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Principals Attitudes Toward Inclusion in Dubai Public Schools: Where Do They Stand?

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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

PRINCIPALS' ATTITUDES TOWARD INCLUSION IN DUBAI PUBLIC SCHOOLS:
WHERE DO THEY STAND?

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS

PROGRAM IN EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION AND SUPERVISION

BY
FOUZIA USMAN
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS
DECEMBER 2011

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For my niece, Maryam.

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ABSTRACT

Inclusion in the UAE has been a concern for many over the years and lately, has gained the attention at national level. Through this study, the researcher confines the research within Dubai only and looks forward to the responses and expects that the results will be used as a guideline to enhance special education services in a fast developing city such as Dubai.

This study discusses the purpose of the study, available literature and research conducted on the topic, sample population, instrumentation, and procedure and data analysis techniques to carry out the research. Based on that, primary research questions are as follows:

1. What are the public school administrators' opinions about inclusion of students in the Dubai public schools with special education needs?
2. Which factors influence public school administrators' opinions about full inclusion in Dubai public schools?

Through this research, the researcher hopes to find some positive answers that in turn will work out for the betterment of all our children.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Attitude drives our behavior

Eman Gaad (2004)

Overview

Over the years, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has grown from a small country in the Middle East, into a modern metropolitan city in the region. The UAE is comprised of seven emirates: Abu Dhabi (Capital city), Dubai, Sharjah, Ras Al Khaimah, Umm Al Quwain, Fujairah, and Ajman. The UAE is situated on the Arabian Gulf, east of Saudi Arabia and north of Oman. Bradshaw, Tennant &, Lydiatt (2004), claim that the country has a long history of local tribal lifestyle and later, of European influences. The UAE has dramatically emerged into the mainstream of modernism over the past few decades, due to an economy which is driven by oil, gas and lately tourism. There is a large expatriate population making the local Arab nationals a minority category (Bradshaw, Tennant &, Lydiatt p.49).

As of 2010, the total population of UAE was estimated at 4.9 million, with almost 20% as the UAE citizens (Nationals) and remaining 80% being the expatriates (foreigners). Vast majority of the foreigners comprise of South Asians (approximately 50% of total population), followed by Arabs and Iranians forming 23% of the total

population and Europeans and other Westerners forming 8% of the total population (Central Intelligence Agency – The World Fact book, 2011).

In the 1960's and 1970's, migrants from neighboring countries such as India, Pakistan and Iran, including countries from the Arab World, moved to UAE and continue to do so till date. The main reason for this was that these migrants could earn a higher income as compared to in their home countries due to the difference in currency rates. The immigrants that moved to the UAE before 1971 (when the UAE federation came into existence) were given the option to apply for UAE citizenship or retain the nationality of their country of origin. However in the 1980's the government stopped granting UAE citizenship to long time settlers and retained that for only the offspring of UAE Nationals. One of the key reasons for this is that the UAE government feared through naturalizing these great numbers of foreigners, the UAE's cultural values would be lost. The government is protective of its citizens and ensures there is enough wealth to be distributed amongst the Nationals, however the non Nationals do enjoy other benefits such as a tax free income and the ability to own a home (Bowman, 2007).

It is key to note, that the children of a female UAE national married to a non-UAE national male, are not considered as UAE citizens. These are some of the few reasons as to why the current day UAE National population remains so small.

Since the beginning of year 2011, the entire gulf region has experienced disturbances within their political arena. Arab States such as Libya and Egypt have undergone political reform, however the political ruling in these countries differ to that of the UAE. The UAE has proved resilient through the years despite several crises that have

occurred in the Middle East region. It survived the 1979 Islamic revolution in Iran, the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war, and the 1990 invasion of Kuwait by Iraqi forces (All Business A D&B Company, 2000). With the recent unrest in the Arab world, including neighboring state Bahrain, most states have called for democracy – however, the UAE population remains least affected. Due to the fact that majority of the population consists of non-UAE nationals, only UAE citizens hold the right to speak or act against their government, whereas the expatriates are not eligible towards such rights.

Education in the Middle East has been in focus for some years now and has captured the interest of many educationalists and other professionals. As Gaad (2004) reports, in a growing economy such as that of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), the field of education has also experienced dramatic change in the last decade – especially the area of special education (Gaad p.160). Attitudes and approaches towards special education and people with special needs have taken a turn, slowly but surely. Due to these changes in attitudes for people with special needs, a greater form of acceptance from teachers, parents and, the government itself, has brought about a revolutionizing change in the field of special education within the UAE (Hassan, 2008), which will be discussed throughout this chapter .

The Education System in the UAE

The education system of the UAE in comparison to other countries is relatively new. Prior to the 1950's, homeschooling was common and a great emphasis was placed on religious studies. This would include studying the Holy Quran (Holy Book for Muslims), writing, arithmetic and, Arabic calligraphy

(<http://www.dubaitourism.ae/CultureHeritage/HistoricalSites/AlAhmadiyaSchool/tabid/177/language/en-US/Default.aspx>). However, Bradshaw et al (2004) report that in 1952, there were few formal schools in the country; this is when public schools officially began and an academic authority was established to overlook at the national curriculum and subjects beyond religious studies were included into the education system (<http://www.dubaitourism.ae/CultureHeritage/HistoricalSites/AlAhmadiyaSchool/tabid/177/language/en-US/Default.aspx>). The public school curriculum (as well as the textbooks) was heavily based on the neighboring countries, Kuwaiti and the Jordanian models (Ministry of Education, 2008). In the 1960's and 1970's the education system expanded with separate schools for boys and girls. This still largely exists today within the public government schools where female educators are appointed for all girls' school and male educators for all boys' school (Bradshaw, Tennant &, Lydiatt 2004). However, lately female educators have also been appointed for all boys' school at the primary level.

At the same time, many expatriates developed private schools to meet their religious, cultural and education needs. Today, both systems are operating in almost equal numbers throughout the UAE. In fact there are more private schools than public schools due to the growing expatriate population. The curricula of these schools vary with most being influenced by the educational curricula from the UK, Canada, USA and India (<http://www.uaeinteract.com/education/>).

The United Arab Emirates Ministry of Education (MOE) is responsible for both the public and private education systems that operate within the country's seven emirates and was established by the UAE government after the Declaration of Federation of the

Seven Emirates in 1971 (Arif, Gaad, Scott, 2006). However, another government body also operates within each emirate (known as that particular Emirate's 'Education Council') to ensure that the educational qualities within the private and public educational institutions (including early learning centers, training institutions and, universities) of that emirate are up to standards. For the public school system, the Ministry for Education assumes a much broader set of roles, similar to Ministries of Education in other countries. They build new buildings, hire staff, determine the standards of education, provide curricular materials and support, coordinate a variety of educationally relevant activities and ensure adequate programs are operating (Bradshaw, Lydiatt, Tennant, 2004).

Moreover, the Ministry for Education overlooks the licensure and assumes a supervisory role within the private education system. They ensure that the basic requirements of the school are met including the physical components of the site and that the educational programs are appropriate.

Over the years the inclusion of students with mild to moderate disabilities has been discussed within the Middle East region, some of which has been reviewed for the purpose of this study and will be discussed in later chapters. Nevertheless, various factors have hindered the decision of policy makers to implement full inclusion into action. These factors include: values and beliefs that exist within the subcultures of the society, funding, teacher qualifications, and parents' attitude towards inclusion and, teachers' attitude towards inclusion (Gaad, 2004). However, funding is the least hindering factor out of the four, but teachers' attitudes hold great importance as it is believed that the

teachers' day to day interaction with the included students would contribute to or lessen the success of inclusive practices (Gaad, 2004).

Education in Dubai

Dubai has a total student population of 209,590 out of which 181,038 attend private schools representing over 13 different curriculums (Knowledge and Human Development Authority, 2010). The majority of the schools in Dubai are private (45% public vs. 55% private) and are composed of 150 private schools that include a kindergarten section and a nursery (Knowledge and Human Development Authority, 2010).

Federal kindergartens and schools are free of charge for UAE citizens (also known as 'Nationals'). They are easily accessible as they are well distributed geographically. Local public kindergartens follow the federal curriculum which had been updated and improved in 2003 but remains weak in Arabic and English language teaching. The MOE requires kindergartens to use the latest methods of teaching which involves games, communication and a free learning environment with the aim of developing the student's self confidence (Hassan, 2008).

The primary and secondary public curriculum is heavily focused on both religious Islamic studies and Arabic language and is very weak in humanities. Most of the private schools follow a foreign curriculum i.e. Indian, British, American, Iranian, Russian, French and Pakistani curriculum; while public schools are closely monitored and controlled by the Ministry of Education. Over the last decade, Nationals have access to both public and private schools. Even though public schools are free of charge for

Nationals, only 72% are enrolled in public schools and 28% in private schools (Knowledge & Human Development Authority, 2008). This is mainly due to the quality of instruction being better in private schools with the teachers being more qualified.

People with Special Needs

People with special needs are found in the general population of the UAE who are of both, Arab and non-Arab descent. Since there is no central data collection agency, it is not clearly estimated as to what percentage of the general population would come into the “disabled” category.

The Ministry of Education and Youth is involved with the education of special needs students, through public and private schooling system (Gaad 2004). Options available to these special needs students are to receive education in: special classrooms in public schools, rehabilitation and welfare centers for the handicapped set up by the Ministry of Social Affairs, private special schools and day care centers and, Non-Profit and Voluntary organizations that include day care units and centers established by charity organizations (Ministry of Education, 2006).

Special Education Services and the UAE Public School System

Since 1979, the provision of special education programs and services in the UAE has increasingly evolved and expanded to recognize a wider variety of categories of special education available to students in increasingly higher grades and to promote inclusive education or equal access to educational opportunities. Since the government provides funding to the public schools, the public system has staff at the upper Ministry

level across the country who are involved in supporting the special education system (Bradshaw, Lydiatt, Tennant, 2004).

Presently, the special education services within the UAE public school system are focusing on an early intervention system. Thus, a child's developmental milestones are noted by a local pediatrician, and based on his or her judgment, parents of a child may be asked to seek a formal evaluation (either through private or public hospitals) of the child for a proper diagnosis. Students from kindergarten through grade one are usually assessed by the special education professional team at the school, which consists of the educational psychologist and/or speech-language pathologist, and finally accepted for extra support. Identified students are then assigned either to a special class or to resource room support where the enrollment of students does not exceed more than twelve. The teaching staffs that take on these students are qualified special education teachers and are fluent in the UAE national language which is Arabic (Hassan, 2008).

In many cases, parents of children with disabilities are guided through by the medical officials, doctors, or their general practitioner to register the names of their children once the child is three years of age to the nearest center for Care and Rehabilitation of the Handicapped. However, those children with less apparent learning needs can go without any form of identification or referral to specialists. Once registered in such centers, children with exceptional learning needs are categorized accordingly and are offered spaces locally on basis of availability (Bradshaw, Lydiatt, Tennant, 2004). They could also be referred by the psychologist to be registered at their local special classrooms in regular schools (Gaad 2004). Within most government schools, counselors

provide support for social-emotional needs. These counselors also act as one of the front-line resources for identifying and referring students who may have special needs. Alas, Gaad found that including students with severe disabilities into regular schools is not offered as an option to parents of children with disabilities. Due to lack of services for the severely disabled available at schools, the parents have the responsibility to find appropriate programs and services, and so many parents of children with disabilities choose to keep their children at home (Gaad 2004, p.199).

Special Education and the Private School System

On the other hand, the private schools' system differs significantly in its organizational functions for supporting students with special needs. Many private schools will not accept students with special needs because they do not have the funding and/or expertise to provide appropriate services (Bradshaw, Lydiatt, Tennant, 2004). Lately, school counselors and educational psychologists have been hired by these private schools that would aid with carrying out appropriate assessments on students when needed. However, now, private schools do take in students with mild disabilities (i.e. learning disabilities, ADD/ADHD). At this point, the Ministry for Education and Youth requires all private schools to provide extra support if they knowingly accept students with special needs. Private schools (if taking in students with special needs) need to clearly indicate the requirements for accepting and supporting these students (Bradshaw, Lydiatt, Tennant, 2004). Furthermore, the Ministry is also interested in developing ways to increase awareness and to foster effective intervention approaches for students with special needs (Hassan, 2008). The Ministry has indicated they are in the very early

stages of attempting to develop guidelines for the private schools which may ease the procedure for parents of students who attend these private institutions. These efforts are being collaboratively approached with the same group who are responsible for special needs services within the public system. (Bradshaw, Lydiatt, Tennant, 2004).

Special Needs Education in Dubai

Special needs centers are provided by the federal and the private sector; no centers are provided by the Dubai local government. Services in the federal centers are available to Nationals free of charge. Since most services available at the federal centers are offered in Arabic, non-Nationals avail services provided within the private sector, where the fee can range from a minimal to a significant amount. Support services are also provided (e.g. medical and physiotherapy) and there is a general method of curriculum for all the centers customized according to the needs of the students (individual education plan: IEP). Also, after the age of 16, some vocational training services are provided to students with special needs (e.g. carpentry handcrafts).

Federal services do not provide services for all disabilities and students with severe or multiple (more than one or two depending on the case) disabilities are not accepted. There is a lack of service continuity in some cases (e.g. blind people get 3 years of special services before having to move to a normal school). Entry requirements are limited to Nationals with a maximum of a dual disability, capable of self hygiene and clear of epilepsy (Ministry of Education, 2008).

On the private level, there are some services available that cater to children who are mentally and/or physically challenged. Unlike federal centers, private centers are

open to Nationals and non-Nationals students that have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) devised for them. Costs are variable (some are very high) and not affordable by all. The services do not cater to all the needs and the hearing/visual impairments are poorly covered. Also, many of the centers do not accept severe disabilities. Quality is variable and there are no quality standards applicable (Ministry of Education, 2008).

Service Providers

There are 25 private, government and local centers in the UAE dedicated for the disabled and six are provided in Dubai (Hassan 2008). The majority of the centers focus on early rehabilitation, orientation and other community activities. Currently, there is only one federal centre for special needs available in Dubai which is creating some accessibility problems. The capacity is insufficient to meet the demand and there are long waiting lists. In addition, federal centers are not accredited (Ministry of Education Strategic Objectives, 2008).

Current Trends in Education

As a young wealthy nation, the United Arab Emirates continues to grow and flourish at a rapid pace, which in turn requires dramatic changes as the country progresses into modernism. Due to the growing multicultural population, changes in education for children with special needs should be provided. In recent times, the UAE government and the country's educationalists have called for an educational reform, in regards to appropriate placement of students with exceptional learning needs (Gaad p.159).

Scholars and education professionals argue that the reason why inclusion of special needs students hasn't been fully implemented in the UAE is due to the country's "national character", meaning that education is tied with culture (Gaad, 2004). It is believed that attitudes are affected by cultural beliefs and values; UAE being a multicultural society, has allowed other cultures to cultivate social and cultural beliefs about individuals with disabilities and/or exceptional learning needs. These perceptions in turn, play an important role in the acceptance of these students in the regular school settings and the success level of inclusion. The UAE however, cares about the welfare of its citizen and constantly strives to provide better services for people with disabilities. For that reason, Federal Law No 29/2006 protects the rights of people with special needs, giving them equal opportunities and rights to a decent life and comprehensive care in education, training, health and rehabilitation (Appendix E). However, due to lack of awareness of this Federal Law amongst school administrators and parents, it is not heavily enforced or rather practiced in schools.

The Ministry of Education, which monitors education in the UAE at a federal level, defines inclusion as, "The education of students with special needs with the non-disabled students in a regular classroom, either in part or whole" (Ministry of Education Strategic Objectives, 2008). The aim is to implement this principle not just to the academic level, but also to encourage social integration and integration in the public life of the community. However, the Ministry also emphasizes that inclusion of disabled students within regular classrooms should not lack additional support for those students.

For the purposes of this study, the researcher seeks school administrators' opinions in regards to "full inclusion" in Dubai public schools.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to investigate school administrators' attitudes towards inclusive education in the Dubai Public schools and the factors that influence such attitudes. In addition, the purpose is to gain more knowledge about the factors that may influence the implementation of inclusive practices in the Dubai public school system. The results of this study can be used as a guideline to enhance special education services in a fast developing city such as Dubai. The Ministry of Education defines inclusion as the education of students with special needs with the non-disabled students in a regular classroom, either in part or whole. Related to that, key questions examined throughout the research are:

1. What are the public school administrators' opinions about inclusion of students in the Dubai public schools with special education needs?
2. Which factors influence public school administrators' opinions about full inclusion in Dubai public schools?

Significance and Limitations

As a result of this study, administrators' roles in public schools in Dubai concerning children with special needs will be explored. To serve the purpose accurately, for this particular study qualitative research will be appropriate. In that, a qualitative questionnaire will be used to gather data. Participants will include school administrators from public schools. The questionnaire will be sent to all public schools

within Dubai (K-8) whose mailing address is publicly available. Permission from school administrators and other local authorities will be obtained (if necessary) prior to conducting the research.

Key Terms

Dubai: One of the seven cities in United Arab Emirates

Education Council: a governing body under the Ministry of Education overlooking the education sector (public and private) within a particular Emirate in the UAE

Expatriates: Non- UAE citizens that reside in the country

Federal Law No 29/2006: Law established by the UAE Federal government protects the rights of people with special needs, giving them equal opportunities and rights to a decent life and comprehensive care in education, training, health and rehabilitation

Inclusion: The education of students with special needs with the non-disabled students in a regular classroom, either in part or whole

Ministry of Education: Governing body of the education sector (public and private) in the UAE

Nationals: UAE citizens

Public Schools: Government funded schools in Dubai that follow the national curriculum

Private Schools: Privately funded schools in Dubai that follow a foreign curriculum (non-National)

UAE: United Arab Emirates

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

A literature review is a compressed critique on the status of knowledge of a defined topic which enables the researcher to gain further insight on the topic (McMillan & Schumacher 2001). So, a thorough literature review is essential prior to conducting further research on a selected topic.

Numerous studies have been conducted on inclusion and mainstreaming in various countries, however very few have been limited to the practices in the UAE, particularly Dubai.

According to R.C. Allen (1996) a literature review should fulfill the following purpose:

- Describe the relationship of the subject matter to the others under construction
- Identify with new ways to interpret previous research and fill in any gaps
- To avoid duplication of previous research and efforts (p. 293)

Within this framework, a researcher will also be able to resolve conflicts that may lie amongst previous studies. Therefore, the literature review itself however does not constitute for a primary scholarship; however it provides guidance for further research (R.C.Allen, 1996). For the purpose of this research, examined areas of studies will include cultural attitudes, teachers' attitudes, and parents' attitudes and, school

administrators' attitudes towards inclusion. Whilst gathering an understanding of the current trends and the issue of inclusion in the UAE itself, these four factors were discussed frequently. Consequently, the purpose of this literature review is to discuss these factors and to gain an understanding of the components that lack within the study of administrators' attitudes. Impact of those factors on special education policies will also be looked at.

The Ministry of Education, which monitors education in the UAE at a federal level, defines inclusion as the education of students with special needs with the non-disabled students in a regular classroom, either in part or whole (Ministry of Education, 2008). The aim is to implement this principle not just to the academic level, but also to encourage social integration and integration in the public life of the community. However, the Ministry also emphasizes that inclusion of disabled students within regular classrooms should not lack additional support for those students.

For the purposes of this study, the researcher seeks school administrators' opinions in regards to "full inclusion" in Dubai public schools.

Cross Cultural Studies on Inclusion

This section will look at the numerous studies that have been conducted involving teachers' attitudes towards inclusion in different countries. Throughout this research, the researcher has come across various literatures by Professor Eman Gaad. Dr. Gaad is a Senior Lecturer at British University in Dubai's Faculty of Education and leads the University's Masters Program in Special Education. She is also Executive Director of the UAE Down Syndrome Association and has conducted extensive research in the area

of educating children with special needs. She has also looked into teachers' and parents' attitudes towards inclusion of students with special needs and the results vary greatly.

This variance in attitudes may be due to the differences in the school systems that these countries have adopted and how special education is implemented (Gaad 2001:2004). Al-Zyoudi (2006) reports that cross-culture studies have been carried out to further investigate teachers' attitudes towards integration – specifically in the USA, Germany, Israel, Ghana, Taiwan and the Philippines. Findings showed that there were differences in attitude to integration between these countries. Teachers in the USA and Germany had the most positive attitudes. Teachers' attitudes were significantly less positive in Ghana, Philippines, Israel and Taiwan (Leyser, Kapperman and Keller 1994).

Research has suggested that teachers' attitudes might be influenced by a number of factors, such as:

- *The nature and the severity of the disabilities:* (Sodak, Podell and Lehman, 1998, AL-khatteeb, 2002, Al-Khatteeb, 2004, Al-khatani, 2003) found that acceptance of inclusion was lower for children with an intellectual disability than children with a physical disability.
- *Teaching experience:* Alsheikh and Elhoweris (2004) found that experienced teachers have been found to be more supportive of inclusion.
- *Training:* Van Ruesen (2001) found that professional training of teachers was reported to be one of the key factors of successful inclusion.

- *Factors related to school:* Factors external to the school that affect the working conditions of teachers, such as financial rewards, status in the society and professional expectations, have also been found to influence the teachers' motivation and dedication (Marchesi, 1998).
- *Gender of teachers:* Gaad (2004) found that female teachers expressed more positive attitudes towards the idea of integrating children with behavior problems than male teachers.

The research studies conducted in these countries, such as Jordan and UAE provide some information- they do not specify to a certain region and focus only on teachers' attitudes. Within the current research, the researcher wishes to only focus on the attitudes of school administrators in the United Arab Emirates and the schooling system within this country. Qualitative research would be best suited for this purpose as opposed to quantitative methods (i.e. cross – culture studies). Due to this choice, a qualitative questionnaire will be relied upon. Due to limitations on travel accessibility, emails and phone interviews will not be conducted.

Other Possible Literature Sources

Other possible literature sources include studies carried out across different cultures that may display different attitudes and value system towards special education and inclusion. Eleweke & Rodda (2000) specifically focus on developing countries and their lack of implementation towards inclusion. Factors such the absence of support services, relevant materials, inadequate personnel training programs, lack of funding

structure and the absence of enabling legislation are the major problems of effective implementation of inclusive education in developing countries. As a result, they strongly recommended that the governments in developing countries should enact laws to give strong support to the policy of integration and other relevant services to individuals with disabilities in these countries (Eleweke & Rodda 2000).

Cultural Perspective of Inclusion in the UAE

Attitude drives our behavior

Eman Gaad

The UAE is comprised of a multicultural society that harbors citizens from all over the world. Accordingly, this section focuses on the trends and changes in attitude towards special needs individuals, not just from the Arab perspective, but also from an international platform. These different cultures come together and form a subculture which heavily influences attitudes, and that is what this section is about to explore.

Gaad (2004) reports, that, over the years, people's cultural beliefs and set of values have influenced their attitudes towards individuals with intellectual disabilities, thus their attitude towards inclusion and mainstreaming is influenced in the same way. However, people in the UAE are gradually becoming aware of the different intellectual conditions and so the terminology used for references has changed as well. For example, the researcher has observed that over the years those with Down's syndrome are not referred to as "Mongols" anymore within the education arena. This shows acceptance on society's part and willingness to treat the intellectually disabled as a significant part of the

society. Other countries, such as the U.K. do not encourage the mentally disabled to be institutionalized but rather participate in communal activities to ensure growth.

On the other hand, in Africa, intellectual disabilities are associated with witchcraft and other evil activities. For that reason, a negative attitude is taken towards inclusion and any sort of educational services provided to such children are hindered (Gaad 2004). In Middle Eastern countries, placement of mentally disabled students is limited as they are then placed in schools (specifically) for mentally disabled.

On the contrary, in the U.S. education of students with special needs has been governed by laws for many years. In 1975, Congress passed Public Law 94-142 (Education of All Handicapped Children Act), now codified as IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) Public Law 94-142 encompasses six principles: (1) zero reject, (2) non discriminatory evaluation of students, (3) appropriate education, (4) least restrictive environment, (5) procedural due process and, (6) parent participation (Turnbull & Stowe 2001). In order to receive federal funds, states must develop and implement policies that assure a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to all children with disabilities (Turnbull, Turnbull, Stowe, Wilcox, 2000).

The law (EHA) underwent amendments over the years and in 1997 was renamed to IDEA. IDEA has been reauthorized and amended a number of times, most recently in December of 2004, as it was signed into law by former U.S. president George W. Bush, which contained several significant amendments (Turnbull, 2005).

IDEA has been established to ensure equity, accountability and excellence in education for children with disabilities. In defining the purpose of special education,

IDEA 2004 clarifies Congress' intended outcome for each child with a disability: students must be provided a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) that prepares them for further education, employment and independent living (Turnbull, Turnbull, Stowe, Wilcox, 2000).

Under IDEA 2004:

- Special education and related services should be designed to meet the unique learning needs of eligible children with disabilities, from birth through age 21.
- Students with disabilities should be prepared for further education, employment and independent living.

Special schools for the handicapped are no longer seen as preferable and children with mental disabilities are placed in regular schools to encourage growth of all children – where they learn how to interact with each other (Vash, 2001). Due to this, new models have been adopted where mainstreaming takes on a more positive role in schools. This proactive, positive approach is manifested within Response to Intervention (RTI). The primary focus of RTI within the American schooling system is to provide early and effective assistance to children who are having difficulty learning (Shores, 2009).

The RTI model can serve as an effective tool to diagnose learning disabilities in students. Also, through effective planning and implementation, it can increase student academic achievement and lessen behavioral problems.

Shores claims that the RTI model can be used as a framework for school improvement plan nationwide. With over 30 years of research associated with this model, most

educators have been able to successfully carry out its procedures at their schools (Shores, 2009). Similarly, other Asian countries, such as, India, Nepal, Korea, Malaysia and China all support inclusion (Gaad, 2004).

The UAE is a very culturally diverse country. Many different nationalities, originating from Europe, U.S, Middle East and Russia and Far East Asia reside in this country. Hence, the cultural practices that they bring in with them cannot go unnoticed. These factors further influence the development of school policies related to special needs students, specifically in private schools that cater to culturally diverse student population (<http://www.uae-embassy.org/uae/education>).

Teachers' Attitudes in the UAE

Teachers' attitude is an important factor when determining the success of an inclusion program within a school setting. Most westernized countries, such as the U.S. have adopted the inclusion model due to their mandate on equal opportunity for all their citizens. Under section 504 Act, children with disabilities are to be provided with an education and any specialized instruction required preparing them for full integration into their society including employment and independent living. Similarly, in the U.K. under the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001((Sec. 316 (3) (a) and (b)), children with disabilities are required to be educated in a mainstream school, unless it is incompatible with the decision of the child's parents or with the provision of efficient education for other children.

Therefore in these countries, general and special education teachers are required to be knowledgeable and skillful in their selected areas (Moghraby 1999). The curricula

is adapted and modified to meet the needs of the intellectually disabled children. However, in the Middle Eastern region, specifically the UAE teachers still remain ill prepared for the task and inclusive practices turn out to be unsuccessful (Gaad, 2004). According to Alghazo, this is also because one on one interaction with the students was limited as the teachers had to meet with the demands of the special needs children *and* regular children (Alghazo, 2005). Thus, based on Gaad's research, some teachers in the UAE feel ill prepared for taking on the challenge of having students with special needs in their regular classroom settings (Gaad 2004).

Moreover, teachers also need to display willingness and a positive attitude when confronting special needs students (Alghazo, 2005). This in turn will improve student performances and create a positive image for all. Al-Zyoudi (2006) states that the severity of the disability heavily influences the attitude and the acceptance level of the teacher towards inclusion. Teachers with more than 12 years of teaching experience show more acceptances towards inclusion of children with mental disabilities; however teachers with less experience showed a more negative attitude towards the concept. Also, in association to that fact, male teachers displayed more negative attitude and insensitivity towards inclusion as opposed to the female teachers (Gaad, 2004). In most cases, teachers may show more acceptances towards students with physical disabilities rather than mental disabilities.

Similarly, in the UAE, culture does make an impact on teachers' attitudes. For most novice teachers, they contemplate this factor very seriously before taking on special education as a career choice. AlGhazo and Gaad (2004) report that teachers do not take

on positions at schools that serve mentally disabled students for the fear that in the future they might bear a child with similar disabilities.

On the other hand, Brown (2004) states that teachers can also be the key factors to help bring change in attitude toward inclusion. Like parents, they can also demonstrate positive attitude towards children with special needs and the idea of their inclusion into regular schools.

Even though other countries such as the U.S. and U.K. have taken a positive approach toward inclusion, teachers in the UAE still lag behind as they show fewer acceptances towards such a concept (Bradshaw, Tennant & Lydiatt, 2004). This is alarming as these teachers will eventually take on leadership roles within the education arena and will be making decisions that will affect the future of students' with disabilities.

Parents' Attitudes in the UAE

Over the years in the UAE, some parents have always been comfortable with that fact that there are special "centers" for their children where they can learn and progress at their own pace, without any added pressure (Gaad 2001). On the other hand, some parents *want* their child to go the same school and enjoy the facilities like all the other children, arguing, that it will help their children adapt better to society (Hassan, 2008). Others hold their child back with the fear that the child may get bullied, labeled, or stigmatized due to their disabilities. In order to protect them from such emotional distress, parents prefer to send their child to special schools where their disabilities are recognized and abilities are appreciated.

On the other hand, parents of children receiving general education have concerns regarding individual attention for their child if a special need's child is attending the same class (AlSheikh and Elhoweris 2006). Teachers will be expected to give more attention to the special need's student, leaving less time for one on one interaction with other children.

Since the UAE, in particular the emirate of Dubai, has been taking on new action plans towards inclusion, most parents' attitudes have been heavily influenced. For students with severe disabilities, there are not many options that parents are left with but for students with mild-moderate learning disabilities, there have always been quite a few choices that parents had the liberty to consider (Asarpota 2003). However in the UAE, most parents are yet to be educated as to what inclusion really is. For instance, some parents think of inclusion as a special classroom within a regular school. For most, they are satisfied with that option as their children are still 'attending' a regular school (Gaad 2004).

For example, in the other countries, such as England, options other than full inclusion of children with disabilities are not even considered (Gaad 1998). This is due to the fact, that children in England, and a few other countries, are protected by laws that enforce full inclusion. Educational rights of such students are well recognized and so no educational segregation is tolerated.

Conclusion

Thoughts and attitudes about inclusion vary due to disparate and divergent knowledge, needs, and experience.

Gaad (2004)

As stated above, cultural beliefs are the primary factors that influence attitudes and perceptions of inclusion for parents and teachers. In the UAE, there is a call for educational reform, however it is equally important for people to be educated and informed about disabilities and inclusion first. Then, comes planning where a vision for these young learners and goals are defined. Also, there should be a proper systematic structure for the teachers to follow and gain skills in order to be better qualified for their role as teachers of both special and general education children. Once that level of awareness is achieved, the society as a whole can move towards a change in attitude and a higher level of acceptance, which in turn will lead to a common goal – inclusion of disabled children and appropriate education for all.

The research methods and measure used in the aforementioned studies focus on the teacher, and parents' attitude towards inclusion in the UAE and very little is said about school administrators. Having discussed these factors, there is a lot that can be sought out by understanding the administrators' perspective; on the whole issue and what factors influence their final decisions in regards to special needs students. Keeping that in mind, the researcher has developed two primary research questions that would serve as guidance in this study:

1. What are the public school administrators' opinions about inclusion of students in the Dubai public schools with special education needs?
2. Which factors influence public school administrators' opinions about full inclusion in Dubai public schools?

Through this research, the researcher hopes to find some positive answers that in turn will serve toward the betterment of all our children.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter will discuss the methods and procedures involved in this study. Topics of discussion will include purpose of study, instrumentation, procedure and, data analysis. For this particular study qualitative research was appropriate, in that, a case study design was applied. McMillan and Schumacher (2001) define case study design as "the one phenomenon that the researcher selects to understand in depth regardless of the number of settings, social scenes, or participants in a study." In respect to this study, the phenomenon that the researcher sought to explore further were the *attitudes* and *perceptions* of school administrators pertaining to inclusion city wide within Dubai.

To serve the purpose, qualitative questionnaires (with school administrators as participants) were used to gather data. Other data sources consisted of UAE government websites, journals and books related to special education, news paper articles and, Ministry of Education websites. Government websites were used as primary sources to identify with the current trends, laws and policies in the field of education within the UAE.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate public school administrators' attitudes towards inclusive education in Dubai public (government) schools and the factors that

influence such attitudes. In this qualitative study, the key research questions are as follows:

1. What are the public school administrators' opinions about inclusion of students in the Dubai public schools with special education needs?
2. Which factors influence public school administrators' opinions about full inclusion in Dubai public schools?

Sample Population

For the purpose of this study, participants were the school administrators of Dubai public schools (n=85). In order to control biases whilst studying the school administrators' attitudes, the researcher used purposeful sampling techniques by sending a qualitative questionnaire to all K-8 school administrators of public schools whose addresses are publicly known. McMillan and Wergin define purposeful sampling as a technique to select participants that are most informative (McMillan & Wergin, 2006 p.95). Therefore, the data that was collected from the school administrators via the qualitative questionnaire would help to derive unbiased samples from the population and has added to the study's credibility and generated a variety of data.

School administrators from different backgrounds were encouraged to participate. Other factors such as age, sex, and years of experience within the field also played a key role in the selection of those participants as previous research shows that attitude is also influenced by these factors. In the UAE the public schools are Arabic based and so the staff and managing members of these schools are all Arabs. Also, these schools are

segregated, meaning, there are separate schools for boys and girls and the majority of these students are UAE citizens.

For the purpose of this study, the researcher concentrated on public school administrators (K-8) in Dubai only. For the researcher, this enriched the value and quality of the data obtained through the questionnaires. The researcher mailed questionnaires to all K-8 Public schools in Dubai that are publicly listed. In order to reduce risks, the researcher mailed out the paper questionnaires to the public schools as opposed to conducting it online. Furthermore, the researcher enclosed an addressed stamped envelope for the participants to return the completed questionnaires. This ensured confidentiality and anonymity of the participant as email and online surveys can be tracked.

Instrumentation

The study used multiple data collection techniques including government websites and journals related to education laws and trends, along with a primary questionnaire designed mainly for school principals.

In this qualitative study, key research questions are as follows:

1. What are the public school administrators' opinions about inclusion of students in the Dubai public schools with special education needs?
2. Which factors influence public school administrators' opinions about full inclusion in Dubai public schools?

A detailed questionnaire was designed, based on the research questions in order to recognize and understand school administrators' attitudes and perceptions towards

inclusion. The survey designed consists of twelve questions, out of which most of them are open ended questions to provide an opportunity for respondents to express their perceptions which would further allow insights into their attitude of such perceptions. However some forced choice questions were added in order for the researcher to identify possible demographic trends in the responses.

Since inclusive practices is still not practiced widely in Dubai's public school system, the researcher designed the questionnaire in such a way where the questions did not force the idea of incorporating inclusive practices on the respondents. Rather, if administrators are against inclusive practices, then it should be depicted easily from the responses received. Therefore, the researcher only consulted with her thesis chair on designing the survey that would help her achieve the best results.

Procedure

The research was conducted across public (government) schools in Dubai, as in, all K-8 public schools within the city. The researcher wished to carry out this study to further explore public school administrators' attitudes from K-8 perspective, thus private and public preschools, child day cares and, nurseries were excluded from the research. Unlike the U.S., there is no research bureau or a government agency in the UAE where permission is to be granted or approved prior to conducting research. In that aspect, permission was sought by the authorities and officials of the individual schools.

Since the participants (school administrators) are spread across Dubai, the researcher sent the questionnaire to the K-8 public schools across the city whose mailing addresses are publicly available. Bias was prevented with this method as there is a high

chance that all of the population characteristics were represented in the same sample (McMillan and Schumacher 2001).

The procedure resulted in the individual school principal receiving one copy of the cover letter in Arabic (Appendix B), along with a copy of the questionnaire, in Arabic, titled *Administrative Perceptions of Inclusion in Dubai Public Schools* (Appendix D). Due to fact that the principals and administrative staff hired at public schools are native Arabic speakers, to avoid any inaccuracy or gaps that may be caused due to language barriers whilst collecting the data, the researcher sent all school principals the questionnaires in Arabic only. These documents were also accompanied with a self addressed stamped envelope for the participant to mail back the completed questionnaire. The consent letter in English can be found in Appendix A. The questionnaire in English can be found in Appendix C.

The cover letter explained the purpose of the study, assured confidentiality as the participants' personal or contact information would not be gathered. However, the age, gender and nationality of the participant was asked for demographic purposes. The letter also included the procedures involved in completing the questionnaire, including directions for returning the questionnaire once finished. Administrators were asked to complete the questionnaire and then send it back to the researcher via postal mail. This ensured anonymity as other modes of communication, such as emails, could be traced. Furthermore, the letter explained that participation was voluntary and that the participant could pull out any time without penalty. Two reminder phone calls to all participants were conducted two weeks later.

Data Analysis

This section of the chapter focuses on how the data (results from the questionnaire) are presented. First, data from participants were translated from Arabic to English by a certified legal translator. Since the study is to gain a deeper understanding of the perceptions and attitudes of school administrators, the questionnaire has been divided into two categories: demographics - which include responses related to the gender, age and nationality of the participant, in addition to the number of special needs students that their school serves. Answering options for these questions include check boxes and one word answers. The second half of the questionnaire focuses on the school administrators' views on inclusion, in that, the answering options in the questionnaire include: yes/no, positive/negative, forced choice, and open ended questions.

Once the questionnaire was completed and sent back, the researcher used qualitative techniques to construct patterns and relationships with previous literature as discussed in chapter two. The researcher derive these data in two categories, (1) through demographics i.e. age, gender, nationality of the participant, (2) by school administrators' views and attitudes on inclusion. The responses were divided where the demographics were represented in form of graphs and the views and attitudes were represented in the form of graphs as well, accompanied by quoting statements from the respondents as well. The researcher then constructed meaningful connections by linking the governing factors that influence the administrators' opinions with the demographics and the literature. This eventually allowed the researcher to gain a deeper understanding

of the reasons and factors that influence the attitudes of the administrators (McMillan and Wergin, 2006 p.94)

Summary

This chapter discussed the purpose of the study, sample population, instrumentation, and procedure and data analysis techniques to carry out the research. Bias control and sampling methods were also discussed, including the research design involved in carrying out this qualitative study to answer the primary research questions:

1. What are the public school administrators' opinions about inclusion of students in the Dubai public schools with special education needs?
2. Which factors influence public school administrators' opinions about full inclusion in Dubai public schools?

Inclusion in the UAE has been a concern for many over the years and lately, has gained the attention at national level. Through this study, the researcher confines the research within Dubai only and looks forward to the responses and expects that the results will be used as a guideline to enhance special education services in a fast developing city such as Dubai.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF DATA

The purpose of this qualitative study is to examine the attitudes of the Dubai public school administrators towards inclusive education in the Dubai Public Schools and the factors that influence such attitudes. In addition to that, the purpose is to gain more knowledge about the factors that may influence the implementation of inclusive practices in the Dubai Public school system; the results of this study can be used as a guideline to enhance special education services in a fast developing city such as Dubai. Fundamental research questions are:

1. What are the administrators' opinions in Dubai public schools about full inclusion of students with special education needs?
2. Which factors influence administrators' opinions about full inclusion in the Dubai Public school?

Chapter Four is intended to display the data gathered through the responses received via the questionnaire titled *Administrative Perceptions of Inclusion in Dubai Public Schools* that were distributed to 85 public schools within Dubai.

Review of the procedure

The researcher contacted the Ministry of Education office in Dubai, requesting for the mailing addresses of all the 85 public schools in Dubai. These schools comprised of

high school, middle school, primary school and were segregated by gender. In order to give each school administrator the opportunity to respond to the questionnaire and to keep the respondent's identity anonymous, the questionnaires were mailed to all the 85 public schools. Approximately two weeks after the survey was mailed, a reminder phone call was made to the schools to complete and send the survey back to the researcher via the self stamped addressed envelope that was enclosed with the survey. By the end of the third week, only seven schools out of the 85 had completed and sent back the questionnaire. In order, to maintain the school principals' anonymity, the researcher only resorted to making a follow up phone call to the school administrators. After this second out – reach, still only seven schools out of the original 85 had responded. The researcher obtained permission on 1/23/2011 from her thesis committee to proceed with the limited sample.

The questionnaire titled *Administrative Perceptions of Inclusion in Dubai Public Schools* consists of 12 questions. Questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8 and 11 are multiple choice questions. The researcher will present these data gathered through the responses to those questions with tables and graphs. Questions 5, 9, 10, 12 are open ended questions and the researcher will present these data by representing the statements gathered through the responses to those questions. Therefore, for the purpose of this study, the perceptions of the seven respondents will be presented and analyzed.

Design of the Qualitative Questionnaire

Demographic Data

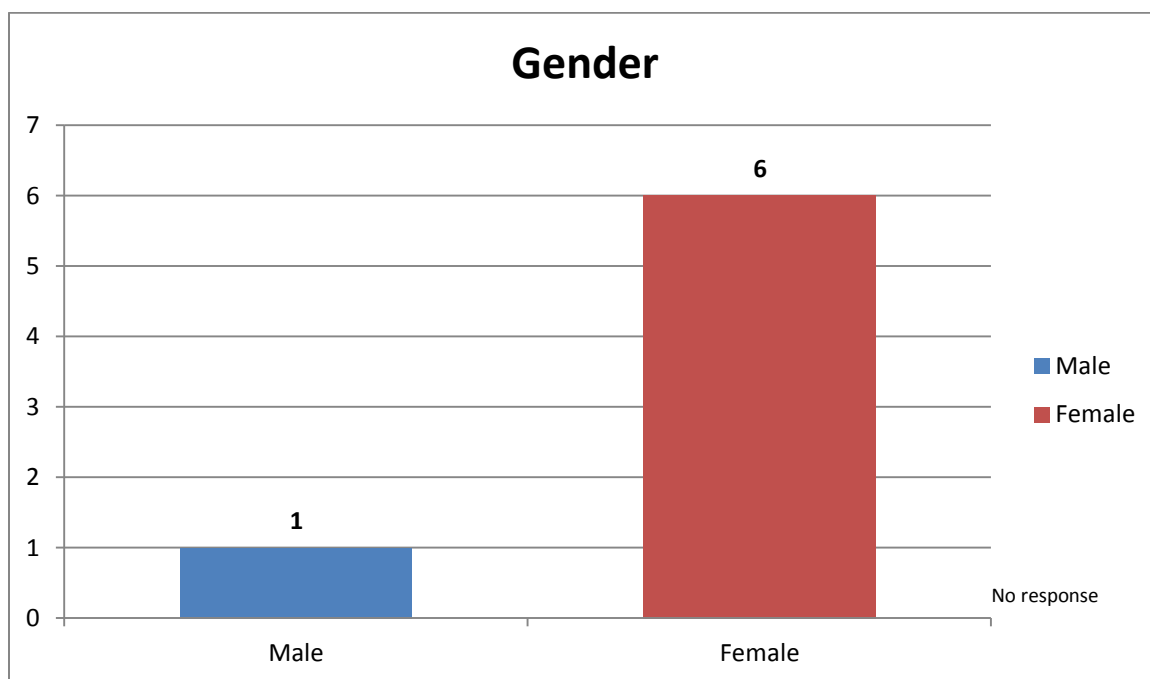
Question 1 of the *Administrative Perceptions of Inclusion in Dubai Public*

Schools was designed to collect demographic data from the respondents.

Gender

Item a of Question 1 asked for the participant's gender.

Figure 1. Gender



(n=7)

As seen in Figure 1, majority of the respondents were female (n=6) and the least number of respondents were male (n=1).

Age Data

Item b of Question 1 asked for the participant's age.

Table 1. Age

Age group (in yrs)	No. of respondents
35-39	1
40-44	1
45-49	2
50-54	1
55 +	1

(n=7)

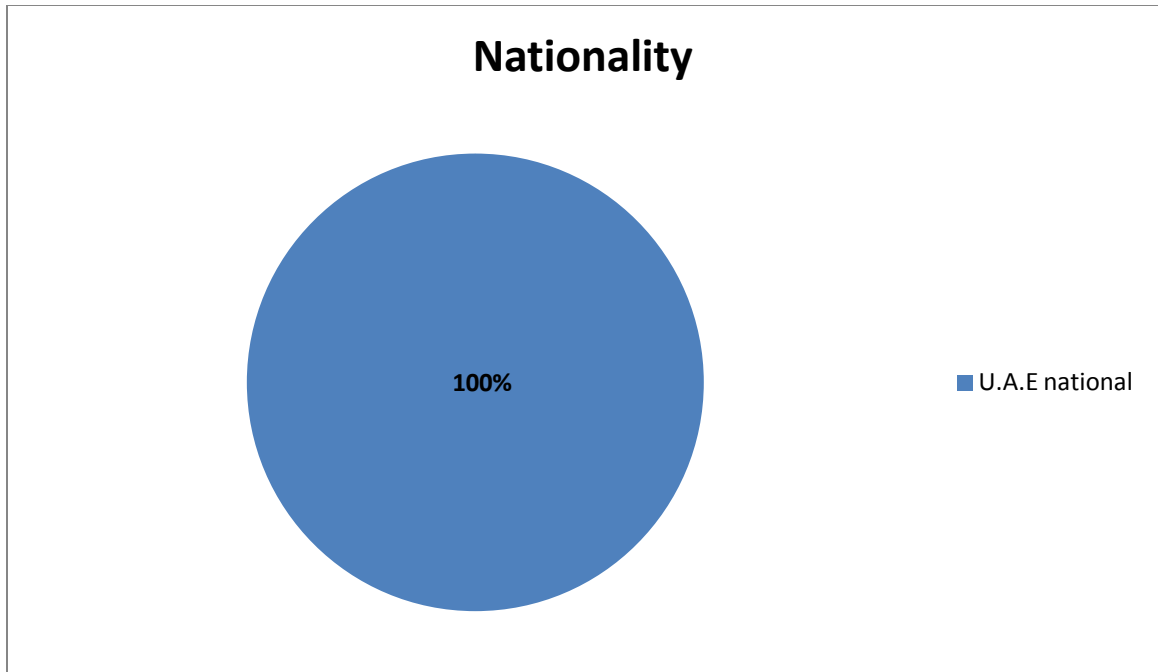
As Table 1 demonstrates, out of all the respondents (n=7) majority of the respondents were between the ages 45 – 49 yrs (n=2). Furthermore, there was one respondent (n =1) from each of the other age groups 35 – 39 yrs, 40 – 44 yrs, 50 – 54 yrs and 55+ yrs. One respondent did not respond to the question pertaining to the participant's age.

Nationality Data

Item c of Question 1 asked for the participant's nationality.

Figure 2. Nationality

(n=7)



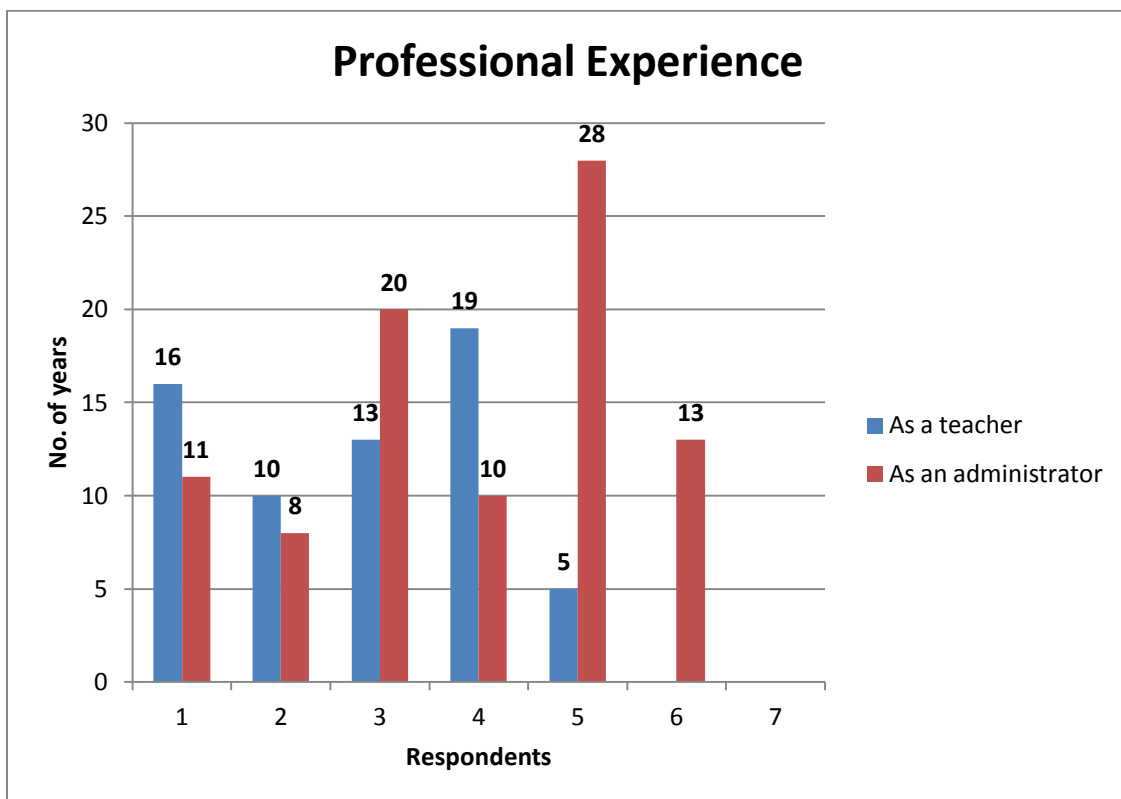
As Figure 2 demonstrates 100% of the respondents (n=7) were UAE nationals.

Professional Experience

Question 2 of the questionnaire asked the participant the number of years experience in the field. Item a under question 2 asked for the participant's years spent as a teacher and item b under questions 2 asked for the participant's years spent as an administrator.

Figure 3. Professional experience

(n=7)



As Figure 3 shows, half of the respondents (n=3) have more years of experience as an administrator in comparison to the other half of the respondents (n = 3) that have

more years of teaching experience. Respondent 6 did not mention the number of years he/she spent as a teacher and respondent 7 did not mention the same for years spent as a teacher and/or administrator.

Current Employment

Question 3 of the questionnaire was designed to ask the participant their current employment location. In Dubai Public School system, the schools are segregated and are divided into “Cycles”. Cycle 1 represents grades 1 -5, Cycle 2 represents grades 6 -9 and Secondary Cycle represents grades 10 – 12. The participant has a choice between item a, under Question 3, which asked if they currently work at a Girls’ school or, item b which asks if they work at an all Boys’ school. Furthermore, question 3 then had 3 sub parts which asked the participant to check the Cycle for which they are working for i.e. Cycle 1, Cycle 2 or Secondary Cycle.

Table 2. Current place of Employment

School Cycle	No. of respondents (All Girls’ School)	No. of respondents (All Boys’ School)
Cycle 1 (grades 1-5)		2
Cycle 2 (grades 6-9)	2	
Secondary Cycle (grades 10-12)	2	1

(n=7)

Table 2 demonstrates that respondents (n = 4) work in an all Girls' school for Cycles 2 (grades 6 – 9) and Cycle 3 (grades 10 – 12). Furthermore, fewer number (n =2) of respondents work in an all Boys' school for Cycle 1 (grades 1 – 5). The least number of respondents (n=1) work in an all Boys' school for Cycle 3 (grades 10 – 12).

Special Needs Students at School

Question 4 of the questionnaire was designed to ask the participants if they had special needs students at their school. The researcher listed out eight forms of disabilities: physical, visual, hearing, learning, intellectual, autism, speech and language disorder, and emotional and behavior disorder. The participants were asked to check all that apply to their school.

Figure 4. Students with Special Needs

(n=7)

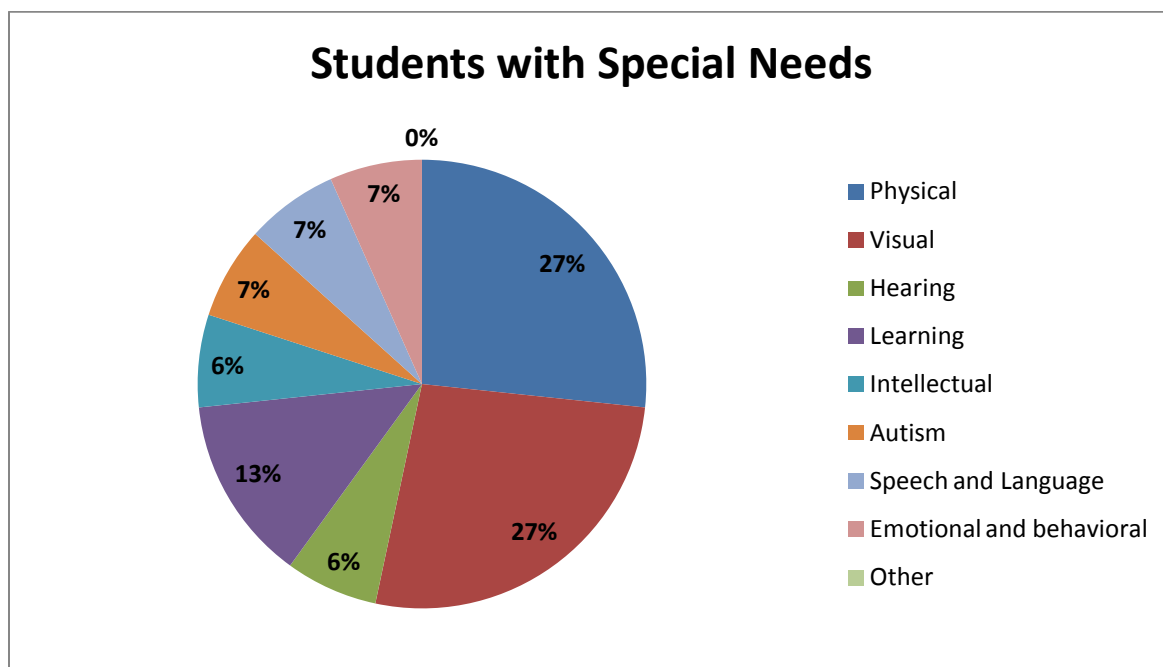


Figure 4 clearly indicates the number of respondents that have students at their school from each of the following categories: Physical, Visual, Autism, Speech and Language disorder, Emotional and Behavior disorder, Hearing, Learning and Intellectual disability. It is imperative to note that respondents responded to more than one category for this question. As indicated by the graph, 27% (n=4) of the respondents have physically disabled students attending their school. Alongside, 27% (n=4) of respondents have visually impaired students attending their schools. Second largest majority of respondents (n=2) have students with learning disability attending their school. Five respondents have one student at their school representing each of the following categories: Autism, Speech and Language disorder, Emotional and Behavior disorder, Hearing, and Intellectual disability.

Provision Provided at the Participant's School for Children With Special Needs

Question 5 of the questionnaire was an open ended question and asked for the participants to state the provisions provided at their school for children with special needs. Out of the seven participants, only six answered this question. Most responses were similar to each other, therefore for the purpose of this study the researcher will present such statement only once throughout this chapter.

Majority of the participants (n=5) stated that they have provided appropriate and adequate access for students with special needs.

- “The classes in which special needs students are enrolled, have been moved to the ground floor”

- “Special parking access has been given to parents or drivers of special needs students, that is closer to the student’s classroom”

Fewer participants (n=3) stated that they had provided special education teachers and an IEP plan is devised for special needs students. Least number of participants (n=1) stated that they would encourage students with special needs at their school to take on a leadership role, in turn to develop a higher level of self-confidence in the students.

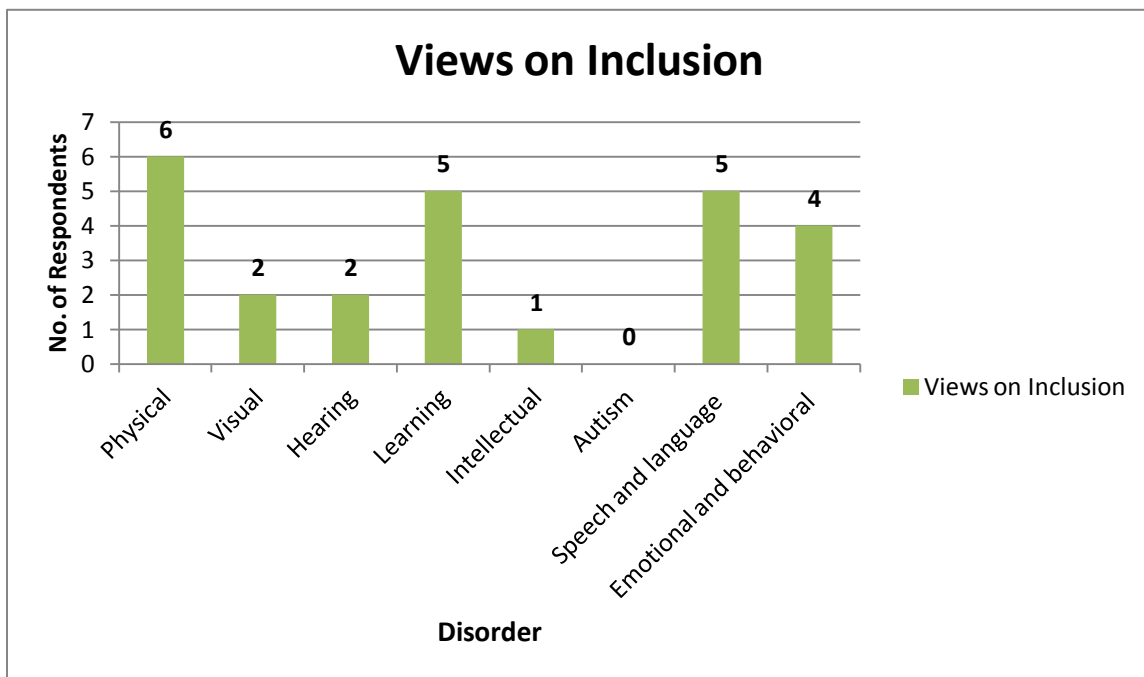
Responses to question 5 determine that majority of the participants provide appropriate physical access for students with special needs. Whereas the least number of participants look into developing students’ personality and level of confidence through leadership roles taken at school.

Views on Inclusion

Question 6 through 12 of the questionnaire were open ended questions and required the respondent to provide their views and comments on inclusion. Question 6 of the questionnaire was designed to ask the participants their views concerning inclusion of special needs students into the mainstream population of Dubai schools. The researcher listed out eight areas of disabilities: physical, visual, hearing, intellectual, learning, autism spectrum disorder, speech and language disorder, emotional and behavioral disorder. The participant was required to place a check mark for the area(s) that in their opinion are appropriate for inclusion in the mainstream population. Totals equal more than 100% as those respondents could indicate more than one category.

Figure 5. Inclusion of special needs students

(n=7)



As Figure 5 demonstrates the majority of the participants (n=6) have the opinion that inclusion of students with physical disabilities into the mainstream population is appropriate. Equal numbers of participants (n=5) have the opinion that inclusion of students with learning and speech or language disorder (n=5) is appropriate. More than half (n=4) of the respondents had the opinion that inclusion of students with emotional or behavioral disorder into the mainstream population is appropriate. Equal number of respondents, however, much lower than the majority, had the opinion that students with visual (n=2) and hearing disabilities (n=2) can be included with the mainstream population. Lastly, lower number of participants had the opinion for inclusion of students

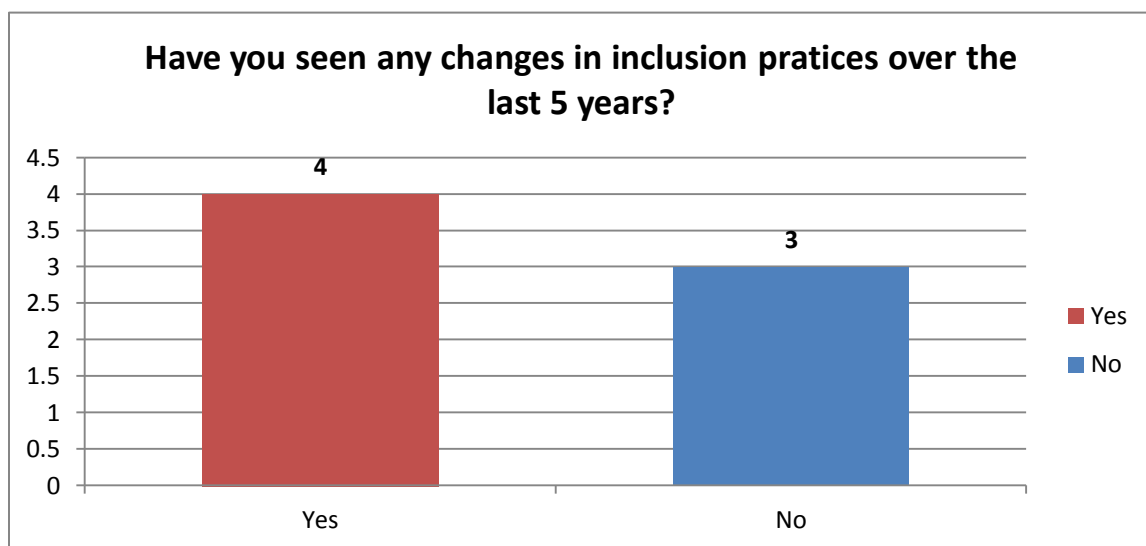
with intellectual disability (n=1) and none had the opinion of including students with autism into the mainstream population.

Changes in Inclusion Practices Over the Last 5 Years

Question 7 of the questionnaire was designed to ask the participants if they have seen any changes in the inclusion practices in Dubai over the last five years. The researcher gave participants the option of placing a check mark by *yes* or *no*.

Furthermore, question 8 of the questionnaire asked the participants if the changes they had seen in inclusion practices were negative or positive. The participants were required to place a check mark by *positive* or *negative* as listed under question 8.

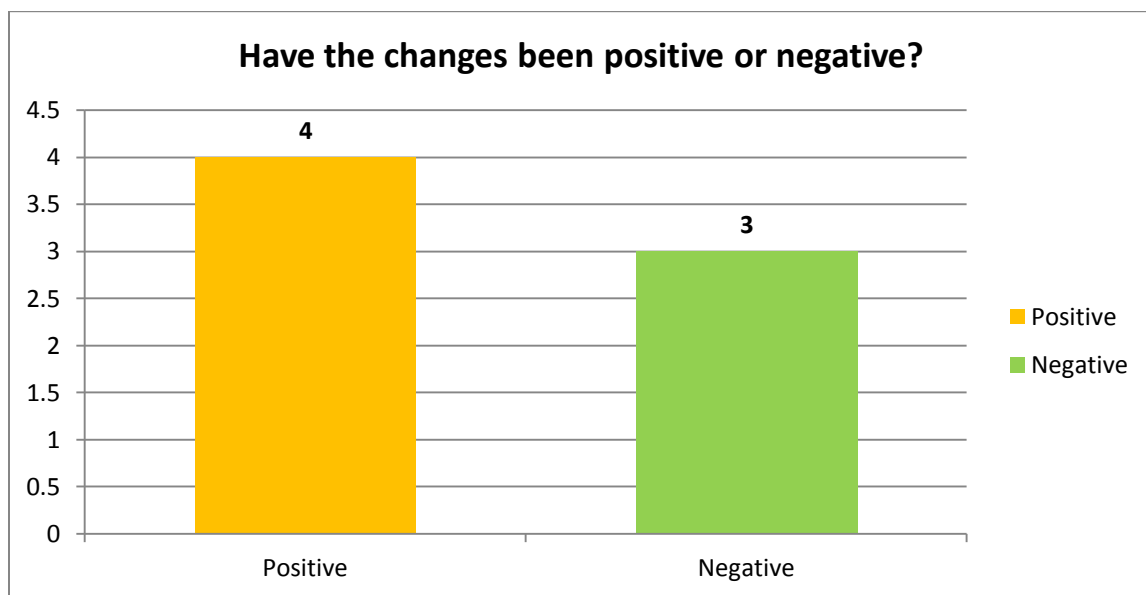
Figure 6. Changes in inclusion practices



(n=7)

As indicated by Figure 6, a slight majority of the participants (n=4) have seen changes in inclusion practices over the last 5 years in Dubai's school.

Figure 7. Changes are positive or negative



(n=7)

Figure 7 indicates that majority of the participants are of the opinion that these changes have been positive.

What Have Been the Changes in Inclusive Practices Over the Last 5 Years?

Question 9 of the questionnaire was designed to ask the participants about changes that they have noted in inclusive practices over the last 5 years. For the purpose of this study, since there were only seven participants that participated, the researcher will present all seven responses to this question. However, some responses were similar so the researcher will present those statements just once throughout this chapter.

Majority of the participants (n=5) were of the opinion that a major change they have noted is the improvement in performance and attitude of the student(s) with special needs. Participants stated that, “an improvement in the students’ behavior and

performance is noted” and “the students with special needs have the potential to challenge themselves within the same educational setting as their peers”. Others stated that “the students’ self-dependence goes higher in a group” and “there is a rise in the students’ self confidence”. These statements indicate the administrators’ sense of satisfaction with the students’ outcomes.

A few (n=2) were of the opinion that very little change has occurred at the public school level in Dubai. Participants stated that “more guidance and follow up on this issue is required in this region”, whereas others (n=2) stated that “the number of special education teachers is growing steadily but there is no continuous training available for them.”

What Do You Believe are the Impediments to Inclusion in the Dubai Public Schools?

Question 10 is an open ended question and is one of the key questions of the survey. It was designed to ask the participants about what they consider to be main factors that create obstacles or challenges towards inclusive practices in Dubai Public Schools. Out of the seven participants, only six responded to this question.

The majority of the responses to this question (n=5), were of the opinion that lack of teacher preparedness and continuous training of special education teachers is the key obstacle. School administrators responded with various statements reflecting this concept:

- “Providing teachers with training opportunities for him or her to reach a good level of preparedness of all aspects of the curriculum is needed.”

- “Lack of specialists in the field and their inability to deal with students in this category”
- “Lack of awareness and knowledge as to how to deal with the student that has special needs”
- “Lack of openness within the educational community on upcoming trends in the field and lack of career guidance in this regard”
- “Lack of special education courses offered at college/ university level within education programs.”
- “Lack of setting up in house training courses for teachers and supervisors”

Few participants (n=1) emphasized on the importance of partnership with the community and lack of parental involvement (n=1) in the process. Participants stated that “lack of parental involvement in the process of inclusion is a key issue that needs to be addressed.”

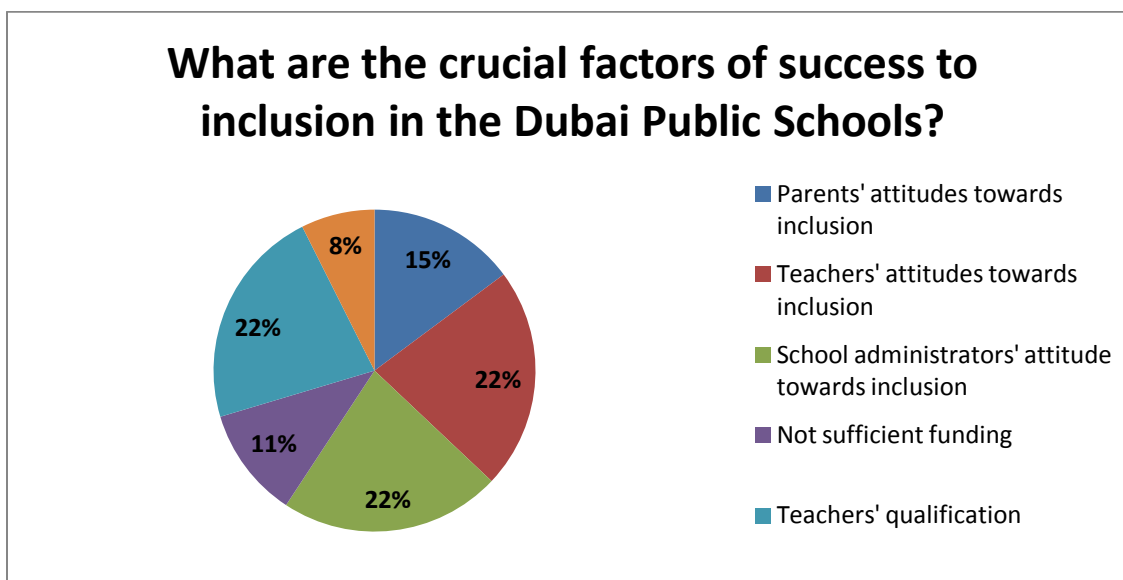
The same number of participants (n=1) were of the opinion that an important factor that acts as a challenge towards inclusive practices is the special needs students’ attitude itself. One principal stated, “The students inability to perform like ‘normal’ students might lead to him or her getting embarrassed and might close off on him or herself.” Lastly, another principal (n=1) stated that there is lack of funding available to include students with special needs into the mainstream population in Dubai Public Schools.

Responses to question 10 indicate that the majority (n=5) of responses and concerns lie with lack of teacher preparedness and training. Whereas, funding (n=1) and attitude (n=1) of students is a minor factor to be considered as an impediment towards full inclusion in Dubai Public Schools.

Crucial Factors of Success to Inclusion in the Dubai Public Schools

Question 11 of the questionnaire was designed to ask the participants what in their opinion are the crucial factors of success to inclusion in the Dubai Public Schools. The researcher listed five factors and asked the participant to check all that applies. The factors listed were: Parents' attitudes towards inclusion; teachers' attitudes towards inclusion; school administrators' attitudes towards inclusion; not sufficient funding; and, teachers' qualifications.

Figure 8. Crucial factors of success to inclusion in Dubai Public Schools



As Figure 8 indicates, equal number of participants (n=6) are of the opinion that teachers' attitudes towards inclusion, school administrators attitudes towards inclusion and teachers' qualification are key factors of success to inclusion in the Dubai Public Schools. Almost an equal number of respondents believe that parents' attitudes towards inclusion (n=4) and not sufficient funding (n=3) are important towards inclusive practices. The least number of respondents (n=2) believe that a key factor of success to inclusion in the Dubai Public Schools is to have more "awareness" and "acceptance" of students towards other students with disabilities.

What Needs to Occur for Inclusion to be Fully Implemented in the Dubai Public Schools?

Question 12 of the survey was designed to ask the participants for their opinion on what needs to occur in order for inclusion to be fully implemented in the Dubai Public Schools. Participants responded with various ideas and concepts as depicted in their statements.

A few participants (n=3) referred to appropriate facilities, such as buildings and classes designed for special needs students. They stated that the physical layout of the school building holds great importance in ensuring that inclusion is successful at the school level. The following statements by the participants reflect this notion:

- "The presence of a building constructed and equipped with all facilities planned to serve people with special needs"
- "Providing all facilities such as classes, learning centers, health facilities, and laboratories that caters to all students needs".

A few participants (n=4) also emphasized the need to have laws at local and federal level than can contribute towards successful inclusion in public schools within Dubai. Furthermore, there has been a call for strategic decision making in light of the required law (see Appendix E):

- “There is a need to develop a strategic plan for inclusion. There should be drafting of a law that protects people with special needs, specifically in a school that practices full inclusion”
- “A need to form a committee composed of members of high level within the field of education, culture and science. Those who are well versed with matters on inclusion and can be involved in decision making and recommendations. One of the core functions of this committee should be to monitor and observe inclusive practices for further improvement.”

However, this participant did not state if the formation of this committee should be at the local or federal level.

On the contrary, the majority of the participants (n=5) placed a strong emphasis on changes that need to occur at the school level – specifically within the schools’ administration. Participants stated that each school administration needs to make appropriate decisions regarding inclusion; this includes design of curriculum and method of instruction, teacher training; funding of facilities and resources; and, hiring adequate staff to meet the needs of the students.

- “The formation of an appropriate curriculum for all grade levels”.

- “Develop programs that contribute to the success of inclusive practices in schools.”
- “The provision and training of qualified teachers.”
- “The evaluation of inclusion should be conducted by administrators well in advance before the school year starts and not during the school year. This is so that the teachers are well prepared for the special needs students that are placed in their class.”
- “Continuous training of teaching staff and administration.”
- “Provide adequate materials and qualified staff (including specialists) for students with special needs.”
- “A well aware administration that is under the strong leadership of the principal. The principal should be able to communicate to the other staff their role in contributing towards a successful inclusion at their school.” A minority of the respondents (n=1) mentioned parental involvement as being a key factor towards successful inclusion.
- “It is essential for parents to be understanding, cooperative and continuously available to work with the school regarding their child’s case”

Therefore, responses to question 12 indicate that these principals are not focusing on parental involvement. However, a majority (n=5) have the opinion that each school administration should play their role in implementing full inclusion into Dubai’s Public schools successfully.

Summary

Chapter Four is intended to display data gathered through the responses received via the questionnaire titled *Administrative Perceptions of Inclusion in Dubai Public Schools* that were distributed to school administrators of 85 public schools within Dubai. Of the 85 questionnaires sent, only seven responded. This low response rate and its implications will be explored in Chapter Five.

This chapter presented data regarding demographics of the participants within the study (age, gender, nationality and current place of employment); current provision for special needs students provided at their school; their views on inclusion as to what category of special needs students should be included with the mainstream population; if participants had noted any changes in the inclusive practices over the last 5 years; if these changes were positive or negative; impediments to full inclusion in public schools; crucial factors of success to inclusion; and lastly, what needs to occur for inclusion to be fully implemented in Dubai.

Chapter Five will analyze these data gathered and will also identify challenges that the researcher faced while carrying out this study.

CHAPTER FIVE

DATA ANALYSIS

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study is to examine the attitudes of the Dubai public school administrators towards inclusive education in the Dubai Public Schools and the factors that influence such attitudes. In addition to that, the purpose is to gain more knowledge about the factors that may influence the implementation of inclusive practices in the Dubai Public school system. The results of this study may be used as a guideline to enhance special education services in a fast developing city such as Dubai. The fundamental research questions are:

1. What are the administrators' opinions in Dubai public schools about full inclusion of students with special education needs?
2. Which factors influence administrators' opinions about full inclusion in the Dubai Public school?

Chapter Five is intended to analyze data gathered from both the quantitative and qualitative analysis of responses to the *Administrative Perceptions of Inclusion in Dubai Public Schools* questionnaire that was distributed to 85 public schools within Dubai.

The researcher contacted the Ministry of Education office in Dubai, requesting for the mailing addresses of all 85 public schools in Dubai. These schools comprised of high school, middle school, primary school and were segregated by gender. In order to give

each school administrator the opportunity to respond to the questionnaire and to keep the respondent's identity anonymous, the questionnaires were mailed to all the 85 public schools. Approximately two weeks after the survey was mailed, a reminder phone call was made to the schools to complete and send the survey back to the researcher via the self stamped addressed envelope that was enclosed with the survey. By the end of the third week, only seven schools out of the 85 had completed and sent back the questionnaire. In order, to maintain the principals' anonymity, the researcher only resorted to making a follow up phone call to the school administrators. After this second out – reach, still only 7 schools out of the original 85 had responded. The researcher obtained permission on 1/23/2011 from her thesis committee to proceed with the limited sample, which may not classify as a valid sample size however, for the purpose of this study the perceptions of the 7 respondents will be presented and analyzed.

The researcher's finding will be presented in a way to address and answer the research questions posed above. Within this chapter, the seven participants' answers will be analyzed with the literature presented in Chapter II regarding teachers' and parents' attitudes in the UAE towards full inclusion and the factors that influence their attitudes and opinions. Finally, the researcher will present the implications suggested by this research study for principals and teachers as they may eventually take on the role of principalship and the possibility of further research within the UAE education arena.

What are the administrators' opinions in Dubai public schools about full inclusion of students with special education needs?

Throughout the course of this study, the researcher came across other studies that primarily focused on teachers' attitudes and parents' attitudes towards inclusion in the UAE. Yet very little was said about school administrators towards inclusion in UAE. Therefore, the researcher focused on school administrators' opinions and attitudes towards inclusion in Dubai's public schools.

Based on the responses gained through the questionnaire *Administrative Perceptions of Inclusion in Dubai Public Schools*, there seem to be several factors that influence school administrators' opinions regarding full inclusion. These factors will be discussed in detail throughout this chapter. But overall, the essence of those responses are in the positive; school administrators are supportive of full inclusion in Dubai public schools and hope to see this implemented within the schooling system soon. A majority of the respondents (n=4) believe that overall changes in inclusive practices over the last 5 years have been positive. Statements from the respondents reflect this notion: "There is a further need to develop programs that contribute to the success of inclusive practices in schools for both, students with special needs and otherwise." Another statement read: "A well aware administration that is under the strong leadership of the principal is constantly required. The principal should be able to communicate to the other staff their role in contributing towards a successful inclusion at their school."

Need for a Strategic Plan at Local and Federal Government Level

His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, the Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE, is also the Ruler of the Emirate of Dubai. He has stated that, “I want Dubai to be number one in everything: healthcare, housing, education....etc” (August 2008). For that reason, Dubai is a fast growing economy and its education sector needs to implement the best practices in order to assure that students are receiving a world class education. Educators and professionals within Dubai’s schooling system realize this and are working towards this directive; however they need more guidance and strategic planning. This concern is depicted in the following statements from the participants: “There is a need to develop a strategic plan for inclusion. There should be drafting of a law that protects people with special needs, specifically in a school that practices full inclusion”. Another respondent stated: “A need to form a committee composed of members from management level within the field of education, culture and science. Those who are well versed with matters on inclusion can be involved in decision making and recommendations. One of the core functions of this committee should be to monitor and observe inclusive practices for further improvement.” This indicates that even though the vision is present, however the mechanism to work towards that vision is seriously lacking. The researcher posits that through the participants’ responses, the principals are calling for reform within the field of special education with the required expertise in order to implement best practice through guidance.

Although the Federal Law no. 29 of 2006 “In the Respect of The Rights of People with Special Needs” (see Appendix E), acknowledges the importance of inclusive

education, it remains entirely upon the local government of Dubai to carry it forth and put it into practice. Lunenburg & Ornstein (2004) state that the target of reform must always be at the local level, and it must always consider people, for they are the ones who must implement reform. Furthermore, Lunenburg & Ornstein emphasize on the importance of partnership between the federal and state level – even though this exists in Dubai, there is no further partnership with the schools where the policies may be put into practice, as demonstrated in the responses received through the questionnaire.

The Ministry of Education, which monitors education in the UAE at a federal level, defines inclusion as the education of students with special needs with the non-disabled students in a regular classroom, either in part or whole (Ministry of Education, 2008). The aim is to implement this principle not just to the academic level, but also to encourage social integration and integration in the public life of the community. However, the Ministry also emphasizes that inclusion of disabled students within regular classrooms should not lack additional support for those students. Although the Federal law 29/2006 requires for people with special needs to be provided with equal opportunities and be admitted into mainstream schools, the local government authority within Dubai has yet to devise a strategic plan to ensure the federal law's effectiveness. Similarly, Elweke & Rodda (2000) report that in other developing countries due to lack of government legislations and law enactments, inclusion has remained unsuccessful.

In light of this, respondents (n=2) were of the opinion that very little change has occurred at the public school level in Dubai. Participants stated that “more guidance and follow up on this issue is required in this region”. While Dubai's Public schools wait for

further directives from the local government, they continue to include students with special needs into their schools based on how they, the principals and administrators, deem fit.

Thus, the researcher believes that these administrators are willing to implement full inclusion at their school; however they want to be told *how* to do so. The government has defined the “what” and “why”. The government now needs to implement full inclusion by defining the *how*. The respondents do have students with special needs attending their schools currently; but they want to learn of strategies and mechanisms that can help them structure this area better. Since the researcher’s main area of focus is on the role of the school administrator, research on instructional leadership and school improvement indicates that, instructional leadership efforts are linked to school improvement and these leadership processes are: (1) defining and sustaining educational purpose, (2) developing and nurturing community, and (3) fostering personal and organizational growth (Murphy, 1995). However, it should be noted that school reformation does not solely lie on school administrators as other members within the educational arena are involved and have a role to play i.e. local government to the teachers. But due to the fact that school administrators make the decisions that eventually affect the day to day functioning of the school, their contribution and attitude matters significantly.

Which factors influence administrators' opinions about full inclusion in the Dubai Public school?

The researcher came across various studies that focused on factors that influence teachers' and parents' opinions about full inclusion, however very little was said about school administrators' opinions and attitudes. Through the questionnaire titled *Administrative Perceptions of Inclusion in Dubai Public Schools*, the researcher has attempted to gain a deeper understanding of this phenomenon by asking participants (public school principals) their views on inclusion. A majority of the participants responded with a positive attitude. However, the respondents also described some other factors that have been and still are, hindering full inclusion in Dubai's public schools. This section will look at those different factors and the researcher will make meaningful connections with previous research conducted as discussed in Chapter two.

Nature and Severity of the Disability

It is imperative to note that a majority of the participants (n=6) have the opinion that inclusion of students with physical disabilities into the mainstream population is appropriate. On the contrary, a low number of participants (n=1) had the opinion that inclusion of students with intellectual disabilities into the mainstream population was appropriate. Similarly, previous research states that teachers' opinions of inclusion were influenced by the nature and severity of the student's disability (Sodak, Podell and Lehman, 1998, AL-khatteeb, 2002, Al-Khatteeb, 2004, Al-khatani, 2003). They noted that acceptance from teachers for inclusion, was lower for children with an intellectual disability than children with a physical disability. Importantly, this demonstrates that as

teachers become leaders (administrators), their opinion on inclusion heavily depends on the type of disability that a student possesses. This is possibly due to the lack of knowledge and resources made available to the administrators in order to carry out full inclusion successfully.

Teacher Preparedness, Training and Attitudes Towards Inclusion

Teacher qualifications and continuous training are by far the primary reasons for unsuccessful inclusion in the region. Gaad (2004) reports that in the UAE teachers still remain ill prepared for the task of inclusive practices and display lack of willingness to take on the challenge to have students with special needs in the regular classroom. Alsheikh and Elhoweris (2004) found that experienced teachers have been found to be more supportive of inclusion. This is mainly due to the confidence that they build up with their skills and pedagogical methods. Al-Zyoudi (2006) states that teachers with more than 12 years of teaching experience show more acceptances towards inclusion of children with mental disabilities; however teachers with less experience showed a more negative attitude towards the concept. Moreover, training of teachers within this area is also key, but sadly rarely invested in. Participants (n=2) stated that “the number of special education teachers is growing steadily but there is no continuous training available for them.” On the other hand, Van Ruesen (2001) found that professional training of teachers was reported to be one of the key factors of successful inclusion.

The majority of the responses (n=5) in regards to teacher training, were of the opinion that lack of teacher preparedness and continuous training of special education

teachers is the key obstacle. School administrators responded with various statements reflecting this concept:

- “Providing teachers with training opportunities for him or her to reach a good level of preparedness of all aspects of the curriculum is needed.”
- “Lack of specialists in the field and their inability to deal with students in this category”
- “Lack of awareness and knowledge as to how to deal with the student that has special needs”
- “Lack of openness within the educational community on upcoming trends in the field and lack of career guidance in this regard”
- “Lack of special education courses offered at college/ university level within education programs.”
- “Lack of setting up in house training courses for teachers and supervisors”

In order for successful inclusion to occur in Dubai’s Public School, these administrators have called for continuous training where teachers are educated and made aware of the upcoming trends and best practices for special needs students. Teachers are required to be fully equipped in order to ensure smooth delivery of a well versed curriculum that will benefit all students. Eventually, these teachers will become leaders (principals) within the education arena and will be required to make strategic decisions for the betterment of all students.

Attitude of Special Needs Students

Children who are treated as if they are uneducable almost invariably become uneducable.

Kenneth B. Clark

Staub and Peck (1995), state that an inclusive setting is essential in the promotion of social development that will in turn enhance learning. They conclude that "the development of all children is enhanced by the extent to which they feel a sense of belonging, caring, and community in school" (p. 39). Through the questionnaire, the researcher came to know that this is an area that most questionnaire respondents do take into consideration when attempting to implement full inclusion in their schools. Some participants (n=5) stated that a major improvement in performance and attitude of the student(s) with special needs had occurred. Participants also stated that, "an improvement in the students' behavior and performance is noted" and "the students with special needs have the potential to challenge themselves within the same educational setting as their peers". Others stated that "the students' self-dependence goes higher in a group" and "there is a rise in the students' self-confidence". These statements indicate the administrators' sense of satisfaction with the students' outcomes and their willingness to move towards full inclusion within their schools.

Waldron & McLeskey (1998) highlight, that increased social participation is likely to be the key factor that powers the improvement in special needs students' academic performance in inclusion classrooms when compared to special needs students in segregated classrooms. Furthermore, the above statements from respondents prove that the climate within these schools allows students with disabilities to discover their own

potentials while being amongst their non-disabled peers. In doing so, the teacher plays a key role in fostering such an environment where the student can see her own strength, believe in herself and become what she wants to become (Henson, 1993). Thus for the students mentioned by the respondents, excel within their groups and display a positive attitude as they feel positive about themselves and their surroundings. Once the students perceive themselves as “good” students, they work towards protecting that image and are willing to give their best. Through various researches, it has been agreed that a setting which fosters more social interactions would be much more beneficial to the development of special needs students. Thus, if social participation and peer relationships are so conducive to special needs students' learning in inclusion classrooms, positive student attitudes are imperative to the success of the inclusion movement. (Leysner & Abrams, 1984).

Physical Layout of the School

The physical layout and classroom size plays an important role in the practice of inclusion. The physical environment should be such that is not oppressive and is conducive to teaching and learning (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2000). Classroom design also matters depending on the disability of the students within that classroom i.e. consistency is important for a visually impaired student in order for him/her to be familiar with his/her environment. In addition, with the school having the necessary architectural features such as ramps, accessible restrooms and the teacher displaying flexibility in his or her attitude towards the student with a disability, leads to a greater outcomes for the student with little alteration in the educational program (Woolfolk, 2005).

Similarly, for administrators of Dubai's public schools, physical layout within the school holds great importance. A few participants (n=3) referred to appropriate facilities, such as buildings and classes designed for special needs students. They stated that the physical layout of the school building holds great importance in ensuring that inclusion is successful at the school level. The following statements by the participants reflect this notion:

- “The presence of a building constructed and equipped with all facilities planned to serve people with special needs”
- “Providing all facilities such as classes, learning centers, health facilities, and laboratories that caters to all students needs”.

As the government does not lay down any specific criteria for the physical layout of the school for special needs students, the principals have taken on this initiative depending on the type of disability that exists within their school

School Administrators' Attitude and Decision Making

A majority of the participants (n=5) placed a strong emphasis on changes that need to occur at the school level – specifically within the school's administration. Participants stated that each school administration needs to make appropriate decisions regarding inclusion; this includes design of curriculum, method of instruction, teacher training, funding of facilities and resources, and hiring adequate staff to meet the needs of the students. This is further illustrated through the following statements from the respondents:

- “The formation of an appropriate curriculum for all grade levels is needed”
- “Develop programs that contribute to the success of inclusive practices in schools”
- “The provision and training of qualified teachers”
- “The evaluation of inclusion should be conducted by administrators well in advance before the school year starts and not during the school year. This is so that the teachers are well prepared for the special needs students that are placed in their class”
- “Continuous training of teaching staff and administration”
- “Provide adequate materials and qualified staff (including specialists) for students with special needs”
- “A well aware administration that is under the strong leadership of the principal. The principal should be able to communicate to the other staff their role in contributing towards a successful inclusion at their school.”

Thus, a majority (n=5) of the respondents have the opinion that each school administration should play a role in implementing full inclusion into Dubai’s Public schools successfully. Through the responses stated above, the researcher believes that the scope of a school administrator covers various areas of schooling and primarily effective decision making is required in light of the law.

Limitations of the Study

As a result of this study, the researcher intended to gain an understanding of what are the principals in Dubai's Public schools opinions regarding full inclusion of students with special needs and what are the factors that influence their opinions. A questionnaire was designed to investigate this phenomenon and the researcher mailed it out to 85 public schools and in turn, did receive some meaningful insights from the principals. Due to reasons of anonymity and confidentiality, the researcher was only limited to making reminder phone calls to the remaining schools requesting to complete the questionnaire and send it back. However, only seven out of 85 schools responded and participated in the survey. Thus this could not be considered a good representation of the population sample.

Participation in this study was presented as an "opportunity" for the administrators to voice their concerns regarding special education in Dubai's public schools. However the lack of responses from the participants could further be interpreted as their fear to respond, especially if they do not practice inclusion within their schools or do not have means to do so. In Dubai, the principal of a school is held accountable for the "productivity" of their school and as the responses from the questionnaires clearly indicate, that, school administrators need more guidance on inclusive practices – however would like to do so without affecting the learning outcomes within their school. Culturally, attitude and opinions towards special needs students and their education is yet to seek approval and positive approach from members within this society, which also includes school administrators. Furthermore, this leads the researcher to conclude that

this could perhaps be one of the primary reasons that the government has not expedited the process of implementing full inclusion under strict radar.

Lack of male participation was another challenge that the researcher faced. Out of the seven respondents, only one is male. Since all public schools are segregated, a male principal is selected for an all boys' school and a female principal for an all girls' school. However, due to less number of male participation within the field of education in Dubai, female principals are also selected for boys' schools at primary level. Due to the one respondent being male, this study was unable to seek further insights into the inclusive practices at all boys' schools.

Further Research

Considering that special education is an area that is growing and needs attention within the UAE's education arena, there are many implications for further research to be conducted. For this particular study, the researcher has only focused on Dubai's Public School; it would be interesting to compare the growth and implementation of full inclusion within Dubai's Private schools as well.

Even though the Ministry of Education oversees certain aspects of Dubai's Private schools, most of the private schools implement and deliver their curriculum as done in their home country, i.e. a private school following British curriculum would use British texts and teaching faculty. With regards to special education, one would assume that they would practice and implement the model as used in the home country. Similarly, schools following American curriculum in Dubai would use tools and techniques as used in schools in the U.S, such as, conducting IEPs. As stated above, more students within

Dubai attend private schools. For the future, the researcher would possibly like to explore further how many of those students are with special needs and to examine how the enrollment of special needs students have increased and what factors have contributed towards that growth in private schools.

Conclusion

The school administrators in this study are in support of full inclusion; however the respondents indicated factors that heavily influence their decision concerning inclusion. Respondents indicated that the nature and severity of the disability, teacher preparedness and training, attitudes of students with special needs, and the physical layout of the school influence their attitudes and decision making. All of the participants are expected to be aware of the federal laws mandate (when it came into existence in 2006) to include students with special needs into mainstream school, however they are unaware of the mechanisms to implement such a practice and have called for a much needed reform in this area. This also reflects that even though there is lack of an implementation plan for including children with special needs, these school administrators, to a certain extent, display a growing positive attitude towards full inclusion.

The UAE is a country that is less than forty years old and Dubai is constantly changing to accommodate the needs of its diverse population, mainly through the field of education. The participants in this study mention the need to implement best practices and for the government to provide further guidance of how this can be achieved.

Furthermore, the participants call for continuous training as a key for teachers and principals in this area which in turn will allow them to serve their students' needs better.

Lastly, the local government needs to intervene and provide the schools with a structured model that they can abide by. It would need to specify intervention strategies, resources, physical criteria of the school, training and qualifications of teachers and administrators that is required in order to successfully implement full inclusion in all of Dubai's public schools. In addition to that, the government would also need to monitor the progress of such a practice in order to ensure smooth transition from partial inclusion towards full inclusion. The data gathered from this study, would serve as a starting point towards understanding the challenges that the public school administrators face and the factors that heavily influence their decision, concerning serving special needs students within Dubai.

APPENDIX A

LETTER OF CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH (ENGLISH)

Fouzia M. Usman

u.fouzia@gmail.com

Dear School Administrator:

My name is Fouzia Usman and I am seeking my Master's degree in Administration & Supervision from Loyola University Chicago, U.S.A. As part of my degree requirement, I am currently working on my Master's thesis titled, *Principals' attitudes towards inclusion in Dubai.: Where do we stand?* The purpose of my study is to explore the school principals' attitudes towards inclusion of students with special needs in Dubai Public Schools. Through this study, I hope to understand how inclusion is implemented in Dubai Public schools. Hopefully my work would also serve as a channel for your voice, as a school administrator, to be heard.

As part of my thesis research, I am surveying school principals and administrators in Dubai's public schools. The questionnaire, titled *Administrative Perceptions of Inclusion in Dubai Public Schools Questionnaire*, will provide needed data for the success of this informative study. Participation will require no more than half an hour of your time.

Before you decide to participate in this study, there are certain procedures involved that you need to understand and agree upon. As a participant in this survey, you will:

- Complete the *Administrative Perceptions of Inclusion in Dubai Public Schools Questionnaire* (names are not to be placed on the questionnaire).
- When completed, mail the questionnaire back in the enclosed stamped envelope.

Participation in this research is voluntary. There is no penalty for non-participation, and you may withdraw your participation at any time. If you do not wish to participate, simply do not complete the questionnaire. Also, participating in this survey will not expose you or your school any risks. There are no foreseeable risks involved in participating in this research beyond those experienced in everyday life. Participating in this survey will also not bring you any direct benefits. All information gathered will be used solely for research purposes, and will be treated with high level of confidentiality. The researcher will have the results of the completed questionnaires translated in English and so the completed questionnaire will be given to a professional translator for this purpose. In doing so, the results of the questionnaire will not be discussed with the translator at any point. The completed questionnaires (English and Arabic) will be stored personally with the researcher and no one will be authorized to have access to it without the researcher's approval. However, once the results are collated, the gathered data will be used to contribute to the completion of my thesis, after which the completed questionnaires will be destroyed. You, the participant, will never be identified by

name, school or position. If the participant would like access to the completed thesis, he or she may contact the researcher directly via the contact details provided above.

At any point, if you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (050) 870-8005. Dr. Marla Israel, my Thesis Chair at Loyola University Chicago U.S.A, can be contacted at 001- 312 915-6336 if you have questions or concerns regarding the validity of this study. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Loyola University of Chicago's Research Services at 001-773-508 2689.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation. I look forward to your feedback, which in turn will help to produce quality research and findings that will, hopefully, help to contribute to the betterment of the inclusion program here in Dubai's government schools.

Sincerely,

Fouzia M. Usman

APPENDIX B

LETTER OF CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH (ARABIC)

فوزية م. عثمان

u.fouzia@gmail.com

السيد المدير / المسؤول الإداري المُحترم،

تحية وبعد،

أبدأ خطابي بالتعريف بنفسي، اسمي فوزية عثمان، طالبة في برنامج الماجستير في الإدارة والإشراف من جامعة ليولا شيكاغو في الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية، وأعمل حالياً على إعداد أطروحة التخرج تحت عنوان: **"مواقف مديري المدارس تجاه عملية الدمج في دبي: ما هو موقعها الآن؟"** وتهدف أطروحتي الحالية إلى استكشاف مواقف مديري المدارس تجاه عمليات دمج الطلبة من ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة في مدارس دبي الحكومية. وأتطلع من خلال هذه الدراسة إلى وضع فهم واضح لكيفية تطبيق الدمج في مدارس دبي الحكومية، وأمل أن أوفر بعلمي هذا قناة لكم للتعبير عن آرائكم وتوصيلها إلى المسؤولين.

أقوم في بحثي هذا بإجراء استبانة بين المديرين والمسؤولين الإداريين في مدارس دبي الحكومية تحت عنوان: **"استبانة وجهات النظر الإدارية حول الدمج في مدارس دبي الحكومية"** والتي ستوفر المعلومات اللازمة لإنجاح هذه الدراسة المعلوماتية، ولن تستغرق الإجابة على الاستبانة أكثر من نصف ساعة من وقتكم.

وقبل أن تتخذ القرار بالمشاركة في هذه الدراسة لا بد من فهم بعض الإجراءات التي تتضمنها وتوافق عليها، وهذه الإجراءات هي:

- إتمام الإجابة على: **"استبانة وجهات النظر الإدارية حول الدمج في مدارس دبي الحكومية"** (لا حاجة لوضع اسمكم على الاستبانة)
- وضع الاستبانة الكاملة في الظرف المرفق وإرسالها إلينا.

الجدير ذكره أن المشاركة في هذه الدراسة تطوعية واختيارية، ولا توجد أية عواقب نتيجة عدم المشاركة، ويمكنكم سحب مشاركتكم في أي وقت تشاؤون. وفي حال عدم رغبتكم بالمشاركة فيها ما عليكم سوى إهمال الاستبانة. ونشير أيضاً إلى أن المشاركة في هذه الدراسة لن تُعرضكم أنتم أو مدرستكم لأيّة مخاطر، كما إنه لا توجد أية مخاطر محتملة أو متوقعة نتيجة مشاركتكم في هذه الدراسة تتخطى ما نُعاشه في حياتنا اليومية. كما إن مشاركتكم لن تعود عليكم بأية منفعة مباشرة. ونؤكد لكم أن جميع المعلومات التي نجمعها ستستخدم فقط لأغراض البحث العلمي وستُعامل بسرية تامة. وسيقوم الباحث بترجمة نتائج الاستبانة الكاملة إلى اللغة الإنجليزية، عن طريق مُترجم مُحترف في هذا الميدان. وفي أثناء الترجمة لن تتم مناقشة نتائج الدراسة مع المترجم بأي حال من الأحوال. وسيتم تخزين الاستبانة الكاملة (العربية والإنجليزية) بصورة شخصية لدى الباحث ولن يتمكن أحد آخر من الوصول إليها قبل الحصول على الموافقة المُسبقة من الباحث. ومن جهة أخرى، فإنه وبمجرد جمع النتائج ستستخدم البيانات لإتمام هذه الأطروحة وسيتم بعدها إتلاف الاستبانة الكاملة. ونؤكد لكم أنكم أنتم المشاركون في الدراسة لن يتم الإشارة إلى شخصكم الكريم أو مدرستكم أو منصبكم، وفي حال رغبتكم بالوصول إلى الأطروحة النهائية فيمكنكم التواصل مع الباحث مباشرة عن طريق عناوين التواصل الموجودة أعلاه.

يمكنكم في أي وقت توجيه تساؤلاتكم إلي عبر الهاتف المحمول 8005-870 (050)، أو التواصل مع البرفسورة مارلا يعقوب المسؤولة عن أطروحتي في جامعة ليولا شيكاغو في الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية عن طريق الهاتف 001-312915-6336 للتحقق من صلاحية الأطروحة ومسؤولة الجامعة عنها. وفي حال كانت لديكم أية أسئلة حول حقوقكم كمشاركين في البحث فيمكنكم التواصل مع مكتب خدمات البحث في جامعة ليولا شيكاغو على الهاتف: 001-773-508 2689

أُتقدم بالشكر لكم مُقدماً على مُشارككنم القِيمة، وأُتطلع إلى مقترحاتكم وأرائكم التي سُسهم في إضفاء صبغة من الجودة على أطروحتي ونتائج دراستي، واللذان أمل أن تُساعدا في تحسين برنامج الدمج في مدارس دبي الحكومية.

وتقبلوا فائق الاحترام والتقدير،،،

فوزية م. عثمان

APPENDIX C

QUESTIONNAIRE: ADMINISTRATIVE PERCEPTIONS OF INCLUSION IN THE
DUBAI PUBLIC SCHOOLS (ENGLISH)

Administrative Perceptions of Inclusion in Dubai Public Schools

Questionnaire

***** Participation in this research is voluntary. There is no penalty for non-participation, and you may withdraw your participation at any time. If you do not wish to participate, simply do not complete the questionnaire. All information gathered will be used solely for research purposes, and will be held in strict confidence. You will never be identified by name, school or position*****

1) Demographics:

a. Gender: Male _____ Female_____

b. Age: _____

c. Nationality: _____

2) How many years have you spent:

a. as a teacher _____

b. as an administrator

3) Where are you currently employed?

a. All Girls School _____

b. All Boys School

i. Cycle 1 (Grade 1 – 5) _____

ii. Cycle 2 (Grade 6 – 9) _____

iii. Secondary (Grade 10 – 12) _____

4) Do you have any students in your school with special needs? Please state how many for each category below:

- a. Physical _____
- b. Visual impairment _____
- c. Hearing impairment _____
- d. Autism spectrum disorder _____
- e. Intellectual disability _____
- f. Learning disability _____
- g. Speech and language disorder _____
- h. Emotional and behavioral disorder _____
- i. Others _____

5) What provisions are provided for special needs students in your school?

Views on inclusion

6) For this question, the researcher seeks your opinion on whether you as a school administrator are *for* or *against*, inclusion of students with special needs in the in the mainstream population within Dubai. Kindly place a check mark for the area(s) that in your opinion are appropriate for inclusion in the mainstream population:

- a. Physical disability _____
- b. Visual impairment _____

- c. Hearing impairment _____
- d. Autism spectrum disorder _____
- e. Intellectual disability _____
- f. Learning disability _____
- g. Speech and language disorder _____
- h. Emotional and behavioral disorder _____
- i. Others _____

7) Have you seen any changes in inclusion practices over the past 5 years in Dubai?
 Yes _____ No _____

8) If yes, have these changes been positive or negative?
 Positive _____ Negative _____

9) Please state what you believe these changes in inclusion have been?

10) What do you believe are the impediments to inclusion in the Dubai Public schools?

11) What, according to you, are the crucial factors of success to inclusion in the Dubai Public Schools? (check all that apply)

- a. Parents' attitudes towards inclusion _____
- b. Teachers' attitudes towards inclusion _____

- c. School Administrators' attitudes towards inclusion _____
- d. Not sufficient funding _____
- e. Teachers' qualification _____
- f. Other (please specify)

12) What do you believe needs to occur for inclusion to be fully implemented in the Dubai Public Schools?

*****End of Survey*****

Thank you for your participation!

APPENDIX D

QUESTIONNAIRE: ADMINISTRATIVE PERCEPTIONS OF INCLUSION IN THE
DUBAI SCHOOLS (ARABIC)

استبانة
وجهات النظر الإدارية حول الدمج في مدارس دبي الحكومية

*** إن المشاركة في هذه الدراسة تطوعية واختيارية، ولا توجد أية عواقب نتيجة عدم المشاركة، ويمكنكم سحب مشاركتكم في أي وقت تشاؤون. وفي حال عدم رغبتكم بالمشاركة فيها ما عليكم سوى إهمال الاستبانة. ونؤكد لكم أن جميع المعلومات التي نجمعها سنستخدم فقط لأغراض البحث العلمي وستعامل بسرية تامة، ولن يتم فيها الإشارة إلى شخصكم الكريم أو مدرستكم أو منصبكم.***

(1) بيانات إحصائية:

- a. الجنس: ذكر _____ أنثى _____
b. العمر: _____
c. الجنسية: _____

(2) ما هو عدد السنوات التي قضيتها:

- a. كمعلم؟ _____
b. كمسؤول إداري؟ _____

(3) أين تعمل الآن؟

- a. في مدرسة بنات _____
b. في مدرسة بنين _____
i. الحلقة الأولى (الصفوف 1-5)
ii. الحلقة الثانية (الصفوف 6-9)
iii. المرحلة الثانوية (الصفوف 10-12)

(4) هل يوجد في مدرستك أي طلبة من ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة؟ الرجاء تحديد جميع الإجابات التي تنطبق على مدرستك مع تحديد العدد:

- a. إعاقة بدنية _____
b. إعاقة بصرية _____
c. إعاقة سمعية _____
d. اضطراب التوحد _____
e. الإعاقة العقلية _____
f. صعوبات التعلم _____
g. اضطراب النطق واللغة _____
h. اضطرابات سلوكية وعاطفية _____
i. غيرها _____

(5) ما هي الخدمات والترتيبات المقدمة من قبل المدرسة للطلبة من ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة؟

وجهات نظر حول الدمج

6) في هذا السؤال، يتطلع الباحثون إلى الوقوف على رأيك كإداري في مدرستك سواء كنت مُناصرًا أو مُعارضًا لدمج الطلبة من ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة في المدارس العادية في دبي. لطفًا، نرجو منك وضع علامة إلى جوار المواطن التي برأيك تكون مناسبة لعملية الدمج في المدارس العادية:

- | | |
|-------|----------------------------|
| _____ | a. إعاقة بدنية |
| _____ | b. إعاقة بصرية |
| _____ | c. إعاقة سمعية |
| _____ | d. اضطراب التوحد |
| _____ | e. الإعاقة العقلية |
| _____ | f. صعوبات التعلم |
| _____ | g. اضطراب النطق واللغة |
| _____ | h. اضطرابات سلوكية وعاطفية |
| _____ | i. غيرها |

7) هل لاحظت أية تغييرات في ممارسات الدمج على مدى السنوات الخمس الماضية في دبي؟

- a. نعم _____
b. لا _____

8) إذا كانت إجابتك على السؤال 7 بالإيجاب، فكيف تُصنف هذا التغيير؟

- a. إيجابي _____
b. سلبي _____

9) يُرجى سرد ما تعتقد أنه قد تمّ إنجازه من تغييرات في عملية الدمج؟

10) ما هي، في اعتقادك، العوائق التي تقف أمام الدمج في مدارس دبي الحكومية؟

11) ما هي، في رأيك، العوامل المهمة لنجاح الدمج في مدارس دبي الحكومية؟ (يرجى تحديد جميع الخيارات التي تنطبق)

مواقف أولياء الأمور تجاه الدمج _____

مواقف المعلمين تجاه الدمج	_____
مواقف إداري المدارس تجاه الدمج	_____
عدم وجود تمويل كافٍ	_____
أهلية المعلمين	_____
غيرها (يُرجى تحديدها)	_____

12) ما هي الأشياء / الأحداث/ التغييرات التي تعتقد بضرورة حدوثها ليتمّ تطبيق الدمج بشكل كامل في المدارس الحكومية في دبي؟

*****نهاية الاستبانة*****

نشكركم على مشاركتكم

APPENDIX E

FEDERAL LAW NO. 29 OF 2006 IN RESPECT OF THE RIGHTS OF PEOPLE WITH
SPECIAL NEEDS

**Federal Law No 29 of 2006
In Respect of
The Rights of People with Special Needs**

We, Khalifa Bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates,

Upon reviewing the constitution,

The federal law No. 1 of 1972 in respect of the competences of ministries and powers of ministers and the laws amending it,

The federal law No. 11 of 1972 in respect of the mandatory education,

The federal law No. 12 of 1972 in respect of regulating the clubs and associations operating in the field of the youth welfare,

The federal law No. 4 of 1976 in respect of establishing and organizing the United Arab Emirates University and the laws amending it,

The federal law No. 9 of 1976 in respect of the delinquent and the homeless juvenile,

The federal law No. 8 of 1980 in respect of regulating the work relationships, and the laws amending it,

The penal law promulgated under the federal law No. 3 of 1987 and the laws amending it,

The law of penal procedures promulgated under the federal law No. 35 of 1992 and the laws amending it,

The law of pensions and social insurances promulgated under the federal law No. 7 of 1999 and the laws amending it,

The federal law No. 21 of 1995 in respect of traffic and driving,

The federal law No. 25 of 1999 in respect of the general authority of Youth and Sports.

And pursuant to the proposal of the minister of the social affairs, the approval of the council of ministers, and the endorsement of the supreme federal council,

We have promulgated the following law:

Section One

General Provisions

Article 1

Definitions:

In the implementation of the provisions of the present law, the following words and expressions mentioned therein shall have the meanings shown opposite each of them , unless otherwise is required by the context:

The State: The United Arab Emirates

The Ministry: The Ministry of Social Affairs

The Minister: The Minister of Social Affairs

The Concerned Authorities: The federal and local authorities concerned with the implementation of the provisions hereof.

A Person with Special Needs: Every person suffering from a temporary /permanent, full /partial deficiency or infirmity in his physical, sensational, mental, communicational, educational or psychological faculties to an extent decreasing the possibility of satisfying his ordinary requirements in the conditions of people without special needs.

The Card: The personal card granted by the ministry to the person with special needs which is considered as an official document indicating that its holder is a person with special needs. This card guarantees for its holder the rights and services shown herein, and in the bylaws and decisions issued in implementation hereof.

The Distinction: Any discrimination, exclusion or restriction due to special needs which cause damaging or denying recognition of any rights prescribed under the legislations applicable in the state, enjoying them or practicing the same equally.

Article 2

This law aims to guarantee the rights of the person with special needs and to provide all the services within the bounds of his abilities and capacities. The special needs may not be a reason to hinder the person with special needs from obtaining such rights and

services especially in the field of welfare and social, economic, health, educational, professional, cultural and promotional services.

Article 3

The state guarantees for the person with special needs the equality with people without special needs and non-discrimination due to special needs in all the legislations. It also guarantees to observe the same in all the policies and programs of economic and social development, and to take the appropriate procedures to prohibit the discrimination based on the special needs.

Article 4

The ministry, in coordination with the concerned authorities, prepares programs to educate the person with special needs, his/ her family and local environment in all what concerns the rights provided for under this law and the other legislations, as well as the services provided for him.

Article 5

Any judgment, standard or practice based on a lawful basis shall not be considered as discrimination. The state guarantees to take all the necessary procedures to enable the person with special needs to enjoy his rights and liberties, and prohibit any infringement upon him or depriving him of them abusively.

Article 6

The state guarantees the legal assistance for the person with special needs in all cases where his liberties are restricted for any legal reason. Upon issuing any decision restricting the freedom of a person with special needs, the following should be taken:

1. Treating him humanely, taking into account his condition and his needs as a person with special needs.
2. To provide the necessary information and data which are connected to the reasons of restricting his freedom.
3. To provide the appropriate assistance in case he is unable to pay the legal fees, expenses or fines, as stipulated under a resolution issued by the council of ministers.

Article 7

The state guarantees for the person with special needs to practice his right of expression and giving the opinion by using Braille, the language of sign and the other methods of communication, and his right in requesting, receiving and transmitting the information equally with others.

Article 8

The law guarantees for the person with special needs the necessary protection of his correspondences, medical records and personal matters.

The executive bylaw of this law determines the regulations and mechanisms of the said protection.

Article (9)

The ministry shall – in cooperation with the competent authorities- establish centers, establishments and institutions for taking care of and training the people with special needs and qualifying them. Such centers, establishments and institutions shall undertake the following tasks:

- A. To qualify the people with special needs to adapt themselves and integrate in the community.
- B. To provide the special education for people with special needs.
- C. To provide the professional training programs for the people with special needs.
- D. To train the families of people with special needs how to deal with them.

Section Two Rights of People with Special Needs

Chapter One: Health and Rehabilitation Services

Article 10

Each UAE national person with special needs has the right to benefit from the health and rehabilitation services and the support services at the expense of the State, including:

- A. All surgeries whether resulting from a special need or not such as transplantation, treatment of ulcers, the anaplasty, the treatment in specialized centers... etc whether for intensive or normal treatments. This includes providing all the equipment and materials ...etc , and all the requirements for the success of the operation, whether permanent or temporary.

B. To provide the medical examination and treatment at: general practitioners, specialists, consultants, dentists, the psychological evaluation, the audiography, radiography, lab tests, and medicines.

C. Rehabilitation and Specialized Treatments: The internal and external, including : the physiotherapy, work therapy, phoniatics, treatment of hearing and the psychotherapy.

D. The technical aids and the assisting equipment such as the mobile and fixed replacement equipment (limbs, audiphones, artificial oculus etc) corrective forms, movement aids (wheelchairs, walking sticks, canes and crutches), and for the prevention from ulcers and all the drugs used in the surgeries.

Article 11

Under a resolution by the council of ministers, a committee named “The Specialized Committee For Health And Rehabilitation Services For People With Special Needs” shall be established. Such committee shall be chaired by the undersecretary of the ministry of health with members representing the concerned authorities. The minister of health shall set forth the committee work system and meetings.

The committee shall specifically carry out the following functions:

1. Providing the diagnostic, treatment and rehabilitation services and developing the existing health programs and services to improve the conditions of the people with special needs.
2. Establishing the programs of early detection, diagnostics, raising awareness and health education, and providing the means of early and specialized intervention in the area of special needs.
3. Providing human cadres specialized in the field of different kinds of special needs and train and rehabilitate them.
4. Preparing the national studies to identify the reasons leading to the special needs, their consequences and the ways of prevention, and circulating such studies among the concerned authorities in the State.
5. Submitting periodic reports to the minister preparing the ground to present the same to the council of ministers to take the appropriate actions in this concern.

Chapter Two: Education

Article 12

The State guarantees for the person with special needs equal chances in education in all the educational and pedagogical institutions, the vocational qualification, teaching of adults, the continuous teaching in the regular classes or in special classes; if necessary, with providing the curriculum in the language of sign or Braille and any other methods as necessary.

The special needs do not constitute intrinsically an obstacle hindering from applying to enroll, join or enter any educational institution whether governmental or private.

Article 13

The ministry of education and the ministry of higher education and scientific research shall take the appropriate procedures in cooperation with the concerned authorities to provide the pedagogical diagnosis, the curriculum, and the simplified means and techniques for the purposes of teaching. Moreover, it endeavors to provide alternative methods to communicate with people with special needs, and to establish alternative strategies for learning, and simplified material environment and other means necessary to guarantee the full participation of students with special needs.

Article 14

The ministry of education and the ministry of higher education and scientific research should – in cooperation with the concerned authorities- provide the academic specialties to prepare the employees working with people with special needs and their families whether in the areas of diagnosis, early discovery, the educational, social, psychological, medical or professional rehabilitation, and guarantee providing the training programs during the service to provide the employees with the modern knowledge and expertise.

Article 15

Under a resolution issued by the council of ministers, a committee named “The Committee Specialized In The Education Of People With Special Needs”. Such committee shall be chaired by the undersecretary of the ministry of education, with members representing the concerned authorities. The minister of the education shall set forth the work system and meetings of the committee.

The committee shall specifically carry out the following functions:

1. Setting forth the executive programs to guarantee equal chances in the education for people with special needs since the early childhood in all the

educational institutions in their regular classes or in the specialized educational units.

2. Developing the methodological structure of the educational programs and preparing the pedagogical plans which are in line with the contemporary time and the technical development and which are consistent with the growth and psychological features of people with special needs.
3. Organizing all the matters related to the education of the people with special needs such as the programs, procedures, methods and conditions of joining the regular classes and sit for examinations.
4. Laying down policies of rehabilitating and training the educational and teaching human cadres working in the area of people with special needs.
5. Providing advice and technological, technical and educational assistance to all the educational institutions which would like to receive people with special needs, and studying the financing requests related to the equipment and techniques and qualifying the educational institution environment.
6. Submitting periodic reports to the minister preparing the ground to present the same to the council of ministers to take the appropriate actions in this concern.

Chapter Three: Work

Article 16

The UAE national person with special needs enjoys the right to work and occupy the public positions, for which the special needs, in themselves, do not constitute an obstacle hindering from applying and being selected for jobs. Special needs shall be taken into account upon undergoing the tests of competency to have the job for people concerned with the provisions of this law.

Article 17

The ministry may enter into contracts with other entities to execute projects for rehabilitation of people with special needs. The minister shall determine the terms, conditions and regulations necessary for that.

Article 18

The legislations issued inside the country show the procedures to be taken to guarantee the person with special needs holding positions in the governmental and private sectors, the working hours, the vacations and the other terms related to the work of people with

special needs, including the necessary regulations to terminate the services and the entitlement to the end of service benefits or the retirement pension. The council of ministers determines –based on the minister’s proposal- the percentage of the jobs to be allocated for the people with special needs in both governmental and private sectors.

Article 19

Under a resolution by the council of ministers, a committee named “The Specialized Committee For The Employment Of The Person with Special Needs”. Such committee shall be chaired by the undersecretary of the ministry, with members representing the concerned authorities. The minister shall set forth the committee work system and its meetings. The committee shall specifically carry out the following functions:

1. To lay down the policies necessary for the employment of the person with special needs and the requirements to realize the optimal competence along with guaranteeing the continuity of the employment for the longest possible period.
2. To encourage and support people with special needs who are qualified to establish projects with economic profitability and feasibility, and to provide the information about the available donations and facilitated loans and how to obtain the same.
3. To provide the information about the labor market, the available vacancies and its prospective.
4. To prepare studies about the occupations and jobs in a manner consistent with the technological developments and the labor market needs.
5. To encourage and orient the private sector to train, qualify and employ people with special needs and to provide the appropriate support within the bounds of the available resources.
6. To propose the necessary procedures to protect people with special needs from all kinds of exploitation at the work.
7. To submit periodic reports to the minister preparing the ground to present the same to the council of ministers to take the appropriate actions in this concern.

Chapter Four: General and Cultural Life and Sports

Article 20

The State shall take the necessary procedures to make the person with special needs participate in the cultural, sporting and entertainment life as follows:

1. To develop the creative, artistic and intellectual abilities of the person with special needs and to invest the same in order to enrich the community.
2. To provide the literary and cultural materials for the person with special needs in all available forms, including the electronic texts, the language of sign, the Braille, and in audio and multimedia formats etc.
3. To enable the person with special needs to benefit from the media programs and means, theatrical shows and all the cultural activities, and to enhance his participation therein, with the fees exemption rules.
4. To enhance the participation of the person with special needs in the sports activities organized on the national, regional and international levels.
5. To submit periodic reports to the minister preparing the ground to present the same to the council of ministers to take the appropriate actions in this concern.

Article 21

Under a resolution by the council of ministers, a committee named “The Committee Specialized In Sports, Culture And Recreation For People With Special Needs” shall be formed . Such a committee shall be chaired by the secretary general of the youth and sports authority with members representing the concerned authorities, The minister shall set forth the committee work system and its meetings.

The committee shall specifically carry out the following functions:

1. To lay down the policies which guarantee the integral development of the person with special needs and providing the opportunity to practice the sporting , cultural and recreational activities which are characterized with fun , safety and consistency with his abilities, and to provide the appropriate conditions to practice them basically like his peers having no special needs.
2. To expand the base of practicing the sporting, cultural and recreational activities among people with special needs and to ensure that the sport of people with special needs whether “sport for people with mental special needs or people with physical and sensational special needs” is contained within the educational programs of the specialized institutions.
3. To set programs to prepare the human cadres qualified to work with people with special needs in the sporting, cultural and recreational fields.
4. To encourage integrating people with special needs with their healthy peers in the sporting and cultural centers, sporting clubs and camps and to provide the appropriate games and activities for them.

5. To submit periodic reports to the minister preparing the ground to present the same to the council of ministers to take the appropriate actions in this concern.

Chapter Five: The Qualified Environment

Article 22

Each person with special needs has the right to be in a qualified environment, and to reach the place where the others can reach.

Article 23

The concerned authorities shall – in coordination with each other- determine the engineering standards and specifications of the facilities and public utilities for which a resolution shall be issued by the council of ministers based on the proposal of the minister. Such resolution shall determine the necessary regulations to apply these standards and specifications and the exclusions mentioned in respect thereof. All this in relation to fitting the facilities to be used by the person with special needs, his need and the requirements of his safety and avoiding any harm against him. The provisions of this resolution shall apply to both governmental and private sectors, except those excluded under a certain provision therein.

Article 24

The council of ministers shall issue the regulation and conditions to obtain a governmental house by the UAE national person with special needs, as well as the specifications of the house, the rules to own it and the other rules regulating the governmental house affairs.

Article 25

1. The necessary technical specifications should be observed in the roads, public vehicles, land, air and maritime means of transport in order to be used by the person with special needs.
2. Under a resolution, the council of ministers shall determine the requirements of obtaining a driving license by the person with special needs, and the regulations thereof. A new category concerning the people with special needs shall be added

to the driving license categories mentioned in the traffic and driving law. The necessary description shall be mentioned therein as per the type of special needs.

Article 26

Each insurance company shall insure the vehicles owned by the person with special needs whenever he requests the same.

Section Three Exemptions

Article 27

The vehicle allocated for the use of the person with special needs shall be exempted from all taxes and fees, based on a handicap certificate issued by the ministry. This exemption may not be given for another vehicle unless after the elapse of five years from the previous exemption or the damage of the vehicle. In case of disposing of the vehicle during that period, the prescribed fees and taxes shall be paid.

Article 28

The vehicles of the people with special needs shall be exempted from the prescribed Car Parking fees .

Article 29

The means of transport of the associations and centers of people with special needs specified by the council of ministers shall be exempted from the licensing fees.

Article 30

The council of ministers shall specify the associations and the centers of people with special needs which shall be exempted from the fees imposed on the applications for building permits submitted by them for the construction of buildings for their use, based on a certificate issued by the ministry in this regard.

Article 31

The cases filed by people with special needs related to the implementation of the provisions hereof shall be exempted from the legal fees.

Article 32

All the correspondences of the person with special needs or the associations or centers of people with special needs specified by the council of ministers shall be exempted from the post fees and charges, including the books, newspapers and magazines etc.

Section Four PENALTIES

Article 33

Without prejudice to the any strictest punishment provided for under any other law, everyone using the card of the person with special needs without a legal requirement shall be punished by fining him an amount not less than One Thousand Dirhams and not exceeding Five Thousand Dirhams, without prejudice to the civil responsibility whenever necessary. Such punishment shall be multiplied in case of repetition.

Section Five Final Provisions

Article 34

The ministry shall approve the logos of the people with special needs and circulate them to the authorities supervising the utilities or those which publish booklets and printed materials and prepare programs containing such logos.

Article 35

The person with special needs shall not be required to show any evidence of his special need except for the card issued by the ministry in this regard. The conditions to obtain such card shall be determined under a resolution issued by the minister.

Article 36

The ministry shall license the nongovernmental institutions which take care of educating, training and rehabilitating the people with special needs. No natural or corporate person may establish any of such institutions unless a license is obtained from the ministry. The conditions, regulations and fees of licensing such institutions in addition to their obligations and the penalties imposed on them in case of violations as well as the other provisions regulating their business shall be determined by a resolution by the council of ministers.

Article 37

The minister shall issue the necessary bylaws and decisions to implement the provisions hereof.

Article 38

All the provisions contradictory to or in conflict with the provisions hereof shall be cancelled.

Article 39

This law shall be published in the official gazette and shall be applicable effective from date of its publication.

Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan
President of the United Arab Emirates
Issued at the Presidency Palace, Abu Dhabi:
On 19 Rajab 1427 H

Corresponding to 13/8/2006 G.

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VITA

Fouzia Usman was born and raised in Dubai, United Arab Emirates where she completed her education till high school. Before attending the Loyola University Chicago, she attended Southeast Missouri State University where she earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Human Environmental Studies. During her time there, she was awarded the Grace Hoover International Scholarship and was initiated into Kappa Delta Pi.

After completing her Master's coursework at Loyola University, Fouzia moved back to Dubai in 2006 where her professional career began within the field of education. She worked as a teacher at an early childhood center and then moved on to work with the Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA), an entity of Dubai Government that is responsible for regulating educational institutions within the Emirate of Dubai.

After serving KHDA for three years, Fouzia relocated to Orlando, Florida where she currently resides with her husband.