are categorized as 'having special educational needs';
- ✓ Viewing the difference between students as resources to support learning, rather than as problems to be overcome; and

- ✓ Emphasizing the role of school in building a community and developing values, as well as in increasing achievement.

Inclusion, in its different facets, aims to meet the requirements of children with special needs. Peters (2007) notes that "inclusive education may also be implemented at different levels, embrace different goals, be based on different motives, reflect different classifications of special education needs, and provide service in different contexts". Also, there are different levels of inclusive education directed at students with special needs: physical, terminological, administrative, social, curricular and psychological. Avramidis and Norwich (2002) assert that the movement for inclusive education is part of a 'broad human rights agenda'. Today, there are many educators around the world who have critical reservations about encouraging and supporting the communal placement of pupils with special needs education in ordinary schools.

Children with SEN should not only be included in mainstream schools, but they must be included everywhere if it is possible. Forest and Pearpoint (2009) state that inclusion must be like living together and learning together; inclusion means 'being with'. Also, they believe that inclusion cuts directly to the core of our values, beliefs and universal human rights. Inclusion seems so simple, so full of common sense.

1.3: Differences between Integration and Inclusion

When students with SEN move from separate educational placement to study with ordinary students, there are two expressions related to this movement: 'Integration' and 'Inclusion'. Ainscow (2007) suggests that integration is about making a number of additional provisions for individual pupils with special education needs in schools, which themselves witness an overall change. On the other hand, inclusion implies the introduction of a more radical set of changes through which schools restructure themselves so as to be able to embrace all students. Integration involves the school in a process of assimilation, where the onus is on the assimilating individual. By contrast,

inclusion involves the school in a process of accommodation, where the onus is on the school to change, adapting curricula, methods, materials and procedures so that it becomes more responsive.

'Integration' and 'inclusion' are two terms that are often exchanged as if they were synonymous by people who work in schools and education. There are, in reality, important differences between the two terms. Integration involves coming from outside school with integration programmes aiming to involve special needs pupils in classes and school. The focus is on the student's ability to adapt. Inclusion differs from this idea: it supposes from the start that all pupils are a part of the mainstream school system. The focus is on the setting's ability to adapt to the needs of the student (Loreman, 1999).

1.4: Types of Inclusion

There are different types of inclusion used with SEN students. Faroge (2002) lists the following types. First, Spatial Inclusion, in which special education institutions share only the same building with mainstream ones, while each school has own planning for learning and special training techniques. Also, might have a combined management.

Second, Faroge mentions Inclusion of Education (Educational Inclusion) in which students with special needs are mixed with mainstream students in the same school or part-time in the same classroom. They are supervised by the same educational institutions, in spite of the possibility there could be differences in curriculum that suit the abilities of students with special needs. The educational programme includes regular classes, special classes and resources rooms. On the other hand, inclusion of education could involve students with special needs with their ordinary peers in classrooms that are allocated for ordinary students to study the same curriculum.

Third, Social Inclusion: involvement of special needs students with mainstream classes and with various school activities such as trips, sports, art and music classes and other social activities. This is one of the simplest types and forms of inclusion that may help students with special needs to establish friendships.

The last type of inclusion listed by Faroge is Community Inclusion: society should provide opportunities for people with special needs to help them take part in the various activities of the community and facilitate their being active members. Also, this type of inclusion aims to provide special needs students with the right to work and move independently and to enjoy all that is available in community services.

1.5: Perceived Benefits of Inclusion

Inclusion of special needs students has several advantages. The positive effects of the inclusion policy include the idea that the presence of special needs students with ordinary students in the same classroom will promote interaction, communication and growth of mutual relations between diverse students. Moreover, the inclusion policy gives an opportunity for ordinary students to help their peers with special needs.

Furthermore, education based on the inclusion of students with special needs in regular schools would be improved by the assistance of professionals inside the educational institutions. The application of an inclusion policy, and particularly interactive education and dialogue methods with multi-groups, will allow students with special needs to obtain the maximum available benefit and assistance in terms of training and guidance for solving their problems.

Moreover, educating students with serious disabilities along with ordinary students will assist those with special needs to observe how their ordinary class mates do their homework and assignments. This might teach them

in a practical way how ordinary students can solve their educational and social tasks.

Generally, children and students need a model amongst their peers to follow and learn from their attitudes and experience. Students with special needs may benefit from such models (Al-Sartawe *et al*, 2000).

1.6: Perceived Negative Effects of Inclusion

Inclusion is a double-edged sword. In spite of all its advantages, there are some negative aspects to this controversial issue. The lack of well-trained and qualified teachers in the field of special education in mainstream schools may lead to the failure of inclusion programmes. This problem might increase the gap between students with special needs and other students at the school. This is especially true in light of the fact that a regular school depends on academic success and marks. This might be considered a fundamental criterion in assessing students.

Inclusion programmes may lead to a strengthening of the idea of failure regarding special need students. This may influence their motivation levels to complete their study. Furthermore, inclusion programmes may lead to the emergence of some incorrect behaviour, such as frustration, failure, aggression, school avoidance, fear and hatred of school and disobedience (Al- Sartawe *et al*, 2000).

Kauffman and Hallahan argue that " in examining some of the effects of mainstreaming that have been documented, the best that can be said about the body of data is that they are inconclusive and often contradictory. In addition to the possibility of increasing or decreasing social stigma, mainstreaming may have an effect on a number of other behavioural variables, such as expectancy of success, responsiveness to social support, outer-directedness or imitativity, self-image and wariness of adults" (1995: 307).

Overall, there are some issues regarding provision, the location of mainstream schools and inclusion. According to Norwich and Gray (2007) the location of schools plays a big part in inclusion for SEN. In some geographical areas, there are not enough qualified teachers to cover the requirements of special needs schools. Placing inclusion schools far away from pupils' accommodation could be a stumbling block for children. If this is the case, they may lose their right to inclusive schooling. Some schools cannot accommodate SEN pupils because they do not have specialised units, while some other schools cannot offer a support service for them (Norwich, 2007).

1.7: Pupils' and Parents' Voices

From time to time, inclusion does not work very well. Therefore it might seem self-evident that pupils' and parent's views should be taken into account when decisions are being made about them. Pupils with special education needs can tell about themselves and their feeling about inclusion. For instance, a pupil (aged 7 years) with a hearing impairment in one mainstream school stated that other children came up to him and shouted and tried to touch his hearing aid. He tried to push them away but they said, " Why have you got it in your ears?"

Another pupil (also 7 years old) with learning difficulties in a different mainstream school said "my teacher was not very helpful and she says I was lazy and I did not want to work". A third pupil (5 years old) with physical disabilities said that he was not able to go on the last school trip because the teaching assistant who looked after him was unable to go, so he spent the day in the library (MacConvill, 2007: 76-105,133; Frederickson, 2002).

The idea of inclusion is still not understood by some people, especially the parents of children with special needs. Sometimes, they think that inclusion may affect their child's achievement in the learning process, and the consequences of the inclusion process will be negative on their children. For example, I know one parent of a deaf pupil who has transferred his son from a special school to a mainstream school. He said to me that he may be saving a lot

of time due to the long journey every day to the special school, but "I am not sure if my child will have same service and facilities in the new mainstream school".

1.8: The Development of Inclusive Education in Saudi Arabia

The early stages of special educational needs in Saudi Arabia started in 1956 through individual initiatives. Such initiatives were taken by some enthusiastic blind people who were keen to learn the skills of the Braille language (Al-Mosa, 1999). These people made efforts to organize and convince some educational authorities to adopt the Braille system and to provide some facilities for their learning needs.

As a result of these efforts, the Ministry of Education established the Department of Special Education in 1962. Such an environment constituted the real start and provided a cornerstone for the development of a special educational department under the guidance of the Ministry of Education. Three types of students with disabilities (the blind, the deaf and the mentally retarded) received special educational services at that time (Ministry of Education, 1978).

In a context of rapid growth and trends towards modern concepts of SEN, in 1983 the Directorate-General of Special Education changed its name to the General Secretariat of Special Education. This department continued its efforts to provide educational services and professional staff training to cover the requirements of special education institutes and units around the country (Al-Mosa, 1999).

There are two types of special education programme: first, residential institutes, which provide certain housing and educational facilities to special education students; second, day institutes, which provide special education students with education and transport on a daily basis.

In 1996, The Ministry of Education established the Educational Advisory Unit, which conducts a continuous evaluation of education

programmes and social services. In addition, it is involved in preparing the curriculum and choosing suitable educational equipment. In 2007, students with special education needs started studying the ordinary students' curriculum.

1.9: The State of Inclusion in Saudi Arabia's Schools

Saudi Arabia, in a similar way to many developing countries, tries to provide the most suitable educational methods for its students, especially those with special needs. In Saudi Arabia there are 61,986 students who have been diagnosed as special needs students. They have their education through 3171 programmes and units in mainstream school in 68 special institutes. All categories of special needs such as visual impairment, hearing impairment, physical and intellectual disabilities, challenging behaviour, learning difficulties, autism and multi-disabilities are included (Al-Mosa, 2008). There are different patterns to the inclusion of students with special needs in schools in Saudi Arabia. The first pattern involves special classes or units in a regular school. The student has the opportunity to encounter students from mainstream schools for the longest possible period in the school day, to meet inclusion needs. The student participates with ordinary students outside the classrooms in some activities. These include break times, sports lessons and school trips.

The second is the pattern of the resources room, where the student sits in a regular classroom and receives special individual assistance in the resources room on a daily basis. Thirdly, there is the pattern of special services, where the student receives different assistance out of school from time to time. This can be on an irregular basis in certain areas, and is sometimes useful with pupils who have more than one disability (Al- Mosa, 2008).

Notwithstanding the fact that there are increasing moves towards the inclusion process for children with special needs in Saudi Arabia, as a developing country, there are some problems that may delay the process of inclusion. For instance, some parents think that the quality of their child's learning will be diminished when the teacher spends most of his/her time

supporting students with SEN. Some pupils have complex disabilities, which schools cannot offer to meet. Al- Mosa, (2008) argues that some people have negative attitudes towards those who have disabilities. Unfortunately, these attitudes are sometimes also held by teachers in mainstream schools, so insufficient attention may be paid to children with special needs.

Generally, there are difficulties and obstacles in all major reforms such as inclusion. In Saudi Arabia, perennial efforts and planning take place concerning schools facilities. The Ministry of Education has catered for this need by establishing new inclusion schools that have all necessary facilities for children with difficulties. Furthermore, current schools will be improved to meet the needs of all pupils with disabilities.

Some educators in Saudi Arabia do not believe that inclusion is the best way of educating pupils with severe needs. Al-Mosa (2008) notes that society is looking for inclusion to help children with SEN: inclusion in schools, in classrooms and in outdoor school activities. The real goal of inclusion is to transfer pupils with special educational needs from special to general schools, where can they build friendships with normal peers. “It is not to bring them from large special schools to small special classrooms in regular schools” (Al mosa, 2008). Also, he observes that we are looking for inclusion that helps children with SEN: inclusion in schools, in classrooms and in outdoor school activities.

Students with special needs must be included and respected. They must feel they are suitable, they are wanted, and they are successful and pleased. Inclusion means welcoming people (pupils, children and adults) with special needs into mainstream schools and elsewhere; in the streets, parks and the wider community. Additionally, even if children with special needs have obviously lost some of their abilities, they still have the right to live in a way similar to that

of their ordinary peers. Hence, society must not leave them to live the rest of their lives in isolated places, where they cannot be seen by other people.

Despite all the advantages which have been mentioned, there are some problems surrounding the application of inclusion in mainstream schools. One of these concerns the difference in views on the acceptance of inclusion by teachers and school staff. Therefore, the study sought to investigate teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of students with special needs in mainstream schools.

The present study is probably the first one conducted in Al-kahraj, Saudi Arabia. The purpose of the study was to explore teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of students with special education needs in mainstream primary schools in Al-kahraj city.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

Despite the controversy over the feasibility of the integration process, it could be said that there is a wide consensus that the process of integration reflects the philosophy of humanity towards the provision of appropriate

education for children with special needs within the appropriate environment. Numerous studies have investigated teachers' attitudes towards inclusion and the results vary. Some of the studies referred to have used the terms 'integration' or 'inclusive', while others have used the term 'mainstreaming'. In spite of using different terminology, all refer to one situation in which schools work to meet SEN students' needs: that is, to study with mainstream students in the same place.

Many of the studies confirm that trends and the views of teachers are factors that can affect the success or failure of inclusion. A review of previous studies of teachers' attitudes towards inclusion covers the last fifteen years. The majority of teachers surveyed had negative feelings about inclusion (Al-Zyoudi, 2006). An international study (Leyser *et al*, 1994) examined teachers' attitudes towards integration in the USA, Germany, Israel, Ghana, Taiwan and the Philippines. There were differences in the findings concerning teachers' attitudes in these countries. Teachers in the USA and Germany had the most positive attitudes. Positive attitudes in the USA were ascribed to integration being widely practised there as the result of Public Law 94-142. The positive views expressed by the German teachers were seen as surprising, because at the time of the investigation Germany had a strong special education system and very few or no inclusive programmes in place. Teachers there were not provided with special education training. Students with special education needs were educated in segregated settings and integration was practiced only on an experimental basis. Teachers' attitudes were significantly less positive in Ghana, the Philippines, Israel and Taiwan. The authors concluded that this was probably due to the limited or non-existent training which would allow teachers to acquire integration competencies, the limited opportunities for integration in some of these countries, and the overall small percentage of students who received the services (Leyser *et al*, cited in Avramidis and Norwich, 2002).

In another US study, Vaughn *et al* (1996) found that the majority of special education teachers who were participating in inclusion programmes had strong negative feelings about inclusion. The teachers identified several factors

that would affect the success of inclusion, such as class size, inadequate resources and a lack of adequate training. Forlin (1995, cited in Avramidis and Norwich, 2002) found that teachers from the Education Support Centres were more accepting of a child with an intellectual or physical disability than educators from regular mainstream primary schools. Also, special education resource teachers tended to have a more positive attitude to inclusion than their mainstream colleagues.

Another British attitudinal study, conducted in one LEA in the south-west of England, revealed that teachers who had been implementing inclusive programmes for some years held more positive attitudes than the rest of the sample, who had little or no such experience (Avramidis, Bayliss and Burden, 2000). In their meta-analysis of 28 survey reports between 1958 and 1995, Scruggs and Mastropieri (1996, in Al-Zyoudi, 2006) reported that two thirds of the respondents surveyed (10,560) agreed with the general idea of integration, and more than half of them were willing to teach students with special educational needs in their classrooms. Only one third or less of teachers believed they had sufficient time, skills, training and resources for integration.

Jelas (2000) found that teachers in primary schools in Malaysia had negative attitude toward the inclusion of students with special needs and they had opinion which obstructed inclusion in schools. Another study by Vaughn *et al* (1996) examined mainstream and special teachers' perceptions of inclusion. The majority of these teachers, who were not currently participating in inclusion programmes, had strong negative feelings about inclusion. The teachers identified several factors that would affect the success of inclusion, including class size and resources.

These attitudes toward inclusion have important correlates with actual classroom practice. Buell *et al* (1999) report that there was a positive relationship between the teachers' attitudes towards inclusion and their belief that they could influence the outcomes of children with special needs in the

classroom. Also, they observe that teachers with more positive views of inclusion have more confidence in their ability to support students in inclusive settings, and to adapt classroom materials and procedures to accommodate students with special needs.

2.1: Researching Teachers' Attitudes towards Inclusion in Saudi Arabia and the Arabic Countries.

Al-Samade (2008) researched teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of students with special needs in ordinary primary schools in the first three years of primary schooling in Arar City (Saudi Arabia). The sample was 142 teachers. They showed positive attitudes towards teaching students with special needs in ordinary schools. The study also recommended the retraining of teachers in how to deal with these students.

Abdul-Ghafour (1999) examined teachers' and administrators' attitudes towards the integration of students with special needs in ordinary primary schools. The study included 447 participants from all the governorates of Kuwait. It showed that although all the participants considered the recent trend towards integration served the disabled and created opportunities for social interaction with students in ordinary schools, they did not appear to accept the idea of integration. The disabilities that were most likely to be accepted were motor disabilities and visual disabilities. The disabilities deemed least acceptable were the categories of mental disability and deafness. With regard to the degree of disability, the representatives showed that students with medium disabilities were better integrated than those with severe disabilities.

Al-Zyoudi (2006) found that teachers' attitudes might be influenced by a number of factors, such the nature and severity of the disabilities, teaching experience and factors relating to the school, gender and the grade level taught. The study showed that female teachers were more positive than male teachers. In their study of 447 teachers who worked in inclusion schools in Riyadh city, Al-Abdulgarbar and Massud (2002) found that the inclusion programmes

implemented had a positive effect on the teachers and support staff who worked in these schools.

In another attitude study conducted in Palestine, Abdullah (1998) examined teachers' attitudes towards the integration of students with special needs (motor disability, visual impairment and hearing impairment) in ordinary schools. The study elicited the views of 1251 teachers. The respondents showed positive attitudes towards inclusion and, in particular, the inclusion of students with motor disability. Dirham (1997) found that in his study of 110 teachers in ordinary schools in the United Arab Emirates, teachers had negative attitudes towards including students with special needs in ordinary schools. They believed that inclusion was not useful for students with or without special needs. Also, Al-Sartawe (1995) in his study of 249 Saudi teachers and students in regular schools, found that teachers had negative attitude towards inclusion. In addition, the study showed that physical and motor disabilities had more acceptance than other disabilities such, deafness, blindness and challenging behaviour.

Harown, (1995) studied the expectations of ordinary class teachers towards teaching students with an intellectual disability in mainstream schools in Riyadh city (Saudi Arabia). The result of a survey of 600 teachers showed a non-rejection of teaching these students in regular schools. Those teachers with 5 years experience and more were more welcoming than those who had less experience. Al-Abdulgabar (1994, in Al-Abdulgabar and Massud, 2002) studied a sample of 221 directors and teachers of both sexes in order to identify acceptance of the integration of pupils with special needs in public education. The researcher found that female teachers had a more positive attitude and accepted these pupils more than male teachers. There were no significant differences between male and female in age, teaching experience or educational level.

In another attitude study conducted in Jordan, Al-Hadedy (1994) examined ordinary and special needs teachers' attitudes towards including students with a visual impairment in ordinary primary schools. The participants were 308 teachers who worked in ordinary schools and special schools catering for children with visual impairments. The researcher found that both groups of teachers had positive attitudes towards inclusion, and the study showed that gender, teaching experience and a professional degree did not play a role in the teachers' attitude towards inclusion.

Finally, a recent nationwide Saudi Arabian study (2008) evaluated the experience of including pupils with special educational needs in public education schools. The study targeted both genders. The number of participants was 23,173, representing three categories of participants: 15,979 teachers and educational personnel, 5159 students, and 2035 parents. The findings of the study indicated that mainstreaming programmes are appropriate if utilised effectively and that the participating teachers had positive attitudes towards inclusion. Male teachers reported more positive attitudes than their female colleagues (Al-Mosa *et al*, 2008).

2.2: Factors Influencing Teachers' Attitudes.

Research has suggested that teachers' attitudes might be influenced by a number of factors which are in many ways interrelated. Several integration studies have been concerned with determining teachers' attitudes towards different categories of children with special education needs and their perceived suitability for integration (which is today labelled 'inclusion'). These factors could be termed 'child-related' variables or could be grouped under the heading 'teacher-related' variables or finally could be termed 'educational-environment related'.

The nature and severity of a disability influences the attitudes of teachers. Various studies have found that children with less severe special needs, who are also less demanding in terms of teachers' input, are generally viewed more positively as candidates for inclusion than children with severe disabilities

(Avramidis, Bayliss, and Burden, 2000). Forlin (1995) found that educators were accepting of including a child with an intellectual disability and more accepting of children with physical disabilities. The degree of acceptance for part-time integration was high for children considered to have mild or moderate special education needs. The majority of educators (95%) believed that mildly physically disabled children should be integrated into mainstream classes, whereas only 6% considered full-time placement of children with severe physical disability as acceptable. Also, the majority of educators (86%) believed that only children with mild intellectual disabilities should be integrated into mainstream classes, and 1% of educators considered full-time placement.

Teaching experience has also been reported in several studies as having an influence on teachers' attitudes. Several studies showed that teachers who have more years of teaching experience hold negative inclusion attitudes. Forlin's (1995) study, showed that acceptance of a child with a physical disability was less among teachers with up to six years of teaching experience than among those with six to ten years of teaching experience. The most experienced teachers, those with more than 11 years of teaching, were the least accepting. Similar results by Leyser *et al* (1994) found that teachers with 14 years or less teaching experience had a significantly higher positive score in their attitude to integration compared with those with more than 14 years. Also, they found no significant difference in attitudes to integration for those whose teaching experience was between 1-4 years, 5-9 years, and 10-14 years.

With regard to gender, some researchers noted that female teachers had a greater acceptance of integration than did male teachers. Leyser *et al* (1994) and Al-Abdulgabar (1994, in Al-Abdulgabar and Massud, 2002) found that female teachers expressed more positive attitudes towards integrating children with behaviour problems than male teachers. However, Hannah (1998) did not mention that gender was related to attitudes.

The variable grade level taught was the focus of several studies. Leyser *et al* (1994) found that high school teachers displayed more positive attitudes towards integration than elementary school teachers. This was supported by Avramidis *et al* (2000) who found that high school teachers showed more positive attitudes towards integration than primary school teachers.

Another important variable in shaping teachers' attitudes towards inclusion is experience of contact with special education needs children or disabled children. Generally, out-of-school contact with people with special needs and/or disabilities has a positive effect on teachers' attitudes. In the study of Leyser *et al* (1994) teachers with considerable experience with disabled persons had a significantly more favourable attitude towards integration than those with little or no experience.

Another factor that has attracted considerable attention is knowledge of children with special education needs during pre-and in-service training. This was an important factor in improving teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. Siegel and Jausovce (1994) found that in-service training was highlighted as an effective way of improving teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. This was supported by Marchesi (1998) who found that the professional training of teachers was one of the key factors to successful inclusion.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

The study reported here represents a descriptive research design. Data were collected through administering a questionnaire to Saudi primary school teachers. The study focused on twenty primary schools in the city of Al-kahraj. Two hundred and thirteen teachers (109 male and 104 female) participated in the study. The study's assumption was that Saudi teachers hold slightly positive attitudes towards the inclusion of children with SEN. Teachers with experience in teaching children with SEN were hypothesised as holding more positive attitudes towards inclusion than teachers without such experience. It was also hypothesised that no differences would be observed in teachers' attitudes towards inclusion between groups of teachers determined by years of teaching experience and that there would be no difference in attitudes towards inclusion between males and females.

The respondents were both teachers who had experience of teaching students with special educational needs or had worked with them in special units or mainstream settings, and teachers who did not have any opportunity to teach these students in their school. The selection of the schools was made through the procedures involved in 'random sampling'. In this respect, the primary concern was not to create a representative sample, but to maximise the variability of the respondents. Moreover, the following two criteria were used in the selection of the sample: first, the participating school should be from the three types of schools mentioned above; and second, the study should include both rural and urban schools.

3.1: Definition of Terms

Inclusion: is the educational process of including with support all learners, including those experiencing significant special educational needs (SEN) in ordinary schools.

Mainstream school: the term mainstream school refers to one where public school education is the most common form of education.

Inclusion school: A primary or secondary school which is identified as having an inclusion special unit/class or students with special needs sitting in an ordinary class.

Teachers' attitudes: An attitude can be defined as an individual's viewpoint or disposition toward a particular object (a person, a thing or an idea). An attitude may include cognitive, affective and behavioural components (Gall *et al*, in Al-Zyoudi, 2006).

3.2: Aims of the Study

This study aims to explore teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education and whether significant differences in attitude exist. This will be achieved by examining the relationship of attitudes and independent variables such as gender, age, grade level taught, type of school and contact time with students with special needs. The research was conducted in schools located in Al-Kahraj city (Saudi Arabia) and sought to gain more knowledge of the factors that may influence the implementation of inclusive education in the Saudi educational system. It was also hoped that the results of this study could be used as guidelines to redirect the special education services in Saudi Arabia.

3.3: Research Questions

The research questions were:

- 1- What are the teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools?

2- Does the type of school provision in place (full inclusion, inclusion within a unit, no provision for inclusion) affect the attitudes teachers hold towards inclusion?

3- Which factors influence teachers' attitude about inclusion?

4- What are the teachers' perspectives on barriers to inclusion, and what are their preferred methods for improving inclusion practices?

A survey on the attitudes and knowledge of school teachers regarding inclusive education was conducted. The questionnaire consisted of a 66-item scale, divided into six sections: Section 1 consisted of 23 items eliciting information about the teachers' background, such teaching experience and previous contact with students with SEN. Section 2 consisted of six items eliciting perceptions about 'ideal placement', i.e. the most appropriate setting for educating students with different types of SEN. Section 3, consisted of 12 items eliciting teachers' opinions about inclusion. Section 4, was seven questions examining the teachers' preparedness for implementing inclusion according to disability type. Section 5 consisted of 20 statements representing the barriers to inclusion, and explored the teachers' views about the importance of each barrier. Finally, Section 6 consisted of one open-ended question, eliciting the respondents' views about the changes needed in their classroom or school to ensure that it became more inclusive.

In order to complete the Likert scale included in Section 3, participants were asked to indicate the extent of their agreement with each statement on the scale by selecting from the following response choices in each of the 12 items of the scale: 1 = Strongly Agree; 2 = Agree; 3 = Undecided; 4 = Disagree; 5 = Strongly Disagree. The items were totalled to generate a composite score for the whole scale. A higher score indicated a more positive attitude. In the scale measuring the respondents' preparedness to teach pupils with different types of SEN (Section 4) the participants had to circle the number best describing their feelings on a scale from 1 to 4 (where 1 = Not Prepared, 2 = Somewhat Prepared, 3 = Very Prepared and 4 = Extremely Prepared). Finally, in Section 5,

each barrier given was rated on a scale from 1 (definitely not a barrier) to 5 (definitely a barrier). The last section was an open-ended item, which asked about the changes needed in the classroom/school in order for it to become more inclusive.

A cover letter was attached to all questionnaires stating the purpose and value of the study. It also gave an explanation of the meaning of the term 'inclusion'. The cover letter emphasised that the data collection was anonymous, that there were no right or wrong answers and that participation was voluntary (See Appendix A). The questionnaires were distributed to the teachers during school hours. Due to the nature of the Saudi culture, girl's schools are separate from boy's schools. Consequently, my contact was with the heads of the girl's schools.

Data Collection :3.4

I received a letter from the Special Education Needs programme director at The University of Exeter, directed to the Saudi Embassy, to show them my plan to collect data from Saudi schools (See Appendix B). The Saudi education system is centralized, so the education authorities across the country are connected to the Ministry of Education. I received a letter from the Al-Kahraj local education authority which allowed me to collect the data (the questionnaires) from the schools in that area (See Appendices C, D). I chose this particular authority because I was a teacher there, no study has been made in this area before and there are a numbers of inclusive schools.

3.5: Procedure for the Questionnaire Translation and Modifications

The questionnaire was translated from English into Arabic by the principal investigator (See Appendix E). With the help of a professional translation office in Saudi Arabia, a second translation of the questionnaire into Arabic was undertaken. This was then translated back into English. The researcher compared the two Arabic translations and came up with a refined draft of the Arabic version of the questionnaire. A panel of two Arab experts

then reviewed and evaluated the drafts of both the English and Arabic versions. Ambiguities and difficulties with the translations were discussed and resolved by the panel.

3.6: Pilot Study

After the draft of the English and Arabic versions of the questions had been evaluated, and prior to the main study, a pilot study was conducted using an appropriate sample of three teachers. The participants involved in the pilot study were not included in the main study. The pilot testing was deemed important for identifying any problems and omissions, as well as for checking the time spent on completion. The pilot testing of instruments was also intended to improve the precision, reliability, and cross-cultural validity of data. Following the analysis of the pilot study data, ambiguous or unclear questions were then either rephrased or removed. All necessary substitutions or modifications were made to facilitate comprehension and to ensure cultural and linguistic accuracy.

3.7: Data Analysis

The analysis of the data followed the order of the research questions posed in this investigation. First, the numerical data from the closed-ended items in the questionnaires were entered into the SPSS 15.0 statistical programme. An interpretational approach was applied to identify categories and subcategories in the answers given to the open-ended items in the questionnaire, thus enabling the entry of this information into SPSS. Second, an exploratory analytical approach was applied to all data, involving the calculation of frequency distributions as well as graphical displays of the data and descriptive statistical analyses. Finally, I explored the importance of a number of factors associated with teachers' attitudes towards inclusion.

Chapter 4: Results and analysis

This section provides information on the descriptive analyses which provided an indication of the attitudes held by the participating teachers. Comparisons between different groups of participants were also conducted (through t-tests and ANOVAs). The effect of several factors such as ‘gender’, ‘age’, ‘teaching experience’, ‘type of school’, ‘experience of teaching students with special needs’ and ‘contact with students with special needs outside the school’ was examined.

4.1: Descriptive Information of the Research Participants

Table 4.1 shows the demographic characteristics of the participating teachers. Roughly similar percentages of male and female teachers took part in the study (51% and 49% respectively). The age variable consisted of four groups. The age band of ‘31-40 years’ included the highest number of participants (N=90); two further age bands included similar numbers of participants (the ‘26-30 years’ = 59, and the ‘41 years and more’ = 49 participants). The lowest number of participants was found in the age band ‘21-

25 years' (N=8). The next question, which was about the years of teaching experience, was split into five categories: 19% of participants had 1-5 years of teaching experience, 18% had 6-10 years, 23% had 11-15 years, 16% had 16-21 years and 21% had more than 21 years of teaching experience. Furthermore, these teachers were drawn from three types of schools. Specifically, 32% of the participants (N=67) came from regular schools, 49% from schools with special education needs units (105), and, finally, 19% came from full inclusion schools (41). With regard to professional development, 32% of the participating teachers had no higher education qualifications, 49% had a bachelor's degree, 19% held a certificate (diploma) and none held a postgraduate masters degree. Further, 31% of participants had experience of teaching pupils with SEN and 69% did not have any experience. Finally, only 25% of the participating teachers had out-of-school contact time with students with special needs. All the demographic characteristics of the sample involved in this study can be seen in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Demographic Characteristics of the Research Sample (N=213)

Categories	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male	109	51
Female	104	49
Age*		
21- 25 years	8	4
26 – 30	59	28
31 – 40	90	42
41 +	49	23
Teaching Experience *		
1-5	41	19
6-10	39	18
11-15	49	23
16- 21	33	16
More than 21	45	21
Type of School*		
Regular School	67	32
Unit in Regular School	105	49
Full inclusion	41	19
Professional Development		
None	67	32
BC (Bachelor's Degree)	105	49
Diploma	41	19
MA (Master's Degree)	0	0
Teaching Experience in SEN		
Yes	65	31
No	146	69
Contact time with students with SEN other than work time*		
Yes	53	25
No	157	74

* Categories do not add up to 213 due to missing data.

4.2: Respondents' Attitudes from Different Types of School

The analysis showed that the participating teachers had a slightly positive attitude toward inclusion, and generally felt that students with disabilities or special needs should have a chance to attend ordinary schools. Table 4.2 shows descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) for teachers from the three types of educational settings. The overall mean score

was 3.23, with a standard deviation of .67 which indicates neutral to positive attitudes to inclusion.

The study examined the attitudes of teachers from the three types of educational settings: regular schools, inclusive schools with a unit and full inclusion schools. The mean scores in Table 4.2 were very similar and no statistically significant difference was detected. Respondents from all schools held positive attitudes and those teachers who worked in inclusive schools with a unit reported the most positive attitudes (mean score = 3.24). By contrast, participants from the schools with full inclusive provision had the lowest mean attitude score (3.19). (See Table 4.2).

Table 4.2: Comparison between different types of schools.

Type of school	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Regular school	66	3.21	64.
Inclusive school with a unit	102	3.24	72.
Full inclusion school	41	3.19	55.
Total	209	3.23	67.

The evidence seems to suggest that inclusion in a specialist unit might be considered the most appropriate form of inclusion, since the teachers working in such settings reported the most positive attitudes. However, these finding needs to be treated with caution as the differences in Table 4.2 are very small.

4.3: Comparison between Male and Female Teachers' Attitudes

Table 4.3 shows the mean attitude scores for male and female respondents. The table indicates that female participants held slightly more positive attitudes than their male counterparts (See Table 4.3). Again, this difference was very small.

Table 4.3: Comparison between male and female teachers

Respondent's gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Respondent's Male	109	3.20	65.

attitude toward inclusion	Female	100	3.25	67.
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This finding appears to indicate that female teachers had a greater tolerance level for the idea of inclusion and for students with special education needs than did male teachers.

4.4: Teachers' Attitudes with Different Degrees of Teaching Experience

Table 4.4 presents the mean and standard deviations for teachers with different degrees of teaching experience. Again, the mean scores were very similar and no statistical significant difference was detected between the different groups. However, teachers with few years of teaching experience showed slightly more positive attitudes toward including students with special needs in public schools than those with many years teaching experience. The highest score was in the years from 6 to 10 and the lowest score was between the teaching experience years 16 to 21.

Table 4.4: Mean scores teachers with different degrees of teaching experience.

Years	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1-5	41	3.29	68.
6-10	38	3.41	76.
11-15	49	3.17	62.
16-21	33	3.05	70.
more than 21	44	3.21	53.
Total	205	3.23	66.

The evidence seems to suggest that those teachers with fewer years of experience are more supportive of inclusion than those teachers who had many years of experience in teaching.

4.5: Teachers' Attitudes within Different Age Groups

The comparison between of respondents from different age groups shows that there is no statistically significant difference. However, as it can be seen from Table 4.5, the youngest group held the most positive attitudes.

Teachers between the ages of 21 and 25 had the largest mean score (3.63) and those over the age of 41 showed the smallest mean score: just (3.23) (See Table 4.5).

Table 4.5: Mean scores teachers with different age groups.

Age Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
21-25	8	3.63	48.
26-30	58	3.26	63.
31-40	90	3.25	71.
+41	48	3.08	60.
Total	204	3.23	66.

The above findings indicate that younger teachers seem more supportive of inclusion of students with special needs in regular schools than older teachers.

4.6: Contact of Teachers with Students with SEN

In terms of the teachers' experience with students with special needs, the analysis indicated that exposure to and experience with students with special needs had an influence on teachers' attitudes. The research indicated that teachers with experience with special needs in class or school held a more positive attitude than their colleagues with no experience of teaching or contact with students with SEN. In addition, those teachers who had out-of-school contact with students with special needs were more positive than teachers with no such contact. However, this difference was not statistically significant. Specifically, the 53 respondents who answered 'yes' to the 'contact' question with students had a mean score of 3.36, while the 154 who answered 'no' (154) had a mean score of 3.18. This indicates the importance of having out-of-school contact with children with SEN (See Table 4.6).

Table 4.6: Mean scores teachers out-of-school contact with SEN

Respondents' out-of-school contact with SEN pupils	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Respondents' answers YES	53	3.36	69.
NO	154	3.18	64.

The evidence seems to suggest that contact with students with special education needs out-of-school had an effect on teachers' attitudes. Teachers with this contact had more positive attitudes towards inclusion than those teachers without such contact.

4.7: Barriers to the Implementation of Inclusion

Table 4.7 shows the descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviations) for 20 items representing perceived barriers to the implementation of inclusion. The mean scores across all items ranged from 3.29 (items 13 and 18) to 4.55 (item 12). There were no large differences in the mean scores between items. On item 12, the "lack of equipment and appropriate educational materials" received the highest rating of barriers to the inclusion of students with special needs in ordinary schools. In addition, the next highest ratings which were selected by teachers were item 8, "little knowledge about special educational needs" (mean 4.37) item 3, "classrooms do not accommodate students with disabilities" (mean 4.33) item 9, "lack of experience regarding inclusion" (mean 4.19) item 11, "limited time for teachers to give sufficient attention to students with SEN" (mean 4.14) item 10, "class size or large teacher/pupil ratio" (mean 4.12) item 20, "inadequate funding" (mean 4.11) and item 2, "overload on the part of teachers" (mean 4.06). Finally, item 1, "inadequate pre-service preparation of teachers" had a mean of 4.04. On the other hand, other items received the lowest rating. Item 13, "non-acceptance by parents of SEN students" with a mean of 3.29, and item 18, "non-acceptance by other students" with a mean 3.29, was the lowest for barriers to the implementation of inclusion (See Table 4.7).

Table 4.7: Perceived Barriers to the Implementation of Inclusion

	Barriers	N	Mean	Stand. Dev
12	Lack of equipment and appropriate educational materials	210	4.55	72.
8	Little knowledge about special educational needs	212	4.37	86.
3	Classrooms do not accommodate students with disabilities	211	4.33	94.
9	Lack of experience regarding inclusion	211	4.19	93.
11	Limited time for teachers to give sufficient attention to students with SEN	208	4.14	1.14
10	Class size or large teacher/pupil ratio	210	4.12	1.05
20	Inadequate funding	210	4.11	1.09
2	Overload on the part of teachers	211	4.06	1.04
1	Inadequate pre-service preparation of teachers	210	4.04	1.00
4	Absence of regulations that support inclusion	209	3.99	99.
17	Inadequate in-service training for teachers	210	3.98	1.08
14	Behaviour management	210	3.95	1.06
19	The absence of educational policy or vision	211	3.91	1.04
15	Rigidity in curriculum design and examinations	204	3.85	1.14
5	Teachers' negative attitudes	204	3.67	1.02
6	Resistance among administrators	203	3.52	1.05
16	Lack of regard for diversity of interests and abilities	209	3.53	1.02
7	Non-acceptance by other parents	209	3.43	1.18
13	Non-acceptance by parents of SEN students	210	3.29	1.18
18	Non-acceptance by other students	211	3.29	1.06

In conclusion, this evidence seems to suggest that objects were barriers to the implementation of the inclusion of students with special education needs in ordinary schools. The following items are the greatest obstacles: 12, 8, 3, 9, 11, 10, 20, 2 and 1. However, these findings need to be treated with caution to obtain successful inclusion.

4.8: Respondents' Perceptions of the Most Appropriate Placement

With regard to the respondents' perceptions about the most appropriate placement for different types of SEN, the analysis showed that 71 teachers (33.8%) reported that students with a visual impairment should be placed in special schools, 62 teachers (29.5%) believed that students should be in special class in a regular school, and 32 (15.2%) of teachers reported that those students should be placed in an inclusive school with in-class support. Eighty-five teachers out of 213 (41.3%) thought that students with a hearing impairment should be educated in special classes in a regular school, 62 teachers (30.1%) reported that these students should be in a special school, and only 23 teachers (11.2%) stated that students with a hearing impairment should be placed in an inclusive school with in-class support. Moreover, 62 (30.1%) of teachers felt that students with a physical disability should be educated in inclusive schools with out-of-class support, while 23(11.2%) of teachers reported that students should be placed in residential care. Ninety teachers (44.1%) stated that students with an intellectual disability should be educated in a special school, and 46 teachers (22.5%) reported that students should be placed in a special class in a regular school. Also, 71 teachers (34.8%) mentioned that students with challenging behaviour should be educated in a special school, 29 (14.2%) reported that these students should be placed in residential care, and only 4 teachers (2%) stated that students with challenging behaviour should be educated at home. In addition, 73 teachers (34.9%) reported that students with learning difficulties should be educated in a special class within a regular school, 71 teachers (34%) stated that these students should be educated in inclusive schools with out-of-class support, and none of the teachers expressed the opinion that students with learning difficulties should be placed in home education. Finally, 81 teachers (38.9%) stated that students with autism should be educated in a special school, 66 teachers (31.7%) reported that students with autism should be placed in a special class within a regular school, and 16 teachers (7.7%) stated that these students should be placed in an inclusive school with in-class support (See Table 4.8).

Table 4.8: Respondents' Perceptions of the Most Appropriate Placement for Different Types of SEN.

Most appropriate placement	Visual Impairment	Hearing Impairment	Physical Disability	Intellectual Disability	Challenging Behaviour	Learning Difficulties	Autism
	(%) N	(%) N	(%) N	(%) N	(%) N	(%) N	(%) N
Home Education	(1%) 2	-	(5%) 1	(1.5%) 3	(2%) 4	-	(1%) 2
Residential Care	(3.8%) 8	(2.9%) 6	(11.2%) 23	(25%) 51	(14.2%) 29	(5%) 1	(11.1%) 23
Special School	(33.8%) 71	(30.1%) 62	(23.8%) 49	(44.1%) 90	(34.8%) 71	(10%) 21	(38.9%) 81
Special Class in Regular school	(29.5%) 62	(41.3%) 85	(18.4%) 38	(22.5%) 46	(24.5%) 50	(34.9%) 73	(31.7%) 66
Inclusion + Out-of-Class Support	(16.7%) 35	(14.6%) 30	(30.1%) 62	(3.4%) 7	(16.7%) 34	(34%) 71	(9.6%) 20
Inclusion + In-Class Support	(15.2%) 32	(11.2%) 23	(16%) 33	(3.4%) 7	(7.8%) 16	(20.6%) 43	(7.7%) 16
Total	210	213	206	204	204	209	208

Note: Total numbers are different due to missing values, i.e. some respondents did not answer all the questions

The evidence seems to suggest that teachers' perceptions of the most appropriate placement for students with special education needs depended on the teachers' belief about the capability of those students for education.

Respondents' Preparation to Teach Students with SEN :4.9

Table 4.8 provides the mean and standard deviations for respondents' perceptions of their preparation to teach students with different types of SEN.

Teachers from regular schools felt prepared to teach students with learning difficulties (a mean of 2.42) students with a physical disability (a mean of 2.14) and students with challenging behaviour (a mean of 2.03). However, teachers were less prepared to teach students with visual impairment (a mean of 1.97) students with autism (a mean of 1.84) and students with a hearing impairment (a mean of 1.82). Regular school teachers were the least prepared to teach students with an intellectual disability. Here the mean was only 1.52. Teachers from schools with a special education needs unit reported that they were most prepared to teach students with learning difficulties (with a mean of 2.80 and a standard deviation of 1.09). They were second most prepared to teach students with a physical disability, with a mean of 2.74 and then students with a visual impairment with a mean of 2.45. Fourth came students with a hearing impairment (a mean of 2.35) and fifth students with challenging behaviour (a mean of 2.00). Teachers were least prepared to teach students with autism, with a mean of 1.86, and students with an intellectual disability, with a mean of 1.82. Teachers from full-inclusion schools reported that they were not very prepared to teach students with an intellectual disability (a mean of 1.39) and students with autism (a mean of 1.88). Those in the median category were students with a hearing impairment (a mean of 2.00) a visual impairment (a mean of 2.10) and students with challenging behaviour (a mean of 2.20). Students with learning difficulties (a mean of 2.61) and students with a physical disability (a mean of 2.54) were at the top of the list of the categories which teachers in full-inclusion schools were most prepared to teach (See Table 4.9).

Table 4.9: Respondents' Perceptions of their Preparation to Teach Pupils with Different Types of SEN

Most appropriate placement	Visual Impairment	Hearing Impairment	Physical Disability	Intellectual Disability	Challenging Behaviour	Learning Difficulties	Autism
Teachers from regular schools (N = 67)	(M (SD) 1.97 (1.01)	(M (SD) 1.82 (94.)	(M (SD) 2.14 (1.04)	(M (SD) 1.52 (97.)	(M (SD) 2.03 (92.)	(M (SD) 2.42 (93.)	(M (SD) 1.84 (1.11)
Teachers from schools with units (N=105)	(1.19) 2.45	(1.19) 2.35	(1.18) 2.74	(99.) 1.82	(96.) 2.00	(1.09) 2.80	1.86 (1.07)
Teachers from full-inclusion schools (N=41)	(1.12) 2.10	(95.) 2.00	(96.) 2.54	(74.) 1.39	(94.) 2.20	(1.05) 2.61	(93.) 1.88

Note: Respondents' preparation was measured on a 1-4 scale where 1=Not prepared, 2=somewhat prepared, 3= Very prepared, and 4=extremely prepared. High mean scores indicate more positive perceptions of preparation

The evidence seems to suggest that teachers' preparation to teach students with special education needs in mainstream schools are affected by the nature and the severity of the disability.

Content Analysis of the Open-Ended Question :4.10

The questionnaire also included an open-ended question which gave the respondents the opportunity to raise issues not covered by the scales of the instrument. The respondents were asked what needed to be changed in the classroom/school for it to become more inclusive. The following issues were reported by the participants: firstly, the majority of the respondents requested more educational resources and curriculum adaptations to meet the abilities of students with special needs. Secondly, some of the participants noted that teachers need more knowledge and more training to manage the behaviour of students with special needs. Also, schools should have SEN staff and specialists. Finally, the school environment: the school building should be changed to meet the needs of students with special needs and some special equipment such as ramps for wheelchairs between different departments of the school, the

provision of special desks and other furniture and of suitable classrooms must be made available.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Based on the results of the study, the participants appear to hold positive attitudes towards the inclusion of students with special needs in regular schools. The results found in this study are similar to the findings reported by Leyser *et al* (in Avramidis and Norwich, 2002); Al-Samade (2008); Avramidis *et al* (2000); and Buell *et al* (1999). On the other hand, some of the studies reviewed showed conflicting results regarding inclusion (Al-Sartawe, 1995; Vaughn *et al*, 1996 and Jelas, 2000). This study has made a comparison of attitudes toward inclusion between different types of schools (regular schools, schools with an SEN unit and full inclusion schools). It has shown very similar results with no statistically significant differences. Respondents from all schools were positive. Interestingly, the findings show that the educational setting where teachers work did not affect their attitudes.

With regard to gender, the study found female prospective teachers to be slightly more positive than males. This result is similar to other findings that showed female teachers having higher scores than male teachers for the inclusion of pupils with special education needs (Al-Zyoudi, 2006; Al-Abdulgabar, 1994, in Al-Abdulgabar and Massud, 2002).

The results of this study showed that there were very similar scores and no statistical significant difference between different types of school teachers with different degrees of teaching experience. The study showed that those teachers who had a few years of teaching were more positive and supportive of inclusion than teachers who had many years of teaching experience. This finding is consistent with another study by Leyser *et al* (1994). Moreover, there is no significant difference between teachers in different age groups. However, the youngest group held the most positive attitude and the second youngest group included more positive attitudes than the oldest group. This finding is similar to the results obtained by Forlin (1995) which showed that teacher who

have more years of teaching experience were found to have more negative inclusion attitudes.

With regard to experience of teaching pupils with special needs, the study found that teachers with experience held more positive attitudes toward inclusion than their colleagues with no experience of teaching pupils with SEN. This result supports Harown (1995). Furthermore, the result of the study showed that in terms of experience of out-of-school contact, teachers who had this contact with special education needs students were more positive toward inclusion than their colleagues with no such contact. However, this difference was not statistically significant.

With regard to perceived barriers to the implementation of inclusion in mainstream schools, the highest score was item 12: "Lack of equipment and appropriate educational materials". Teachers mentioned this because their schools may receive special funding for students with SEN. In another high barrier score, item 8 ("Little knowledge about special education needs") teachers noted that such items were barriers. They believed that knowledge and more information about special education needs were necessary. This was one of several reasons for the successful implementation of SEN inclusion. In item 3, "Classrooms do not accommodate students with disabilities" teachers noted that schools were not designed to meet the requirements of students with special needs. However, it is important to check for barriers to ensure the successful inclusion of SEN pupils in ordinary schools. Furthermore, other items showed that regarding barriers (See Table 4.6) there are two items which had the lowest mean scores (13 and 18): "Non-acceptance by parents of SEN students/by other students". Teachers mentioned that these two items had low scores because they believed students with SEN should have the opportunity of sitting with their peers from ordinary schools.

The current study elicited respondents' perceptions of the most appropriate placement for different types of SEN. The study found that teachers reported that the best placement for students with a visual impairment was a special school (33.8%) because it is difficult for a school to offer the facilities and the teaching for their disabilities. Also, the study reported that a special

class in a regular school is the most suitable setting for students with hearing impairments and learning difficulties. Students with a physical disability were seen as more suitable for placement in an inclusion school with out-of-class support. The study found that all students with an intellectual disability, challenging behaviour and autism should be studying in special schools.

This study also found respondents' perceptions of their willingness to teach students with different types of SEN. Teachers from regular schools were more prepared to teach students with learning difficulties than other groups of SEN, perhaps because these students did not present extreme difficulties or strange behaviour. These teachers were less prepared to teach students with intellectual disabilities, as were teachers from schools with an SEN unit. However, they were more prepared to teach students with learning difficulties. Finally, teachers from full-inclusion schools show that they were more prepared to teach students with learning difficulties, and less prepared to teach students with intellectual problems.

With regard to the qualitative findings of this study, the content analysis of the open-ended items which participants completed suggests that certain factors may help SEN programmes to become more inclusive. The teachers mentioned that the important factor was availability of educational resources and curriculum adaptations to meet the needs of students with special needs. Certainly, such educational resources will provide a school environment more suitable for these students. Another point which was suggested was that teachers should have more knowledge about SEN students and more training to be confident in managing the behaviour of students with special needs. Furthermore, schools should have SEN staff and specialists. Finally, as regards the school environment, schools departments should be established and changed to meet requirement of students with special needs. Such requirements include ramps for wheelchairs between different department of the school, the supplying of special desks and other furniture and suitable classrooms.

A possible explanation for these findings may point to educational (schooling) factors. In Saudi Arabia, male students have separate schools with

male teachers. Female students have female teachers in their separate schools. As a result, both male and female teachers have different educational environments. It is therefore possible that there are differences between the academic inclusion environments. This possibility introduces a very important question: does the academic inclusion environment of teachers in male schools differ significantly from the academic inclusion environment of teachers in female schools? To answer this question a qualitative study needs to be conducted in order to examine and compare the environments of both male and female teachers.

5.1: Limitations of the study

Although the finding of the study may be useful, there are limitations which make a generalization of the results to all teachers and their attitudes towards inclusion extremely difficult. This study assessed teachers in only one city. Therefore, its findings cannot be generalized to all teachers in Saudi Arabia. In order to generalize these findings, it would be necessary to include samples from all the different cities. In general, the results will give guidelines to enhance the special education services in Saudi schools, the uniformity of school management, resources, the curriculum content and the teaching arrangements across the country.

5.2: Conclusions

The present study has investigated teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of students with special education needs in ordinary schools in Al-kahrj city in Saudi Arabia. Overall, the results of this study indicate that teachers hold a positive attitude towards inclusion. There was no statistically significant difference between teachers in different types of school, and there was a very slightly difference in gender: females had a more positive attitude than males. There was no significant difference between teachers with different degrees of teaching experience. Also, there was no difference in attitude between the age groups of teachers. However, the youngest group held the most positive attitudes. Teachers with experience of teaching students with SEN were more positive than their colleagues with no experience.

Those teachers with outside-school contact were more positive than teachers with no such contact. In addition, teachers mentioned that all 20 items regarded as barriers to the implementation of inclusion in the survey were in fact barriers and had scores of between 4.55 and 3.29. Also, teachers suggested the most appropriate placements for different types of SEN. Students with visual impairment, intellectual disability and autism should be placed in special schools, students with hearing impairment, challenging behaviour and learning difficulties should be educated in special class in regular schools, and students with physical disability should be placed in inclusion school with out-of-class support. As regards teachers' preparation for teaching students with SEN, all three groups of teachers were more prepared to teach students with learning difficulties, and less prepared to teach students with intellectual disabilities. I recommend implementing the suggestion from teachers that more educational resources should be given to schools and teacher training. Finally, further studies on inclusion will enhance our understanding of the factors surrounding the formation of positive attitudes to inclusion.

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Appendix A: Instrument, English Questionnaires Copy

A Survey of teacher's Attitudes toward Inclusion of Students with Special .Education Needs in Ordinary primary Schools

Dear Teacher

I am currently undertaking research into Saudis' schools teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of students with special needs in the ordinary schools. The purpose of this questionnaire is to obtain information that will aid to understanding of factors surrounding 'inclusion' such teachers' opinions, preparedness to implement inclusion according to disability type and barriers of .inclusion

The questionnaire is designed to be confidential and anonymous and there is no intent to identify individual teachers or teacher views. Please note that there are no correct answers; the best answers are those that honestly reflect your feelings. Finally, I will be happy to share the results of the study with you if you are interested. You can contact me by e-mail at: abdulaziz517@hotmail.com

.Thank you for your kind co-operation
Abdulaziz A. Alothman

A definition of Inclusion

Inclusion is the educational process of including with support all learners; including those experiencing significant special educational needs (SEN) such, visual impairment, hearing impairment, physical, intellectual disability, .challenging behaviour, learning difficulties and autism in ordinary schools

:Section 1

:Background

Gender: () Male () Female -1

+ Age: () 21- 25 () 26 – 30 () 31 – 40 () 41 -2

:Teaching Experience -3

() more than 21 () 21 -16 () 11-15 () 6-10 () 1-5 ()

:Type of School -4

Regular School () unit in Regular School () Full inclusion ()

Please indicate your professional development in the field of SEN -5

None () BC () Diploma () MA ()

Teaching Experience in SEN () Yes () No -6

?Have you had any contact time with students with SEN other than work time -7

No () Yes ()

Section 2: Perceptions about placement

In your view as a teacher what is the most appropriate setting or environment ?for teaching students with SEN

Disability	Home	Residential care	Special School	Special Class in RS	Inclusion + out class support	Inclusion + in class support
Visual impairment						
Hearing impairment						
Physical						
Intellectual disability						
Challenging behaviour						
Learning difficulties						
Autism						

Section 3: Teacher Opinions

Please complete this section by ticking the box under the column that best describes your agreement or disagreement with the following statements. There are no correct answers; the best answers are those that honestly reflect your feelings. When referring to students with special educational needs, please keep the case study in mind

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
.1	The needs of students with special educational needs are best served through special, separate classes					
.2	The challenge of being in an ordinary classroom will promote the academic growth of the child with special educational needs					
.3	Inclusion offers mixed group interaction which will foster understanding and acceptance of differences					
.4	Isolation in a special class has a negative effect on the social and emotional development of a student with special educational needs					
.5	The child with special educational needs will probably develop academic skills more rapidly in a special classroom than in an ordinary classroom					
.6	The contact ordinary-class students have with included students may be harmful					
.7	Including the child with special educational needs will promote his/her social independence					
.8	The inclusion of students with special educational needs can be beneficial for regular students					
.9	Inclusion is likely to have a negative effect on the emotional development of the child with special educational needs					
.10	The child with special educational needs will be socially isolated by other students					
.11	Students with special educational needs should be given every opportunity to function in the ordinary classroom setting, where possible					
.12	The presence of students with special educational needs will promote acceptance of difference on the part of other students					

Section 4: Teacher preparedness to implement inclusion according to disability type

Please indicate the level of preparedness that you feel you have in teaching students in full inclusive classroom setting. Circle one number of each statement

extremely prepared =4	Very prepared =3	Somewhat =2 prepared	Not prepared =1
-----------------------	------------------	----------------------	-----------------

Visual impairment	4	3	2	1
Hearing impairment	4	3	2	1
Physical	4	3	2	1
Intellectual disability	4	3	2	1
Challenging behaviour	4	3	2	1
Learning difficulties	4	3	2	1
Autism	4	3	2	1

Section 5: Barriers

Please read the following statements and indicate "the degree to which you feel each item represents a barrier to inclusion based on your own experiences and beliefs." Each item is rated on a scale from 5 (definitely a barrier) to 1 ((definitely not a barrier)

1	Inadequate pre-service preparation of teachers	1	2	3	4	5
2	Overload on the part of teachers					
3	Classrooms do not accommodate students with disabilities					
4	Absence of regulations that support inclusion					
5	Teachers' negative attitudes					
6	Resistance among administrators					
7	Non-acceptance by other parents					
8	Little Knowledge about special educational needs					
9	Lack of experience regarding Inclusion					
10	Class size or large teacher/pupil ratio					
11	Limited time for teachers to give sufficient attention to students with SEN					
12	Lack of equipment and appropriate educational materials					
13	Non-acceptance by parents of SEN students					
14	Behaviour management					
15	Rigidity in curriculum design and examination					
16	Lack of regard for diversity of interests and abilities					
17	Inadequate in-service training for teachers					
18	Non-acceptance by other students					
19	The absence of educational policy for inclusion in Saudi Arabia or the absence clear vision for change					
20	Inadequate funding					

**Section 6: Changes needs in your classroom/school to become more
.inclusive**

Please indicate in the space below the changes needs in your classroom/school
.in order to become more inclusive

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

.Thank you very much for completing this questionnaire

:Appendix B

**Letter from the Special Education Needs Programme Director
in the University of Exeter, directed to the Saudi Embassy**

Appendix C & D

Letters from the Al-Kahraj Local Education Authority for Schools Access

Appendix E: Instrument, Arabic Questionnaires Copy

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

زميلي المعلم:

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته ,,

يود الباحث من خلال هذه الاستبانة التعرف على وجهة نظرك واتجاهك حول أهمية دمج الطلاب ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة في مدارس التعليم العام بدلاً من عزلهم في مدارس للفئات الخاصة. فالباحث بصدد إجراء دراسة حول بعض المتغيرات التي يجب أخذها في الاعتبار عند تطوير برامج دمج الطلاب ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة في مدارس التعليم العام. ومن أهم هذه المتغيرات هي وجهة نظر المعلم حيث إنه هو الذي يقع عليه العبء الأكبر في العملية التعليمية.

عزيزي المعلم أرجو أن تختار بكل دقة وأن تقرأ العبارة كاملة قبل أن تختار، وأحب أن أذكرك بأنه لا توجد عبارة صحيحة وأخرى خاطئة، فكلها وجهات نظر، ووجهة نظرك سيتوقف عليها اتخاذ قرار يخصك كمعلم ويخص العملية التربوية بأكملها. وبإمكاني تزويدكم بملخص نتائج الدراسة إذا رغبت في ذلك.

شاكراً لكم تعاونكم وجهدكم المثمر،

الباحث

عبدالعزیز عبدالله العثمان

جامعة إكستر، بريطانيا

مفهوم الدمج: هو تعليم الطلاب ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة سوياً جنباً إلى جنب مع أقرانهم العاديين في المدارس العامة.
والمقصود بالطلاب ذوي الحاجات الخاصة في هذه الاستبانة الطلاب "المعاقون" بصرياً، سمعياً، حركياً، عقلياً، المضطربون سلوكياً، صعوبات التعلم، التوحد.

القسم الأول:

بيانات شخصية:

العمر: 31-40 26-30 21-25 أكبر من 41

سنوات الخبرة التدريسية:

أقل من سنتين 6-10 11-15 أكثر من 20 3-5 16-20

نوع المدرسة:

مدرسة عادية (بدون تلاميذ تربية خاصة).
 مدرسة عادية + فصول تربية خاصة ملحقة.
 مدرسة شاملة (دمج داخل الفصل).

هل حصلت على أي مؤهل في التربية الخاصة؟

لا دبلوم بكالوريوس ماجستير

هل تلقيت دورات تدريبية عن الفئات الخاصة؟

لا نعم

هل عندك أوقات تشترك فيها مع ذوي الحاجات الخاصة خارج وقت المدرسة؟

لا نعم

القسم الثاني:

من واقع خبرتك كمدرس ما هو المكان الأفضل لتعليم الطلاب ذوي الحاجات الخاصة. فيما يلي مجموعة من البدائل، من فضلك اختر المكان المناسب من وجهة نظرك، مع العلم انه لا توجد إجابة صحيحة وأخرى خاطئة، المهم أن تعبر الإجابة عن وجهة نظرك.

مكان الدراسة	البيت	دار الرعاية	مدرسة خاصة	فصل خاص في مدرسة عادية	دمج في فصول مدرسة عادية + مساعدة داخل الفصل	دمج في فصول مدرسة عادية + مساعدة خارج الفصل
نوع الإعاقة						
إعاقة بصرية						
إعاقة سمعية						
إعاقة بدنية أو حركية						
إعاقة عقلية						
اضطرابات سلوكية						
صعوبات التعلم						
التوحد						

القسم الخامس: المعوقات

فيما يلي مجموعة من المعوقات لعملية الدمج من فضلك اقرأ كل عبارة ثم حدد مدى موافقتك على كونها تمثل عقبة أو معوقاً في سبيل تحقيق الدمج عن طريق وضع دائرة حول الرقم الذي تراه مناسباً حسب المقياس التالي:

		1 = غير موافق بشدة		2 = غير موافق		3 = محايد		4 = موافق		5 = موافق بشدة	
م	البنية	موافق بشدة	موافق	محايد	غير موافق	غير موافق بشدة	موافق بشدة	موافق	محايد	غير موافق	غير موافق بشدة
1	تأهيل المعلمين قبل الخدمة غير كاف	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
2	زيادة الأعباء على كاهل المعلمين	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
3	الفصول الدراسية لا تلائم احتياجات الطلاب ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
4	عدم وجود لوائح وتشريعات وقوانين تدعم عملية الدمج	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
5	اتجاهات المعلمين السالبة نحو الدمج	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
6	مقاومة المسؤولين والمديرين لعملية الدمج	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
7	عدم تقبل أولياء أمور الطلاب العاديين لدمج ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة مع أبنائهم	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
8	قلة معلومات المعلمين في المدارس العادية بالاحتياجات للطلاب ذوي الحاجات الخاصة	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
9	قلة خبرة المدرسين بالدمج أو عدم وجود خبرة تدريس مباشرة مع الطلاب ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
10	زيادة عدد الطلاب داخل الفصل الدراسي	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
11	ضيق وقت المعلمين للاهتمام بالطلاب ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
12	ندرة التجهيزات والوسائل التعليمية المساعدة بالمدرسة العادية	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
13	عدم تقبل أولياء أمور الطلاب ذوي الحاجات الخاصة لدمج أبنائهم مع الطلاب العاديين	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
14	صعوبة ضبط سلوك بعض الطلاب من ذوي الحاجات الخاصة	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
15	صعوبة المناهج ونظم الامتحانات	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
16	عدم تقدير المعلمين للتباين والاختلاف بين الطلاب في الاهتمامات والقدرات	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
17	تدريب المعلمين أثناء الخدمة غير كاف	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
18	عدم تقبل الطلاب العاديين للطلاب ذوي الحاجات الخاصة	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
19	غياب السياسة التعليمية للدمج أو عدم وجود رؤية واضحة للتغيير	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
20	قلة الدعم المالي والتمويل	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1

القسم السادس: تغييرات واحتياجات من وجهة نظرك.

بعض التغييرات والاحتياجات لعملية الدمج داخل الفصل أو المدرسة يمكن إضافتها من وجهة نظرك.

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شاكراً لسعادتكم حسن تعاونكم
والله يحفظكم ويرعاكم.