Parental Participation in the Education of Female Students with Learning Difficulties: The Views of Saudi Elementary Teachers and Parents

Submitted by

Sarah Salem Saad Alqahtani

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Abstract

This study contributes to knowledge of parental involvement in education in Saudi Arabia by focusing on teachers' and parents' conceptualisations, attitudes and practices of parental involvement in the education of female students with learning difficulties in elementary inclusive schools. The specific location of the research is Riyadh, the capital city of Saudi Arabia. Three specific objectives informed the research: (1) to obtain teachers' and parents' views on their conceptualisations and current practices of parent involvement, (2) to document and analyse teachers' and parents' views about the importance of parental involvement, roles, and responsibilities, and (3) to identify the obstacles to implementing effective parental involvement practices. In this study, I used Bronfenbrenner's bioecological system theory to provide a framework for the development of the questionnaire, data collection, analysis, and discussion. Based on the pragmatic research paradigm, I utilised a mixed-methods design with a purposive sampling strategy to collect data from 110 teachers and 105 parents. The particular design chosen for this study was a sequential explanatory type which is also referred to as the QUAN-qual research model or the explanatory mixed-method design. The research approach involved the collection and analysis of survey data followed by the collection and analysis of interview data for integration. A close-ended questionnaire and a semi-structured interview for teachers and parents were employed to collect data. At the interview stage, 10 parents and 10 teachers from those who responded to the questionnaire were interviewed. The survey data were transferred from the hard copy material into SPSS version 26. The data analyses included descriptive statistic of mean, standard deviations and rankings of mean scores. In addition, factor analysis, t-test, and

ANOVA were performed to test the cluster of responses and variabilities in the results pertaining to teachers and parents. Further, framework analysis serves as a pragmatic approach to the analysis of the interview data.

The results indicated that parental involvement conceptualisation varied among participants. Key among their conceptualisations were: the connection between the members of the school's community; the activities that teachers and parents participate in together; a two-way communication that helps to improve the education of students; and a contractual agreement between teachers and parents that involved trust, respectful relationship, and positive cooperation. In terms of parental involvement practices, almost all the teachers indicated that they did not involve parents in making decisions about their children's education. More than half of the teachers indicated that they communicated to parents regularly to provide information about their children's education. However, parents contend that teachers only communicated to them about their children's academic problems and behavioural challenges. Regarding the availability of school-level policy on parental involvement, most teachers and parents agreed these policies did not exist. In the absence of policy to guide teachers, parental involvement practice was arbitrary, demonstrating a dissonance in practice. However, parents' support for their daughters' learning at home achieved the highest mean score. A major concern of parents was that school meetings were organised without consulting them which may implicate some barriers to parents' involvement, but teachers claimed that parents' attitudes reduced their interest in working with them. Further, some teachers alluded that their school responsibilities and lack of time made it impossible for them to involve parents. The majority of teachers affirmed that training them on how to

work with parents might improve parental involvement. All parents claimed that positive and effective communication that incorporates respectful relationships can improve their relationships with teachers to participate in the education of their children with learning difficulties in inclusive elementary schools in Saudi Arabia. Based on these findings, I provided recommendations that may help in developing a contextually relevant parental involvement practice in Saudi Arabia.

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1 Chapter One: Introduction and Context of the Study

1.1 Introduction

In recent years, there has been considerable interest in inclusive education policy and practice worldwide (Araújo, Magalhães, Rocha & Macedo, 2014; Jackson & Cameron, 2010). One critical policy interest has been a push for parental involvement in the education of students with special education needs (Cooper, Lindsay & Nye, 2000; Ratcliff & Hunt, 2009). Parents' involvement in school, which refers to "all home, school, and community-based activities involving parents in supporting their children's educational development" (Daniel, 2011, p. 166), is a topical issue, particularly in research focusing on students with special education needs. Parental involvement incorporates the concept of participation, which is the ways parents are empowered to contribute to decision-making in their children's educational programmes and school administration (Epstein, 2005).

This mixed methods study is concerned with female students with learning difficulties in Saudi inclusive elementary schools. The purpose is to explore the perspectives of teachers and parents on parents' involvement in the education of female students with learning difficulties. This study is based on the notion that in-depth knowledge of teachers' and parents' expectations, experiences, and beliefs about how parental involvement in school can support programmes to encourage effective parental engagement for effective learning (Alhabeeb,2016; Alqahtani, 2015).

The majority of the research conducted in the area of parental involvement emphasises the importance of cultivating the culture of parental involvement and

positive participation in the school's community (Johnson, Pugach & Hawkins, 2004). Studies have claimed that parental involvement in children's education can improve school attendance, increase motivation to study, improve behaviour at home and at school, and promote better school outcomes (Fan & Chen, 2001; Khajehpour & Ghazvini, 2011; LaRocque, Kleiman & Darling, 2011; Malik, 2012). However, underpinning such research has been an ongoing debate about the limited participation rates of parents in their children's education (Cullingford & Morrison, 1999; Epstein & Sheldon, 2006). Khajehpour and Ghazvini (2011) claimed that when teachers and parents collaborate to care about the same things, energy is aligned and there is a natural flow for improvement to occur in children's learning.

One of the issues facing inclusive education is how to respond to the learning needs of students with learning difficulties (LDs) (Guthrie & Waldeck, 2008; Loreman, Deppeler & Harvey, 2011). In Saudi Arabia, female students with LDs experience significant educational challenges. These challenges include the design of school systems (Brooks, 2007), students' different learning styles (Westwood, 2008), and lack of parental involvement (Anderson & Minke, 2007; Baird, 2011; Westwood, 2008). Historically, it is believed that students with LDs would improve their learning capabilities without educational interventions as they grow into adulthood (Alqahtani, 2015); however, Lerner (2003) argued that without adequate support, students with LDs will experience reading, math, and writing difficulty and grow up to have trouble with work, leisure time and social relationships.

Studies indicate that strong support from parents and teachers can help improve the academic achievement of students with LDs (Khajehpour & Ghazvini, 2011; LaRocque et al., 2011). Parental involvement, however, is a new phenomenon

in the Saudi Arabian's education system (Alhabeeb, 2016). Female students with LDs in Saudi Arabia thus, require increased parental involvement due to the cultural segregation between females and males.

1.2 Personal Motivation for the Research

My motivation to undertake this study is driven by both personal and professional experiences working with students with learning difficulties in Saudi Arabian Elementary schools. As a teacher, my goal was to involve parents as equal players in the education of the students because I understood that parents could be rich sources of information for improving the education their children receive. My efforts to involve parents were often frustrated by both colleagues and parents. Some of my colleagues felt that parental engagement was an additional burden to their work hence they were not interested in supporting the process. Many parents also gave several excuses including lack of time, tiredness and teachers' attitudes towards them as reasons to exclude themselves from school participation. These experiences resonate with the available previous studies which indicate that engaging, parents in school matters is a difficult task in Saudi Arabia (Alhabeeb, 2016; Al-Gharaibeh, 2012; Masoud, 2005; Rashidi, 2002).

In addition to my personal motivation, there is little information in the literature on parental involvement in Saudi Arabia. Recent studies by Alqahtani (2015) and Alhabeeb (2016) for example, mentioned that there is a need for further research about the obstacles of implementing effective parent participation in school. In view of the segregation between females and males in Saudi Arabia, studies tend to focus

on male teachers' perspectives. Zafar, Shami and Al-Hussein (2010) recommends further investigation of female teachers' views on parental involvement.

I was in a position to enter the research space to explore current issues of parental involment in the education of children with learning difficulties in Saudi Arabia. I see this as an opportunity to serve my community and school teachers by embarking on this research journey and contribute new knowledge about factors that enhance or inhibit parental involvement. In this way, I do not come to this research value-free, my own set of ideas and assumptions on parental involvement and my reading of other scholars in this area influenced how I made sense of the data collection and analysis (Esterberg, 2002). This study yielded information that can be used to transform the ways teachers of students with LDs work with parents to enhance students' educational outcomes. It examined how definitions of parental involvement in school in the context of students with LDs impacts on educational practices. Further, I was motivated to carry out this research because I belive the research will transform my own practice in terms of thinking and professional practice.

1.3 Research Context

The purpose of this study is to explore the views of Saudi Arabia, KSA elementary (6-12 years) school teachers and parents regarding parental participation in the education of female students with learning difficulties. In view of this purpose, it is important to provide adequate and relevant information to situate the research in context. Research context gives clear meaning to the research being conducted as well as helps shape the research process (Dewsbury, 2017;

Robertson, Jepson, Macvean & Gray, 2016). This section presents the research context in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) by offering a brief description of the context of Saudi Arabia education system in general. This is followed by an overview of the context of special education in Saudi Arabia to provide information about the context of learning difficulties in Saudi Arabia, including the definition of learning difficulties. The section concludes with a contextual definition of parental involvement, particularly in Saudi Arabia.

1.3.1 Saudi Arabia Education

The Saudi Arabian education system, which was formed in 1925, has undergone remarkable transformations. According to Al-Liheibi (2008) and Alsharif (2011), prior to the current formal education system, education was mostly restricted and organised in mosques and Qur'anic Schools, where teaching and learning were restricted to writing, reading Arabic and reciting the holy Qur'an. The Saudi Directorate of Education in 1925 established a formal education system (Alsharif, 2011). According to historical records, King Abdul-Aziz founded the Directorate of Education prior to the unification of the country and the proclamation of the KSA in 1932 (Alrashidi & Phan, 2015). The formation of the Directorate of Education symbolises the importance King Abdul-Aziz placed on education at the time in spite of the numerous political and international challenges Saudi Arabia was facing as a new country (Al-Harthi, 2014).

In 1930, the Directorate of Education, which was responsible for opening new offices and schools in KSA, opened the first public schools that formally enrolled only males (Alsharif, 2011). Thirty years later, in 1960, education was extended to include female students, however, the education system segregated females from males

into separate schools (Al-Zarah, 2008). In the beginning, girls' education faced extreme cultural and religious opposition in some areas of the KSA by people who viewed non-religious education as worthless for women. According to Almutairi (2008), tribal and religious fundamentalists initially did not support girls' education. For example, until 2002, girls' education at all levels of education (elementary, secondary, high school and university) stayed under the Department of Religious Guidance and Religious Police. This was to ensure girls' education did not deviate from the primary purpose of their education to be good mothers and wives (Hamdan, 2005; Prokop, 2003).

Contrary to this, boys' education was managed by the Ministry of Education (Hamdan, 2005). The poor attitude to girls' education changed radically as the majority of the Saudi population began to advocate for girls' education and brought it under the Ministry of Education (Alghamdi, 2002; Hamdan, 2005). Despite these dramatic shifts in education provision, currently, the Saudi education system still segregates students and teachers on the basis of gender (Al-Zarah, 2008). The table below Table 1.1 shows the distribution of number of schools for girls and boys.

Education Level	Student Age
Elementary school	6-12 years old
Secondary school	13-15 years old
High school	16-18 years old

Table 1.1: Age of Students and School levels.

	Elementary school	Secondary school	High school
Public schools for boys	513	267	112
Public schools for girls	456	276	163
Private schools for boys	163	150	109
Private schools for girls	232	146	105

Table 1.2: Number of Private and Public Schools in Riyadh (General Organization for Statistics, 2017).

As can be seen in Table 1.2, the current education system operates on a single-sex school system that can be explained in terms of the beliefs of Islam, cultural, social and traditional values (Wiseman, 2010). It can be argued that single-sex education system is not unique to Saudi Arabia, it is also available in many Middle East countries including Jordan and Bahrain whose educational principles are influenced by the Islamic religion and Arabic cultural system (Alrashidi & Phan, 2015; Fryer & Levitt, 2010).   Interestingly, "private schools in Saudi Arabia are allowed to have first to third graders of both genders study side by side in the same classroom; however, only a few schools apply this option" (Felimban, 2013, p. 5). Despite the fact that the education system segregates males from females, Al-Johani (2009) argues that the educational both sexes receive are relatively the same in terms of quality with the same stages of schooling at Elementary, junior secondary and high school (see Table 1.1). The schools operate on similar curriculum for each subject except with small differences to meet the needs of each gender.

The educational provision, affordability, and access in Saudi Arabia was limited to a privileged population prior to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's unification in 1932 and in addition, educational development was slow and fragmented. As a

result, at the time the Ministry of Education was established, around 300 schools existed and provided education to a small urban population. Currently, Saudi Arabia has 47,325 schools (special and mainstream) offering educational provision to nearly five million students, in both rural and urban areas with more than 420,443 teachers (Ministry of Education, 2014). In addition, primary education through to high school is opened to all children free of charge (Alnaim, 2015). A key component of the transformation in the education sector is the development and expansion of special education with a strong focus on moving from segregated schools to mainstreaming programmes.

1.3.2 A Brief Overview of Special Education Development in Saudi Arabia

Special education in Saudi Arabia started in 1958 with a braille-reading program for blind adults. However, this program excluded young people and services for other categories of disability and it was not until 1964 when the Saudi Ministry of Education established the first day school for deaf boys to serve their education needs (Aldabas, 2015). Since then, the Ministry of Education, spearheaded many development programmes that led to dramatic increases in the number of special schools to cater to the needs of other categories of disabilities. For example, from 1960-2000, special schools were established for deafness, blindness, Autism, intellectual disabilities, mild and moderate intellectual disabilities, hearing impairments and hard of hearing (Aldabas, 2015). Currently, there are special education services that cater to the needs of mild to moderate learning disabilities, moderate, severe and profound disabilities including Autism, intellectual disabilities, deafness-blindness, physical disabilities and multiple disabilities in full-time special

education classrooms in public schools, special day schools and general education classrooms with resource-room assistance (Aldabas, 2015; Alquraini, 2011).

In addition to the current commitments to educating persons with disabilities, the Saudi government is instrumental in the provision of various support and complementary services for individuals with disabilities. These include monthly compensation for academic and living costs, funding for disabilities equipment, free transportation, 50% reduction in airfare, and granting of scholarships to gifted students with disabilities. All these support programmes were aimed to promote the quality of life for students with disabilities to function inclusively in the Saudi society (Alquraini, 2014; Battal, 2016; Ministry of Education, 2001).

The Ministry of Education is also expanding special education programmes for gifted and talented children including funding research, students' accommodations, educational awareness creation about disability through public relations, and collaboration with the Ministry of Social Affairs (Aldabas, 2015; Ministry of Education, 2014).

1.3.3 Moving Towards Mainstreaming and Inclusive Education

Saudi Arabia enacted the Education for all Handicapped Children Act in 1975 which gave impetus to the implementation of mainstreaming as the main process of educating students with disabilities in public general education schools, however, it was not until the year 2000 when the Saudi government established the Provision Code for individuals with disabilities (Al-Mousa, 2010). This law guarantees the rights of students with special needs an appropriate and free education in the least restrictive educational environment. In addition, the Saudi government in 2002 promulgated the rules and regulation that affirmed regular schools as the most

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appropriate educational placement for students with disabilities (Ministry of Education, 2002). This was followed by the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN, 2006) and its Protocol in 2008 to promote inclusive education (Al-Mousa, 2010).

To support the progressive development of special education services, a Department of Special Education was established in 1983 at King Saud University to train local special education teachers and experts for the special education field (Alrashidi & Phan, 2015; Battal, 2016). Table 1.3 shows the statistics of institutes, programmes and students with disabilities in 2014/2015 as reported in a recent study (Battal, 2016).

Disability	No. of institutes	No. of students
Hearing impairment	586	6881
Visual impairment	363	3214
Intellectual disabilities	1101	20576
Autism	220	1464
Multiple disabilities	58	490
Learning disabilities	2393	26225
Hyperactivity	30	81
Physical and health disabilities	90	4530
Total	4796	63461

Table 1.3: The statistics of institutes, programmes and students with disabilities in 2014/2015.

The above statistics demonstrate that the Saudi government is committed to supporting the education of students with disabilities. According to Battal (2016), the majority of students with special needs now receive the educational services in self-

contained classrooms, resource rooms, itinerary alternatives and consultation. It is estimated that 92% of students with disabilities are provided for in the regular schools; however, only 8% are serviced in institutions (Alqahtani, 2015). Indeed, more efforts are needed to ensure that students with disabilities and those with learning difficulties receive adequate support to improve their learning outcomes. The majority of studies that wrote on the development of special education in Saudi Arabia adopted a library research approach or used secondary material and grey literature as data sources (Aldabas, 2015; Alquraini, 2014; Battal, 2016). Therefore, it is possible that some of the statistics might be under-reported, or over-reported. In addition, a few empirical studies that were conducted utilised small samples that might not have captured the full story pertaining to special education and inclusive practice provisions in Saudi Arabia.

1.3.4 Defining Learning Difficulties in Saudi Arabia

As this study is about female students with learning difficulties, it is important to provide some insights into the definition of learning difficulties and its situational context in Saudi Arabia. The concept of Learning Difficulties (LD) was introduced into the Saudi education system in 1996 as a new disability sub-category. However, the history of the LD sub-category began in 1992 when Kind Saud University established teacher-training programmes that focused on training teachers to teach students with LD (Al-hano, 2006).

The General Secretariat of Special Education under the Ministry of Education administers special education. In 1995, a unique department was created to support the administration and education of students with LD in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (Al Mosa, 1999). This was followed by two government pilot projects to identify

situational factors implicated in LD and how to support students with LD, in general, to learn effectively. In view of the positive outcomes of the pilot projects, LD was formalised into the education system and students with LD have full rights to receive specialised education services. In addition, research from other countries such as USA and UK informed the provision of services to students with LD (Araújo et al., 2014).

Although the Saudi educators adopted American conceptualisation of LD as "learning disabilities", if translated into Arabic would read, "*So'ubat Al taal'um*". The literal translation into English is "Learning Difficulties" (Al-hano, 2006). LD is defined by the Saudi Ministry of Education Regulation for Special Education Institutions and Programmes (2002) as:

> Disorders in one or more of the psychological processes involved in understanding or using spoken and written language which is manifested in disorders in listening, thinking, talking, reading, writing, spelling, or arithmetic, and is not due to factors related to intellectual disabilities, visual or hearing impairments, or educational, social and family factors (Cited in Al-Hano, 2006, p.2).

Researchers distinguished between learning disability and intellectual disability. On the one hand, learning disability is described as a condition which affects the different aspects of learning and interferes with the academic achievements of the student without any known neurological basis of disability (Nifl, 2009). This may include reading, writing, comprehending and organising language and doing mathematics. On the other hand, intellectual disability refers to a neurodevelopmental disorder that affects an individual's social, academic,

communication, and normal daily living activities (Clegg, Black, Smith & Brumfitt, 2018; Nifl, 2009).

Special provisions and strategies by which students with LDs should be taught or supported to enhance their educational outcomes, guided this conceptual definition. It is argued that "learning difficulty arises when a specific task or circumstance in the learning environment inhibits an individual's ability to learn" (Nifl, 2009, p. 21). In contrast to learning disabilities, which are intrinsic to the individual, learning difficulties are instigated by factors and conditions external to the individual, such as the learning environment and task. Most existing literature uses the term learning disability (Al-Hano, 2006; Alnaim, 2015), however, since a number of students with neurologically based learning disabilities are thought to be relatively low, in this research the term learning difficulty will be used to represent the larger number of LD students with and without diagnosed learning disabilities who want to learn but struggle in the process.

1.3.5 Learning Difficulties in Saudi Arabia

There are different definitions of LD constructed through various perspectives and theoretical positions. Some special education professionals prefer to use the term *learning disabilities* when referring to "school children who experience learning difficulties in particular school subjects and who 'apparently' have average intelligence, have an underlying deficit, presumed to be dysfunction in the central nervous system" (Al-Hano, 2006, p.176). In the Saudi Arabian context, "learning disabilities" (LD) is the most widely used term to refer to students who are not performing well in school despite no known cause of disability (Alnaim, 2015). However, this study focused on "learning difficulties" (LD) which refer to students

who may experience difficulties with learning in various ways which is not due to their physical or sensory disabilities (Brooks, 2007). Learning difficulties experienced by students also vary by its causative factors, nature, intensity and persistence (Baird, 2011; Westwood, 2008). Students can be confronted with learning difficulties at any time in their education. Thus, there is the need for continuous assessment and ongoing support throughout a student's school life (Burns & Ysseldyke, 2005).

In 2009, it was estimated that there were around 5-10% of Saudi students with learning difficulties (Felimban, Nowicki, Dare & Brown, 2016). In comparison to Australia, AUSPELD, which is an organisation that supports people with learning disabilities found that at least 20% of Australian children have learning difficulties and 3% to 5% of these students have a developmental learning disability (AUSPELD, 2017). According to 2018 national statistics in England, "the number of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) has increased for a second consecutive year from 1,244,255 in January 2017 to 1,276,215 in January 2018, an increase from 14.4% to 14.6% of pupils." (Department for Education, UK, 2018). However, the most common primary types of needs have remained the same within the same period. Of these, Specific Learning Difficulty constitute (15.0%); Moderate Learning Difficulty (24.0%); Severe Learning Difficulty (0.3%); and Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulty (0.1%) respectively.

Moderate learning difficulty was identified as the most common type of need for students on special education needs support (Department for Education, UK, 2018). Ironically, similar detailed statistics are not available in the Saudi context. Felimban (2013) noted that the data on students with learning difficulties in Saudi

Arabia might not be accurate due to a lack of adequate assessment tools and parents' tendency to reject their children being labelled for cultural reasons.

Within the Saudi educational context, regular classroom teachers are the key professionals who make referrals for assessment and identification when they suspect that a student has a learning difficulty (Hussain, 2010). According to research by Felimban (2013, p. 6),

> identified students then receive support from learning disabilities specialists [because] learning disabilities are regarded as minor disabilities and students who have learning disabilities are educated in the general education curriculum with their typically developing peers.

In Saudi Arabia, students who need extra support outside the general education classroom receive resource room services (Al-Ajmi, 2006). As part of efforts to promote awareness and increase educational outcomes for students with LD, the Ministry of Education introduced Learning Disabilities Day with a campaign called *"I Know My Difficulties"* on May 3, 2009, followed by "*Yes, I Can Learn*" in 2010 and in 2011 it was re-branded as "*Learn About My Difficulties So We Can Defeat Them.*" (Felimban, 2013). The MOE encouraged Saudi schools to play active roles in these campaigns to educate the society about learning difficulties as a way of transforming negative societal attitudes (Ministry of Education, 2011). These programmes were developed by special education experts in Saudi Arabia in collaboration with the Ministry of Education.

Research suggests that students may have difficulty in learning because of the different ways in which they learn (Westwood, 2008). The educational environment, resources, teacher, and curriculum factors may contribute to learning difficulties (Chivers, 2012). Consequently, students who have learning difficulties will

have different levels of educational needs and supports. The prime responsibility for meeting the special educational needs of students with learning difficulties thus lies with schools and families (Skues & Cunningham, 2011). This indicates the need for parental involvement to support all students to thrive in education.

1.3.6 Parental Involvement in Saudi Arabia

In this research context, parental involvement refers to parents' participation in the whole school activities that their child attends (Epstein & Sheldon, 2006). Dubis and Bernadowski (2014) claimed that parents play important roles in their children's education. For example, Al-Gharaibeh (2012) and Epstein (2010), indicated that parents can share relevant cultural and development related information with schools' teachers, which is vital for developing educational programmes to support students with LDs (Al-Gharaibeh, 2012; Daniel, 2011). According to Dubis and Bernadowski (2014), parental involvement includes attending meetings and contacting teachers about school activities so that parents can help their children at home. The concepts of involvement, collaboration, and participation may empower parents to contribute to decision-making in their children's educational programmes and school administration (Anderson & Minke, 2007, Baum & Swick, 2008).

The Saudi government has been committed to efforts to improve parental involvement with special education students (Al-lhaidan, 2010). This started in 2002 when the Ministry of Saudi Education established the Disabled Care System whereby parents have legal rights to participate at all stages of their children's education who have special needs (Ministry of Education, 2011). Parents whose children do not have disabilities are also encouraged to play pivotal roles in school

matters; however, Al-Ihaidan (2010) claimed that parents whose children do not have disability had lower involvement rate than those with children with disabilities. This is because the former was of the view that involvement is necessary, only if their children have issues with their education (Al-Ihaidan, 2010). Rashidi (2002) stated that generally, parental involvement in Saudi Arabia is limited. Parents think they are involved in helping their children doing their homework and the majority of parents are satisfied with this limited involvement (Al-Ihaidan, 2010). Although many Saudi teachers believed that parental involvement is necessary because it complements teachers' professional practice, they contend that involvement should not interfere with teachers' work (Al-Gharaibeh, 2012).

Some researchers in Saudi Arabia reported that some teachers who teach students with learning difficulties have poor expectations of parental involvement with the view that parents' involvement causes unnecessary interference in school matters (Al-Gharaibeh, 2012; Al-Herthi, 2014). Some teachers also felt that their professional responsibility is to teach which excludes engaging in discussing students' personal difficulties with parents (Al-Gharaibeh, 2012; Masoud, 2005).

Diliberto and Brewer (2012) opined that some parents do not have the ability to participate in individual education planning meetings as they found the process to be too complicated. In Keen's (2007) view, some teachers' lack of respect for parents' opinion is a source of discouragement for parents to be fully involved in their children's education. Other studies in Saudi Arabia found that poor expectations of students with learning difficulties are a source of major concern and considerable frustration for parents, which undermine the development of closer professional ties with parents (Alhabeeb, 2016; Masoud, 2005; Rashidi, 2002). Another piece of research by Al-Gharaibeh (2012) illustrated that Saudi special education teachers

contact parents only to convey negative information about their children's education. In extreme cases, some teachers discussed students' educational and behaviour problems in front of other parents which caused frustration, anger, and embarrassment. Such negative experiences undermined parents' encouragement and willingness to be involved in school matters. In response, it is claimed that many parents stay away to avoid any humiliation relating to their children's academic and behavioural conditions being discussed in front of other parents (Al-Gharaibeh, 2012). In addition, special education terms used by teachers may sometimes exclude parents' contributions (Hebel & Orly, 2012; Keen, 2007), and families who work long hours may not have the time to engage adequately with teachers (Coots, 2007).

1.4 Statement of the Research Problem

As presented in Table 1.3, students with learning difficulties form the largest disability group in Saudi Arabia and the number is still growing. The evolution of inclusive policy in Saudi Arabia recognises, at least in part, that there needs to be more nuanced ways of framing the role of parents in the education of female students with learning difficulties (Al-alwi, 2006). In Saudi Arabia, there are concerns that parents are not actively involved in their children's education (Alhabeeb, 2016). Parents' educational roles and responsibilities tend to be limited to monitoring children's homework and preparing them for their exams so that they can score high grades (Alhabeeb, 2016). Parent-teacher conferences to inform parents about their children who are struggling academically or exhibiting challenging behaviours

appeared to be the major reasons for involving parents (Al-Anqoodi, 2012; Alhabeeb, 2016; Rashidi, 2002).

In terms of effective education of females with learning difficulties, this is worrying as students with special needs may require more parental involvement to support programme development, resource mobilisation and support (Al-Gharaibeh, 2012). Georgiou (1997) draws attention to an existing problem in researching parental involvement that needs to be addressed, and that is, the complexity and confusion surrounding the concept of parental involvement. He argues that "obviously, one needs to know exactly what something is before one can say what it can do" (Georgiou, 1997, p. 193).

The Saudi government, the Ministry of Education and Special Education services promote parental involvement in the education of students with disabilities to augment teachers' services and increase educational outcomes. Whilst it has been clearly acknowledged that parental involvement in students' education can improve their academic outcomes (Epstein, 2005; Fan & Chen, 2001; Khajehpour & Ghazvini, 2011; LaRocque et al., 2011; Malik, 2012), to date, little progress in this area has been made in Saudi Arabia. Frequently mentioned reasons by previous research for the lack of parental involvement include poor expectation from teachers (Al-Gharaibeh, 2012; Diliberto & Brewer, 2012), humiliation by teachers who sometimes discuss children's issues in front of other parents (Masoud, 2005), parents' limited knowledge of special education (Diliberto & Brewer, 2012), and lack of respect for parents' views (Keen, 2007). In addition, some Saudi special education teachers contact parents only to convey negative information about their children's education (Rashidi, 2002), and some parents felt that it is not their obligations to be fully involved with schools (Al-Gharaibeh, 2012). Parental involvement, in many

ways, transformed the way diverse school communities in UK, Australia and some other European countries assist students with LDs to enhance their educational outcomes (Araújo et al.,2014). For example, in Australia, Povey et al. (2016) claimed that parental involvement led to a reduction in bullying behaviours against students with learning difficulties, increased student attendance and academic performance, positive student behaviour, and school retention. As such, parental involvement is seen as having the potential reach and power to act as educative and supportive human resources for enhancing parent and teachers' efficacy (Daniel, 2011; Epstein, 2005).

In view of the potential benefits that parental participation has for student learning, the limited participation of parents in schools identified by previous studies (Al-Gharaibeh, 2012; Diliberto & Brewer, 2012) in Saudi Arabia cannot be ignored. In order to be able to understand the complexities of sustained, meaningful parental involvement for elementary students with LDs, it is important that a mixed methods study be conducted to determine what and how context-specific parental involvement develops and implement strategies for parents and teachers to work together to enhance the educational outcomes of students with LDs. This research is timely, as a few studies have investigated parental participation in the Saudi Arabian context in relation to parental involvement in the education of elementary school students with LDs.

1.5 Purpose and Significance

Studies indicate that a strong support from parents and teachers can help improve the academic achievement of students with LDs (Khajehpour & Ghazvini,

2011; LaRocque et al., 2011; Malik, 2012). The purpose of this study is, therefore, to explore and critically analyse teachers' and parents' perspectives about parental involvement in Saudi elementary schools to support girls with learning difficulties. The specific objectives are to:

- Obtain teachers' views on their conceptualisations and current practices of parent involvement.

- Document and analyse teachers' and parents' views about the importance of parental involvement, roles, and responsibilities.

- Identify the obstacles to implementing effective parental involvement practices.

Based on these objectives, the following questions were formulated to guide the study:

1. How do elementary school teachers of students with learning difficulties and parents conceptualise parental involvement and their respective roles?

2. What are teachers' attitudes toward parental involvement?

3. What are the experiences and concerns of Saudi elementary school teachers and parents regarding parental involvement?

4. How do teachers and parents describe effective parental involvement?

In terms of significance, the findings provide information for school-based policy making and practice to enhance processes by which parents and teachers can work more collaboratively with students with LDs. Based on this purpose, the study is significant in the following ways. First, it generates a new body of cultural knowledge that can be used to provide professional development for teachers to

work with parents so that they can be more involved in their children's education. It is argued that a more informed approach based on research findings is more likely to yield meaningful outcomes for all parties concerned (Breckon & Dodson, 2016). Second, it revitalises the discourse on parental involvement in the policy-making context. Policy analysts and researchers can make inappropriate assumptions and arrive at flawed conclusions if they are insensitive to parents. Third, it extends theoretical insights into parental participation.

1.6 Scope of the Research

This research focused on students with learning difficulties at the elementary school level (6-12 years) in Riyadh, the capital city of Saudi Arabia. Only female teachers who teach students with LDs and parents of children diagnosed as LDs participated in this research.

1.7 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is divided in to seven chapters. Chapter One, provides information on the background, research context, problem statements and research questions. The significance and structure of the thesis concludes this chapter.

Chapter Two is the detailed literature review that focuses on conceptual and empirical reviews of contemporary issues on parental involvement, learning difficulties as well as parental involvement practices. Chapter Three presents the theoretical framework followed by the methodology in Chapter Four.

In Chapter five, the results from the quantitative and qualitative phases of the study are reported, followed by discussion of the findings in Chapter Six. Chapter

Seven summarised the study and provides specific recommendations with conclusion.

2 Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Parental participation has been a closely studied area of research in inclusive education globally (Blok, Peetsma & Roede, 2007; El Shourbagi, 2017; Ferguson, 2004; Jafarov, 2015; Sukys, Dumciene & Lapeniene, 2015). Research into parental participation in the area of inclusive education typically focuses on how parental participation can support students' learning to enhance their academic achievement (Afolabi, 2014). This chapter presents a narrative review of relevant literature highlighting the concepts, beliefs, and practices of parental participation in school.

In this study, I used a narrative or traditional approach to the review of the literature to present previous knowledge on parental involvement in schools pertaining to educational issues of students with learning difficulties in general, benefits of parental participation and factors that contribute or inhibit parental involvement (Onwuegbuzie, & Frels, 2016). I searched for studies published on parental involvement in school in Web of Science (ISI), Google Scholar, Scopus (Elsevier), ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global and Exeter University online journals using Boolean operators of keywords and educational subject headings. Examples of these are parental involvement OR participation AND education AND randomised control trials; parental involvement AND school performance AND control trials OR longitudinal; female students AND learning difficulty OR learning disability; and parental involvement AND barriers OR challenges. I searched for a combination of articles for example, randomised experimental control trial studies, case studies, and descriptive studies pertaining to parental participation in the

education of female students with learning difficulty. Finally, I hand searched the reference sections of related articles that were identified through the search engines.

2.2 Conceptualising Learning Difficulty and Challenges for Students with LD

As presented in Chapter 1, the purpose of this study is to explore female elementary teachers' and parents' perspectives regarding parental participation in the education of students with learning difficulties in Saudi Arabia.

The home and school contexts collaboratively provide unique influence on student learning and achievement. Generally, "parental participation in education refers to the ways that parents attempt to support and manage their children's educational experiences" (Crosnoe, 2010, p. 2). In terms of inclusive education of students with learning difficulties, Dearing, Kreider, Simpkins and Weiss (2006) claimed that parental participation can promote student resilience and academic success.

In this study, parent participation is conceptualised as a respectful partnership between school community members and parents to support the education of their students. Respectful in this sense means, embedding a culture of respect and equality across the entire inclusive school community. Respectful partnerships value parents' participation by giving them adequate information about school practices (Dearing, McCartney, Weiss, Kreider & Simpkins, 2004). This may, in turn, empower parents to support schools with resources and their children's learning at home. Dearing et al. (2006) suggest that parental participation can be measured by the quality and frequency of communication with teachers and the ways parents participate in school functions and activities. In addition, parents' dispositions and

aspirations regarding their children's education have been found to contribute to their participation in school programmes (Catsambis, 2001; Englund, Luckner, Whaley & Egeland, 2004; Mahmoud, 2018). Overall, parental involvement or participation is related to parental support in a child's education in which two important contexts in a child's education (home and school) are brought together (El Shourbagi, 2017).

2.3   Role of Parental Participation with Children with LD

Parents play a critical role in the education of their children through the sharing of relevant cultural and development related information to schools (Al-Gharaibeh, 2012; Epstein, 2010). Many teachers of students with learning difficulties affirmed and emphasised the roles of parents' participation in their children's education by suggesting that parents have important skills, knowledge, and resources that can be harnessed to support their children's learning in school (Keen, 2007; Lee & Bowen, 2006; Malone ,2015).

For example, results of longitudinal studies suggest that the relationship between behaviour problems and reading difficulties starts before school. If targeted early interventions are not provided these children go on to develop reading difficulties with associated behaviour problems at the beginning of school, which lead on to poor reading performance (Jorm, Share, Matthews & McLean, 1986; Park & Holloway, 2017; Stevens, 2018). Olsen and Fuller (2008) suggest that parents' contributions to school practices can provide a strong complementary role in their children's learning and behaviour management. Findings from other studies suggest that apart from formal contributions to school practices, parents play informal roles in their children's education by encouraging their children to go to school (El Nokali et al., 2010; Epstein, 2009). Although not all parents will have the professional

knowledge of teachers to contribute to individual education plans or diagnosis, they have other opportunities in the informal aspects of schooling that their contribution could be valued (Kologon, 2014).

2.4 Issues of Parental Participation with Children with Learning Difficulties

When parents have the opportunity to participate in the education of their children with learning difficulties they may be able to deal with several issues and share in the effects of learning difficulty that their children have (Resch et al., 2010). Families who are not aware that their children have learning difficulties may try to deal with all the learning challenges their children have on their own even before seeking professional help (Olsen & Fuller, 2008). The frustrations parents face trying to make sense of why their children are not making gains in their learning can instigate psychological distresses for parents (Lockhart's, 2003; Resch et al., 2010). According to Dyson (1996), the presence of one child with learning difficulties in a family can create enormous psychological and physical stress for parents, and shape the lifestyle of the family and the interaction between siblings. Warner (1999) conducted a study on children with severe learning difficulty in Bangladesh and found that a child with learning difficulty within a family unit exerted social and cultural effects on the attitudes of the parents towards the child with learning difficulties and their satisfaction about the schools these students attended. The social and cultural effects were related to the cultural norms of Bangladesh that ridicule students with learning difficulties. Antony-Newman (2019) suggested that when schools provide information to parents about their children's learning in their local language their overall engagement with schools is likely to increase.

Some schools use resource rooms to provide support for students with disabilities. A resource room refers to a separate, remedial learning space or classroom in a general education school where students with disabilities, such as specific learning difficulties receive direct, specialised instruction and academic assistance from special education teachers (Bulgren, 2002). According to some studies, resource rooms provide some comfort for parents with students with learning difficulties as they regard such a support system as improving their children's academic standards (Alqahtani, 2015; Weiner, 1999). However, Bulgren's (2002) US study claimed that not all parents were satisfied with what the resource room provided to students with learning difficulties because the resource rooms did not sufficiently meet the socio-emotional needs of students with learning difficulties due to them being isolated from the rest of the group. Bulgren's (2002) study again demonstrated that due to the low-teacher student ratio in rural areas, parents were more satisfied with the services schools provided to students with learning difficulties there than in the urban areas. Although this study was conducted in the US, its findings can be applied to the current study because Saudi Arabia uses resource rooms to provide learning support for students with learning difficulties and other disabilities.

In the US, the resource room may operate as a categorical, cross-categorical, non-categorical, specific-skills, and itinerant. Student support may be provided at five levels such as:

- Station oriented model: in this model, the room arrangement is divided into stations that contain specific content area materials such as a

reading, maths, computer and, and writing centres where students work with their specific IEP goals.

- Whole-Group Area: this focuses on whole-class lessons and includes direct instruction, informal discussion and student presentations.

- Small-Group Area: in this, model teachers give small-group instruction in addition to peer-led discussions or collaborative learning experiences and projects.

- Reading & Writing Area: this approach is used for remedial reading activities independently or with a partner.

- Testing Area: this provides a quiet space for working on tests or other learning activities (Bender, 2008).

Saudi Arabia on the other hand, operates exclusively with the categorical resource room model in which students with special needs are grouped according to their disability labels (Al-Zoubi & Bani Abdel Rahman, 2012, 2016). On the issue of whether to educate students with learning difficulties in special or inclusive schools, in Elkins, Kraayenoord and Jobling's (2003) study, the majority of parents in Australia preferred to have their children educated in inclusive schools than in special education schools. This is supported by B'airat's (2005) study in Jordan, which claimed that parents were satisfied with the mainstreaming of their children with learning difficulties in the regular schools because of the quality of the support provided to those students. Another study by Fraihat (2007), which explored the effectiveness of resource room service provision in Najran area in Saudi Arabia from the perspective of parents and regular teachers of children with learning difficulties,

claimed that the parents and the regular teachers are very satisfied with the services provided to the students with learning difficulties in the resource rooms. However, some parents still hold negative views that participation in a resource room brings shame to the family. This is because those parents felt that their children did not possess the same potentials as the other children, and as such, they were pulled out to participate in resource rooms (Somaily, Al-Zoubi & Abdel Rahman, 2012).

According to Fraihat (2007), lack of in-depth knowledge of learning difficulties and the perceived role of the resource room in supporting children's academic, social and emotional development can compound parents' negative attitudes toward resource room practices. In this way, families of children with learning difficulties may refuse to accept the fact that their children need support, assistance, and the idea of their children joining the resource room (Al-Khateeb & Hadidi, 2009). The findings of Somaily et al.'s (2012) study in Saudi Arabia suggested that parents who attended resource rooms regularly to see what teachers were doing for their children were satisfied with the resource room services that their children with learning difficulties received. However, Alqahtani (2015) claimed that Saudi teachers generally complained about poor parental participation in resource room activities to support their children.

For lack of parental participation in resource rooms, Shechtman and Gilat (2005) strongly stressed the need for counselling programmes in lightening the psychological stress parents of children with learning difficulties experience on daily basis. It is argued that training programmes that support parents to understand why their children are experiencing learning difficulties can be effective in changing their negative perceptions about their children (Khrais, 2004). The analysis of the

literature so far highlights the complexity of inclusive provision for students with learning difficulties and the need for a better understanding of parental participation.

2.5   The Benefits of Parental Participation

It is claimed that students with special education needs including those with learning difficulties benefit most when their families become actively involved with schools (Funkhouse & Gonzalez, 1997; Malik, 2012). In this regard, this section examines the benefits of parental participation, the different ways parents can become involved, the barriers to participation, and strategies that schools can use to involve all families and increase student achievement. Some studies suggest that quality education is at the heart of most parents and has been one of the influential factors why many parents involve themselves in school programmes that their child attends (Epstein, 2009; Malik, 2012). According to Giroux (2004),

> educational work at its best represents a response to questions and issues posed by the tensions and contradictions posed by the broader society; it is an attempt to understand and intervene in specific problems that emanate from those sites that people concretely inhabit and actually live out their lives and everyday existence (p. 41).

Teachers' understanding of the key roles that parents play in the education of their children is essential for building a strong parent-school collaboration (Epstein, 2009). Some authors claimed that through a strong collaboration between school and home teachers and parents can mutually set high expectations for students (Gestwicki, 2016; Jones, 2001). When parents become effectively involved in their children's education, there is potential benefit to schools, students, and communities (Caplan, 2000; Epstein et al., 2018). However, findings from studies that investigated the effect of parental involvement on children's educational outcomes are mixed. A

randomized control trial with pre- and post-measurements that evaluated the effectiveness of a training programme for parents to support their children's reading at home showed significant effect of the intervention on the children's word reading and writing skills, as well as parents' use of reading strategies with their children (Sylva, Scott, Totsika, Ereky-Stevens & Crook, 2008). Similarly, successive large-scale studies have shown a strong association between parental involvement and school outcomes across all age ranges (Cooper et at., 2010; Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2008).

A Family School Partnership programme that trained 222 teachers to train parents in behavioural management skills and literacy and numeracy skills was found to be beneficial in enhancing family school collaborations (Bradshaw et al. 2009). Parents' participation in classrooms in the early years of children education was found to be beneficial to increasing the children's school attainment (Reynolds et al. 2011).

In a randomised control trial study, Cross, et al. (2018) found that "a whole-school capacity-building intervention in early and middle childhood can improve the likelihood and frequency of positive parent–child communication about bullying". Regarding a combination of parental training with parental support, Reynolds et al. (2004) investigated parental training, home support, classroom strategies and a range of comprehensive services, such as health and nutrition services and found positive effects on attendance and high school completion. On the provision of educational and family support, Reynolds et al.'s (2011) study found positive effects on educational attainment in terms of staying on in school, on-time graduation, and attendance. McDonald et al. (2006) found that family support that involved working

closely with schools to get families together to form a support group, and empower parents to protect their child from risks while they are young had positive effects on academic achievements and social skills of students.

In another study, a family support intervention aimed to prevent dropout and support parents in helping them to track and monitor their children's performance had mixed findings. While there was positive effect on reducing dropout, no effect was realised on reducing absenteeism and no conclusive effect on academic achievement could be drawn (Garlington, 1991). Similarly, a study involving home-school collaboration that focused on a family support programme which trained service workers to help parents engage in their children's learning found no effect on school development delays; however, there was positive effect on parental involvement for Black children and negative effect on White children using untrained workers only (Harvey, 2011). Also, a home–school collaboration to encourage parents to be involved in children's maths homework had no effect (Balli et al. 1997). Again, an intervention project involving parents working with children at home with computers with an adult family member to facilitate learning in at home showed no evidence of effect on maths performance (Tsikalas et al. 2008). Herts's (1990) evaluation of a school-collaboration programme involving parents helping their children to read at home using prescribed activities did not show that parental involvement was beneficial to the children's reading.

A Nuffield Foundation report on parental involvement suggests that there is no good-quality evidence that parental involvement interventions result in improved educational outcomes, in most age groups and for most approaches. This has been attributed to the quality of studies in this area which often conflated other variables

with parental involvement in children's learning making it difficult to ascertain the actual effect of parental involvement on children's learning outcomes(El Shourbagi, 2017). Despite these mixed findings, it is claimed that strong home-school relationships help stakeholders to focus on issues that are of high importance to parents and schools (Caplan, 2000; El Shourbagi, 2017; Perez, 2018).

Education is a process that involves sharing and interaction hence, parents and teachers are the most important educators in children's lives and the educational process (Dubis & Bernadowski, 2014). Positive teacher relations can build family capacity in order to contribute to improving learning outcomes for students with learning difficulty (Benner, Boyle & Sadler, 2016; Mahmoud, 2018). Al-Gharaibeh (2012) reiterates that information provided to school teachers can help in designing appropriate learning programmes for students with LD overcome the challenges they may be facing in school. Al-Gharaibeh, (2012) claimed that using relevant information from parents to tailor educational programmes to the specific needs of students with LD can facilitate meeting their educational goals because teaching and learning can be adapted to their cultural needs. Dubis and Bernadowski (2014) suggest that parental participation implies not only influencing children's educational programmes but also participating in school events, meetings and contacting teachers on what has been done in school so that parents can help their children at home. In Gallagher, Rhodes and Darling (2004) view, parental participation can be vital to the process of defining a child's individual educational plan to ensure the specific circumstances and concerns of the student are represented and addressed. Also, parental participation can help students with learning difficulties to develop positive attitudes toward their education as well as

significantly improve their attendance (Al-Shalalfa, Al-Atoum & Al-Jarrah, 2018; Fan & Chen, 2001).

According to (Rafiq, Fatima, Sohail, Saleem & Khan ,2013, p.5), "parental involvement in a child's education along with environmental and economic factors may affect child development in areas such as cognition, language, and social skills". Parents can contribute to the process of planning a child's individual educational plan to ensure their specific needs and concerns of the students are identified and addressed (Alqahtani, 2015; Russell, 2004). Studies suggest that parental participation contributes to improving school attendance among some students with learning difficulty (Baum & Swick, 2008; Epstein, 2007, 2008; Fan & Chen, 2001; Malik, 2012). When parents of LD students work in partnership with teachers, they increase their self-confidence as they learn more about their children's needs, which they can translate into developing effective and beneficial strategies for working with their children such as supporting teachers to manage challenging behaviours (Anderson & Minke, 2007; Emerson, Fear, Fox & Sanders, 2012; Epstein & Sheldon, 2006).

Thatcher (2012) reiterates that parental participation is critically important for the education of students with learning difficulties; not only for students themselves but also for both parents and teachers. According to Gallagher et al. (2004), parents who participate in the education process can support teachers in managing their students' behaviour which is likely to increase the efficiency of the educational process both inside and outside of the classroom. Zafar et al. (2010) argued that when parents of students with learning difficulties work in partnership with teachers, they can learn more about their children's needs, which they can translate into

developing effective and beneficial strategies for working with their children. Such collaborative practices can help these parents increase their self-confidence about their ability to improve their children's education. This is particularly possible when teachers provide adequate and timely feedback to parents on school programmes (Rafiq et al., 2013).

Studies have claimed that strong parental participation in their children's school programme increases their educational achievement. These authors explained their findings in terms of the support and motivation those children received from their parents (Lagace-Seguin & Case, 2010; Malone, 2015). However, See and Gorard (2015) argue that increased parental involvement should be conceptualised in terms of a wider approach involving formal schooling to be effective.

It is further explained that the educational achievement resulting from parental participation are more related to younger children who may be more motivated by their families working together to educate them (Thatcher, 2012). Other studies reiterated that parental participation in children's education can increase socialisation and motivation to learn and possibly enable students to receive higher grades and test scores (Mahmoud, 2018; Perez, 2018). Similarly, Van Voorhis's (2003) intervention study examining the effects of weekly interactive science homework on student achievement, homework attitudes, and family involvement in homework involving 253 6th- and 8th-grade students found that interactive students reported significantly higher levels of family involvement than did non-interactive students. In addition, students in both groups who more regularly involved family members completed more assignments, turned in more accurate assignments than those who were not involve with parents. Also, interactive students obtained

significantly higher science scores than those who were not involved in the parents' interactive programme.

However, Baş, Şentürk and Ciğerci's (2017) meta-analysis of 88 non-duplicate studies published between 2000 and 2015 on homework and academic achievement identified that homework assignments had a small effect size (d = 0.229) on students' academic achievement levels. Several studies claimed that quality parental participation leads to increased graduation from elementary school with more possibilities of continuing education post-elementary programmes (Anderson, & Minke, 2007; Funkhouse & Gonzalez, 1997; Riggins-Newby, 2004; Thatcher, 2012).

A partnership between schools and parents can empower parents to get to know more about school programmes, challenges, and possibilities and how they can support schools (Drake, 2000; Feiler, 2010; Moorman, 2002). Nistler and Maiers' (2000) research identified that parental participation increased parental confidence to believe in their own capabilities to support their children with classroom assignments. Its suggested that apart from parental benefits, teachers have tremendous benefit when parent participation is respectful and strong (Jafarov, 2015). Concerning students with learning difficulties, school staff have potential gains to make in terms of becoming aware of the ways they can build on family strengths and students' learning profiles to support their educational success (Epstein & Jansorn, 2004; Epstein, 2010). According to Hornby and Lafaele (2011, P.38),

> despite widespread acknowledgement of these potential benefits; however, there are clear gaps between the rhetoric on parental

participation found in the literature and typical parental participation practices found in schools.

2.6   Different Types of Parent Participation

There are diverse ways and processes that parents can be involved with schools in the education of their children. The National Parent Teacher Association in the US, for example, identified the following six types of parent participation – parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and collaborating with community - as National Standards for Parent Participation Programmes (Epstein & Jansorn, 2004).

2.6.1   Parent Education

Parent participation continues to challenge educators as schools move to build strong ties with parents as part of inclusive school reform and improvement initiatives (Drake, 2000). The benefits of parent participation are well-documented and that successful parent participation can improve not only student attendance and behaviour but also possibly increase student achievement (Drake, 2000; Jafarov, 2015; Wilder, 2014). Successful parental participation is based on the form of education that schools provide to parents to enable them gain a sense of what is required of them (Van Voorhis, 2003).

Parental education; therefore, is related to ongoing education programmes that promote and support families to build positive home environments that support learning including information on topics including safety and health, nutrition, and discipline so student can arrive at school well fed, well rested, and clothed (Al-Shalalfa et al., 2018; Drake, 2000). Many schools are now taking concrete steps to

share their vision and practices with parents and families, envisioning that parents are partners in the learning process (Lagace-Seguin & Case, 2010; Perez, 2018). Effective education programmes provide assurance to parents and minimise parental discomfort with schools. Some parents may experience discomfort when they are not familiar with school procedures and policies and the specific requirements regarding their roles (Jafarov, 2015). Schools with a genuine commitment to parent participation take an active role in educating parents about school programmes and the various opportunities available to them to be involved in their children's education (Alshammari, 2017; Jafarov, 2015). In addition, parent education can enable parents to build the knowledge repertoire required to support their children's learning at home and at school as well as how to communicate their children's academic needs to teachers (Sheldon & Epstein, 2005).

Schools vary in their policies and practices and as such may use various process for parental education. Schools may use workshops, collaborative seminars, and brainstorming meetings to help parents learn about classrooms activities (Borgonovi & Montt, 2012). Some parents may go to the resource room or the general education classrooms to support their children's reading programmes or discuss with teachers the preferred methods of their children's learning (Epstein & Salinas, 2004). Research suggests that when teachers provide guidelines for parents on how to support their children's learning at home, for example, specific information about what to look for in their children's work, they are able to dispense greater efforts in helping their children (Sheldon & Epstein, 2005).

According to Sheldon and Epstein (2005), school homework and assignments in which parents participate may lead to higher levels of achievement. A Saudi study

found that instead of supporting their children complete homework, some parents admitted completing the work for their students with disabilities (Mahmoud, 2018). Parental support does not mean that parents should complete the work for their children, although this may be the case with some parents. Support implies providing guide to children as well as encouraging and removing barriers to their participation (Sheldon & Epstein, 2005; Epstein et al., 2018).

Education programmes must also focus on teachers and address their feeling of unpreparedness to effectively involve parents (El Nokali, et al., 2010; Thatcher, 2012). It is argued that structured visits to students' homes, establishing trust, and having discussions about ways in which families can support their children with the material they are learning in school can lead to productive parental participation outcomes such as a reduction in discipline problems and increases in attendance rates, and academic achievements (Caplan, 2000; Jafarov, 2015). While this may be possible in some rural settings because of teacher and parent proximity, making this a requirement for teachers may be over-reaching their professional boundaries. While there is the need for parental participation for schools to thrive, clear and mutually agreed guidelines by both teachers and parents have been identified factors that ensure teachers and parents are comfortable with their respective roles (El Nokali, et al., 2010).

2.6.2 Communication between Schools and Parents

A crucial aspect of parental participation is effective communication between families and schools. Some researchers argued that the success or failure of parental participation depends on the nature and processes schools use to engage parents to know about the school that their children attend (Epstein et al., 2018;

Thatcher, 2012). Studies have suggested that schools that have a well-established process to share relevant information with each other about students and school programmes are more successful in achieving quality parental participation (Alobaid, 2018; Thatcher, 2012; Viadero, 1997). Drake (2000) advises that schools must adopt openness and flexibility with parents to encourage regular information sharing on important school and family issues to enhance children's progress.

Effective communication requires active listening and a two-way information flow. Thatcher (2012) is of the view that when schools develop a variety of information sharing channels such as newsletters, web sites, press releases and feedback boxes they are able to reach more parents with school-related information. Studies suggest that the use of technology such as smart phones communication Apps, emails and skype can improve communication between schools and parents (Dubis & Bernadowski, 2014; Thatcher, 2012). Information sharing from schools to parents is one way to inform parents about current happenings in their children's classes and ways they can contribute to their education (Anderson & Minke, 2007; Epstein et al., 2018).

There is variability in parents' knowledge levels, beliefs, attitudes, behaviours and family practices (Agbenyega & Tamakloe, 2014; Avvisati et al., 2010). Therefore, schools need to develop communication processes according to the needs of parents. For example, emails may not work for some parents and likewise some parents may not prefer to be called on the phone but would prefer a face-to-face meeting with teachers. The most important consideration for school is to communicate using relevant strategies that convey what is important in a way that can be understood and heard by families and parents (Dyches, Carter & Prater,

2011). Research findings indicate that the mode and topic of communication and how teachers interact with parents can affect the quality and extent of parents' participation with their children's learning (Avvisati et al., 2010; Bulgren, 2002). For example, Bulgren (2002) posited that schools that communicated bad news about student performance more often to parents discouraged those parents from participating actively in school matters. Similarly, Al-shammari (2017) opines that when parents feel they are being blamed for the lack of progress of their children, their participation in school matters can decline.

Effective communication between schools and parents can be a motivating factor for parents to be involved in their children's education because through effective communication, they learn more about the school and its programmes as well as get ideas from school on how to help and support their children. Communication processes that value parents' input benefit parents by enabling them build more confidence about the value of their school participation (Dyches et al., 2011).

Teachers need to initiate contact with parents through a variety of means as soon as they are aware of the students they are responsible for in their classrooms. Effective communication also thrives on timeliness of information, and consistency and frequency of information (Dotger, Harris, Maher & Hansel, 2011). According to Bluestein's (2001) study, warmth, child/young person- centredness, approachability, positive discipline, effective classroom management, trust and reliability are teacher attributes that can possibly invite parents to communicate with teachers. Research further identified that most parents want frequent, ongoing feedback about how their children are performing with schoolwork and they also wanted a follow-through, that

is doing what schools said they will do (Dyches et al., 2011). Another important feature of effective communication is clarity and usefulness. In this sense, teachers and parents are required to have the information they need to help students, in a form and language that makes sense to them (Dolger, Harris, Maher & Hansel, 2011). It is argued that a strengths-based approach in conversations with parents may ensure that challenging issues are dealt with in a tactful manner during parent-teacher conversations (Dyches et al., 2011). Dolger et al. (2011) suggests that parents are motivated to be part of school programmes when teachers value their perspectives and incorporate them into their decision-making. Research reiterates that being aware of how cultural differences may affect communication and help teachers to prepare before interacting with parents (Dyches et al., 2011).

2.6.3 Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteering encourages parents to take part in non-compulsory activities at their own discretion and time frame. This may include school events, meetings, classroom activities as support readers and field trips (Caplan, 2000; Staples & Diliberto, 2010). Successful parent-participation programmes are usually developed in response to specific needs of the schools or their communities and are both flexible and focused on addressing that need (Caplan, 2000; Epstein et al. 2018). A strategy that works in one school may not be the best choice for another, therefore schools may need to develop flexible approaches in collaboration with parents to encourage them to volunteer their time (Al-shammari, 2017). According to Staples and Diliberto (2010) school programmes that are developed in collaboration with parents are more likely to be successful than those that schools alone develop and impose on parents.

2.6.4 At-home Learning Activities

At-home learning opportunities are crucial to supporting students with learning difficulties as it recognises the importance of home-based support in student achievement (Alobaid, 2018). Parents can assist by monitoring homework, and helping with classroom assignments (Caplan, 2000; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2001). As parents become involved in at-home learning activities, they can support their children to learn time management and organisation skill (Ferguson, 2004). It may however be challenging for parents with low-levels of education or who had their education long time ago who do not possess adequate knowledge on contemporary subjects to provide adequate homework support to their child with LDs. In addition, some parents may have low technological skills and be challenged by use of technology to help their children's learning if the homework requires the use of assistive technological devices (Tamakloe & Agbenyega, 2017).

2.6.5 Decision-making Opportunities

Students with learning difficulties may experience daily challenges when they study with their peers. Research suggest that providing opportunities for parents to make informed decisions regarding the school's programme practice can have beneficial effects (McGaw & Newman, 2005). Opportunity for decision-making provides the space for parents to look at different ways their children with LD's experience can be addressed. It is argued that recognising and addressing power differentials when working with parents can reduce parents' feeling of disempowerment and marginalisation in formal decision-making within the school (Hill, 2000).

According to McGaw and Newman (2005), whenever there is a feeling of unequal power relations, parents will tend to conclude that schools have already taken decisions and they have nothing more to contribute. Gestwicki (2016) points out that outdated forms of school organisation in which schools make decisions without involving parents can lead to parental disengagement. Importantly, honesty, fairness, reliability and demonstrations of concern and sensitivity to parents as individuals have been argued to promote their involvement in decision-making (Emerson, Malam, Davies & Spencer, 2005; Dolger et al., 2011). As such schools need to empower them to contribute to decision making by serving in various roles as parent-teacher-student organisations, school committees and school advisory councils (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005).

2.6.6 Collaborating with the Community

Ability to collaborate with the community recognises schools as part of the wider community hence, the need to be connected with local agencies, cultural groups, businesses, and community organisations (Alobaid, 2018). Such collaborative engagements can position families as advocates for the schools their students attend and support efforts to increase support for school resources (McDermott-Fasy, 2009; Mislan, Kosnin & Yeo, 2009). Generally, researchers classify these parent participation processes as *home-based* parent participation and *school-based* parent participation (Alobaid, 2018; Deplanty, Coulter-Kern & Duchane, 2007; Pomerantz, Moorman & Litwack, 2007).

2.7 Barriers to Parental Participation

There are several benefits that schools and families can derive from parental participation in schools. However, researchers have identified several factors that

can reduce parent involvement in school programmes (Staples & Diliberto, 2010). Education practices and parent involvment exist in societies inhabited by people of different ideologies, beliefs, "established positions and social rules, they do not take place in a social vacuum, free from any element of dominance and power" (Hermans & Geiser, 2012, p. 9). In this sense, parents' participation in education is structured and constrained by societal, family and school traditions, and processes. Various factors are documented by previous research as the drivers of the quality of parental participation which can be grouped into three main divisions as parent-related factors, school-related factors and student-related factors (Jafarov, 2015).

2.7.1 Parent-related Barriers

Parent-related factors entail a complex area and deal with a host of socio-economic, cultural and personal issues (Benner et al., 2016; LaRocque et al., 2011). Liontos (1992) for example, claimed that socio-economic variations among families and differences in attitudes, beliefs, values and personal dispositions are critical issues that make parental participation in school a complex pursuit. According to Tatcher (2012), the "degrees of social capital, or the ability to form the professional relationships needed to achieve positive outcomes for students, is affected by economic, ethnic, and social factors" (p. 10). Goodall and Voorhaus's (2011) review of best practices across contexts on parental involvement found that while middle-class families tend to have culturally supportive social networks, command respect from teachers and usually understand school process better because of their higher educational attainment, lower class parents or those considered at the margins of society are often disengaged and ostracised from school participation.

Some other studies claimed that parents' employment situations, for example, working for long hours can reduce the available time to participate in school matters (Coots, 2007; Ludicke & Kortman, 2012). In addition, some parents may not be willing to share sensitive developmental and learning information with teachers because of confidential and cultural issues. This is more common in Saudi Arabia and most middle eastern countries who prefer to keep family issues away from schools (Aldabas, 2015; El Shourbagi, 2017).

El Shourbagi (2017) claimed that teachers' use of special education terminologies that parents do not understand coupled with school administrative factors can create difficulty for parental engagement with teachers. According to previous research, teachers use special education terms such as resources room, inclusive pedagogy and integration that confused parents and disengaged them from participating in school activities (Al-Gharaibeh, 2012; Alqahtani, 2015; Lo, 2008; Stoner et al., 2005).

Other studies claimed that parents with low educational levels may lack the necessary sets of skills and knowledge to assist their children with homework or contribute to discussions when they attend parent-teacher meetings (Baeck, 2010; Lee &Bowen, 2006; Pena, 2000). In Hu, Wang and Fei's (2012) study in China, low-income parents were reported to have been confused about their children's disability placement and classifications while some parents also indicated that the special education process was overly complex, cumbersome and overwhelming because of their lower educational attainment. A study by El Shourbagi (2017) in Oman suggested that although teachers tried to find different ways to involve parents more in the school activities of their children, the parents complained about lack of time,

the presence of baby at home, and their working hours. As a result of these barriers, parents rarely took part in any school activities.

According to Pena (2000), some parents may have limited financial resources to travel to school for meetings and / or participate in school activities. Others may be working full time in distant locations that may make a full commitment to school activities very difficult (Alqahtani, 2015). Research also documents that parents' previous negative school experiences or hostile professional teachers' attitudes contribute to lack of parental participation (McDermott-Fasy, 2009). In addition, when parents are unsure of the value of their contributions to school practice their urge to participate can decline (Goodall & Vorhaus, 2011; Lee & Bowen, 2006). Some studies have identified barriers such as parental insecurity due to a feeling of self-inadequacy and being suspicious of the idea that teachers are shirking their professional responsibility, passing it on to parents (Deslandes & Bertrand, 2005; Jones, 2001; Liontos, 1992).

While some studies have claimed that high-income parents are more often involved in school activities than low-income parents (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991; Domina, 2005; Jafarov, 2015), some other researchers differed in their findings that parents' income level is not a contributing factor to their level of participation in school programmes (Shaver & Walls, 1998). The researchers attributed this success to the school leadership in adjusting their programmes to meet parents' needs. The literature also mentioned family structure, that is single parents are more likely to have limited time to dispense to visit their children at school or participate in school activities especially when they also have work commitments (Jordan, Orozco & Averett, 2002). It can be argued that marital disruption is a key barrier to participation

and in some cases may compound the issue of learning difficulties due to new parenting styles that have to be introduced when families break down (Cooper et al., 2000; Hornby & Lafaele, 2011).

2.7.2 School-related Barriers

Tissot (2011), writing on the placement of students with autism in UK explained that many parents "found the process bureaucratic, stressful and time consuming. Any alternative placement suggestions were viewed to be for financial reasons only" (p.1). The complexity was associated with different "considerations necessary to determine what is best for an individual child and often struggle with conflicting tensions between the goals of inclusion and the merits of individual settings" (Tissot, 2011, p. 1).

In addition to bureaucratic hurdles, parents complained about the process of assessment and admission as excessively time consuming (Tissot, 2011). In a recent study in the US on parental participation with schools, Perez (2018) found that the diversity of student population such as linguistic levels, learning preferences and behavioural characteristics makes it complex for teachers to meet all parents' needs. Other issues identified by this study included teachers' issue of working with parents as an additional burden when they have to attend to cultural diversity School staff and teachers had not been trained to work with parents. Some teachers also tend to misinterpret or consider parents as lacking the necessary skills to be involved in school matters. Malone (2015) argues that misinterpreting parents deficient in knowledge and skills necessary to support their children's education because of their cultural background could pose a serious barrier to effective school-parent participation. Viewing parents' contribution purely in academic sense is rather

regarded as a narrow conceptualisation of parental-school relationship (Perez, 2018). It is documented that parents with low academic attainment spend time talking to their children about school matters, support their children by getting them ready for school and participate in their children's extra-curricular activities such as excursions and field visits (Caplan, 2000; Perez, 2018).

Teachers expressed positive views on parental participation in terms of the unique contributions they can make to students with LDs to enhance their education and behaviour (Mislan et al., 2009). Teachers also expressed reservations and tension regarding parental participation and mentioned parents' lack of professional knowledge to participate in school activities. This resonates with many other studies (Al-Gharaibeh, 2012; Hebel & Orly, 2012; Keen, 2007). These perspectives appeared to be judgemental and can affect the ways teachers work with parents. Some researchers argued that teachers who express negative perceptions about parents find it difficult to reach out to parents beyond school open days, which can inhibit parental participation (Alobaid, 2018; Baum & Swick, 2008; Cullingford & Morrison, 1999). Similarly, misconceptions about parents' abilities based on their educational backgrounds may lead to lack of engagement with some parents because every parent has their own social and cultural capital that they can contribute to the educational process of their children (Epstein et al., 2002). It is argued that poorly educated families support their children's learning by talking with their children about school, monitoring homework and making and emphasising the importance and level of education they expect their children to attain (Baeck, 2010; Alhabeeb, 2016; Al-shammari, 2017). Recognising the informal contributions parents can make to the educational process can move the debate away from

participating in classroom and curriculum issues. Thus, the need to engage in joint and clear communication to determine how everyone's ideas can be effectively applied cannot be overstated (Epstein & Sanders, 2006).

According to findings from previous studies demanding work, administrative schedules and multifaceted school responsibilities can diminish teachers' time and inhibit their ability to engage actively with parents, hence a need for a school-wide policy on how schools can support teachers to plan for collaboration between parents and schools (Ludicke & Kortman, 2012; Westwood, 2008). Where the whole school considers parental participation as a crucial policy imperative, effective programmes can be developed to improve children's outcomes through teacher-parent participation (Blackmore & Hutchison, 2010; Sanders, 1996; Sanders & Lewis, 2005).

Aldabas (2015), writing on special education initiatives in Saudi Arabia and areas that need reform, draws attention to teacher perceived barriers of lack of parent mobility because of Saudi laws prevent mothers from driving. The study indicated that this problem can be factored into a school-wide planning programme and develop innovative ways by which to engage parents including the use of current mobile technological platforms for communication. According to Epstein and Sanders (2006), policies that are developed with community inputs can have profound impact in supporting effective teacher-parent partnerships. Another study in Saudi Arabia suggests that often, schools are not familiar with the complex communication styles of diverse families and tended to be judgemental about parents' lack of participation (Somaily et al., 2012). This resonates with Liontos's (1992) position that the lack of culturally responsive approach to communication can

create dissonance between teachers and families which and compromise the parent participation process.

In Antony-Newman's (2019) view some teachers tend to use academic language that parents may find it difficult to understand. This is consistent Hebel and Orly's (2012) position that the use of unfamiliar jargons and/or special education concepts can limit the capacity of some parents to foster and contribute to the creation of new and innovative meanings and solve problems collaboratively with teachers. Similarly, Bourdieu's (1993) notion of linguistic capital provides insights into how language may be used consciously or unconsciously as a tool to control and disempower parents. Bourdieu (1991) argues that institutions and policy makers can manipulate language to exert authority thereby failing to recognise the everyday cultural language of minorities. For example, if schools use technical language that parents could not understand, it can lead to ostracising as well as symbolises less recognition for their linguistic capital. Parents use the language they understand best to negotiate ways to gain, retain and communicate a sense of self, belonging and competence in engaging with others about their needs and desires (Bourdieu, 1993).

Thus, the inability of teachers to recognise the complexity and persuasive power of language can compromise teacher-parent relations and damage parental participation in school. It is argued that "every time we use language we invoke and reconstruct the broader cultural, social and political meanings of dominant discourses" (Robinson & Jones Diaz, 2005, p. 121).

The special education field is an example of this as it is full of complex and varied linguistic terms. More often than not one term may mean more than one thing, for example, the term 'inclusion' means many things to different teachers. In addition,

some teachers may have difficulty communicating critical matters about children to their parents and may damage relationships during the communicative process (Aronson, 1996). Attitudes of some teachers when communication to parents have also been identified to stray parents from participating in school programmes (McDermott-Fasy, 2009; Pena, 2000). For example, Hornby and Lafaele's (2011) model on barriers to parental participation identified teacher defensiveness or authoritative dispositions when communicating about students' achievement or learning profiles to parents as factors that inhibit effective parental participation. They added that such teacher behaviours tend to portray teachers as more knowledgeable than parents.

Some teachers may become concerned that closer relationships with families would mean giving up power and decision-making (Pena, 2000). However, Smaill's (2015) New Zealand study suggested that when teachers involved parents in school decision-making as a way of power sharing their motivation to participate increased. Researchers argue that power sharing between schools and parents can contribute to parents' feeling of ownership to freely express their views to support improvements in the educational process (Ludicke & Kortman, 2012; Minke, Sheridan, Ryoo & Koziol, 2014). On the other hand, a study in Australia claimed that when teacher-parent relationships presented prominent power relationships this led to asymmetrical relationships that compromised the sharing of ideas (Ludicke & Kortman, 2012).

Unequal power relation issues can also affect parents' confidence to assert their role in the education process of their children (Aronson, 1996; Fan & Chen, 2001; Hermans & Gierser, 2012; Malik, 2012). Unequal power relations situations

arise when teachers tend to control the actions of parents. Some parents from a minority social and cultural background may also lack the needed cultural and social capital required for effective collaboration (Daniel, 2015; Hebel & Orly, 2012). For example, parental involvement is a shared responsibility and social capital exists in the social relations that people enact among themselves. Some minority groups who may not speak the language of those spoken by the schools and may have difficulty enacting their relationship with the institutions of the community (Antony-Newman, 2019; Pillai, 2012). However, building trust and providing training on ways to collaborate with teachers and how to use a school-related information to support the development of their children can enhance the process of parental engagement with school teachers (Deslandes, Barma & Morin, 2015; Hebel & Orly, 2012).

Despite these findings, there is limited knowledge on how to develop a strong partnership framework that is underpinned by mutuality and reciprocity, particularly in the Saudi context where hierarchical relationships are dominant. According to Rouse and O'Brien (2017), "Mutuality assumes a common regard or understanding of both parties; while reciprocity suggests an interdependence of shared understanding" (p. 47). These ideas reinforced the choice of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) bioecological framework, which suggests parent-teacher relations as bi-directional and consisting of joint activity in which one person resumes the *side* of the other. This is further discussed in the theoretical framework of this thesis.

According to Resch et al. (2010), valuing parents and engaging them respectfully in conversations about their children's education is the positive way to enhance their participation in the learning programmes of their students with LD. Some studies argued that parents' discomfort is a serious inhibitor of parental

participation. For example, Baker (2000) found that some parents feel intimidated and unwelcome at school during meetings with teachers when discussing their children's academic progress. This is because schools did not seem to value their input or consider them as part of school leadership, meetings were confrontational rather than collaborative and thought communication was a one-way system, with few parents, if any, opportunities to share their ideas during meetings (Rouse & O'Brien,2017). This often resulted in tension in parents and teachers' relationships. Some parents felt that they did not receive timely information about their children educational progress (Baker, 2000). They indicated that by the time information about their children's education reaches them, it is all bad news. Studies also suggest that most parents felt they have difficulty accessing their children's teachers on a regular basis and whenever their children have problems at school, teachers often blame parents for it (Hornby, 2011; Hornby & Lafaele, 2011; Hornby & Witte, 2010).

Schools are different in the ways they operate with parents (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). Some parent-teacher relationships break down because teachers believed parents disrespected them by challenging their leadership authority and decision-making processes regarding students (Agbenyega & Sharma, 2014; Zafar et al., 2010). In this sense, children's school misbehaviour is seen as something they have learnt from parents. For example, some studies claimed that parenting styles, such as harsh or permissive discipline, can lead to behaviour problems in children (Arnold, O'Leary, Wolff & Acker, 1993; Freeman & DeCourcey, 2007; Tichovolsky, Arnold & Baker, 2013).

2.7.3 Student-related Barriers

Supporting students with learning difficulties to learn is the responsibility of both teachers and parents (Bist & Gera, 2015; Westwood, 2008). However, the effectiveness of the learning process is based on the likelihood that both teachers and students expect parents to be involved (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2001). A student who perceives parents' participation as   interfering in their academic freedom may resent parents' participation (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2001). According to Hornby and Lafaele (2011), students' age is a critical factor that affects the level of parental participation; children in lower grades tend to appreciate and encourage parental participation more than those in the upper grades. Other studies pointed to gender as a predictor of parental participation (Carter & Wojtkiewicz, 2000; Deslandes & Potvin, 1999). For instance, it was identified in previous Jordan study that male students' parents contact teachers more frequently than their female counterparts (Al-Shalalfa et al., 2018).

2.8 Facilitators of Quality Parent Participation in Schools

Several factors have been found to facilitate the quality of parental participation. Parental motivational beliefs that they have a significant role to play in their children's education has been identified as contributing to increased participation in schools (Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler, 1995; Walker et al., 2005). According to Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2005) and Walker et al. (2005), parental role construction exemplifies their beliefs about their intentional contributions to school programmes. Studies also suggest that parents' self-efficacy, that is, their personal beliefs that they have something to contribute and are capable of helping their children' achieve in schools can lead to their involvement (Alobaid, 2018; Hoover-

Dempsey & Sandler, 2005; Walker et al., 2005). Parents with low self-efficacy may be challenged and feel vulnerable that they do not have the requisite knowledge to be involved (Bist & Gera, 2015). For example, in terms of special education of students with LD parents reported lower self-efficacy levels of working with and interacting with teachers (Koonce & Harper, 2005; LaRocque et al., 2011). Research findings suggest that providing parents with information on parenting skills and how to support their children's education, implementing collaborative educational programmes that help to alter their parenting cognitions and self-efficacy beliefs as well as effective strategies to have better positive interactions with their children can increase their self-efficacy (Ardelt & Eccles, 2001; Dumka, Gonzales, Wheeler & Millsap, 2010; Williams, k., Swift, Williams & Van Daal, 2017).

Another motivational factor for parental participation is school violence, bullying and peer victimisation. In general, parents are concerned about the nature of school climate that has particular relevance to their children's education. Parents who feel or are apprehensive that their child will be victimised or bullied in school might tend to involve more in school for the sake of promoting the wellbeing of their children (Neiman, 2011). School violence is an issue in schools that include students with learning difficulties and thus is an influential factor for parent participation (Schonfeld, 2006).

As indicated in the introduction section on the barriers to parental participation, the differences among schools mean that there is not a single way for involving families in schools. Generally, effective family-school participation practices are those that tailor the programmes to meet the unique needs and interests of families, students and schools (Aronson, 1996). Caplan (2000) is of the view that flexible and

innovative approaches including recognising parents' important role in school leadership can promote parent participation. Agbenyega and Sharma (2014, p. 116) argue that:

> implementing inclusive education in schools requires significant shifts in the way school leaders act and respond to daily challenges that schools face in meeting the needs of students with diverse abilities.

For school leaders to actively engage parents, they need to adopt leadership styles in which power and decision-making do not reside within one person but it is distributed for all the school community members. This means, school leaders must work with parents rather than work over them (Blase & Anderson, 1995). Harris (2005), notes that "leadership practice is like a group dance, where the interactions of the dancers rather than their individual actions allow us to understand what is taking place" (p. 14). Ryan (2006), reiterates that "concentrating leadership power in a single individual is exclusive" (p. 8). For example, if parents feel they have no leadership role to play and they are just listeners to teachers, their motivation to be involved in school matters will decline. Working with parents may develop into tensions and contradictions if decisions are made by schools without parent consultation. In this sense Leonardo's (2010, p. 157) point is worthy of consideration:

> contradictions and tensions are: … not an annoyance to wish away but opportunities that present the [principal, my own insertion] with a glimpse into the order of things. To live without contradictions is to exist with one eye closed, missing a full view of the panorama called education. [Parental participation, my own insertion] …is full of contradictions, giving way to both complexity and vulnerability. That said, leaving tensions prevents movement and change. Being open to contradictions is not the

same as surrendering to them. Wading through, rather than lingering in, contradictions allows development and the potential for growth.

Leonardo's point instigates deeper insights into how leadership is important in parental participation in inclusive schools, and how school leaders must engage in the messy practices of inclusive school organisation, by joining forces with all stakeholders who bring differing knowledge, attitudes, values, beliefs, needs and dispositions.

A further facilitator is related to parents' commitment to support their children's learning. According to Funkhouse and Gonzalez (1997), school programmes that desire parent participation should emphasise families helping their children' learning at schools, home and community. Caplan (2000) suggested that schools should start with a needs assessment to generate information on critical needs of students, set goals and develop programmes based on real needs of students and to increase the chance of programme success. Caplan (2000) also recommends that schools can collect relevant information from family members about their level of participation to determine their satisfaction with the school and its programmes. Epstein and Jansorn (2004) determined that schools that formed Action Teams that included principals, teachers, support staff, family members, and community members in planning for school practices continually increased family and community participation. Jones (2001) argued that relegating parents to traditional roles such as cooking classes and showing up activities in schools are not likely to have much effect on parent participation and impact on student achievement. It is suggested that schools should diversify parent participation by including non-conventional activities to meet diverse parents' needs (Avvisati et al., 2010; Moorman, 2002).

Flexible practices that vary the location and time of school events are beneficial to parental participation in schools. Locations such as churches, mosques, cultural centres, libraries, and public buildings are all potential places where parent meetings and events can take place to provide a variety and engagement (Nistler & Maiers, 2000). Consideration should also be given to extended family members who have a responsibility to the child (Wherry, 2003). Some studies suggested providing family-to-family or teacher-to family mentoring services to support new families to understand school policies, practices, and procedures. Families who have such close interactions and networking have been regarded to be effective players in school family relations (Bist & Gera, 2015; Nistler & Maiers, 2000). Some research cautions that schools should not use a single approach to parental participation, rather they should be proactive and use targeted approach to tailor the programmes to the specific interests, needs, strengths and resources of families, schools, and staff (Funkhouse & Gonzalez, 1997; Lagace-Seguin & Case, 2010).

Parents also need clarity about how they should participate in the education of their students. It is found that when there are clear policy goals and parents' roles and responsivities are clear to them, their level of participation increase (Avvisati et al., 2010). Parents, although they would like to be actively involved in school programmes, fail to do so because school staff do not show them how to help their children to improve their academic performance (Epstein & Jansorn, 2004). In this sense, encouragement and direction for participation must come from schools to parents rather than blaming them for lack of participation (Duncan, 2002; Wherry, 2003).

Gu (2017) and Wherry (2003) identified that the use of bulletin boards, newsletters to parents, the school's website, school tours, open days and phone calls to inform family members of events and programmes have beneficial effects on parental participation. Panfil (2001) identified parent training on how to help students in collaboration with teachers as an essential component that develop the cognitive and social skills needed by students in school. Families who are convinced that their schools value and respect their contributions have been identified as those participating more in school programmes (Dyches et al., 2011). It is argued that atmosphere of mutual respect and trust create strong partnerships and effective parental participation (Deslandes et al., 2015). In this sense, there is a need for teachers to recognise the unique strengths and capabilities of all family members and to celebrate their contributions (Avvisati et al., 2010; Wherry, 2003). Since parents' attitudes about school teachers are a deciding factor in parental participation (Al-shammari, 2017), schools developing various ways for teachers and parents to have regular discussions can help establish rapport early in the school year to avoid misunderstanding (Baker, 2000; Ferguson, 2004). For instance, research findings suggest that respectful relationships for cultural differences empowers parents and make them feel welcome to schools (Funkhouse & Gonzalez, 1997; Smaill, 2015).

2.9   Summary

In this chapter, the literature framing the study have been reviewed. The review identified that the benefits of parental involvement in the education of students, particularly those with LDs are mixed. Whiles some studies identified direct impact on educational achievement, others were suggestive. Throughout the review, it

became apparent that there is multiple definitions of parental involvement and multiple ways parents can be involved with schools. Epstein and Jansorn's (2004) six typologies of parental involvement (parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and collaborating with community) provide a useful guide to how parents can be involved with schools. The definitions of LD also vary from context to context, thus presenting implementation challenges. The review identified that the inclusive schools' ecology can pose additional risk to students with LD and that parents and teachers need to work together to develop effective programs that support students with LD. The review also identified several challenges and possibilities regarding parental involvement. A challenge for educators in working with students with learning difficulties in the elementary schooling is engaging families or parents to actively participate in their education (Daniel, 2011; El Shourbagi, 2017; Perez, 2018). Parental participation has been a closely studied area of research, in regard to how students can make progress socially and academically when parents work in partnership with teachers (Daniel, 2011; Daniel, 2015; Khajehpour & Ghazvini, 2011; LaRocque et al., 2011; Malik, 2012). It is well suggested that effective collaboration between teachers and parents can improve student learning (Baş et al., 2017; Lagace-Seguin, & Case, 2010). Strong partnership is viewed as key to enabling teachers to provide the best support to students including those with learning difficulties (Cullingford & Morrison, 1999; Epstein & Sheldon, 2006; Johnson et al., 2004). However, effective communication and building of trust were pivotal to effective parental involvement. While international literature on parental involvement abounds, the same is limited in the Saudi context with regard to students with LD. This situation calls for this study to add knowledge to the existing practices pertaining to parental involvement in the

education of students with LD in Saudi elementary inclusive schools. In the next chapter, the theoretical framework of this thesis is discussed.

3 Chapter Three: Theoretical Framework

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, an in-depth discussion is provided on the theoretical underpinnings of the research. The purpose of this undertaking is to show how the theory informed the thesis as a whole. In presenting the theoretical framework, I explained how Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory guided investigation into the methodological choices to source data to answer the research questions. The importance of theory in research is not only for situating one's work in philosophical thoughts but also a space for researchers to discuss and challenge their presuppositions in which to examine complex educational issues. It is argued that "theories provide complex and comprehensive conceptual understandings of things that cannot be pinned down: how societies work, how organisations operate, why people interact in certain ways" (Reeves, Albert, Kuper & Hodges 2008, p. 631). In this sense, research needs to utilise a relevant theoretical framework to guide the whole research process. Studies have used different theoretical frameworks to explore parental involvement in their children's education including the theory of planned behaviour (Alghazo, 2016), stages in a child's cognitive, emotional and social development theory (Moore & Lasky, 1999), social and cultural capital theory of Pierre Bourdieu (Okeke, 2014), and Bronfenbrenner's bioecological system theoretical perspective (Seung Lam & Pollard, 2006). As indicated in Chapter 1 of this thesis, the purpose is to explore and critically analyse teachers' and parents' perspectives about parental involvement in school to support girls with learning difficulties in Saudi elementary schools.

Since parents are heterogeneous in nature (Perez, 2018), it is not possible that all will collaborate with schools and participate at the same level in their children's education. Because of differences between parents and schools, conflicts concerning expectations between teachers and parents, practices between school and home barriers are inevitable (Moore & Lasky, 1999). Therefore, involving parents as partners requires an understanding of parents' aspirations for their children, their perceptions of schooling, their expectations of teachers, their approach to parenting and their concept of their responsibilities and role (Okeke, 2014; Van Voorhis, 2001). This requires identifying the sociocultural, environmental and policy factors that influence parent-school understanding to critically analyse and propose strategic approaches that can enhance effective community, communication and partnerships between teachers, parents and schools (Moore & Lasky, 1999; Seung Lam & Pollard, 2006). Moore and Lasky (1999) argue, "the structures of schooling must shift from closed and protectionist to open and inclusionary if parent-teacher partnerships are to flourish over time and benefit children" (p.13). This requires in-depth theoretical and practical understanding of how to develop a strong partnership framework that is underpinned by mutuality and reciprocity, particularly in the Saudi context where hierarchical relationships are dominant (Aldosari, 2017; Masoud, 2005).

According to Rouse and O'Brien (2017), "mutuality assumes a common regard or understanding of both parties; while reciprocity suggests an interdependence of shared understanding" (p. 47). These ideas reinforced the choice of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) bioecological framework, which suggests parent-teacher relations as bi-directional and consisting of joint activity in which one person resumes

the *side* of the other (p. 60). The next section that follows discussed the framing of this study Bronfenbrenner's bioecological systems theory.

3.2 Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Framework in this Study

According to Dockett, Perry and Petriwskyj (2014), theoretical frameworks are important for research as they serve as tools or lenses that lead researchers to collect, analyse data, explain and draw implications from their findings. Howe (2009) argues that the purpose of research and research questions must guide the choice and deployment of a particular theory in research. Understanding the facilitators and barriers to parental involvement is the focus of this study. In any school family relations, teachers, parents and students are entangled in a time of political and policy changes in education, which significantly affect the nature of their relationships (Moore & Lasky, 1999). The choice of Bronfenbrenner's theory enables the exploration of parent involvement by interrogating conceptually and structurally how parent-school relations are positioned within the educational change process (Bronfenbrenner, 1994; Burns, Warmbold-Brann & Zaslofsky, 2015; Hayes, O'Toole & Halpenny, 2017).

In Saudi Arabia where this study is conducted, there has been a rapid transformation in the educational landscape where the focus is on educating most students with disabilities in inclusive mainstream schools (Aldabas, 2015; Ministry of Education, 2016). Special and inclusive education policies thus made provision for students with learning difficulties to be educated alongside their peers without disabilities as outlined in Chapter 1 of this thesis. Bioecological systems theory provides the tools for the experiences of educators and parents in this current

inclusive education policy framework to be effectively investigated. The changes occurring in Saudi public elementary schools are, in part, the result of pressures from international legislation, research and parents themselves for their children to have full benefits of inclusive education provided by the state (Aldabas, 2015). This position is central to the exploration of the concepts and practices of parental involvement within the contexts of learning difficulties in inclusive education in Saudi Arabia.
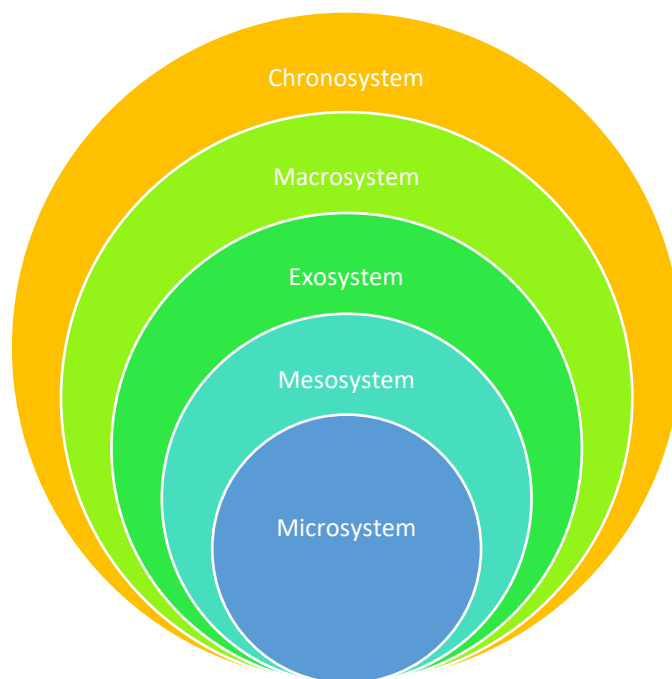
Figure 3.1 A model of Bronfenbrenner's bioecological systems theory showing the various systems that may affect parental involvement.

In 1994, Bronfenbrenner developed his model and renamed it the 'bioecological model' – this was an extension to his original bioecological model. This

study utilised Bronfenbrenner's (1994) bioecological model of human development as a theoretical framework for understanding the central role of families in schools, and how this interactively supports students with learning difficulties in their learning and development. In his original bioecological model, Brofenbrenner (1979) states:

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

In Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model the child is situated at the centre of five layers of interacting systems namely, the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem systems (Seung Lam & Pollard, 2006). These concepts and their relationship with the child parents, schools and the wider society are discussed below. These nested systems provide conceptual lenses through which to analyse and interpret parents and teachers' perspectives on parental involvement and their participation in school programmes that their children attend (Barton, Drake, Perez, St Louis & George, 2004; Härkönen, 2007). This theoretical framework is relevant to this study because it recognises that domestic and work responsibilities, the psychological well-being of families and school policies, national and cultural values can enable and/or prevent families from actively involving in school matters (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). According to Bronfenbrenner (1989), every individual child develops within an environmental context consisting of five level or systems. I now apply these to parental involvement.

3.2.1 The Microsystem and Parental Involvement

The microsystem is the first consideration within which an individual develops in the context of multiple microsystems (Kocayörük, 2016). Generally, for most children, the family is the first and most significant microsystem. However, additional microsystems outside of the family such as schools and peer systems become prominent as the child learns and develops. The microsystem is the everyday environment of home, school, or work, including relationships with parents, teachers, caregivers, siblings and classmates (Barton et al., 2004). Significant in the microsystem of learning and development, are issues related to the contributions the individual and the family contexts influence learning and development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Parents, teachers and other caregivers all contribute to the child's learning within the microsystem. It is claimed that positive interactions between these agents will create a balance between a child's learning and development (Kocayörük, 2016).

According to Kocayörük (2016), children's learning, development, and experiences are influenced by their interaction with all family members, especially their parents and siblings within this micro space. Parents are significant within the microsystem and act as role models by providing learning opportunities as well as connecting children to their social and cultural practices (Emerson et al., 2012). Kocayörük (2016, p. 1) argues:

> parents' childrearing strategies, skills and behaviours embody and influence their children's development. It is considered that the kind of parenting appears to promote optimal child development and to provide such developmental care in different period time.

The link between the microsystem and parental involvement in school is that what children learn at home provides support for further learning at school (Bulotsky-Shearer, Wen, Faria, Hahs-Vaughn & Korfmacher, 2012). The close interaction between parents and children in the microsystem provides many opportunities for parents to observe their children, gather rich information about their learning and developmental trajectories, which they can provide to teachers to inform programme planning (Joe & Davis, 2009; Kocayörük, 2016; O'Toole et al., 2019). In addition, cultural norms and values within families can dictate the ways parents are involved and participate in their child's education (Britto, 2012; Brooks-Gunn & Markman, 2005). In Britto (2012) view, information parents receive from teachers can be used to support children in at home. Thus, the microsystem is a bi-directional concept, providing a conceptual tool for the analysis of parents' voices regarding their involvement and participation in schools.

3.2.2 The Mesosystem and Parental Involvement

Next to the microsystem is the mesosystem, which refers to linkages and processes taking place between a child's home and school or in other words. It is the interlocking of various systems an individual is involved with between school and home, home and work, work and community (Härkönen, 2007; O'Toole et al., 2019). The mesosystem contains the microsystem and centres on the influences between two or more systems, essentially varied microsystems, such as home, school, playmate settings and special education resources rooms. According to Black (2012), "the mesosystem is the relationships between the groups in the microsystem" (p. 217). The activities within a microsystem, such as the home in which a child lives, can influence school practices, which in turn can influence

interactions at home (Krishnan, 2010). It is argued that "a parent's and a teacher's involvement in the child's education, if mutual, will result in mesosystem functioning" (Krishnan, 2010, p. 8). In addition, the interaction between community organisations such as church or community services such disability and counselling services can have distal processes on the child because they help the parent to provide the necessary support that the child needs (Kocayörük, 2016; Krishnan, 2010). Thus, the mesosystem highlights the significance of the numerous roles an "individual must take to succeed within the multiple microsystems in which he/she develops" (Kocayörük, 2016, p. 2).

In this sense, effective education of students with learning difficulties cannot be realised with families in isolation but must be considered in conjunction with other mesosystem factors that impact on what happens within families (Daniel, 2011). This means, schools need to consider events at home that can affect the child's progress in school, and vice versa. It is theorised that home-school relations drive effective learning (Britto, 2012). The mesosystem concept reinforces the idea that teachers, parents, and peers who constitute players within the mesosystem need to work together as they play complementary roles in supporting students' learning and development. According to Kocayörük (2016) positive teacher-school relationship is crucial for students, particularly those with learning difficulties to thrive in school. Daniel (2011) argues that the concept of the mesosystem offers a way for schools to network with parents and become familiar with and include "socioculturally informed knowledge and ways of relating to the world within a child's schooling experience and engage these in supporting learning at home" (p. 168).

3.2.3 The Exosystem and Parental Involvement

The third layer, or exosystem, refers to environmental factors that affect how parents are involved and participate in school activities and programmes (Bronfenbrenner, 1986; Härkönen, 2007). It is the larger environment of institutions, like school, mosque, media, and government agencies. Factors such as parent's workplace policies, distance, pay levels and social services affect parental involvement (Bulotsky-Shearer et al., 2012). For example, parents' employment type may determine their quality time for their involvement in school activities (Härkönen, 2007). These conditions, in turn, will indirectly affect a child's school performance although the child does not directly encounter the system (Krishnan, 2010).

The exosystem encompasses micro and mesosystems, with implications for the wellbeing of all those who come into contact with the student. Although school and government policies are made at a wider level, they indirectly impact the student at home and at school (Bronfenbrenner, 1986; Burns, Warmbold-Brann et al., 2015). Workplace schedules where a parent cannot get time off to attend scheduled meetings can lead to limited parental involvement with teachers, thereby having an undesirable influence on child's development. In addition, school's inclusive policies on students with learning difficulties can all be considered as exosystem influences (Krishnan, 2010).

Lloyd and Hertzman (2009) & Daniel (2015) indicated that social characteristics, such as socioeconomic, cultural, and social capital affect the ways parents participate in their children's education. In view of this, the exosystemic factors can illuminate facilitators and inhibitors of parental involvement in school programmes. In Saudi Arabia for example, until recently, women were not allowed

to drive which adversely affected their freedom and mobility with implications for their ability to attend school meetings.

3.2.4 The Macrosystem and Parental Involvement

Macro-system is the overarching cultural patterns of government, education, religion and the economy. It is the outer layer of the bioecological systems theory, which is denoted as the macrosystem, explains factors such as educational policies, cultural values and norms, and national customs that influence school practices (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Härkönen, 2007). Bronfenbrenner (1994) argues that education policies in each country affect not only children but also family, schools and the whole community. Directives in national and education policies may determine how schools engage with families (Ball & Nikita, 2014; Johnson et al., 2004) to support students with learning difficulties (Press & Hayes, 2000).

3.2.5 The Chronosystem and Parental Involvement

The chronosystem adds the dimension of time to child development and parental involvement in their children's education. The application of the concept of chronosystem indicates that the nature of each system and their interactions change over time (Bronfenbrenner, 1989; Hayes et al., 2017). Although Bronfenbrenner's model suggests that a high level of the parental involvement in school activities should lead to successful child outcomes, changes in events in families and schools can make this difficult to realise (Krishnan, 2010). For example, the influence of normative or non-normative change or constancy in parents' lives and environment can affect the ways they are involved with schools. Changes in family structure, place of residence, employment, or economic cycles constitute chronosystem

changes that occur in space and time and influence all systems (Brofenbrenner, 1994).

Society is in constant change, transformation and transition. Education policy changes, technological innovations, workplace changes and diversity among student populations within mainstream schools are just a few examples (Ball & Nikita, 2014). Children's learning is affected by these day-to-day and year-to-year cultural, policy and social changes that occur in the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem (Brofenbrenner, 1994; Burns et al., 2015; Duncan & Brooks-Gunn, 2000). Normative events such as the birth of a new child or loss of employment, which are dictated by socio-historic or socioeconomic factors can affect the ways parents commit to school involvement (Bronfenbrenner, 1986; Evans, 2004). For example, different cultural settings, religious practices and economic policy periods are different in time and space and affect parents in different ways (Brofenbrenner, 1994; Hayes et al., 2017). Parental involvement in school is a normative event, which is tied to both school and family traditions (Johnson et al., 2004). On the other hand, non-normative events within the chronosystem are sudden unusual events that may have a significant impact on how families will participate in school (Elder, 1998). For example, the introduction of a new school policy that is unanticipated can trigger apprehension among some families.

Thus, family-school partnerships must offer a way for schools to dialogue with parents and include their ways of relating to the world and socioculturally informed knowledge within school policies and programmes. It is therefore important to recognise that "teacher' collaborative relations with parents and work in a family

context do not come about naturally or easily" (Powell, 1998, p. 66) but has to be worked upon and developed to increase the effectiveness of parental involvement.

3.3 Learning Difficulties with Reference to Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Systems Theory

Learning is a social activity and takes place within families (microsystem) schools (mesosystem) and community (exosystem and macrosystems) and affected by the changes in family and school systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). In terms of this study, the microsystem is concerned with the relationships and interactions the child with LD has with her immediate environment (Poole, 2003). In addition, the mesosystem –provides understanding into the connection between the structures of the child's microsystem (Berk, 2000) in terms of the child's connectedness to teachers and his parents. Although the child does not function directly in the exosystem –directly, this layer may impact the child with LD's development by interacting with some factors in the microsystem (Berk, 2000). For example, parents' workplace schedules and ways they access community resources and support can influence the time they may devote to support their child with LD.

Children with LD difficulty receive home support from families, which may depend on several microsystem factors and chronosystem factors. For example, as physiological changes occur with the aging of a child they may not be receptive to the support their parents provide in terms of helping them to do homework (Berk, 2000). Further, as children with LD get older and progress through the education system, they may react differently to the school environmental changes and the learning difficulty may also become more apparent as the complexity of the

curriculum/learning increases. In addition, depending on family expectations and culture, learning difficulties may not be an issue at home but may remain a mesosystem issue at school (Poole, 2010).

3.4 Summary

This chapter has presented the theoretical framework of this study, which is located in Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory of human development. Five key concepts – microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem and chronosystem were explained to ground the study. From the discussion, it is apparent that the interactions of the systems in understanding parental involvement in children's learning and development are complex and studies using these systems in their complexity are rare. The majority of studies focus on the use of the microsystem because it is closer to the child. However, this study utilised all the five systems to analyse the factors of parental involvement and provide deeper insights into the facilitators and barriers in the Saudi Arabian context. The next chapter presents and discusses the methodology of this research.

4 Chapter Four: Methodology

4.1 Introduction

Choice of research methodology depends on the aims, purpose of the study and research questions (MacKenzie & Knipe, 2006). The purpose of this study is to explore parental involvement in the education of female students with learning difficulties in Saudi Arabia. This aim is based on the findings from previous studies that a strong support from parents and teachers can help improve the academic achievement of students with LDs (LaRocque et al., 2011; Milad & Dabbagh, 2011; Malik, 2012) and my own experiences as a teacher in Saudi Arabia. According to Gray (2003), "we cannot speak from nowhere, but from where we are positioned, socially, culturally and politically" (p. 33). Crotty (2003) indicates that methodology should be seen as "the strategy, plan of action, process or design lying behind the choice and use of particular methods and linking the choice and use of methods to the desired outcomes" (p. 3). Every researcher has different ways of conceptualising knowledge which is driven by the nature of research aims and questions. Knowing and knowledge claims are situated in research paradigms, which is the belief and physical ideas that guide the conduct of a piece of research (Wisker, 2008). There are various research paradigms for conducting research; however, I have chosen the pragmatic paradigm as suited to this particular research. As a researcher, there is the need to take a position regarding the nature of knowledge and how this knowledge really works. In this research, I am seeking to understand sense-data collected from participants' perspectives which is not based on hypothesis testing (Creswell, 2009). I believed that reality is relative, subjective and differs from person

to person (Guba & Lincoln, 1994) because humans use their senses to formulate understanding of phenomena (Crotty, 1998). This positionality connects to the choice of a pragmatic paradigm as a single paradigmatic orientation of research is insufficient to provide deeper understanding into social or educational research issues (Alise & Teddlie, 2010; Biesta, 2010), which gave rise the use of mixed methods in this research. This further discussed in the research paradigm section of this methodological chapter.

Parental involvement is a relatively new phenomenon in education systems in Saudi Arabia (Alqahtani, 2016; Mahmoud, 2018). In this sense, there is the need to conduct a study that provide some understandings of current practices, challenges and opportunities of parental involvement I the education of students with LD. The research questions of the study were:

1. How do elementary school teachers of students with learning difficulty and parents conceptualise parental involvement and their respective roles?

2. What are teachers' attitudes toward parental involvement?

3. What are the experiences and concerns of Saudi elementary school teachers and parents regarding parental involvement?

4. How do teachers and parents describe effective parental involvement?

The specific objectives were to:

- Obtain teachers' views on their conceptualisations and current practices of parent involvement.

- Document and analyse teachers' and parents' views about the importance of parental involvement, roles, and responsibilities.

- Identify the obstacles to implementing effective parental involvement practices.

The issue of parental involvement as explained earlier in this study in Chapter 1 & 2 is likely to be influenced by sociocultural, political and economic factors. The sociocultural aspects are embedded in the values, attitudes, beliefs, perceptions and practices of the participants, hence the need for a methodological rigour to explore these complex integrative elements. The political aspect relates to government and school policies that inform parental involvement. The economic factors are concerned with parental employment, transportation, time and other financial issues that may affect their involvement in school matters. In view of this, there is a need for a methodology that allows for data to be derived from in-depth exploration of these sociocultural, political and economic factors relating to parents and teachers (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011; Lee & Bowen, 2006). Indeed, the study called for the measurement of attitudinal characteristics and qualitative evaluation of beliefs and practices. While a detailed explanation of the mixed methods approach utilised in this research is explained later in this chapter, it is worth discussing it briefly here as a way of building arguments for the methodological choices.

A mixed method approach was utilised for this study to find out about parents' and teacher's cognitive, affective and behavioural aspects of parental involvement. It is argued that people's perceptions and attitudes are strongly related to a variety of contextual and social factors (Lee & Bowen, 2006). In terms of parental involvement in school, social factors might include parents' and teachers' personal

circumstances, work and home-based responsibilities, values they attach to school involvement, routines, social norms, lifestyle choices, as well as personal intentions, expectations and feeling of control over educational processes (Carrascoa & Lucas, 2015; Hornby & Lafaele, 2011).

While attitudes have traditionally been measured using Likert scales (Carrascoa & Lucas, 2015), I recognised the limitations of this approach alone in explaining how and why elementary education teachers work with parents with learning difficulties in the Saudi context. Thus, utilising a mixed method research strategy helped to explore perspectives that simply cannot be measured using one research method (Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Wisker, 2008). Therefore, the aims of this study were accomplished within a pragmatic research paradigm to understand the meanings, interpretations, ideas, and values that parents and teachers associated with parental involvement in Saudi Arabia.

4.2 Deciding on a Pragmatic Paradigm for this Research

This research is situated in a pragmatic paradigm due to the nature of research questions and purpose. In this sense, the deconstructive nature of the pragmatism paradigm was employed to inform the collection and analysis of data. The pragmatic paradigm questions traditional assumptions about certainty, identity, and truth and in addition advocates the use of mixed methods in research. It is argued that pragmatism "sidesteps the contentious issues of truth and reality" (Feilzer 2010, p. 8), as well as "focuses instead on 'what works' as the truth regarding the research questions under investigation" (Tashakkori & Teddlie 2003, p. 713).

Utilising the pragmatic paradigm is premised on the sense that the notion of divisions or opposition viewpoints between positivism and interpretivism is rejected, (Feilzer, 2010) allowing the methodological approaches of the two be brought together in a single research to deepen insights into the research problem (Plano Clark & Badiee, 2010). Specifically, the use of the pragmatic paradigm offered me opportunity to obtain complementary data (qualitative and quantitative) on parental involvement practices in Saudi Arabian primary schools. Furthermore, the use of pragmatism paradigm in this research implies that the division between realism and anti-realism, one of the dominant arguments that set positivist research against interpretive research is rejected (Feilzer, 2010; Pansiri, 2005). Drawing on the arguments of Pansiri (2005), in this research, I am not claiming reality and facts as fixed, rather, what is discovered in research as the truth is continuously changing based on participants' and researchers' actions in relation to social practices. According to MacKenzie and Knipe (2006), pragmatism is not tied to any one system of philosophy or reality because as Creswell (2003) argue, pragmatist researchers emphasise on the 'what' and 'how' of the research problem. The adoption of a pragmatic methodological approach places parental participation at the centre of looking at all relevant approaches to understanding the problems associated with it (Creswell, 2003; Plano Clark & Badiee, 2010).

4.3 Mixed Method Design

This study adopted a mixed method design to understand primary teachers' and parents' perspectives and experiences of parental involvement in Saudi Arabia. The validation of the choice of a mixed method design is in line with a pragmatism

paradigm. Wisker (2008) explains that research participants and researchers all have consciousness or a mind, and their behaviours are affected by knowledge of the social world. According to Creswell (2003), the knowledge of the researcher and participants exists in relation to their social world in which they live and practice.

There are various types of mixed methods designs and each design type is based on what the researcher intends to do. For example, to explain and interpret phenomena, to explore a phenomenon, to develop and test a new instrument that has been constructed, to investigate and validate a theoretical perspective, to complement the strengths of a single design and overcome its weaknesses or to address a question at different levels (Creswell, 2003). This study focused on understanding the phenomenon of parental involvement in which different research questions were asked as detailed in the beginning section of this methodological chapter.

The particular design chosen for this study was a sequential explanatory type which is also referred to as the QUAN-qual research model, or the explanatory mixed method design (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998, 2003). The design type employed in this study involved the collection and analysis of quantitative data followed by the collection and analysis of qualitative data for integration (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007). The purpose was to use the qualitative results obtained from interviews to promote in-depth exploration and interpretation of the findings obtained from the quantitative data obtained through questionnaires. The adoption of the mixed method design thus contributed to an extensive and in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of parental involvement investigated in this study. The use of the qualitative approach allowed the participants to articulate the meanings they

assigned to parental participation in their cultural context (Tashakkori & Teddie, 2003).

4.4 The Justification for Using Mixed Methods in this Research

The main research tool utilised to collect data was the questionnaire. This was supplemented with a semi-structured interview protocol as detailed in the design of this study (Greene, Caracelli & Graham, 1989). Johnson and Onwueguzie (2004) indicated that multiple data sources provide richness to data than methods that lead to extracting data from a single source. The collection of quantitative and qualitative data in this research provided the opportunity for diverse and richer interpretations of the results. According to Sheppard (2006) research needs to not only capture the 'What' question but also the 'Why' question in order to gain insight into participants' responses to a particular issue. Thus, in order to understand, why and how teachers and parents are engaged in reciprocity and mutuality in respect to parental involvement to support female students with learning difficulties, there was the need for data that probed into their understandings about the way "things are, why they are that way, and how the participants in the context perceive them" (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2009, p.12).

Again, the collection of qualitative data reinforced the socially constructed knowledge and the complex world lived experience from the point of view of the teachers and parents in this research (Creswell, 2009; Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007; Mertens, 2005, 2014). One of the important aspects of the mixed method is that as participants' voices are often ignored in quantitative research; the use of mixed methods employing both quantitative and qualitative approaches ensure that

participants' voices are heard in addition to their responses to questionnaires (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). I recognised the limitation of the subjective nature of qualitative research and its data interpretations. Apart from reaching a large number of participants with quantitative questionnaires, it also allowed me to gain some descriptive statistics for specific geographical areas in Saudi Arabia and access a wider range of views that would otherwise have been impossible. The qualitative approaches also provided opportunity to look for patterns and linked themes that were revealed in interviews to responses to scale questions (Teddlie & Johnson, 2009). In this study, the mixed methods design helped in exploring the cultural issues around parental involvement in Saudi Arabia, thus making the results to make sense in context. method key benefit of the use of the mixed methods approach is that it helped gained insight and explained the data in ways that recognised and incorporated participants' authentic voices (Creswell, 2003; Johnson & Christensen, 2004).

4.5 Data Collection Tools

Two data collection tools were developed for use in this study. These included a close-ended questionnaire and a semi-structured interview for teachers and parents. The development of the teacher and parent questionnaire involved a series of carefully considered processes. First, I considered it important to identify several other studies conducted in different countries which have used questionnaires to explore the area of interest. Such an activity enabled me to identify a relevant questionnaire used by Shearer (2006) to study parental involvement and document teachers' and parents' voices in Florida County, USA. I adapted some of the relevant

questions and modified them for use in this study. For example, "My work schedule makes it hard for me to be involved was reworded as "My work schedule makes it difficult for me to be involved in school programmes", and "Family health problems reduce my involvement" was modified as "My social situation reduces my involvement in school programmes." It was not possible to use all the items of the questionnaire in Shearer's (2006) study, as the Saudi context is different from the Canadian context in terms of the cultural and social factors that the participants face in enacting school-family relations. The question, "family health problems reduce my involvement" was not adapted for use because traditionally, Saudi families do not openly talk about their health problems. In addition, the question, "the values, behaviours and attitudes in minority cultures keep children from making progress in school" was not relevant because the term 'cultural minority' is not commonly used in the Saudi context.

Second, the research made use of the literature review in Chapter 2 of this thesis to identify key issues presented by previous research that needed further investigation. These include factors that facilitate or inhibit effective parental involvement in school matters. The literature review, for example, pointed to teacher workload, time, communication and attitudes as some of the barriers identified by previous research (Daniel, 2011; Epstein, 2005). Thus, these factors were used to frame the questionnaire items. Examples of these questions included: "Teachers' attitudes toward me reduces my involvement in school programmes", and "I have limited knowledge of special education to be involved in school programmes."

Thirdly, I drew on the theoretical framework of Bronfenbrenner (1986) which has been discussed in Chapter 3 of this thesis. These include the microsystem

factors such as family, mesosystem factors such as school and neighbourhood relations and mesosystem and macrosystem factors such as societal values, beliefs, practices and government policies and procedures for education which all have an impact on the child (Bronfenbrenner, 1994; Seung Lam & Pollard, 2006). These factors were considered to select important elements and contents to develop the questionnaire items. Examples of specific statements in the questionnaire developed from this theory are included in Table 4.1.

Ecosystem layer of Bronfenbrenner	Examples of questionnaire statement
Micro and macro-level family.	My work schedule makes it difficult for me to be involved in school programmes.
Meso-level policy.	My economic situation reduces my involvement in school programmes. There are adequate guidelines for how parents should be involved in school matters.
Chronosystem.	I have limited time to be involved with parents

Table 4.1: Examples of statements in the questionnaire based on Bronfenbrenner's bioecological systems theory.

Finally, when the initial questionnaires for teachers and parents were completed, they were sent to the student's supervisors for review and comments. The supervisors made comments on lack of clarity in some of the items, restructuring, deletion and inclusion of some items, as well as grammatical and

syntax errors in some of the items. Upon the return of the review comments, I addressed all the comments and returned the questionnaire to the supervisors for final validation. The questionnaire was then piloted as outlined below.

4.6 The Pilot Study

The completed questionnaire, which was approved by the supervisors was translated into Arabic by me to facilitate easy understanding of the participants since their first language is Arabic. I conducted a pilot run of the questionnaire with 15 teachers and 10 parents in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia to determine item clarity and the time it would take to complete all the questionnaire items. The participants in the pilot stage completed the questionnaire within an average time of 15 minutes. The parents and teachers who participated in the test-run of the questionnaire did not offer suggestions for change or revision of any of the items. This suggested that the questionnaires were clear to them. Two separate questionnaires were used to collect data for this study. The section that follows described these questionnaires, their similarities and their variabilities.

4.7 Final Instruments for Data Collection

4.7.1 Teacher Questionnaire

The first instrument was a quantitative questionnaire designed for the primary school teachers who teach children with learning difficulties. The teacher questionnaire was the main data-gathering instrument from teachers. This questionnaire was used to gain a better understanding of teachers' perceived rating of their attitudes, views on current practices, and barriers to parental involvement.

Documentation and analysis of their views about the importance of parental involvement, roles, and responsibilities provided data informing the important factors that support or inhibit effective parental involvement practices in Saudi inclusive primary schools with respect to supporting girls with learning difficulties. This questionnaire was divided into four parts as shown in Table 4.2.

Parts 2-4 of the questionnaire used a 5-point Likert scale of strongly agree to strongly disagree for all items. The questionnaire was designed to be completed in no more than 20 minutes (See Appendix 1 and 2. Appendix 2 is the Arabic version of the instrument).

Parts	No. of items	Details of coverage
Part 1	5	Teachers' demographic information (age, teaching experience, qualification and the number of students with learning difficulties the teachers taught on a weekly basis)
Part 2	10	Teachers' attitudes to parental involvement
Part 3	16	Teachers' experiences of parental involvement practices
Part 4	10	Teachers' perception of the barriers to parental involvement

Table 4.2: Teachers' questionnaire details.

4.7.2 Parents' Questionnaire

The questionnaire for parents was slightly different from that which was developed for teachers. In the parents' questionnaire instead of attitudes, a relationship component was explored. This questionnaire aimed to gain a better understanding of parents' views on their relationships with teachers regarding school

involvement. It also gleaned information on their level of involvement practices to support their female students with learning difficulties, and the perceived barriers to their involvement in the Saudi elementary schools that were described as inclusive by the teachers. Data from parents provided important information on parental involvement, roles, and responsibilities and assisted in the identification of the factors that support or inhibit the implementation of effective parental involvement practices in Saudi inclusive primary schools with respect to supporting girls with learning difficulties. The questionnaire contained four parts as described in Table 4.3.

Parts	No. of items	Details of coverage
Part 1	9	Collected parents' personal information
Part 2	10	Collected Information about parents' views on parent-teacher relationships
Part 3	16	Collected information about parents' experiences on parent involvement
Part 4	11	information about parents' perception of the barriers to their involvement

Table 4.3 Parts of the questionnaire.

Apart from the demographic details, all the other sections were measured on a Likert scale of Strongly Agree (5) to Strongly Disagree (1). The questionnaire was designed to be completed in no more than 20 minutes (Appendix 3) and (Appendix 4 is the Arabic version of the instrument).

4.7.3 Justification for Using a Structured Questionnaire

Surveys are valuable for gathering data from a large sample and are useful ways of measuring views, behaviours, beliefs, experiences, and predictions about a future event (Dawn, 2012; Taylor, 2000). In addition, they minimise time constraints for participants who perhaps could not be interviewed owing to various reasons (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). In this research, the elementary schools that participated were located Riyadh the capital city of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia; therefore, these primary research methods were excellent process for reaching such a widely distributed sample of respondents.

With regard to questionnaire design, there are three questionnaire design types which are: structured, unstructured and semi-structured. Unstructured questionnaires tend to use open-ended questions, while structured questionnaires tend to use closed questions, and semi-structured questionnaires tend to use a combination of both open and closed questions (Wray, Trott & Bloomer, 1998). Wray et al. (1998) point out that open-ended questions normally require a longer response and in cases where participants are constrained with time, responding to open-ended questionnaires can be demotivating to participants, which can affect the validity and reliability of the results.

In this research, a structured questionnaire will be used as Seliger (1989) points out that structured questionnaires with multiple choices are classified as being of a high level of explicitness and easy to score by participants. Therefore, this type of questionnaire is systematic and is one in which subjects' similar responses to each question can be organised and located, that leading to a relatively easier and be more effective analysis of the results (Dawn, 2012; Moser & Kalton, 1971). Dawn

(2012) indicates that surveys questionnaires are best for measuring aspects or views of perceptions as they use a Likert type scale to measure the developed beliefs, which relate to parental participation as well. I used a 5-point Likert scale on the advice that providing more options to research participants on a scale decreases the occurrence of extreme response styles (Weijters, Cabooter & Schillewaert, 2010). A limitation of this is also that respondents may not respond to an item with a mid-point. I am aware of several disadvantages of survey and questionnaires, for example, it is possible that respondents may not feel encouraged to provide accurate, honest answers that present themselves in an unfavourable manner or experience boredom and give answers anyhow to just complete the questionnaire. In addition, answer options to a questionnaire could lead to unclear data when participants interpret certain answer options differently (Dawn, 2012; Johnson, Onwuegbuzie & Turner, 2007; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2008).

4.7.4 Semi-structured Interviews and Justification

The second instrument used in collecting data for this research was a semi-structured interview protocol for selected teachers and parents who indicated on their questionnaires that they would like to be interviewed. The use of semi-structured interview provided a clear set of guidelines for the researcher to direct the conduct of the interviews so as to obtain reliable and comparable qualitative data (Creswell, 2013). Although some of the questions on the interview protocol were developed in advance prior to the distribution of the questionnaire, they were reviewed after the initial analysis of the questionnaire data by using responses that demonstrated high agreement or disagreement with the questionnaire items. As explained in the theoretical section of this thesis, Bronfenbrenner's bioecological

systems theory provide unique understanding to parental involvement by taking into consideration family, societal and institutional practices (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). This theory guided the development of the interview questions from the onset my considering microsystemic factors such as family issues and practices; exosystemic factors such as school issues and meso and macrosystemic factors such as policies, values and societal issues that may facilitate or impede parental involvement in the education of female students with LD (Baş et al., 2017; Lagace-Seguin & Case, 2010; Hayes et al., 2017). I conducted face-to-face interviews because of the value placed on context and personal voice as data, enabling depth of meaning to be gained (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003).

The use of semi-structured interviews allowed me ample time to prepare. This preparation enhanced my confidence and competency during the interviews. While in the field, I allowed participants the freedom to express their views and clarified issues when she probed and asked further questions about emerging issues.

The processes I undertook were consistent with the views that semi-structured interviews are relatively informal and much less rigid than structured interviews (Kavle, 1996). Although semi-structured interviews have some predefined questions, it is possible for the researcher to change the order of the questions based on the participant's perspectives of what seems most appropriate (Esterberg, 2002; Kavle, 1996). Also, it allows emergent questions to appear at any time within a moderately firm framework (Cohen et al., 2007; Radnor, 1994). The semi-structured interviews were organised separately for teachers and parents to discuss their perspectives on parental involvement. The interviews were important in generating data through

interactions on generic questions in relation to the aims of the research (Creswell, 2013; Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007).

4.8 Participants

4.8.1 Sampling

A purposive sampling strategy was applied in this research as I aimed to select participants from a specific group of teachers who teach in elementary schools that include students with learning difficulties and the parents of those children. According to Patton (2000), purposive sampling allows for information-rich participants who are interested in a research to be selected for insights to be gained on the research problem. The target population for this research was all the inclusive mainstream primary school teachers who taught students labelled as having learning difficulties and the parents of these children, in a specific geographical area in Riyadh in Saudi Arabia. There were many schools in Riyadh designated as inclusive schools providing learning difficulties programmes. According to the Ministry of Education of Saudi Arabia 2018 data, 187 inclusive mainstream schools provide programmes for 4349 learning difficulties students (Aldabas, 2015).

First, after obtaining ethical approval from Exeter University (Appendix 5), I contacted the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia by email to get permission to collect data for this research in Riyadh inclusive elementary schools. There was no response after two weeks of sending the email; therefore, I personally went to the Saudi Ministry of Education's office and obtained the relevant information including the contact details of the inclusive schools. After receiving permission from the Saudi Ministry of Education (Appendix 6), I contacted the principals of the various schools

through the schools' emails with explanatory forms to seek permission to contact the teachers through their school email addresses. After that I sent the invitation letter and explanatory statements by email to all the 187 elementary schools that provide learning difficulties programme. Out of the 187 schools, 128 schools did not respond to the emails, seven schools responded but indicated they were not interested in participating in the research because they were busy with beginning of school year activities. Thus, 27.8% of the schools contacted agreed to take part in the research, so I sent the questionnaire to the remaining 52 schools that agreed to complete the questionnaires.

Out of the 280 questionnaires sent to the schools (160 teacher questionnaires and 120 parent questionnaires) 215 participants returned the questionnaires (110 teachers and 105 parents). These represented response rates of 68.75% and 87.5% for teachers and parents respectively, which are considered good (Baruch & Holtom, 2008). The selection of the interview was based on whether the participant indicated on the questionnaire that they were willing to participate in a further interview. Twenty-six teachers and 30 parents expressed desire to participate in the interviews which is more than the required number; therefore, I applied a simple random process to select 10 parents and a simple purpose process to select 10 teachers for the interview (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007).

4.8.2 Participants

The teacher participants were all elementary school teachers who taught female students with learning difficulties and parents of those children. The parent participants were mothers as the school system in Saudi Arabia is segregated on gender basis and it is not expected that fathers should be involved in girls' schools,

thus mothers would have more experience of parent involvement in this context. Two-hundred and fifteen participants participated in the study. The breakdown of participation is as follows:

- 110 teachers from Riyadh in Saudi Arabia responded to the questionnaires.

- 105 parents from Riyadh in Saudi Arabia responded to the questionnaires.

- 10 mothers participated in interviews.

- 10 teachers participated in interviews.

4.9 Data Collection

4.9.1 Phase 1: Administration of Questionnaire to Teachers and Parents

The study was conducted in three phases. I sent copies of the consent from (Appendix 7) and (Appendix 8 is the Arabic version of the instrument) and information sheet (Appendix 9) and (Appendix 10 is the Arabic version of the instrument) to all the teachers and parents email addresses. After I received consent from the teachers and parents, I sent a copy of teachers and parents' survey to all participants across the 52 schools who consented to participate by email in a word document. These participants were asked to return the completed questionnaire by email as an attached word document or post it whichever they found most convenient. I used emails, in the hope that this would facilitate a quick distribution and return of the questionnaires. It is argued that results from electronic surveys provide the same advantages as do postal survey content results, with the additional advantages of speedy distribution and response cycles (Taylor, 2000). Emailing the questionnaires also offered me the advantage of minimising travel and postal costs

in distributing the questionnaires. On the last page of the survey, participants were asked to indicate their willingness to participate in further interviews.

4.9.2 Phase 2: Semi-structured Interviews with Selected Parents

The second phase of the study involved organising semi-structured interviews with selected parents in a public space (local community centre) and convenient place nominated by them. After an initial inspection of the questionnaire responses, it was discovered that 30 parents indicated their willingness to participate, which was more than the required number. Therefore, random sampling was used to select each third parent who indicated a willingness on the questionnaire to participate in an interview . This brought the total parent interviewees to 10 mothers.

All the mothers signed consent forms prior to the interviews and welcomed face-to-face interviews in a community hub, which most parents frequented during the day. Each interview lasted on average of 30 minutes. Only one mother did not give consent for her interview to be audio recorded. The note-taking slowed down the interview process and it lasted approximately 40 minutes. During the interviews, I took notes in addition to the digital recording. After each interview, I took another extra 30 minutes to play back the audio files to the nine mothers as well as read the notes written during the interview sessions to the participants so that they could provide feedback before their data are included in the data analysis. Some participants clarified some points and asked for some additional information that were not accurately captured to be included. The interview session demonstrated a welcoming environment because the participants were chatty and mostly interactive enabled the establishment of positive rapport between me and the participants This allowed them to talk freely with little direction from me. In addition, recording the

interviews using a smartphone facilitated the interview process. I discovered that interviewing requires specific skills from the interviewer, that is, the ability to think about questions during the interview as well as keep the participants engaged throughout the process, which can be demanding and confusing sometimes. However, being focused and attentive to what the participants were saying, offered more control over the interview process (McGrath, Palmgren & Liljedahl, 2018).

4.9.3   Phase 3: Semi-structured Interviews with Selected Teachers

Similar processes were used for teachers' interviews. An initial inspection of the questionnaire responses showed that 26 teachers indicated their willingness to participate. Ten participants were selected on purpose in terms of their professional roles. All teacher interviewees received consent forms on which they indicated their willingness to have their voice recorded during the interviews. Two teachers opted out from having their voice recorded. The interviewees included six learning difficulties teachers and two mainstream teachers, one principal and one educational supervisor. Although the elementary schools where this study was conducted were described as inclusive, students were often pulled out into classes based on their disability labels. According to Alharbi and Madhesh (2018), and Batlal (2016) pull-out into disability groups is a common practice in Saudi Arabia mainstream schools. The interviews were conducted in the teachers' offices and the schools' library as suggested by the interviewees.

Each interview lasted about 30 minutes. However, the interview for the two teachers who opted out from having their voice recorded took 45 minutes to complete as I had to take notes which slowed down the process. The rapport I created with the participants during the interview process enriched interaction and

positive verbal exchanges (Esterberg, 2002; Grix, 2004). Rubin and Rubin (2005) has indicated that qualitative data allows the researcher to gain access to the individual's perceptions, experiences, intentions, and wishes in participant's words, rather than investigator's when there are positive interactions during the data collection process. Creswell (2003) explains that if "the topic is new, or the topic has never been addressed with a certain sample or group of people" (p. 22) then qualitative exploration is important.

Prior to the interviews, the questions were trialled with one teacher and one parent to determine their clarity. It was identified that the items were clear; however, there were five duplicate questions that extended the interview time to more than 40 minutes. The repeated questions were removed which reduced the items from 25 to 20 items. Sample items deleted were: What is your challenge in participating in school matters? In which ways do teachers give you information?

As the first language of Saudi Arabia is Arabic, all the data were collected in Arabic to ensure that the participants were able to express themselves clearly and avoid any confusion. Also, the interview data were analysed in Arabic to preserve the original meaning of participants' answers (Van Nes, Abma, Jonsson & Deeg, 2010). Then, relevant findings were translated from Arabic to English to produce the final report of this thesis.

4.10 Data Analysis

4.10.1 Survey Data Analysis

In total, 280 questionnaires were sent to schools,160 copies for teachers and 120 for parents. Two-hundred and fifteen questionnaires were returned (110

teachers and 105 parents) indicating response rates of 68.75% and 87.5% for teachers and parents respectively. According to Baruch and Holtom, (2008), these constitute very good response rates. Responses were on a Likert-type scale that ranged from strongly disagree=1, disagree=2, neither agree nor disagree=3, agree=4 and strongly agree=5. All the returned questionnaires were included for analysis because they were sufficiently completed by the participants. Survey data were transferred from the hard copy material into SPSS Statistics Version 26, the most recent version of SPSS statistical analysis software (Norusis, 1990).

Two separate sets of questions were used to collect data from teachers and parents. The teachers' questionnaire was divided into four parts namely, demographic details (5 items); Part 2, Attitudes to parental involvement (10 items); Part 3, Perspectives on parental involvement practices (16 items) and Part 4, Perspectives on barriers to parental involvement (10 items). The parents' questionnaire was also divided into four parts namely, demographic details (9 items); Part 2, Perspectives on teacher-parent relationships (10 items); Part 3, Perspectives on parent involvement practices (16 items) and Part 4, Parents' perspectives on barriers to their involvement (11 items).

4.10.2 Total Scale and Subscale Statistics for Teachers' Questionnaire

SPSS was used to perform descriptive and inferential statistical analyses on the teachers' and parents' survey data. The descriptive statistics for the subscales and the overall scale pertaining to teachers, parents and their Cronbach's alpha reliability scores are included in Tables 4.4 and 4.5. According to Joppe (2000) a good alpha value is between 0.70 and 0.80. This suggest that the scales used achieved good consistency for gauging participants' opinion in this research.

Subscales	N	Mean	Median	Mode	Std Dev.	α (reliability alphas values)
Attitudes	110	35.47	36.00	39.0	4.68	.700
Involvement Practices	110	42.19	40.00	36.00	10.04	.790
Barriers	110	33.99	33.00	40.00	8.13	.923
Total scale	110	109.65	109.00	106.00	12.44	.754

Table 4.4 Statistics of the teachers' subscales and overall scale.

Table 4.4 and Figure 4.1 show the subscales and total statistics. This particular nature of the subscales provides more insights into the teachers' responses to attitude, involvement practices, and barriers to parental participation. The histogram shows the normal distribution of the total scale with skewness at -.116.
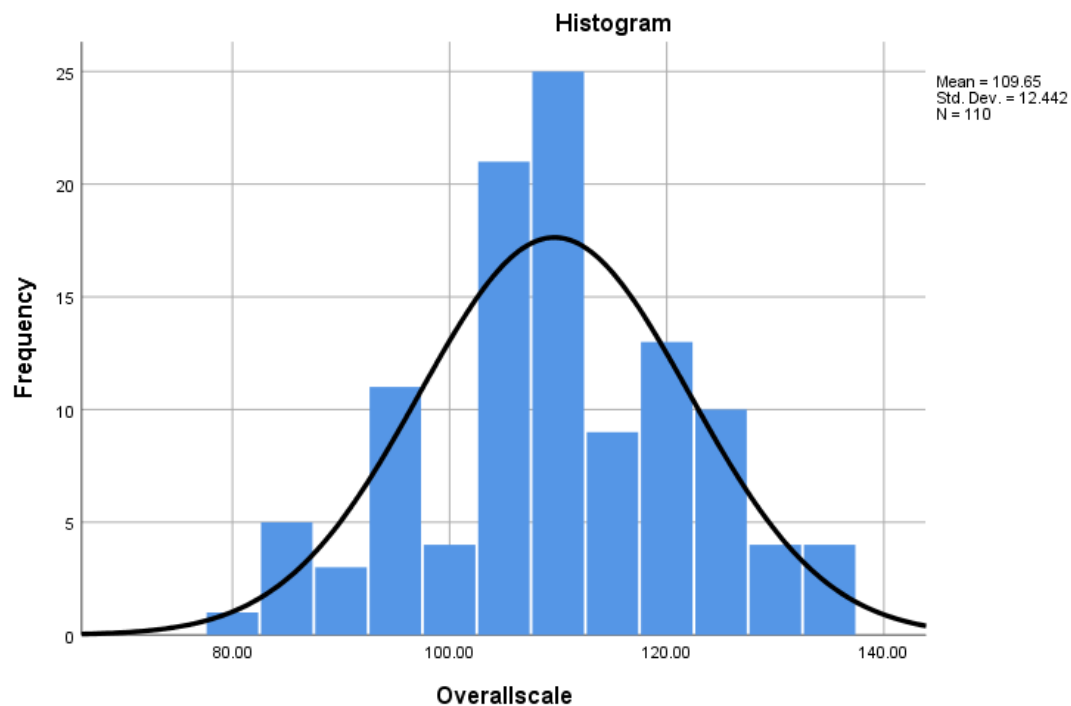
Figure 4.1 Histogram with normal distribution of the total scale for teachers.

4.10.3 Total Scale and Subscale Statistics for Parents' Questionnaire

The table below shows the various subscale and the total scale means, standard deviations and reliability values for parents' survey data.

Subscales	N	Mean	Median	Mode	Std Dev.	α (reliability alpha values)
Teacher-parent relationships	105	28.64	28.00	26.0	5.16	.805
Involvement Practices	105	46.41	46.00	44.00	8.80	.793
Barriers to involvement	105	33.86	35.00	37.00	8.13	.801
Total scale	105	108.90	107.00	102.00	13.45	.786

Table 4.5 Statistics of the parents' subscales and overall scale.

Table 4.5 and Figure 4.2 show the subscales and total statistics. The values of the subscales provide more insight into the parents' responses to teacher-parent relationships, involvement practices, and barriers to parental participation. The histogram shows the normal distribution of the total scale with skewness at .268.
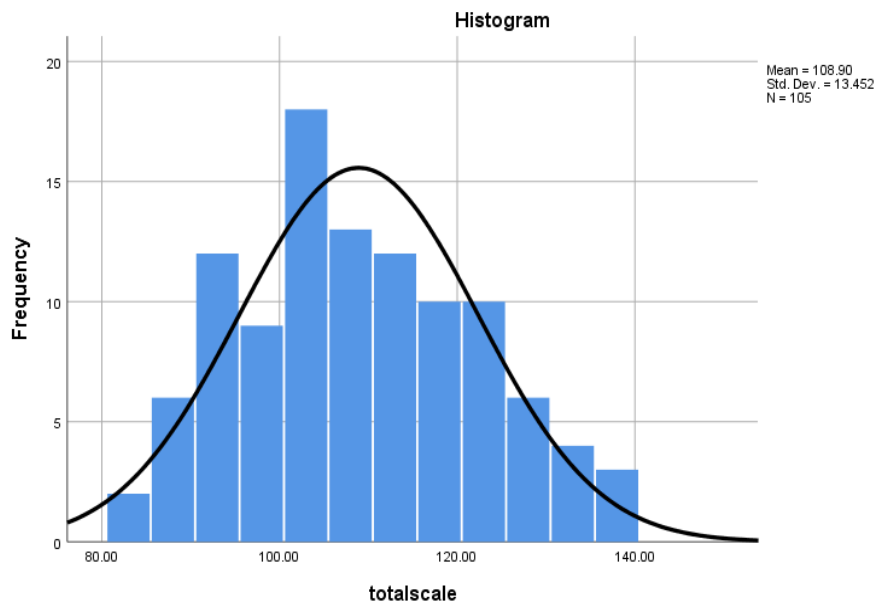
Figure 4.2 Histogram with normal distribution of the total scale for parents.

Descriptive statistics: This form of analysis was performed on the survey data to describe the basic features of the data pertaining to teacher attitudes, involvement practices, and barriers to involvement as well as parent-relationships data, their involvement practices and barriers to their involvement. The analysis provided simple summaries about the sample and the measures including percentages, means, modes and standard deviations. The standard deviations in particular provided information on the variability in responses to the questionnaire items for each subscale.

Ranking of Means: The means of the various subscales pertaining to teachers' and parents' responses to the survey were ranked in descending order to ascertain the position and degree of importance in ways participants responded to specific items in the questionnaire. This approach was useful in explaining factors that participants considered were of most or least value pertaining to attitudes to

parental involvement, parental involvement relationships, practices and barriers to involvement.

Factor analysis of teachers' and parents' data: With the exception of teachers' data on barriers to parental involvement subscale, which did not yield to factor analysis after initial inspection (all items loaded onto one factor that cannot be rotated), the rest of the data set was subjected to factor analysis using principal components analysis with Varimax rotation to identify and compute composite scores for the factors underlying the subscales (Habing, 2003).

To perform the factor analysis, the sampling adequacies of all the subscales were inspected and confirmed to be satisfactory (Field, 2000). Table 4.6 shows the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacies, number of factors extracted and the total % of variances explained by the factors. According to Kaiser (1974), 0.5 (value for KMO) should be considered as minimum, values between 0.7-0.8 as acceptable, and values above 0.9 as excellent. Thus, all the sampling values are within the acceptable range for factor analysis to proceed.

Subscales	KMO and Bartlett's Test of Sampling adequacy	Number of factors	Total % of variances explained
Teacher attitudes (10 items)	.714	3	55.67
Teacher involvement practices (16 items)	.770	4	63.95
Parent-teacher relationship (10 items)	.654	4	79.80
Parent involvement practices	.818	4	62.01
Parents' perceived barriers (11 items)	.729	3	66.9

Table 4.6 Sampling adequacy, number of factors and total% variance explained.

Also, the communalities were all above .4 for each subscale, further confirming that each item in each subscale shared some common variance with other items. The component transformative matrices obtained through principal component analysis with Varimax and Kaiser Normalization for the subscales pertaining to the factors are displayed in Tables 4.6 to 4.10.

Component	1	2	3
1	.948	.291	.131
2	-.274	.530	.803
3	-.164	.797	-.582

Table 4.7 Teacher attitudes to parental involvement component transformative matrix.

Component	1	2	3	4
1	.585	.531	.525	.315
2	.712	-.516	.015	-.477
3	-.066	-.671	.369	.639
4	.383	.031	-.767	.514

Table 4.8 Teacher involvement practices component transformative matrix.

Component	1	2	3	4
1	.732	.449	.192	.476
2	.081	-.437	.893	-.073
3	-.523	.746	.407	-.065
4	-.430	-.225	.000	.874

Table 4.9 Parent-teacher relationships component transformative matrix.

Component	1	2	3	4
1	.611	.526	.522	.279
2	.271	-.409	-.335	.805
3	-.353	.742	-.491	.291
4	-.655	-.078	.612	.436

Table 4.10 Parents' involvement practices component transformative matrix.

Component	1	2	3
1	.867	.499	.018
2	-.493	.861	-.122
3	-.076	.097	.992

Table 4.11 Parents' perceived barriers component transformative matrix.

The number of factors extracted for each subscale was based on the Eigenvalues being 1 and above and the inspection of the scree plots. The point at which the scree plot was clearly levelling off for each subscale, was used to determine the number of total percentage variance explained by the factors. Given these overall indicators, solutions for the factors were each examined using varimax rotations of the factor loading matrix after which they were considered for their meaningfulness in terms of if the variables which loaded together described the same or different things. The factor loading matrices for these final solutions are presented in the results section in Chapter 5 with their scree plots.

Linear regression analysis: This analysis was performed on teachers and parents' data to measure the statistical relationship between teachers' and parents' demographic variables and attitude, practices, parent-teacher relationships and barriers to involvement scores. The purpose was to determine the degree of the association, or correlation, as well as the direction of the relationships. For the teachers' data and parents' data, the linear regression analyses did not show strong association between all the demographic variables on attitudes, involvement practices and barriers. As this is not an experimental research that is testing any hypothesis, it was deemed necessary to include brief information on items that showed some associations in the findings.

4.10.4 Interview Data Analysis

Transcription of data: Once the qualitative data had been collected, they were transcribed by the researcher and anonymised, with just a pseudonym and age assigned to the data as labels. I checked the transcripts against the digital recordings to ensure accuracy of the transcribed data with the aim of obtaining the perspectives of the teachers and parents concerning the issue of parental involvement, their understanding of the concept, roles, level of participation, and the facilitators and challenges. With this in mind, the goal of the data analysis is not to be constrained by rigid categories, but to allow the data to speak, complement, and extend insights into the quantitative data (Patton, 2000). For these purposes, framework analysis serves as a pragmatic approach to the data analysis as it is "essentially independent of theory and epistemology" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.6) allowing the researcher the freedom to engage the data analysis with high degrees of flexibility (Ritchie & Spencer 1994). The data analysis process was not linear, and yet facilitated

the organisation, coding and interpretation of rich data in detail to understand the teachers' and parents' views in depth (Braun & Clarke, 2006). I decided to analyse the qualitative data manually instead of using a software package. Also, I felt that manual coding of the data provided rich opportunity to better understand the data. (John & Johnson, 2000; Patton, 2000). Therefore, data were analysed thematically by following the principles of framework approach proposed by Ritchie and Spencer (1994) which included five steps: familiarization; identifying a thematic framework; indexing; charting; and mapping and interpretation.

Step 1. Familiarisation with the data: At this first stage, the qualitative data collected were transcribed verbatim from the handwritten notes and the audio recordings into a text on a computer file for reading and re-reading. This intense reading stage enabled me to have adequate knowledge of the data, how the individuals responded to each interview questions and the general feeling of the data set. This approach is what Ritchie and Spencer (1994) described as 'Immersing' oneself in the data (p. 179) to establish a complete sense of the nature of the data. At this familiarisation stage, I listened to the interviews, read the transcripts and reflected on emerging issues in the data to identify the important points of focus for the participants regarding parental participation in school.

In addition, I paid close attention to the emotionally charged moments the participants attached to particular aspects of the data and expressions that conveyed inner feelings about their concerns related to school-parent relationships. Initial impressions of the data were noted in the margins of transcripts including opposing comments from participants. As I went through the data several times, she

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underlined, specific phrases and words that conveyed participants' perspectives of significance to the research questions.

Step 2. Identifying a thematic framework for the data*:* Once I became adequately familiar with the data set, she proceeded to formulate a thematic framework for the data by organising the data in a sensible and manageable way so that she could revisit data segments, and then examine them in detail during the final stages for conceptual meanings to emerge. In Ritchie and Spencer's (1994) view, this process of developing conceptual categories occurs within a priori concerns as well as issues that arise during the familiarisation stage. In this way, it is possible for me to accommodate flexibility and, at the same time, link the analysis to the research questions without compromising the perspectives of the participants. During this stage of the analysis, I focused the analytic categories on the difficulties that both parents and teachers face in enacting effective parental participation in their children's education, what they hoped to achieve and their overall enacted practices. Specifically, I wanted the thematic frames to emerge from the data as well as reflect the participants' perspectives hence, flexibility was key to the analysis at this stage. Through this process, the following categories emerged from the data:

- Conceptions of parental involvement

- Description of parents and teachers' feelings and practices of parental involvement.

- Difficulties of parental involvement.

- Description of relationships with parents and teachers.

- Nature of communication between teachers and parents.

Step 3. Indexing the data: Ritchie and Spencer (1994) describe the indexing as the process of organising the transcripts into the framework categories for coding. At this stage, I systematically applied a coding framework to each interview transcript by using the computer to highlight phrases and sentences in the text that were of significance after which she assigned them to particular frameworks or codes. Samples of how teacher and parent interviews were coded have been provided in Appendices 11 and 12.

Step 4. Charting the data: This stage enabled me to organise the data into a more manageable format. After coding all the data set using the analytical framework, I summarised the data into a matrix for each theme (see Appendix 13 for examples). The matrix comprised of one row per teacher and parent participants and one column per code. I then abstracted data from transcripts for each participant, coded it and summarised it using verbatim words that corresponded to the theme codes.

Step 5. Mapping and interpretation of the data: This stage was challenging as it relates to meaning making of how the data have been categorised and themed. According to Ritchie and Spencer (1994), this is the stage where the researcher pulls together the main components of the data into a network of analytical relationships so that meaning can be inferred from the whole data set. To do this, I engaged in finding patterns within the data and articulating my own meaning making of the data. This meaning making led to some themes the collapsing of some themes into one to avoid repetitive statements. Five main themes emerged from the analysis namely: complex conceptions of parental involvement, orchestrating effective parental

involvement practices, dissonance in parental involvement experiences, barriers to parental involvement, and building parental involvement.

4.11 Ethical Consideration

Ethics approval was obtained from Exeter University's Ethics Committee and permission was sought from the Saudi Ministry of Education, research schools and participants before this research commenced. Plain language statements outlining the process of participating and the purpose of the research, along with consent forms were sent to teachers and parents with students with learning difficulties enrolled in the research schools. These documents detailed the processes regarding anonymity, confidentiality, and options for withdrawal from the research (Blaxter, Hughes & Tight, 2006). The questionnaires had cover sheet explaining the purpose of the research, and the voluntary nature of completing the questionnaire. The questionnaires also contained clear information that the participants did not have to complete the questionnaire, or agree to be interviewed if they did not wish to be involved. The information sheets and consent forms for teachers and parents explained the voluntary nature of participation in the interviews. The information sheet and consent form were provided in Arabic and emphasised that information provided by participants in the study was confidential and that their involvement in the study was completely voluntary and they were free to withdraw at any time. Participants were assured on the information sheet that their participation or non-participation in the study would in no way influence any aspect of their life or professions. I informed parents that their participation or non-participation in the study would have no influence on any aspect of their children's education.

As part of the consent for participation in research, private details and names of participants were not reported in any part of this thesis. In addition, any future publication from this thesis will be anonymous. During the data collection, I took great care so that the framing of questions did not contain personal and intrusive statements that might cause emotional stress for participants. A challenge of collecting data was that some of the participants declined to have their voices recorded therefore I asked those participants to speak slowly so that I could take notes without missing important information. All the data set were stored on password protected computers at the University of Exeter. In the handing of all data set for this research, I adhere to the principles of General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in ensuring the data set was processed securely, lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner.

Many ethical issues have been clearly addressed by the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2018) who emphasised that in any the educational research, there should be a very clear plan of how researchers will approach their participants. At the macro level, there are substantial differences in the sociocultural constructions between Saudi Arabia as an Arabic and Islamic state, and Britain as a Western European country. In the Saudi context, people value traditions and tribal pride, extended family relationships, Saudi heritage and customs, and Sunni/Islamic Sharia worldview and practices (Hamdan, 2005; Masoud, 2005; Rashidi, 2002). Consequently, researchers sometimes encounter teachers or/and parents may reject that they have a 'disabled' child in their family or classroom and refuse to give me any personal information. This is because of fear of stigmatisation as being inferior. In view of this, as a researcher, I was mindful of my insider and outside

positioning which influence my conscious reflection during the research process so that I did not put the participants at risk.

The study follows written procedures and policies for identifying and analysing risks and identifying measures to minimise such risks such as informed consent, information sheet, voluntary nature of participation and the right to withdraw. The discomfort to participants anticipated in this research was the time they made available to be part of the research which was not greater, in and of themselves than those usually faced in daily life. The participants also had the opportunity to communicate their concerns to me and advisors should there be any feeling of discomfort during their involvement in the research.

Generally, Saudi Arabia has a strong family social structure and extended family relationships. Disrespect to participants could result in risks of participants pulling out. Therefore, I respected all the cultural and religious protocols of Saudi life and of Islam and gave enough time to the participants to express their opinion without participants feeling judged. During my interaction with the participants, I ensured my dress code was consistent with the Saudi values, tribal pride and traditions, customs and heritage, and Sunni/Islamic Sharia worldview in order not to cause stress to any participants when she interviewed them.

4.12 Quality of the Research

4.12.1 Validity and Reliability

Validity refers to the extent to which a test scores represent the variable they are intended to measure (Johnson & Christensen, 2004). Valid tests have good test-retest reliability and internal consistency. Reliability is concerned with the extent to

which results are dependable over time and serve as a true representation of the population from which the participants are selected for the study (Joppe, 2000).

To ensure the credibility of the items I contacted specialists in learning difficulties in Saudi Arabia for suggestions and assistance regarding the appropriateness and wording of the survey items, including the accuracy and clarity of the translated statements. After initial items have been reviewed, they were trial-run with teachers and parents. The Alpha Cronbach coefficient reliability test of the internal consistency of the questionnaire (Gay et al., 2009) was acceptable at .754 for teachers' questionnaire and .786 for parents' questionnaire. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) indicated that the research is reliable, if the research instrument provides similar data from a group over time. In terms of content validity, I ensured that the instrument created measured the theoretical construct of the research study (Tashakkori & Teddile, 1998). This was done by ensuring that the measures cover the construct of parental involvement practices, parent-teacher relationships, attitudes to parental involvement, barriers to parental involvement, and experiences, offering the participants opportunity to respond either positively or negatively to the items covering these areas.

4.12.2 Trustworthiness

With regard to the qualitative phase, it is recognised that quality could be achieved by ensuring the trustworthiness of the findings through directing careful consideration to the ways in which the data is gathered, analysed and interpreted, and how the research study is conceptualised (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Silverman, 1993; Tashakkori & Teddile, 1998). Trustworthiness was also established through transparency of the research process. The semi-structured questions for the semi-

structured interviews were pilot tested with participants for clarity of expression and to avoid asking leading questions. The records of the semi-structured interview deliberations were read back to the participants immediately after the semi-structured interviews for them to comment, modify, delete and approve of their discussions. Overall, the data collected through the qualitative and quantitative approaches served to overcome the limitations imposed by each approach.

4.13 Summary

In this chapter, I presented and discussed the methodological aspects of the research. Based on the pragmatic paradigm perspective, I utilised a mixed method design with a purposive sampling strategy to collect data from 110 teachers and 105 parents. The particular design chosen for this study was a sequential explanatory type which is also referred to as the QUAN-qual research model, or the explanatory mixed method design. The research approach involved the collection and analysis of survey data followed by the collection and analysis of interview data for integration. A close-ended questionnaire and a semi-structured interview for teachers and parents were employed to collect data. At the interview stage, 10 parents and 10 teachers from those who responded to the questionnaire were interviewed. The questionnaire data were transferred from the hard copy material into SPSS version 24. The data analyses included descriptive statistic of mean, standard deviations and rankings of mean scores. In addition, factor analysis, t-test and ANOVA were performed to test the cluster of responses and variabilities in the results pertaining to teachers and parents. Further, framework analysis served as a

pragmatic approach to the analysis of the qualitative data. In the next chapter, I report on the findings of the study.

5 Chapter Five: Results

5.1 Introduction and Purpose of this Chapter

This mixed methods study explored and analysed the perspectives of Saudi Elementary school teachers and parents regarding parental involvement in inclusive elementary schools that support girls with learning difficulties. This chapter presents the survey and interview findings. The first part provides specific data on teachers' and parents' demographics, and their responses to questions on attitudes to parental involvement, parental involvement practices, parent-teacher relationships, and barriers to parental involvement. The second part provides the interview findings, linked to the data in Part 1. Together, these data sources provide rich information to discuss the research questions in Chapter 6 by integrating the qualitative and survey findings.

5.2 Section 1: Presentation of survey findings on teachers' responses

5.2.1 Presentation of Teachers' Survey Results

5.2.1.1 Teacher Demographics

Age range in years	Frequency	Percentage
20-29	22	20.0
30-39	47	42.7
40-49	36	32.7
50+	5	4.5
Years of teaching experience		
<5 years	16	14.5
5-10	37	33.6
11-15	41	37.3
16+	16	14.5
Highest qualification		
Masters	16	14.5
Bachelors	94	85.5
Professional role		
Administrator/principal	3	2.7
Teacher	13	11.8
Educational supervisor	4	3.6
Learning difficulties teacher	90	81.8
Number of students taught weekly as a LD teacher		
1-5 students	62	54.4
6-10	45	40.9
Missing values	3	2.7

Table 5.1 Teacher information.

Table 5.1 shows that the majority of teachers (63%) were below the age of 40 years. This presents professional learning opportunity for all the teachers on parental involvement. However, teachers close to retirement need special attention to commit to reform in parental involvement. Research findings suggest that the age of a teacher and experience can determine how they are receptive to school reforms;

teachers close to retirement may be less concerned about reform than those with more years (Berkovich, 2011; Kennedy, 2005). A small number of the participant teachers (5%) were 50 years and above and (33%) were in the age range of 40-49 years. Regarding the teachers' qualification, the great majority (86%) had Bachelor's degrees and the remaining (15%) had Masters Degrees.

A Pearson correlation analysis between age and years of teaching shows a strong correlation r=0.718, p=0.000. This means, professional experience of the teachers increases with age. In terms of professional roles, an overwhelming majority (82%) identified themselves as learning difficulty teachers. These teachers had their professional training in special education and teach students with varying disabilities in resource rooms or special contained classrooms within the general education school. Four percent of the participants identified as educational supervisors, 12% as classroom teachers and, 3% as principals. Education supervisors are personnel who are assigned the responsibility to conduct periodic supervision of teachers' work in schools in a particular local school district. About 56% of the teachers indicated that they usually taught 1-5 students with LD in a week, while 41% responded that they taught between 6-10 students with LD weekly. A small number of the teachers 3% did not indicate the number of students with LD they taught in a week. All the teachers who participated in this study taught in inclusive elementary schools.

5.2.1.2 Teacher attitudes toward parental involvement

Items	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neither agree nor disagree		Agree		Strongly agree	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1. I find teaching students with LD rewarding	0	0.0	7	6.4	13	11.8	79	71.8	11	10.0
2. It is teachers' duty to provide a classroom atmosphere where parents of students with LD can be involved	1	0.9	12	10.9	13	11.8	82	74.5	2	1.8
3. I have lower expectations of parents' participation in the education of their child	2	1.8	28	25.5	26	23.6	51	46.4	3	2.7
4. I am comfortable with parents' assistance in teaching their children	0	0.0	5	4.5	12	10.9	77	70.0	16	14.5
5. I am at ease around all parents	4	3.6	33	30.0	22	20.0	47	42.7	4	3.6
6. I provide an environment that accommodates all parents' participation	3	2.7	27	24.5	16	14.5	61	55.5	3	2.7
7. I feel that parents who don't make time to	1	0.9	18	16.4	27	24.5	60	54.5	4	3.6

come to school don't really care about their child's education										
8. Parents should know how to help their children with schoolwork at home	1	0.9	11	10.0	17	15.5	78	70.9	3	2.7
9. I view home-based involvement as an integral component of a student's education	1	0.9	10	9.1	29	26.4	64	58.2	6	5.5
10. Parental involvement adds to our professional workload	0	0.0	10	9.1	20	18.2	74	67.3	6	5.5

Table 5.2 Frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviation of teachers' attitudes to parental involvement (Items 1-10).

In reference to Table 5.2, when the percentages for (agree/strongly agree), (neither agree nor disagree) and (disagree/strongly disagree) were considered in their combinations, the results indicate that the majority of the participants (72%) agreed that teaching students with LD was rewarding. When combined with strongly agreed this is 82%. In addition, a great majority of the respondents (75%) indicate that teachers have responsibility to provide a classroom atmosphere where parents of students with LD can be involved. In addition, nearly half (46%) of the respondents indicate they have lower expectations of parents' participation in the education of their child and (24%) neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement.

The findings show that most of the teachers (70%) agreed they are comfortable with parents' assistance in teaching their children and together with those who agreed strongly, this constitutes (84%). This positive feeling may be related to home-based support that parents provide to their children. For example, (71%) of the teachers agreed that parents should know how to help their children with schoolwork at home, and (58%) of the teachers agreed that home-based involvement is an integral component of a student's education. Although a little over half (58%) of the teachers agreed/strongly agreed they provide an environment that accommodates all parents' participation, the positive attitude to parental involvement does not extend to the classroom environment. This inference is supported by the findings that less than half of the teachers agreed (43%) or strongly agreed (4%) that they feel at ease around all parents and the majority agreed (67%) or strongly agreed (6%) that parental involvement adds to their professional workload.

Items	N	Range	Min.	Max.	Mode	Mean	Std. Dev.
4. I am comfortable with parents' assistance in teaching their children	110	3.00	2.00	5.00	4.0	3.95	.66
1. I find teaching students with LD rewarding	110	3.00	2.00	5.00	4.0	3.86	.68
10. Parental involvement adds to our professional workload	110	3.00	2.00	5.00	4.0	3.69	.71
2. It is teachers' duty to provide a classroom atmosphere where parents of students with LD can be involved	110	4.00	1.00	5.00	4.0	3.65	.73
8. Parents should know how to help their children with schoolwork at home	110	4.00	1.00	5.00	4.0	3.65	.74
9. I view home-based involvement as an integral component of a student's education	110	4.00	1.00	5.00	4.0	3.58	.77
7. feel that parents who don't make time to come to school don't really care about their child's education	110	4.00	1.00	5.00	4.0	3.44	.84
6. provide an environment that accommodates all parents' participation	110	4.00	1.00	5.00	4.0	3.31	.96
3. I have lower expectations of parents' participation in the education of their child	110	4.00	1.00	5.00	4.0	3.23	.93
5. I am at ease around all parents	110	4.00	1.00	5.00	4.0	3.13	1.01
Valid N (listwise)	110						

Table 5.3 Teacher attitudes means ranked in descending order (items 1-10).

When the mean scores of the 10 attitude items were ranked in descending order (Table 5.3) and their modes scrutinised it was discovered that the means ranged from (*M*=3.95, *SD*=0.66) being the highest to (*M*=3.13, *SD*=1.0) being the lowest on a scale of 1-5, with a rage of 3.0-4.0, and all the modes were the same at 4.0.

The statement that attained the highest mean of the 10 items indicating most agreement was "teachers' feeling of contentment with parents' assistance in

teaching their children." Ninety-three out of 110 participants selected "strongly agree/agree", five selected "disagree" and 12 "neither agree nor disagree" on the scale of 1-5 (Item 4, *M*= 3.95, *SD*= 0.66134). For the question, "I find teaching students with LD rewarding", 90 participants selected "strongly agree/agree", seven selected "disagree" and 13 were "neither agree nor disagree" on this item (Item 1, *M*= 3.85, *SD*= 0.67). When asked whether "parental involvement adds to their professional workload" 80 out of 110 participants agreed that parental involvement is a burden. Ten participants "disagreed" to this statement and 20 neither agree nor disagree on this scale (Item 10, *M*= 3.69, *SD*=.071). The statement that attracted the lowest mean score is "I am at ease around all parents", 51 out of 110 selected "strongly agree/agree", 37 indicated strongly disagree/disagree and 22 were neither agree nor disagree (Item 5, *M*= 3.12, *SD* 1.01).

Results of the factor analysis on teachers' attitudes to parental involvement (items 1-10)

The results of the factor analysis on teachers' responses to the attitudes items are shown in Figure 5.1 and Table 5.3.
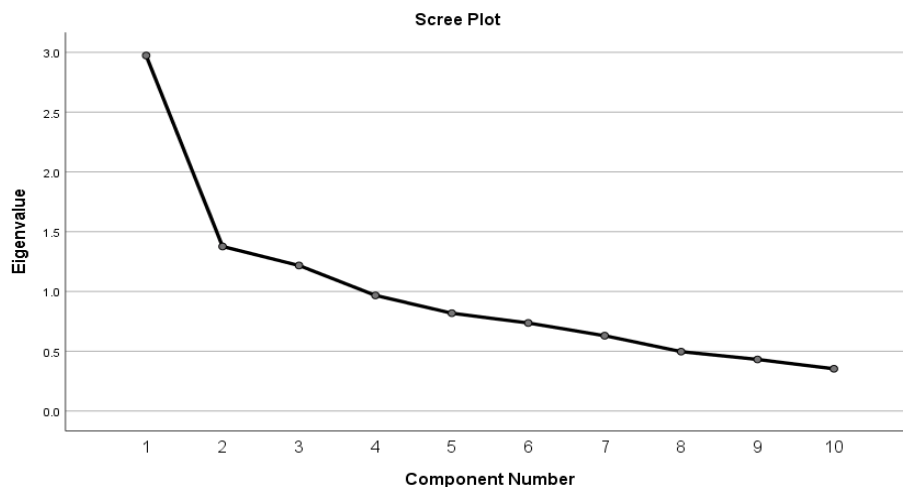
Figure 5.1 Scree plot with component number and Eigenvalue.

Items	Components		
	1	2	3
5. I am at ease around all parents	.622		
6. I provide an environment that accommodates all parents' participation	.383		
7. I feel that parents who don't make time to come to school don't really care about their child's education	.598		
8. Parents should know how to help their children with schoolwork at home	.713		
9. I view home-based involvement as an integral component of a student's education	.761		
10. Parental involvement adds to our professional workload	.753		
1. I find teaching students with LD rewarding		.626	
4. I am comfortable with parents' assistance in teaching their children		.729	
2. It is teachers' duty to provide a classroom atmosphere where parents of students with LD can be involved			.629
3. I have lower expectations of parents' participation in the education of their child			.538

Table 5.4 Factor pattern matrix of attitude items.

The first factor in Table 5.4 describes attitudinal issues related to parents' support and views about parental involvement such as comfortability with parents, parents' lack of involvement, and professional load issues. This factor explained 28.07% of the total variance and I labelled it *Drivers of involvement* (Items 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10). Factor 2 explained a 14.1% of the total variance and included items 1 and 4. These items describe teachers' positive attitudes toward and support for students with LD. I named this factor *Positive feeling.* The third factor included items (2 and 3) that explained 13.5% of the total variance. The items relate to the provision of classroom atmosphere where parents of students with LD can be involved and having lower expectations of parents' participation. This factor was labelled pragmatic issues. It appears that although the teachers indicated that it is their duty

to facilitate parental involvement, their choices suggested that they have little trust in parents' involvement.

As indicated in the data analysis section linear regression analysis to find associations between the attitudes, practices, barriers factors and demographic variables of age, number of students with LD taught per week, professional role, qualification and experience did not show any associations except a very weak association between participants' age and barriers (Factor 3 ($r=.207$, $p>0.05$, effect 4.3%) and years of teaching and Factor 3 ($r=.185$, $p>0.05$, effect 3.4%). This means that participants' demographic details have little to do with their attitudes. There was a strong association between age and years of teaching $r=0.718$, $p=0.000$. which explained 52% of the variance as shown in Table 5.5.

Model Summary$_b$

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.718$_a$	.515	.511	.64067	1.707

Table 5.5 Linear relationship between and teaching experience.

5.2.1.3 Teachers' Responses on Parental Practices (Items 11-26)

This section presents findings on the teachers' responses to parental involvement practices items (Questions 11-26). Parental involvement is a complex process encompassing a variety of practices (Epstein, 2001; Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). Understanding these practices can contribute to how schools implement policies to enhance involvement practices. The results are shown in Tables 5.4 and 5.6.

Items	Strongly disagreed		Disagree		Neither agree nor disagree		Agree		Strongly agree	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
11. I have regular communication with parents about students' activities	48	43.6	22	20.0	10	9.1	20	18.2	10	9.1
12. Parents' involvement in school programmes is an important duty	20	18.2	31	28.2	9	8.2	30	27.3	40	36.4
13. Parental participation contributes to the academic achievement of students with learning difficulties	16	14.5	34	21.8	18	16.4	30	27.3	22	20.0
14. Teaching students with learning difficulties is the sole responsibility of teachers	20	18.2	13	11.8	7	6.4	30	27.3	40	36.4
15. Some parents of this school are more involved than others	9	8.2	6	5.5	21	19.1	44	40	30	27.3
16. Teachers in this school are welcoming to parents	17	15.5	9	8.2	19	17.3	41	37.3	24	21.8
17. I approach parents whenever they need help with their children	7	6.4	2	1.8	4	3.6	48	43.6	49	44.5
18. I collaborate with other staff to support parents	40	36.4	18	16.4	7	6.4	32	29.1	13	11.8
19. I involve parents in making decisions about their child's education	83	75.5	10	9.1	14	12.7	2	1.8	1	0.9
20. Teachers in this school are trained on how to work with parents	91	82.7	12	10.9	1	0.9	2	1.8	4	3.6

21. There is school-level policy on how to involve parents	82	74.3	19	17.3	2	1.8	4	3.6	3	2.7
22. I follow school policy when involving parents	70	63.6	10	9.1	18	16.4	6	5.5	6	5.5
23. Parents are allowed to freely share their views at school meetings	46	41.8	14	12.7	21	19.1	18	16.4	11	10.0
24. Parents share their opinions and questions about their daughter' education with me	35	31.8	26	23.6	20	18.2	20	18.2	9	8.2
25. I set the place and time of parents' meeting by agreement with them	51	46.4	30	27.3	5	4.5	14	12.7	10	9.1
26. Whenever problems arise between teachers and parents they are resolved quickly	16	14.5	17	15.5	24	21.8	24	21.8	29	26.4

Table 5.6 Frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviation of teachers' responses to parental involvement practices (Items 11-26).

The results in Table 5.6 show that more than half of the teachers indicated they communicated regularly with parents about their daughter's educational activities (Item 11, strongly agree 44%, agree 20%). However, a large percentage of teachers indicated they, did not involve parents in making decisions about their children's education (Item 19, strongly agree 76%, Agree 9%). A large majority of teachers indicated that they were not trained on how to work with parents (Item 20, strongly agree 73%, agree 11%).

Regarding the availability of school level policy on parental involvement (Item 21), 74% strongly disagreed and 17% disagreed that policies this policy exists. In combination, this constitute most participants (91%) who indicated that their schools did not have policy on how to involve parents. It may also be that policies exist but

these teachers are not aware of them or simply ignore them in their practice. This finding is consistent with a large number of the teachers (64%) who strongly agreed or agreed (9%) that they did not follow school policy when involving parents. Over half of the teachers (item 23, 42%=strongly agreed, 13%=agreed) were of the view that parents did not share their opinions or ask questions about their daughter's education.

A great number of the teachers responding to item 25 disagreed (27%) or strongly disagreed (46%) that they set the place and time of parents' meeting by agreement with parents. This may suggest that meetings were organised without consulting parents which may implicate some barriers to parents' involvement, in particular when the meeting times are not suitable for parents. The interview data shed more light on this issue. Interestingly, less than half of the participants (48%) indicated that whenever problems arise between teachers and parents they are resolved quickly.

Items	N	Range	Min.	Max.	Mean	Mode	Std. Dev.
17. I approach parents whenever they need help with their children	110	4.00	1.00	5.00	4.18	5.0	1.05
15. Some parents of this school are more involved than others	110	4.00	1.00	5.00	3.73	4.0	1.16
14. Teaching students with learning difficulties is the sole responsibility of teachers	110	4.00	1.00	5.00	3.52	5.0	1.52
16. Teachers in this school are welcoming to parents	110	4.00	1.00	5.00	3.42	4.0	1.34
26. Whenever problems arise between teachers and parents they are resolved quickly	110	4.00	1.00	5.00	3.30	5.0	1.39
13. Parental participation contributes to the academic achievement of students with learning difficulties	110	4.00	1.00	5.00	3.16	4.0	1.36
12. Parents' involvement in school programmes is an important duty	110	4.00	1.00	5.00	2.98	2.0	1.41

18. I collaborate with other staff to support parents	110	4.00	1.00	5.00	2.64	1.0	1.51
24. Parents share their opinions and questions about their daughter' education with me	110	4.00	1.00	5.00	2.47	1.0	1.33
23. Parents are allowed to freely share their views at school meetings	110	4.00	1.00	5.00	2.40	1.0	1.42
11. I have regular communication with parents about students' activities	110	4.00	1.00	5.00	2.29	1.0	1.42
25. I set the place and time of parents' meeting by agreement with them	110	4.00	1.00	5.00	2.11	1.0	1.36
22. I follow school policy when involving parents	110	4.00	1.00	5.00	1.80	1.0	1.22
19. I involve parents in making decisions about their child's education	110	4.00	1.00	5.00	1.44	1.0	.85
21. There is school-level policy on how to involve parents	110	4.00	1.00	5.00	1.43	1.0	.91
20. Teachers in this school are trained on how to work with parents	110	4.00	1.00	5.00	1.33	1.0	.89
Valid N (listwise)	110						

Table 5.7 Teachers' response on parental involvement practice items ranked in descending order according to item means (Questions 11-26).

In Table 5.7, the ranked mean scores in descending order and their modes indicated mean range from 4.18 being the highest to 1.33 being the lowest on a scale of 1-5 with modes ranging from 5.0 to 1.0. Item 17, "I approach parents whenever they need help with their children" was the statement that achieved the highest mean (*M*= 4.18, *SD*= 1.05). Ninety-seven out of 110 participants "strongly agreed/agree" to this statement, 9 selected "strongly disagree/disagree" and 2 were "neither agree nor disagree." Two other statements that achieved means next to the highest mean score are item 15, "Some parents of this school are more involved than others (Strongly agree/agree 73, strongly disagree/disagree 15, neither agree nor disagree 21 (*M*= 3.72, *SD*= 1.16); and item 14, "Teaching students with learning difficulties is the sole responsibility of teachers; Strongly agree/agree 70, strongly disagree/disagree 23, neither agree nor disagree 7; *M*= 3.52, *SD*=1.52).

Four statements that achieved the lowest mean scores on a scale of Strongly Disagree 1, Disagree 2, Neither disagree nor agree 3, Agree 4 and Strongly agree 5 in ranked order are item 22, "I follow school policy when involving parents" (strongly agree/agree 12, neither agree nor disagree 18, strongly disagree/disagree 80; *M*= 1.80, *SD*= 1.22); Item 19, "I involve parents in making decisions about their child's education" (strongly agree/agree 3, neither agree nor disagree 14, strongly disagree/disagree 93; *M*= 1.44, SD=0.85); item 21, "There is school-level policy on how to involve parents" (strongly agree/agree 7, neither agree nor disagree 2, strongly disagree/disagree 101; *M*= 1.43, *SD*= 0.91) and item 20, "Teachers in this school are trained on how to work with parents" (strongly agree/agree 6, neither agree nor disagree 1, strongly disagree/disagree 103; *M*= 1.33, *SD*= 0.89).

Results of factor analysis on teachers' responses to parental involvement practices

The results identified four factors with Eigen values above1 as shown by the scree plot in Figure 5.2.
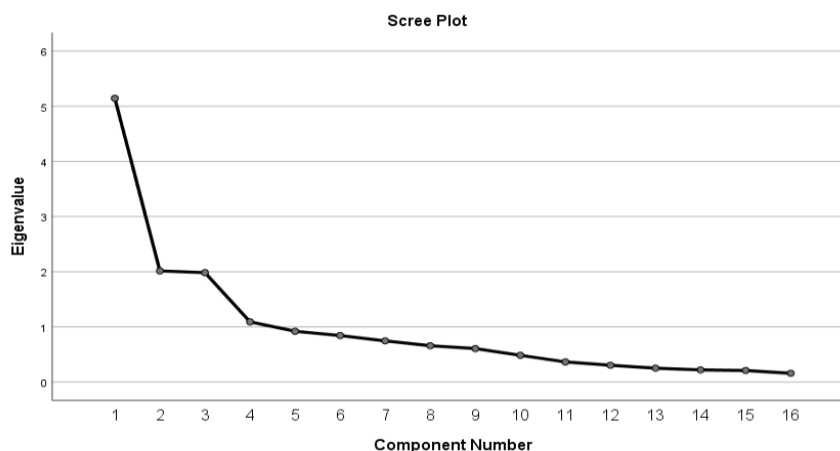
Figure 5.2 Number of factors extracted based on the Scree plot.

Items	F1	F2	F3	F4
18. I collaborate with other in making decisions about their child's education	.695			
20. Teachers in this school are trained on how to work with parents	.674			
21. There is school-level policy on how to involve parents	.779			
22. I follow school policy when involving parents	.866			
23. Parents are allowed to freely share their views at school meetings	.432			
12. Parents' involvement in school programmes is an important duty		.832		
13. Parental participation contributes to the academic achievement of students with learning difficulties		.821		
14. Teaching students with learning difficulties is the sole responsibility of teachers		-.812		
19. I involve parents in making decisions about their child's education		.400		
11.. I have regular communication with parents about students' activities			.562	
24. Parents share their opinions and questions about their daughter' education with me24. 24			.650	
25. I set the place and time of parents' meeting by agreement with them			.770	
26. Whenever problems arise between teachers and parents they are resolved quickly			.529	
15. Some parents of this school are more involved than others				.712
16. Teachers in this school are welcoming to parents				.766
17. I approach parents whenever they need help with their children				.588

Table 5.8 Factor pattern matrix of involvement practices.

In reference to Table 5.8, the total variance explained by the four factors is

63.95 %. The first factor consists of five items (18, 20, 21, 22 & 23) that explained

32.1% of the variance and is concerned mainly with issues of "school policy." This could mean that effective school policy on teacher-parent collaboration is central to teachers to enact effective ways of working with parents. Thus, effective school policy can provide directions to parent-teacher collaboration.

Factor 2 included four items (12, 13, 14 & 19) that explained 12.6% of the variance. Three of the items (12, 13 & 19) loaded positively and centred on "parents' role in school practice". Item 19, however, loaded negatively suggesting that teachers' do not disagree with parents' role in educating students with LD in school. This factor is labelled "complexity of parental involvement" It could be that although the teachers see the importance of parental involvement to increase educational outcomes of students with LD, they possibly were of the view that parents do not have the skills to be involved directly in the education of children with LD in schools. The third factor explained 12.4% of the variance and included four items (11, 24, 25, & 26) that describe the important role of "communication" in teacher-parent collaboration. This suggests that teachers believe effective communication can be the tool for working with parents and resolving conflicts whenever they arise.

The fourth factor included three items (15, 16, & 17) that explained 6.8% of the variance. This factor describes "support for parents". It suggests, that differences exist among parents in the ways and levels of their involvement in school activities but the provision of support and resolving parents' issues can boost their involvement. In the education of children with LD. These findings draw some implications for orchestrating effective parental involvement, because they identified practice issues within the schools around policy, communication and decision-making and support that can help boost parental involvement.

5.2.1.4 Teachers' perspectives on barriers to parental involvement (items 27-36)

The final part of the questionnaire contains 10 items that measured what the teachers considered barriers to working with parents to educate students with LD in inclusive elementary schools. To better understand parental involvement practices it is important to obtain teachers' views about what they consider the barriers to parental involvement (Baker, Wise, Kelley & Skiba, 2016). This because unresolved barriers can frustrate teachers and parents to work together and support quality education of students (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). The results in Table 5.9 show that a little over half (52.7%) of the teachers agree/strongly agree that their schools have adequate guidelines for parental involvement and 65.5% agree/strongly agree that parents' attitudes toward them reduces their involvement. Important also, is the finding that more than half had limited time to be involved with parents (57.3%). Half of the teachers (50%) agree/strongly agree that inability to train teachers on how to work with parents can lead to lack of communication between teachers and parents.

Items	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neither agree nor disagree		Agree		Strongly agree	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
27. There are adequate guidelines for how parents should be involved in school matters	5	4.5	35	31.8	12	10.9	53	48.2	5	4.5
28. Parents' attitudes towards me reduces	4	3.6	22	20.0	12	10.9	63	57.3	9	8.2

my involvement in school programmes									
29. Parents have limited knowledge of special education to be involved in school programmes	6	5.5	19	17.3	31	28.2	45	40.9	9	8.2
30. I have limited time to be involved with parents	6	5.5	28	25.5	13	11.8	54	49.1	9	8.2
31. I have a lot of responsibilities in the school that mean I am unable to involve parents lead to poor parental involvement	3	2.7	30	27.3	10	9.1	57	31.8	10	9.1
32. I find it is difficult to set a meeting time with parents	5	4.5	39	35.5	10	9.1	51	46.4	5	4.5
33. Failure to train the teachers on how to deal with parents may lead to a lack of communication between teachers and parents	5	4.5	29	26.4	21	19.1	48	43.6	7	6.4
34. Lack of available place in the school for parent meeting reduces the parental participation	3	2.7	29	26.4	31	28.2	40	36.4	7	6.4
35. Lack of interest in the school administration to the parental involvement reduces my involvement35.	8	7.3	39	35.5	27	24.5	32	29.1	4	3.6
36. Using scientific terms (such as: Integrating and the resource room)	8	7.3	36	32.7	14	12.7	46	41.8	6	5.5

with parents reduces
their participation

Table 5.9 Teachers' responses on barriers to parental involvement frequencies and percentages.

Teachers' responses to parental involvement barrier items are ranked in descending order according to item means. This research has identified a number of barriers perceived by teachers that inhibit effective parental involvement in their children's education which is reported in Table 5.10.

Items	N	Range	Min.	Max.	Mean	Mode	Std. Dev.
28. Parents' attitudes towards me reduces their involvement in school programmes	110	4.00	1.00	5.00	3.46	4.0	1.02
31. I have a lot of responsibilities in the school that mean I am unable to involve parents lead to poor parental involvement	110	4.00	1.00	5.00	3.37	4.0	1.07
29. Parents have limited knowledge of special education to be involved in school programmes	110	4.00	1.00	5.00	3.29	4.0	1.03
30. I have limited time to be involved with parents	110	4.00	1.00	5.00	3.29	4.0	1.10
33. Failure to train the teachers on how to deal with parents may lead to a lack of communication between teachers and parents	110	4.00	1.00	5.00	3.21	4.0	1.05
34. Lack of available place in the school for parent meeting reduces the parental participation	110	4.00	1.00	5.00	3.17	4.0	.98
27. There are adequate guidelines for how parents should be involved in school matters	110	4.00	1.00	5.00	3.16	4.0	1.07
32. I find it is difficult to set a meeting time with parents	110	4.00	1.00	5.00	3.11	4.0	1.09

36. Using scientific terms (such as: Integrating and the resource room) with parents reduces their participation	110	4.00	1.00	5.00	3.05	4.0	1.12
35. Lack of interest in the school administration to parental involvement reduces my involvement	110	4.00	1.00	5.00	2.86	2.0	1.04
Valid N (listwise)	110						

Table 5.10 Teachers' response on parental involvement barriers items ranked in descending order according to item means.

These barriers are ranked according to order of significance in terms of those responses that were 50% or more of the participants. Five main barriers have been identified and listed below. The percentages of strongly agree/agree have been combined and the raw data in the tables assist undertaking of the skewness of responses.

1. Item 28, 65.5% (72) of teachers affirmed that parental attitudes to them reduces their involvement.

2. Item 31, 60.9% (67) of teachers affirmed that lot of responsibilities in the school makes it impossible for teachers unable to involve parents.

3. Item 30, 57.3% (63) affirmed that they have limited time to be involved with parents.

4. Item 32, 50.9% (55) find it is difficult to set a meeting time with parents.

5. Item 33, 50.0% (55) teachers affirmed that failure to train the teachers on how to deal with parents may lead to a lack of communication.

The interview findings in Section Two of the presentation of findings provided more robust insights into issues that constitute key barriers to parental involvement practices in terms of this research.

As can be seen from the ranking, it seems that poor teacher-parent relationships may be a factor working against parental involvement. From the data some of the teachers find it difficult to set meeting times with parents. This may be due to several factors, including parents' working hours as indicated in the demographic information and lack of an appropriate meeting place as indicated by the teachers' responses. The findings also suggest that teacher responsibility and lack of effective training on how to relate to parents may be limiting factors to their engagement with parents for some of the teachers. Teachers were drawn from different schools to participate in this research. It is possible that not all have the same level of professional development experience on how to work with parents.

The teachers' survey gleaned data on teachers' attitudes to parental involvement, practices, and barriers. The results showed that teachers did not involve parents in school decision-making about their children's education. More than half of the teachers indicated that they communicated to parents regularly about their children's education. Regarding the availability of school level policy on parental involvement, most teachers agreed that these policies did not exist. The results again showed that all the teachers were highly in favour of parents' support for their child's homework. However, they regarded parents that they do not have the requisite professional knowledge to be involved in academic aspects of the school. Key among the issues rated highly in the questionnaire were lack of time and workload which made it difficult for them to involve parents.

This section has presented the findings obtained from the teacher surveys. The next section of this chapter is the presentation of findings from parent surveys. Obtaining data from parents is important as it adds to strengthening the evidence collected from teachers on parental involvement relationships, practices and barriers. The data presentation begins with parents' demographic details.

5.2.2 Presentation of Parents' Survey Results

5.2.2.1 Parent Demographics

One hundred and five parents completed the surveys out of the 120 copies sent which represented a very good return rate of 87.5%. The high return rate was partly due to follow-emails to the participants to remind them to return the questionnaires. Secondly, the participants may be self-motivated as Saudi parents and teachers are beginning to appreciate the educational importance of children to get good jobs in the future, hence issues with school involvement are now attracting interest. The demographic information on parent participants is presented in Tables 5.11 to 5.16. Some parent participants did not respond to certain demographic information. The demographic information regarding, age, education background, number of children in households, number of children with learning difficulties in participants' households and hours per week worked are reported in this section. The questionnaires were primarily returned by mothers (78%) and the majority of participants were below 40 years (62%).

Categories of parents who completed the questionnaire	Frequency	Percentage
Mother	82	78.1
Father	9	8.6
Guardian	4	3.8
Other	10	9.5

Table 5.11 Respondents to the parent questionnaire.

Age range	Frequency	Percentage
20-29	25	23.8
30-39	40	38.1
40-49	24	22.9
50-59	5	4.8
60-69	3	2.9
Missing values	8	7.6

Table 5.12 Age range of parents.

Age range	Frequency	Percentage
20-29	3	2.9
30-39	37	35.2
40-49	30	28.6
50-59	7	6.7
60+	2	1.9
Missing values	26	24.8

Table 5.13 Age range of spouse.

Hours per week worked	Frequency	Percentage
10-19 hours	1	1.0
20-29 hours	4	3.8
30-39 hours	22	21.0
40-49 hours	14	13.3
Missing system	64	61.0

Hours per week worked by spouse	Frequency	Percentage
20-29 hours	8	7.6
30-39 hours	14	13.3
40-49 hours	28	26.7
50+ hours	10	9.5
Missing values	45	42.9

Table 5.14 Working hours.

Marital status	Frequency	Percentage
Married	76	72.4
Married and living apart from spouse	6	5.7
Separated, widowed or divorced	14	13.3
Missing values	9	8.9

Educational level	Frequency	Percentage
Elementary	6	5.8
Secondary	11	10.6
High School	36	34.6

Bachelor Degree	41	39.4
Postgraduate	10	9.6
Missing values	1	1.0

Table 5.15 Marital status and educational level.

Number of children in household	Frequency	Percentage
1	75	71.4
2	6	5.7
3	14	13.3
Missing values	10	9.5
Number of children with LD in family unit	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
1	83	79.0
2	6	5.7
Missing values	16	15.3

Table 5.16 Information on children in family unit and those with LD.

Tables 5.11 to 5.16 show the demographic details of the parent participants. A small number (3%) was 60 years and above which is the pension age for public sector workers in Saudi Arabia. Eight participants representing 8% did not report their ages and 25% did not report the ages of their spouses. In terms of their spouses' age, 2% were above the pension age and 72% were below the pension age of 60 years. The majority of participants (72%) had married and living together. Six percent declared being married but living apart, 13% reported that they were separated and 9% did not provide marital information. Only one participant did not provide information on educational level. Ten participants completed postgraduate qualification, 40% had bachelor degrees, 35% had high school diplomas, 11% secondary school certificates and 6% attended up to the elementary school level.

In addition, the data indicated that 71% of the study participants had one child living in their family unit, 6% had two children in their household and 13% had three children and 10% did not provide this information. One of the criteria for parent participant selection was having a child or being a guardian for a child with LD. Pertaining to children with Learning Difficulties, 79% stated that they had one child with LD and 6% indicated that they had two children with LD and 15% did not provide this information.

5.2.2.2 Parent's perceptions of parent-teacher relationships

Items	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neither agree nor disagree		Agree		Strongly agree	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1. My daughter's teacher contacts me to say good things about my daughter	84	80.0	16	15.2	1	1.0	3	2.9	1	1.0
2. My daughter's teachers know about the learning difficulties of my daughter	0	0.0	0	0.0	15	14.3	56	53.3	34	32.4
3. My daughter's teachers support the learning difficulties of my daughter	0	0.0	0	0.0	14	13.3	51	48.6	40	38.1
4. My daughter's teachers care about my daughter as an individual	0	0.0	9	8.6	55	52.4	26	24.8	15	14.3
5. My daughter's teachers help my daughter feel good about her education	0	0.0	5	4.5	49	46.7	34	32.4	17	16.2

6. I am included in decisions affecting my daughter's education	81	77.1	18	17.1	6	5.1	0	0.0	0	0.0
7. My daughter's teachers invite me to visit the classroom during the day	88	83.8	17	16.2	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
8. My daughter's teachers value my efforts in school involvement	88	83.8	17	16.2	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
9. I have good relationship with my daughter's teachers	8	7.6	24	22.9	17	16.2	39	37.1	17	16.2
10. Teachers in my daughter's school know how to work with parents	86	81.9	18	17.1	1	1.0	0	0.0	0	0.0

Table 5.17 Descriptive statistics on parent-teacher relationships.

Generally, the results in Table 5.17 presents mixed perspectives about teacher-parent relationships. With regards to teachers contacting parents to say good things about their daughters (Item 1), the majority of parents representing 80% strongly disagreed and 15% disagreed. This suggests that whenever teachers contacted parents they presented negative messages about their children academic performance and behaviour challenges. This perspective was reiterated during interviews with parents. Pertaining to decision making in school, a great majority strongly disagreed (77%) and 17% disagreed that they were included in school decision making about their children with learning difficulties. None of the parents agreed to this statement. A previous study found that Programme Support Group meetings are useful for discussing and planning for students with disabilities (Dempsey, 2012). Parents are a part of Programme Support Groups and can make

valuable contributions to decision making during such meetings. All the parent participants (100%) responded in the negative that teachers invite them to visit their children's classroom during the day while their children are in school (Item 7, Strongly disagreed 84%, disagreed 16%).

The results also identified that parents agreeing that the school teachers have adequate knowledge about their children's learning difficulties (Item 2 Strongly agree 52%, Agree 32%). Again, this is consistent with the view of the majority of the parents who believed that teachers support the learning difficulties of their children (Item 3 49% strongly agreed, 38% agreed). When those who strongly agreed/ agreed were combined, the results indicate that a little over half of the parents (53%) have good relationship with their daughter's teachers, and a little below half of the parents (49%) were of the view that teachers in their daughters' school know how to work with parents.

Items	N	Mini.	Maxim	Mean	Mode	Std. Dev.
3. My daughter's teachers support the learning difficulties of my daughter	105	3.00	5.00	4.25	4.0	.68
2. My daughter's teachers know about the learning difficulties of my daughter	105	3.00	5.00	4.18	4.0	.66
5. My daughter's teachers help my daughter feel good about her education	105	2.00	5.00	3.60	3.0	.82
4. My daughter's teachers care about my daughter as an individual	105	2.00	5.00	3.45	3.0	.84
9. I have good relationship with my daughter's teachers	105	1.00	5.00	3.31	4.0	1.21
10. Teachers in my daughter's school know how to work with parents	105	1.00	5.00	3.26	4.0	1.16
8. My daughter's teachers value my efforts in school involvement	105	1.00	5.00	2.85	3.0	1.13

1. My daughter's teacher contacts me to say good things about my daughter	105	1.00	5.00	1.30	1.0	.72
6. I am included in decisions affecting my daughter's education	105	1.00	3.00	1.29	1.0	.57
7. My daughter's teachers invite me to visit the classroom during the day	105	1.00	2.00	1.16	1.0	.37
Valid N (listwise)	105					

Table 5.18 Parents' response on parent-teacher relationships items ranked in descending order according to item means (Questions 1-10).

The ranked results in descending order in Table 5.18 indicate mixed perspectives of participants regarding various items. The means ranged from (*M*=4.25, *SD*=0.68) being the highest to (*M*=1.16, *SD*=0.37) being the lowest and rage from 4.0-to 1.0. The item that achieved the highest mean was parents' agreement that "teachers support the learning difficulties of their daughters" (Item 3, *M*= 4.25, *SD*= 0.68). This was followed by parents' agreement that their daughters' teachers "have knowledge about how their daughters with LD learn (Item 2, *M*= 4.1810, *SD*= 0.66).

It is important to note the low means recorded for certain items that indicate parents showing a high level of disagreement with these items. These include, for example, teachers inviting parents to be part of classroom activities during the day (Item 7, *M*= 1.1619, *SD*= 0.37); parents feeling included in decisions affecting their daughters' education (Item 6, *M*=1.28, *SD*= 0.57), and teachers contacting parents to say good things about their daughters (Item 1, *M*=1.29, *SD*= 0.72). The responses of the parents suggest some important challenges parents encountered in establishing strong teacher-parent relationships.

Results of factor analysis of the relationship items

Pertaining to parent-teacher relationships, the results indicate four factors based on the Scree plot and consideration for Eigenvalues above 1 as shown in Figure 5.3.
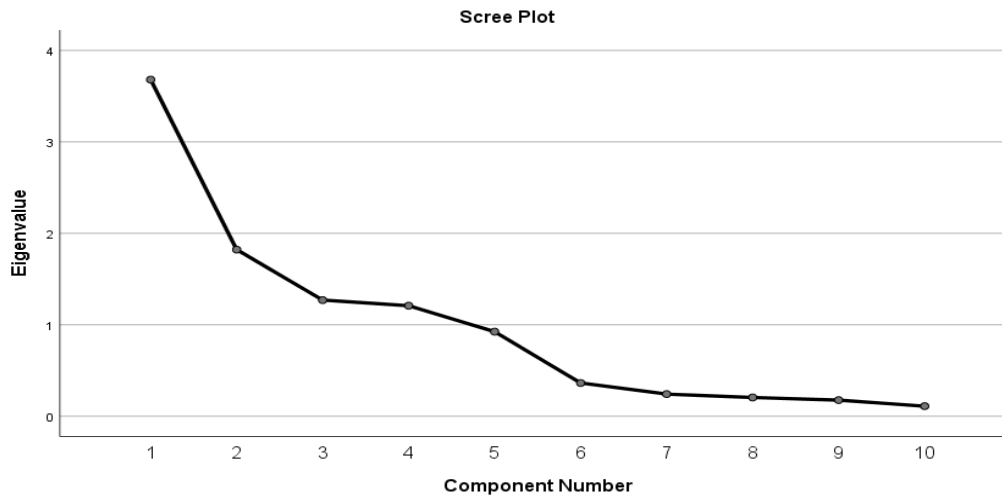
Figure 5.3 Number of factors extracted based on the Scree plot .

Items	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
1. My daughter's teacher contacts me to say good things about my daughter	.444			
8. My daughter's teachers value my efforts in school involvement	.926			
9. I have good relationship with my daughter's teachers	.830			
10. Teachers in my daughter's school know how to work with parents	.847			
6. I am included in decisions affecting my daughter's education		.942		
7. My daughter's teachers invite me to visit the classroom during the day		.943		

2. My daughter's teachers know about the learning difficulties of my daughter	.939
3. My daughter's teachers support the learning difficulties of my daughter	.892
4. My daughter's teachers care about my daughter as an individual	.946
5. My daughter's teachers help my daughter feel good about her education	.927

Table 5.19 Number of factors with factor scores.

The total variance explained by the four factors is 79.8 %. The first factor consists of 4 items (1, 8, 9 &10) that explained 36.8% of the variance and is concerned mainly with issues of "relationship and communication." This could mean that effective communication is key to these parents developing positive relationship with teachers. Thus, effective communication and positive relationships are closely related.

Factor 2 included two items (6, 7) that explained 18.2% of the variance and centred on "invitation to be part of school's decision making". It could be that invitation to support children's work at school can enable parents to play a role in the school's decision-making process and strengthen parent teacher relationships. The third factor explained 12.7% of the variance and included 2 items (2, 3) that describe teacher's "knowledge and support" for students with LD. This suggests that teachers who know their students are better positioned to provide personalised support for students to enhance their learning. It may be that parents' belief that teachers are knowledgeable professionals who support their daughters' learning can have positive influence on their relationships. The fourth factor included 2 items (4, 5) that explained 12.1% of the variance (Table 5.19). This factor describes beliefs about "care and support" teachers provide for their students with LD. Caring about a child's

education may translate to supporting them to feel good about themselves. It is possible that parents who feel their children with LD are well-cared for may develop stronger and positive prelateship with teachers.

5.2.2.3 Parents' Involvement Practices

Parental involvement practices determine the level of parents' involvement in schools (Mapp & Kuttner, 2013). Obtaining the views of parents on how they are involved is important for this research outcome. The next section presents data on these practices**.**

Items	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neither agree/ disagree		Agree		Strongly agree	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
11. I fully participate in my daughter's classroom programmes	86	81.9	18	17.1	1	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
12. I fully participate in the non-classroom activities of my daughter's school	54	51.4	20	19.0	5	4.8	23	21.9	3	2.9
13. I understand what my daughter's school expects of me as a parent	37	35.2	44	41.9	11	10.5	12	11.1	1	1.0
14. I support my daughter's learning at home	1	1.0	5	4.8	5	4.8	47	44.8	47	44.8
15. I can contribute to decision making in the school	47	44.8	18	17.1	10	9.5	23	21.9	7	6.7

Item	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
16. I do contribute to decision making in the school	84	80.0	20	19.0	1	1.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
17. My daughter welcomes my involvement in her educational activities	16	15.2	17	16.2	25	23.8	36	34.3	11	10.5
18. I see my involvement in school programmes as an important duty	23	21.9	24	22.9	10	9.5	27	25.7	21	20.0
19. I communicate my daughter's needs to the school	6	5.7	23	21.9	5	4.8	45	42.9	26	24.8
20. Parental participation contributes to the academic achievement of students with LD	2	1.9	10	9.5	40	38.1	38	36.2	15	14.3
21. Teaching students with LD is the sole responsibility of teachers	17	16.2	25	23.8	19	18.1	25	23.8	19	18.1
22. I would like to participate more in my daughter's education at school	6	5.7	14	13.3	10	9.5	35	33.3	40	38.1
23. It is easy for me to participate in my daughter's education at school	26	24.8	28	26.7	13	12.4	33	31.4	5	4.8
24. School meetings to discuss my daughter's progress are very helpful.	1	1.0	10	9.5	28	26.7	47	44.8	19	18.1
25. I feel comfortable being involved in the	0	0.0	11	10.5	25	23.8	47	44.8	22	21.0

education of my daughter									
26. Teachers in this school are welcoming to parents	9	8.6	20	19.0	30	28.6	32	30.5	14	13.3

Table 5.20 Percentage distribution of parent involvement practices.

The data in Table 5.20 presents mixed perspectives on parents' involvement practices. Parents being able to fully participate in their daughter's classroom programmes, for example, contributing to in the individual education plan recorded disagreement from 99% of the parents (Item 1, strongly disagree 82%, disagree 17%). A further 70% indicated that they did not fully participate in the non-classroom activities such as sports, culture and arts that the schools organised for their daughters (Item 2, strongly disagree 51%, disagree 19%). Parental participation is multiple and diverse and may involve "demonstrable actions…like attendance at school events and reading to one's child" (Jeynes, 2013, para1). Usually, schools work with parents to decide in which activities they can participate (Sheldon & Epstein, 2002).

However, the majority (89%) noted that they often supported their daughters' learning at home. Having opportunity to contribute to decision making in the school recorded disagreement from parents. For example, "I can contribute to decision making in the school (Item 15, strongly disagree 45%, disagree 17) and "I do contribute to decision making in the school (Item 16, strongly disagree 80%, disagree 19%). This suggests that almost all the participants (99%) felt that they did not have the opportunity to contribute to decision making in the school regarding the education of their daughters. While the majority of parents in this research responded that they

communicated their daughters' needs to their schools, on the contrary, there was a large number (77%) of the same respondents who indicated that they did not understand what their daughters' schools expected of them as parents.

The majority of parents responded that they would like to participate more in their daughter's education at school (Item 22, strongly agree 38%, agree 33 %). When those who strongly agreed were combined with those who agree, just a little over half of the parents 51.4% (n=54) felt that it was easy for them to participate in their daughter's education at school. A total of 63% responded that school meetings where their daughters' educational progress matters were discussed was very helpful (Item 24, strongly agree 18%, agree 45%). This perspective although is consistent with the finding of the majority of parents (66%) reporting a feeling of comfortability being involved in the education of their daughters contradicts the lower percentage of parents who strongly agreed (13%) or agreed (31%) to Item 26 that the schools were welcoming to parents.

Items	N	Minim	Maxim.	Mean	Mode	Std. Dev.
14. I support my daughter's learning at home	105	1.00	5.00	4.28	4.0	.84
22. I would like to participate more in my daughter's education at school.	105	1.00	5.00	3.85	5.0	1.23
25. I feel comfortable being involved in the education of my daughter.	105	2.00	5.00	3.76	4.0	.90
24. School meetings to discuss my daughter's progress are very helpful, (for example periodic meeting with special education teacher)	105	1.00	5.00	3.70	4.0	.91
19. I communicate my daughter's needs to the school	105	1.00	5.00	3.59	4.0	1.24
20. Parental participation contributes to the academic achievement of students with learning difficulties	105	1.00	5.00	3.51	3.0	.92

26. Teachers in this school are welcoming to parents.	105	1.00	5.00	3.21	4.0	1.16
17. My daughter welcomes my involvement in her educational activities	105	1.00	5.00	3.09	4.0	1.24
21. Teaching students with learning difficulties is the sole responsibility of teachers	105	1.00	5.00	3.04	2.0	1.37
18. I see my involvement in school programmes as an important duty	105	1.00	5.00	2.99	4.0	1.48
23. It is easy for me to participate in my daughter's education at school	105	1.00	5.00	2.65	4.0	1.29
15. I can contribute to decision making in the school	105	1.00	5.00	2.29	1.0	1.40
12. I fully participate in the non-classroom activities of my daughter's school (for example, participating in cultural, artistic and sports programs)	105	1.00	5.00	2.06	1.0	1.31
13. I understand what my daughter's school expects of me as a parent	105	1.00	5.00	2.01	2.0	1.00
16. I do contribute to decision making in the school	105	1.00	3.00	1.21	1.0	.43
11. I fully participate in my daughter's classroom programmes (e.g. participation in the individual education plan)	105	1.00	3.00	1.19	1.0	.418
Valid N (listwise)	105					

Table 5.21 Parents' response on parental involvement practice items ranked in descending order according to item means (Questions 11-26).

In reference to Table 5.21, the findings on parents' involvement practices identified means that ranged from (*M*=4. 28, *SD*=0.84) to (M=1.19, *SD*=0.42) and range from 5.0 to 2.0. "Parents' support for their daughters' learning at home" achieved the highest mean (Item 14, *M*= 4.28, *SD*= 0.84) indicating more parents agreeing with this statement. Next to this statement, is parents' willingness to "participate more in their daughters' education" (Item 22, *M*= 3.85, *SD*=.23).

Two items recorded the lowest means. These include parents' feeling "included in decision making in the school" (Item 16, *M*= 1.21, *SD*. 0.43) and opportunity to

fully involve in their daughters' classroom programmes" (Item 11, *M*= 1.19, *SD*= 0.42) which recorded the lowest disagreement from parents.

Results of Factor Analysis of the Parent Involvement Practice Items (17-26)
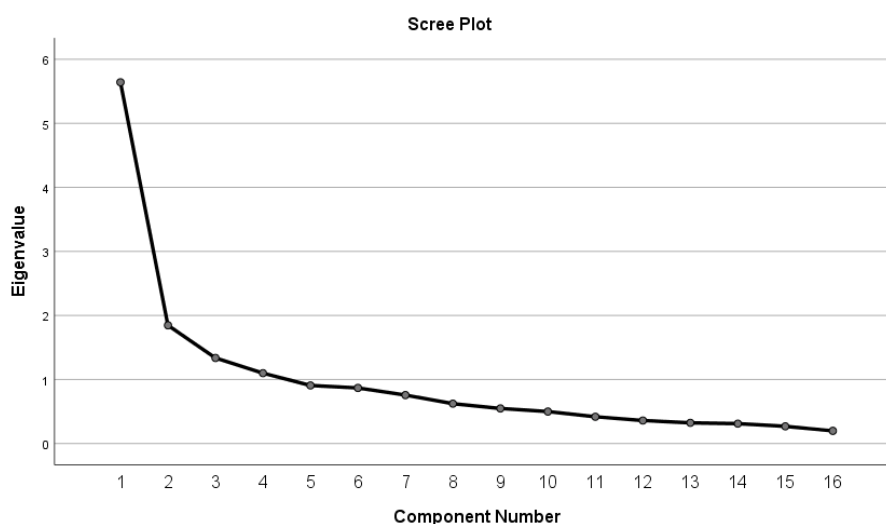
Figure 5.4 Scree plot indicating number of factors extracted.

The scree plot in Figure 5.4 and pattern matrix in Table 5.22 show four factors that explained a total variance of 62%. The first factor included four items (15, 20, 21 & 23) and I labelled this "participation and decision making". This factor explained 35.3% of the total variance. Teaching student with LD seen as sole responsibility of teachers correlates negatively to contribution and participation. Thus, if parents regard teaching of students with LD as teachers' sole responsibility, their contribution to decision making and participation may be negatively affected. This probably takes place in difficult teacher-parent relation circumstances. The second factor included three items (11, 16 & 17) that relate to full participation in classroom activities

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contribution to decision-making, children's welcoming behaviours of their parents' support at school. This factor explained 11.5% of the variance. However, item 17 has the weakest effect on this factor. I labelled this factor "motivators of participation." The third factor included four items (12, 13, 25 & 26) that explained 8.3% of the variance. This factor describes issues related to "comfortability of parents' involvement". It could be that, feeling welcome by teachers and being aware of what teachers expect parents to do can translate into parents' comfortability to be involved. The fourth factor loaded on five items (14, 18, 19, 22 & 24). These items which explained a small percentage of the variance (6. 9%) describe parental involvement issues. Home support by parents to their daughters highly influence this factor followed by opportunity to be more involved.

Items	Component			
	1	2	3	4
15. I can contribute to decision making in the school	.751			
20. Parental participation contributes to the academic achievement of students with learning difficulties	.550			
21. Teaching students with learning difficulties is the sole responsibility of teachers	-.765			
23. It is easy for me to participate in my daughter's education at school	.621			
11. I fully participate in my daughter's classroom programmes		.793		
16. I do contribute to decision making in the school		.707		
17. My daughter welcomes my involvement in her educational activities		.401		
12. I fully participate in the non-classroom activities of my daughter's school			.753	
13. I understand what my daughter's school expects of me as a parent			.764	

		.527
25. I feel comfortable being involved in the education of my daughter.		.527
26. Teachers in this school are welcoming to parents.		.762
14. I support my daughter's learning at home		.924
18. I see my involvement in school programmes as an important duty		.437
19. I communicate my daughter's needs to the school		.416
22. I would like to participate more in my daughter's education at school.		.709
24. School meetings to discuss my daughter's progress are very helpful		.434

Table 5.22 Factor score pattern matrix.

Relationship between parent demographic variables and involvement practices

A Pearson correlation showed significant association between Item 22 "willingness to participate more in the education of students with LD at school" and demographic details of age, marital status, number of children in household, hours per week worked and age of spouse as presented in Table 5.23 below.

		22. I would like to participate more in my daughter's education at school.	6. Marital status	Q3. Age of Spouse	Q4. Hours per week worked	Q2. Participants age	Q8. Number of children in the family
22. I would like to participate more in my daughter's education at school.	Pearson Correlation	1	-.227*	.097	-.097	.132	-.329**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.026	.394	.548	.198	.001
	N	105	96	79	41	97	95
6. Marital status	Pearson Correlation	-.227*	1	.132	-.352*	.108	.596**

	Sig. (2-tailed)	.026		.252	.026	.315	.000
	N	96	96	77	40	88	93
Q3. Age of Spouse	Pearson Correlation	.097	.132	1	.190	.626**	.123
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.394	.252		.253	.000	.293
	N	79	77	79	38	76	75
Q4. Hours per week worked	Pearson Correlation	-.097	-.352*	.190	1	.136	-.333*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.548	.026	.253		.396	.036
	N	41	40	38	41	41	40
Q2. Participants' age	Pearson Correlation	.132	.108	.626**	.136	1	.097
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.198	.315	.000	.396		.369
	N	97	88	76	41	97	88
Q8. Number of children in the family	Pearson Correlation	-.329**	.596**	.123	-.333*	.097	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.000	.293	.036	.369	
	N	95	93	75	40	88	95

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
Table 5.23 Correlations.

The results in Table 5.23 shows that two demographic variables "marital status" and "number of children in household" had weak negative correlations with Item 22 (r=-.227, p=.026 at the 0.05 level) and (r=-.329, p=.001 at the 0.01) respectively. These suggest that as one variable increase the other decreases. It seemed that if the number of children in parents' household increases, their willingness to be involved in their daughters'' learning at school will decrease. Similarly, it could be that being married may increase family commitment and reduce the willingness to be more involved in children's learning at school.

The results also show that age of spouse has moderate positive correlation at 0.01 level with age of participants (r=.626, p=.000) and hours per week worked by

participants has weak negative correlation at the 0.05 level with participants' age (r=-.352, p=.026). This can be explained that as participants age increase, the number of hours they work decrease. Working hours have implications for how parents can be involved in school programmes to support their children's learning (Sheldon & Epstein, 2002). The correlation table also show that participants' age has moderate association with spouses' age at the 0.01 level (r=.626, p=.000).

5.2.2.4 Barriers to Parental Involvement

Knowing more about what parents consider the barriers to parental involvement is important to enable the development of strategies that can motivate them to be actively involved in school practices and decisions making about their children with learning difficulty's education. Table 5.24 contains mixed perspectives on these barriers.

Items	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neither agree nor disagree		Agree		Strongly agree	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
27. There are adequate guidelines for how parents should be involved in school matters	65	61.9	25	23.8	11	10.5	4	3.8	0.0	0.0
28. Lack of transportation reduces my involvement in school matters	21	20.0	19	18.1	14	13.3	42	40.0	9	17.6
29. Lack of available time reduces my	18	17.1	16	15.2	14	13.3	46	43.8	11	10.5

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involvement in school matters									
30. My work schedule makes it difficult for me to be involved in school programmes	19	18.1	12	11.1	16	15.2	42	40.0	16	15.2
31. A language barrier reduces my involvement in school programmes	5	4.8	11	10.5	18	17.1	51	48.6	20	19.0
32. Teachers' attitudes toward me reduces my involvement in school programmes	8	7.6	21	20.0	15	14.3	46	43.8	15	14.3
33. My opinions are not valued by teachers	4	3.8	32	30.5	18	17.1	34	32.4	17	16.2
34. I have limited knowledge of special education to be involved in school programmes	1	1.0	21	20.0	13	12.4	52	49.5	18	17.1
35. I do not know how to support the education of my daughter with learning difficulties	2	1.9	19	18.1	20	19.0	42	40.0	22	21.0
36. My social situation reduces my involvement in school programmes	24	22.9	27	25.7	18	17.1	32	30.5	4	3.8
37. My economic situation reduces my involvement in school programmes	26	24.8	30	28.6	4	3.8	36	34.3	9	8.6

Table 5.24 Parents' perspectives on barriers to parental involvement.

Regarding involvement guidelines (Item 27), most parents either strongly disagreed (62%) or disagreed (24%) that there were adequate guidelines for how parents should be involved in school matters. Again, of the respondents, less than half 49 % constituting those who strongly agree/agree, attributed their lack of involvement in their daughter's schools to transportation issues, 38% did not affirm this and 13% neither agree nor disagree. It is to be noted that until 2018, Saudi women were not allowed to drive which might partly explained this result (Government of Saudi Arabia, 2018). On the issue of time, a little over half 54 considered lack of available time as a barrier to their involvement in school matters. Furthermore, for Item 37 on economic situation as a barrier to their involvement 34% agreed and 9% strongly agreed that their economic circumstances affected their involvement in their daughter's education.

The participants also pointed to other barriers including, "language issues" (Item 31, Strongly agree 19%, agree 49%) "teachers' attitudes toward them" (Item 32, strongly agree 14%, agree 43) "limited knowledge of special education" (Item 34, strongly agree 17%, agree 50%) and "lack of knowhow to support the education of their daughter with learning difficulties" (Item 35, strongly agree 21%, agree 40%). The participants were however split on the issue pertaining to whether their opinions are valued or not. When those who strongly agree and agree were combined 49% of the parents felt that their opinions are valued by teachers, 34% indicated that this is not the case and another 17% neither agreed nor disagreed. On the issue of whether work schedules hinder parental involvement, 45% against 30% affirmed their work schedules made it difficult for them to be involved in school programmes.

The results in Table 5.25 show that parents' agreement to items was highest for "language as a barrier" to their involvement (Item 31, M= 3.67, SD= 1.05) followed by "not able to understand special education issues" (Item 34, M= 3.62, SD=1.02), and being able to effectively support the education of their daughters (Item 35, M= 3.60, SD= 1.07). Responses showing agreement to barrier items were moderate with respect to "lack of transportation" (Item 28, M= 2.99, SD=1.32) and "available time" (Item 29, M= 3.15, SD=1.29). Item 27 recorded the lowest mean score (M= 1.56, SD= 0.83) suggesting that parents do not have or aware of guidelines regarding how they can be involved in school programmes.

Items	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Mode	Std. Dev.
31. A language barrier reduces my involvement in school programmes	105	1.00	5.00	3.67	4.0	1.05
34. I have limited knowledge of special education to be involved in school programmes	105	1.00	5.00	3.62	4.0	1.02
35. I do not know how to support the education of my daughter with learning difficulties	105	1.00	5.00	3.60	4.0	1.07
32. Teachers' attitudes toward me reduces my involvement in school programs	105	1.00	5.00	3.37	4.0	1.18
33. My opinions are not valued by teachers	105	1.00	5.00	3.27	4.0	1.17
30. My work schedule makes it difficult for me to be involved in school programmes	105	1.00	5.00	3.23	4.0	1.35
29. Lack of available time reduces my involvement in school matters	105	1.00	5.00	3.15	4.0	1.30
28. Lack of transportation reduces my involvement in school matters	105	1.00	5.00	2.99	4.0	1.32
37. My economic situation reduces my involvement in school programmes	105	1.00	5.00	2.73	4.0	1.38
36. My social situation reduces my involvement in school programmes	105	1.00	5.00	2.67	4.0	1.24

27. There are adequate guidelines for how parents should be involved in school matters	105	1.00	4.00	1.56	4.0	.83
Valid N (listwise)	105					

Table 5.25 Parents' response on parental involvement barriers items ranked in descending order according to item means (Questions 26-37).

Results of Factor analysis on barriers to parental involvement scale

The results in Figure 5.5 and Table 5.26 show the Scree plot and the factor score pattern matrix with three factors.
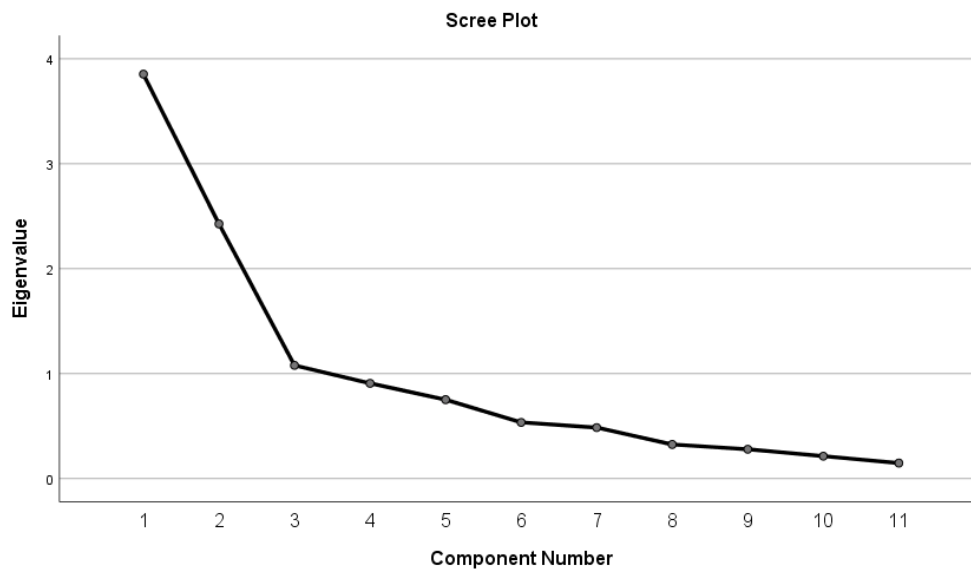
Figure 5.5 Scree plot showing number of factors extracted.

Items	Components		
	1	2	3
28. Lack of transportation reduces my involvement in school matters	.744		
29. Lack of available time reduces my involvement in school matters	.898		
30. My work schedule makes it difficult for me to be involved in school programmes	.891		
36.My social situation reduces my involvement in school programmes	.722		
Q37. My economic situation reduces my involvement in school programmes	.726		
32. Teachers' attitudes toward me reduces my involvement in school programmes		.657	
33. My opinions are not valued by teachers		.804	
34. I have limited knowledge of special education to be involved in school programmes		.839	
35. I do not know how to support the education of my daughter with learning difficulties		.795	
27. There are adequate guidelines for how parents should be involved in school matters			.779
31. A language barrier reduces my involvement in school programmes			-.505

Table 5.26 Factor score pattern matrix.

These factors together explained a total variance of 66.9%. The first factor explained 35% of the total variance and five items (28, 29, 30, 36 & 37) loaded on this factor. The items collectively describe personal circumstances such as time, work schedules, transportation and economic situations that could make it difficult for parents to be involved. I labelled this factor "personal circumstances." Four items (32, 33, 34 & 35) loaded on the second factor that explained 21.1% of the variance. Items (32 & 33) describe perceived teacher behaviours toward parents and items (34 & 35) describe parents' perceived lack of knowledge that could inhibit parental involvement. I labelled this factor "behaviour and knowledge". Two items (27 & 31)

loaded on the third factor which explained 9.8% of the variance. Item 27 relates to guidelines on parental involvement and item 31, which had negative loading, relates to language. It could be that language played a role in parents' understanding of guidelines regarding their involvement. Even if guidelines exist, they need to be written in accessible language that parents can understand. I called this factor, "understanding guidelines."

Associations between Parents' Demographics and Barriers to their Involvement

A linear regression was conducted to test the relationship between age of respondents and how they perceived barriers to their involvement. The analysis indicated (Factor 1, r=.026, p>0.05); (Factor 2 r=.007, p>0.05) and Factor 3, r=.092, p>0.05) respectively. All these explain 1.1% of variance suggesting very weak correlations that age is not a predictor of how the participants perceived barriers to their involvement.

Similarly, linear regression analysis on the number of hours worked a week by parents did not correlate highly on any of the factors (Factor 1, r=.140, p>0.05); (Factor 1, r=.238, p>0.05); (Factor 1, r=.121, p>0.05). There is a very weak association between age and Factor 2. It appears that parents' age could slightly have influence on how they perceived teachers' attitudes towards them as well as their own knowledge level as being sufficient to be involved in the education of their daughters with LD. A linear regression analysis did not find associations between educational level and any of the factors.

5.2.3 Summary of Survey Findings

The parents' questionnaire was used to collect and analysed data on parents' parental involvement, practices, parent teacher relationships and barriers to their involvement. The results suggest that parents were generally willing to be involved in school matters concerning their children's education. However, they appeared to be hindered by negative teacher attitudes and lack of clarity about how they can be involved. Again, the results identified that the use of special education terms and limited knowledge on sped coupled with ineffective communication from teachers, hindered parental involvement. Also, it seemed that if the number of children in parents' household increases, their willingness to be involved in their daughters'' learning at school is likely to decrease. Despite these hindrances, all the parents indicated that they supported their children's education at home to do their homework. In the next section, I presented data from the interview findings.

Section 3: Presentation of the interview findings

This section of Chapter 5 presents the interview findings of the study. The qualitative data collection occurred after the initial analysis of the numerical data. Interview questions were developed based on the findings of the numerical data to provide deeper insight into the responses of teachers and parents on parental involvement attitudes, relationships, practices and potential barriers. The participants' details are enumerated in Table 5.24. All the parents who were involved in the interviews are mothers.

Participant	Age in years	Qualification	Role
Principal	52	Bachelor's degree	Principal
Educational supervisor	48	Bachelor's degree	Educational supervisor
LDTeacher1	32	Master's degree	LD teacher.
LDTeacher2	36	Bachelor's degree	LD teacher.
LDTeacher3	43	Bachelor's degree	LD teacher.
LDTeacher4	38	Bachelor's degree	LD teacher.
LDTeacher5	30	Bachelor's degree	LD teacher.
LDTeacher6	38	Bachelor's degree	LD teacher.
M. Teacher1	41	Bachelor's degree	Classroom teacher.
M. Teacher 2	38	Bachelor's degree	Classroom teacher.
Mother 1	55	Elementary	Housewife
Mother 2	43	High School	Housewife
Mother 3	30	Bachelor's degree	Housewife
Mother 4	36	Bachelor's degree	Housewife
Mother 5	35	High School	Housewife
Mother 6	26	High School	Housewife
Mother 7	45	Bachelor's degree	Housewife
Mother 8	29	Bachelor's degree	Housewife
Mother 9	39	Bachelor's degree	Teacher
Mother 10	35	Master's degree	Teacher

Table 5.27 Interviewee participants' details.

A framework approach was utilised to analyse the data as reported in the methodology chapter. The aim of the interview data analysis is to elucidate and complement the results of the numerical analyses with respect to participants' understanding and benefits of parental involvement in school, practice experiences and the barriers that they face in this process. To gain insights into these aims, I analysed what participants report about their understanding of parental involvement,

practice experiences and barriers to effective involvement practices. This approach allowed me to find out the key issues and to recommend strategies to improve upon the current parental involvement practices with the hope to enhance the educational achievement of students with LD in inclusive schools in Saudi Arabia. The findings are reported with direct transcribed quotations from participants without grammatical corrections to preserve how the participants expressed their opinions during the interviews.

The analysis highlighted five key themes as indicated in the thematic diagram below.
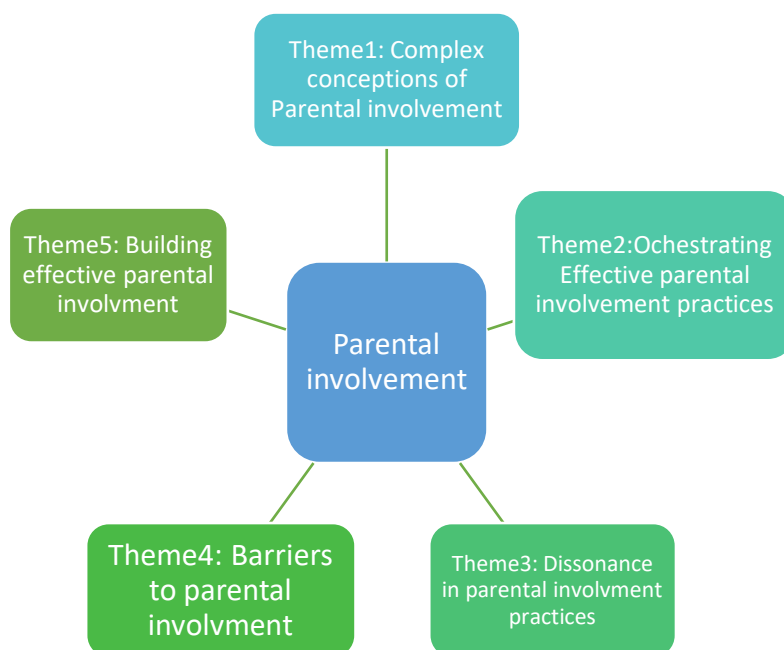
Figure 5.6 Thematic diagram of key themes.

Theme1: Complex conceptions of parental involvement

Particular understandings or conceptions of parental involvement influence how teachers and parents work together to enhance students' learning. The findings from parents and teachers in this research demonstrate different and complex understandings of parental involvement. Participants referred to parental involvement as the act of "*connectedness to complement the work of teachers in schools*" (Principal) which they considered as a "*solution that will help them and schools to overcome nearly all educational problems of children with LD*" (Educational Supervisor). Furthermore, most participants talked about several activities that they considered meant parental involvement. These include*: Attending parent-teacher meetings (Mother 1 and being a recognised member of a Parent Teacher Association (PTA) (Principal).*

While parents considered parental involvement as extending beyond the home such as "*volunteering in school programmes*" (Mother2) and *"helping with children's work at school"* (Mother 3), some of the teachers made reference to parental involvement as limited to home-based activities as: *"supporting students in the home by parents"* (LD Teacher 3*)," discussing school activities with the child at home"* (LD Teacher 2), *"and monitoring child's school progress at home"* (Mainstream Teacher 2).

Other participants gave impressions about parental involvement as a "*two-way communication between the parents and teacher of learning difficulties and the teacher of the classroom and working as a team because it is one of the important thing in participation"* (LD Teacher 1).

Some participants intersected the meaning of parental involvement with the benefits and purpose of involvement. Examples of these perspectives include:

"I believed that parents participate in their daughter's education to fill a big gap in the education of their students with LD" (LD Teacher 3).

"By participating in schools, parents will become aware of the level of their daughter's academic level or any other academic or behavioural problems" (LD Teacher 6).

"Participation helps the mother to check with the teacher especially the student with learning difficulties, what the student learns in school is confirmed at home it is the core in the education of the student" (Mainstream Teacher 2).

Some of the participants described interaction and communication as important components of the conceptualisation of parental involvement. For these participants, parental involvement is about "*good interaction with the teacher of learning difficulties*" (Mother 1), "*timely and respectful communication with the teacher to hear good news about my daughter*" (Mother 3), and "*a mother's follow-up of her daughter at home including a mother should making continuous visits to the school and asking about the academic level of her daughter*" (Mother 4).

Mostly, parent participants described parental involvement as an "essential part of the development of students' education, which must be built on communication with the school" (Mother 7). It is believed that "positive cooperation between the mother and the teacher will help to achieve educational goals for children quickly" (Mother 8) because the "relationship between the mother and the school is very important as they complement the work of each other" (Mother 1).

These perspectives of parental involvement define parent behaviours related to the child's schooling and practices that can be observed as manifestations of their commitment to their child's educational activities. The variety of perspectives highlight the significance interviewees assign to the concept of parental involvement when applied to the education of students with LD. The dominant meanings of parental involvement here are: being able to communicate with teachers and parents, collaborate with schools and support students with their home work with the view of improving the educational goals of students with LD. Concisely, these conceptualisations echoed divergent perspectives on important aspects of parental involvement which can be used jointly to build a strong foundation for parental involvement practices.

5.2.4   Theme 2: Orchestrating effective parental involvement practices

Teachers and parents were asked to describe factors of effective parental involvement and their personal experiences. Participants mentioned effective involvement sub-theme codes are effective and positive communication, home support, acceptance of the LD label and positive teacher and parent attitudes.

5.2.4.1 Effective and Positive Communication

Teachers and parents mentioned effective and positive communication as the most important aspect of effective parental involvement in the education of students with LD. Examples of comments from teachers show the importance the participants attach to this factor:

> *"There has to be communication between parents and teachers at least once a week even by the mobile phone to check their daughter's education" (Principal).*

"Effective participation should keep the mother and teachers in constant contact even if it is by the social media programmes" (LD Teacher 1).

"The mother must be familiar with the educational goals. This can only happen if the teacher informs the mother of all the educational goals of her daughter in a simple way so that the mother can help in achieving these goals at home" (LD Teacher 3).

The participants, particularly the Learning difficulty teachers stated that positive communication between learning difficulties teachers and mainstream teachers and continuous communication between mothers and teachers would encourage parents' participation in school programmes.

Parents also expressed perspectives that focused on positive communication. Their perspectives connect inspiration of involvement with the idea of opening up their minds and understandings of school practices in relation to IEPs, helping them to discover new ways and possibilities of complementing the work of teachers.

"When the mother is familiar with how to share information through effective communication with the teacher in her daughter's education this creates friendly relationship with her daughter's teachers, as well as helps the mother knows how to help her daughter at home" (Mother 1).

"Communication between the mother and the teacher in anything related to the student is important" (Mother 3).

Parents regard communication as the strongest facilitator of parental involvement and believed that continuous communication helps mothers to be familiar with their role in educating their daughters to achieve school goals. In addition to communication, parents realised periodic meetings between teachers and parents as equally important because it provides opportunity *"important issues*

pertaining to the student's development and academic level to be discussed" (Mother7).

Indeed, different modes of communication featured in the data. The results showed that the preferred modes of communications were telephone, WhatsApp and letters.

"I communicate by the WhatsApp programme, because it is the easiest way to reach the parents" (LD Teacher 1).

"I use the telephone and letters, when seeking consent to enter the student into the programme or provide the mother with important information about the student, such as weekly skills that I want the mother to teach her daughter at home" (LD Teacher 2).

"My forms of communication are letters and WhatsApp programme, if necessary to discuss the academic situation of the student" (LD Teacher 3).

Learning Difficulties Teacher 5 mentioned that she used "*WhatsApp, phone, letters, in rare cases if the mother did not respond to the application for approval to enter her daughter in the learning difficulties programme."* Yet, another reported that she used "*Student follow-up book" in communicating to parents* (*LD* Teacher 6).

5.2.4.2 Home Support

Another effective parental involvement practice factor described in the interviews relates to parents supporting their child at home. Parents' support for children at home is viewed by teachers as an integral educational activity that increases the skills and knowledge of students with LD. Teachers in particular perceived parents' participation as purely limited to home-based supports to students with LD which they illustrated in the following statements:

"It is parents' duty to respond to the learning difficulties teacher and follow up the student at home, in this way they are helping to complete the school's mission… the mother is also supposed to work on developing the academic level of the student at home because the student spends more time at home, the cooperation of the mother in the home is important" (Educational supervisor).

The teachers believed that parents have the responsibility to continue what the teacher teaches by "*applying the educational plan at home can help the student*" (Mainstream Teacher 2). The results indicated that teachers placed high demands on parents to teach their daughters at home and communicate with the teachers at the school about the academic level of their daughters. The principal supports this perspective by stating: *"Parents' support is at home, they must follow the homework of their daughters, which they must communicate with the teacher"* (Principal).

The findings are concerning in terms of the kinds of responsibilities the teachers appeared to be shifting to parents. For example, a Learning Difficulty teacher 6 said; "*I communicate with the mother and discuss the problem of the child which they can address at home.*" Although teachers expect parents to support their daughters with LD with their schoolwork, they were not expected in the schools *"In the school there is no requirement and clear participation the mother must do"* (Mainstream Teacher 2).

While all the teachers who participated in the interviews expected parents to help their daughters solve their homework and correct any emerging behaviour problems, the question remains as to whether all the parents have the knowledge, skills and time to carry out these responsibilities. The majority of parents pointed out several ways in which they provided home support to their children with LD.

"I try to teach my daughter at home according to the goals in the follow-up book and always search in YouTube about the best educational methods to deliver information easily to my daughter's learning difficulties" (Mother 2).

"I try to teach my daughter at home but my educational level is low and this sometimes prevents me from doing so" (Mother 3).

"I try to teach her every day as much as I can but as I said she does not like to study" (Mother 5).

"By teaching my daughter at home and I help her with her homework" (Mother 7).

Some of the home-based activities the parents mentioned they utilised to support their children included "utilising teacher's follow-up book" (Mother 8) "allowing their daughters to watch educational programmes on YouTube" (Mother 9).

Parents emphasised that by teaching the mother how to teach their daughter at home could help "*develop the academic level of the students, so the student will not fail in the academic year*" (Mother 1). This sentiment was reiterated by another parent who claimed that "I *notice that when I followed up with the school work at home, the education level of my daughter developed significantly*" (Mother 3).

While home support featured as the dominant practice factors that parents experienced, one parent mentioned that lack of formal education prevented her from offering home support to her daughter: *"I want to support my daughter at home but I cannot because as I mentioned I cannot read nor write" (Mother 1*).

Another parent participant expressed that although she provided home support for her daughter, parental involvement should not be limited to this area alone. She

indicated that there should be opportunity for parents to contribute in all areas of their daughters' schooling.

> *"I believe that the mother must participate in the education of her daughter in the classroom and non-class activities and many studies have proved the effectiveness of the participation of the mother in all areas and the school should support the mother in it" (Mother 10).*

5.2.4.3 Acceptance of the LD Label

Additionally, the findings point attention to parental acceptance of the LD disability label as crucial for orchestrating effective parental involvement. The teachers felt that parents' acceptance of the LD label is the first step to effective parental collaboration.

> *"First, effective parental participation begins with acceptance, and when the multidisciplinary team sets up the individual educational plan for the student, the parents should review this plan and make sure that their daughters achieve the educational goals in this plan. But the issue is that many parents do not accept the plan, they claim their daughters do not have disability so it is difficult to engage with them" (LD teacher 4).*

One of the interviewees mentioned that it was difficult to work with some parents because they refused to accept that their daughters have learning difficulties and need learning difficulties programmes.

> *"For example, one of the mother of student with learning difficulties when I spoke to her and told her that her daughter had learning difficulties, she was very angry and told me that she was going to complain about me to the Ministry of Education. This kind of mother it is very difficult to work with in their daughter' education" (Principal).*

Most of the teachers believed that parents' non-acceptance of their children's disability label contributed to weak parental involvement, which often was limited to the beginning of the school year and the end of the year for the near-test dates.

5.2.4.4 Positive Teacher and Parent Attitudes

Generally, the teachers expressed that positive parent attitudes are key to their involvement in the education of the daughters with LD. One participant noted that "*strong parent-teacher relationships are based on their respect for teachers*" (Principal). Other teachers described parents' participation as weak because of their negative attitudes.

> "*From my experience, I see only one or two parents participating and the rest do not even attend school meetings because some mothers care about their daughter only when their daughter had a low grade, even the school letters they do not respond to them*" (LD Teacher 1).

> "*Often mothers do not care about participating. I think they just don't care*" (LD Teacher 2)

Similarly, another teacher described that positive parent attitudes contribute to greater participation by saying: "*the issue is positive attitude, the more positive the parents about our programme the more they will be part of our programme*" (LD Teacher 3). This perspective was echoed by another teacher claiming: "*So far, I have not seen some mothers of a student with learning difficulties participate. Only those parents who are positive will participate in their daughter's education because they value what we do*" (Mainstream Teacher 2). Parent participants also indicated that positive teacher attitudes play significant roles and determine the level of parent participation. One mother indicated that "*I need respect from teachers, it is like they value what I can contribute*" (Mother 6). Similarly, a working parent reported: "*I will*

not be comfortable going to the school if the teachers see me as a trouble maker…
It is better I stay away from them unless they see me someone who can provide
some help" (Mother 10).

5.2.5 Theme 3. Dissonance in parental involvement experiences

In view of the factors mentioned, it is no surprise that study uncovered a
dissonance in experiences of parents and teachers with regards to parental
involvement. The interviews show that participants' typically reported experiences
are opposed to what is considered effective parental involvement by previous
researchers (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011; Murray et al., 2014).

These findings suggest conflictual relationships between parents and the
school teachers as indicated by the following expressions from participants.

> *"Our experiences, it is like facing a lot of rejection and non-acceptance of*
> *parents, especially when signing the consent to enter the student learning*
> *difficulties programme. If they accept that their daughters have LD then*
> *we can develop good working relationships for effective practice to occur"*
> *(Educational Supervisor).*

Apart from the issues mentioned above, participants report low levels of
participation of parents in their children's education. For example, a Learning
difficulties teacher 3 mentioned that **"***parents often argue with us about why their*
children are in the LD programme". This view resonates with the view of another
participant who claims:

> *"There are differences among parents in terms of their understanding of*
> *the concept of learning difficulties. Some parents believe that learning*
> *difficulties is mental retardation or madness, and this is due to the*
> *educational level of the mother and this is evident in the mother's reaction*

when told that her daughter has learning difficulties, some mothers face
us with scorn and insults and do not accept" (Educational supervisor).

Parents mention issues that relate to identification of LD and quite often described that their daughters do not have LD but just dislike learning. These experiences connect with the idea of lack of understanding and rejection of labelling.

"First of all, I want to know how a learning difficulties teacher has identified
my daughter with learning difficulties. Is this teacher a doctor so that she
can diagnose my daughter?" (Mother 6).

"I want to tell you that I know my daughter well, my daughter does not
have any difficulties in learning she is just stubborn and does not like
studying" (Mother 7).

"I am not satisfied that the teacher decides that there are difficulties in my
daughter, my daughter if she study well will become one of the best
students" (Mother 5).

These findings demonstrate borderlands between teacher and parent perspectives perhaps caused by competing understandings of parental involvement and the construct of LD. This possibly indicates the idea that differing competing interests are at play in the field of LD education in the Saudi context that represent contested spaces of teacher practice, where parents are seen as outsiders of the classroom. When teachers are in working dissonance with parents, making a collective sense of effective ways to orchestrate parental involvement is not possible.

5.2.6 Theme 4: Barriers to parental involvement

The findings indicate that a host of barriers inhibit the effective development and practice of parental involvement. These barriers relate to negative attitudes, time

and family environment, negative aspect of relationships, poor communication practices and school-related factors.

5.2.6.1 Negative Attitudes

The findings of this study indicate that educators and parents should work towards eradicating attitudes that impact negatively on their working together. This means more orientation towards a culture and behaviours that will help them develop personal and institutional dispositions to mutually benefit each other.

> *"The parents' lack of interest or response to the letters, is problem and in some cases the teacher's lack of interest in the importance of the mother's participation is influenced by their poor attitudes" (LD Teacher 6).*

> *"I encourage parents to participate but their attitude and ignorance also affect their participation. For example, if the guardian of the student's request is a man and they don't believe females can also do a good job as it is in the culture of Saudi society, this prevents communication between women and men" (Mainstream teacher 2).*

Some of the teachers indicated that they were willing to support parents' involvement but *"a few mothers do not want them to use the named learning difficulties with the student because of stigma" (LD* Teacher 3). Other teachers expressed that most mothers of children with learning difficulties "*do not recognize the learning difficulties of their daughters so they do not demand any needs"* (Mainstream teacher 1).

The findings of this study indicate that while most of the parents believe that mothers must participate in the education of their daughters in the classroom and non-classroom activities, teachers appear to have hostile attitudes toward parents and perceive them as people who are ignorant and have insignificant role in school

matters. Significant of the findings is that the teacher narratives construct parents as ignorant and mere trouble makers.

"I mean that the school is not ready for the parents' participation and the classroom is narrow and has a large number of students and does not allow the participation of mother. Also, the presence of mother causes many problems to the teacher because of the intervention of the mother in matters not of its competence and distract the attention of students" *(LD Teacher 6).*

Other teachers expressed lack of support for parents because:

"they sometimes hit the teachers and students in the classroom so the school administration decided to put a panel on the door of each classroom (forbidden to enter the mothers) to avoid many of the problems caused by the mothers" *(Mainstream teacher 1).*

"I cannot make the mother help me in making important decisions in teaching the student, because the mother is ignorant of many educational things and does not have any idea about the individual educational plan or educational goals" *(Educational supervisor).*

"I see that the parents are not qualified to help us to make academic decisions, if they are able to make decision they can find solutions to their daughters' problems at home but not in school programme or our helping in classrooms" *(LD Teacher 2).*

Another trend identified in the data is that the teacher participants do not think parents have a role in making contributions to educational goals of their children. The below example shows that even if parents offer suggestions there is a high risk that their opinions will not be taken seriously because of the negative attitudes teachers have towards them.

"I do not think the mother is capable of making educational decisions, because she is not qualified… I am setting the plan and I cannot change this plan because of the opinion of the mother" (Mainstream teacher 1).

Parents also express various perspectives that describe attitudinal issues that inhibit effective parental involvement practices.

"I want to know how a learning difficulties teacher has identified my daughter with learning difficulties. Is this teacher a doctor so that she can diagnose my daughter? I am not satisfied that the teacher decides that there are difficulties in my daughter, my daughter if she study well will become one of the best students" (Mother 6).

"Teachers do not have good minds towards parents. When the mother participates in her daughter's education and always hears bad news from the teacher, the mother always tries to hold back her participation in her daughter's education" (Mother 3).

The data suggest that the persistent negative comments from teachers to parents about their children's poor academic performance or behaviour problems led to parental discomfort.

"The teacher always tells me that my daughter did not pass the academic skills and needs more effort. This talk hurts me. It is always the bad news. Teachers do not contact me if my daughter does something well" (Mother 4).

The findings also identify parents' descriptions of how teacher attitudes influence the ways they are prevented from taking active roles in the education of their daughters. A parent (Mother 6) for instance said "*I know it is forbidden that the mother participates in her daughter's education at school*". This is reiterated by another parent (Mother 7) "*The teacher is not interested in the mother's participation*

in her daughter's education, so does not wish to communicate or respond to the mother's communication".

Findings show that negative attitudes also led to distrust, disrespect and lack of cooperation between teachers and parents, including the perception that parental participation creates interference in school matters.

"There is no respect between teacher and mother, cooperation and trust between them, teachers do not trust the abilities of mothers in developing their daughters; they believe that they are the only ones who understand education. One of the teachers, when I express to her my opinion, she said please it is unacceptable to change anything in the individual education plan, we know more than you in your daughter education" (Mother 10).

Similarly, another parent opined:

"The school administration does not like the presence of mothers, although I go to the school almost once a month, I think this is my right but they dislike it" (Mother 9).

The findings suggest that the prevalence of negative attitudes among the teachers towards parents led to distrust, resentment and lack of positive communication between teachers and parents.

"There is no contact between me and the teachers and the teachers do not try to involve mothers in educating their daughters. They do not want me to interfere in school matters". (Mother 5).

"I am surprised that the school treated me like a child, even the educational supervisor when I talked with her, she was talking to me and walked in the stairs, she did not stand and listen to what I was trying to say and she said to me go away, we are busy now" (Mother 6).

5.2.6.2 Time and Family Environment

The findings point to time factor and family environment as containing the development of effective parental involvement practices. Specific issues mentioned by teachers and parents relate to busy schedules that prevented serious collaborative engagement.

"We are busy with other commitments and we do not have enough time for parental involvement" (LD Teacher 2).

"I think availability of time for parents is a problem of parental participation. Many mothers are busy with their families and their children, making it difficult for them to participate in their daughters' education" (LD Teacher 5).

"Lack of time or ignorance of the importance of participation or the existence of family problems, prevent parents from participating" (LD Teacher 6).

"The problem is family problems or tight mother time which hinder their participation" (Mainstream teacher 1).

Some teacher participants referred to family environment and lack of awareness as barriers to parents' involvement.

"Parents are different, but most mothers do not participate in educating their daughters because they are not aware of what the difficulties of learning means so you cannot participate in the education" (LD Tteacher 6).

"Culture of parents is also to blame for their lack of participation, educational level of parents and their economic level is also a factor. If the mother is ignorant it is very difficult for her to participate" (LD Teacher 3).

Parents also reported several time and family related factors that inhibit their effective participation in their daughters' education at school.

"Even if the school asked for it, I cannot come to the school because the school is far from my home and I do not have transportation. My husband does not have a car and we usually travel by taxi and it is expensive. There are no schools close to my home offering Learning difficulties programme" (Mother 2).

"As I mentioned, I have other household duties and I have not time to visit the schools of my daughter. I don't work because, I have other young children, and I need to look after them too" (Mother 3).

5.2.6.3 Negative Aspects of Relationships

While parental participation in children's education is something that is valued by both teachers and parents, participants talked about a number of barriers that negatively affected the building of positive and respectful relationships. Parents were generally consistent in the ways they described they ways teachers perceived them.

"The teachers showed to us that it is forbidden that the mother participates in her daughter's education at school. You want to be involved but their behaviour indicate you are not welcome by the school" (Mother 6).

"There is no respect between teacher and mother or cooperation and trust…Teachers do not trust the abilities of mothers in developing their daughters' education; they believe that they are the only ones who understand education. How can we relate with teachers who think like this?" (Mother 10).

These perspectives are reflected in the following comments made by Learning Difficulties Teacher 6 who stated, "I have no positive relationship with parents,

because teachers usually do not trust the views of mothers and they are ignorant of the programme of learning difficulties"

Several parents also described their frustration related specifically to ways teachers perceived them as "*trouble makers*" (*Mother* 4) including having inadequate knowledge to be part of the school process.

"There is no relationship with the staff of the school because they are disrespectful to us" (Mother 6).

"I have nothing to do with them, they see me as a trouble maker" (Mother 8).

"Teachers do not trust me even I have a master's degree in education. This has affected my relationship with the staff at the school administration, it is not that good, they think I don't have knowledge to contribute anything" (Mother 9).

"The teacher thinks that I do not understand anything, she does not appreciate my opinion so I can't be part of the school process" (Mother10).

Some other parents described that they did` not have positive relationship with the teachers because their contributions were not welcome by the teachers.

"I do not have a good relationship with the teachers, may be because of my low educational level the teacher is not interested in my involvement in my daughter's education" (Mother1).

Others noted: "*Teachers do not want any interventions from the mothers, so the mothers limited their participation in helping her daughter at home only*" (Mother 10), and there is the sentiment of apprehension by some parents who stated:

"Yes, but I fear that my participation is not welcome by teachers. I think my daughter does not like it when I teach her" (Mother 6).

"No, teachers believe that we are ignorant and that our presence in school will hinder the educational process of the students, I don't want to be the person who cause trouble for the teachers" (Mother 6).

This perspective was confirmed by a Learning difficulties teacher 6 who stated:

"I cannot make the mother help me in making important decisions in teaching the student, because the mother is ignorant of many educational things and does not have any idea about the individual educational plan or educational goals".

This teacher's opinion demonstrates disrespect to parents and with such attitude, there is little parents can do in building positive relationships with teachers. Other parents attributed their poor relationship to lack of respect and trust: "*I think the school does not respect the mother and does not trust the mother's opinion and her ability to be part of her daughter's education at school"* (Mother 8). Indeed, "*lack of trust and respect between teachers and mother is the problem"* (Mother 10).

Many teachers described situations that compromise the development of positive and respectful relationship between them and parents. Issues emerged around deeper discussions that tended to view parents as the problem.

"Parents do not like the idea that their daughters have learning difficulties and need learning difficulties programmes and this is causing a lot of problem" (Principal).

"One of the mothers of a student with learning difficulties, when I spoke to her and told her that her daughter has learning difficulties, she was very angry and told me that she was going to complain about me to the Ministry of Education. I think with this kind of mother it is very difficult to build any

positive relationship with her to participate her in their daughter' education" (LD Teacher 2).

Teachers branded parents as trouble makers and as such were not willing to welcome them into their classrooms.

"Mothers cause many problems and sometimes hit the teachers and students in the classroom so the school administration decided to put a panel on the door of each classroom to prevent mothers from entering the classroom, and avoid many of the problems caused by the mothers" (Mainstream teacher 1).

In addition to these perspectives, teachers were of the opinion that parents often rejected their children being put into the learning difficulties programme which is one of the factors that compromise the building of positive and respectful relationships.

"We face a lot of rejection and non-acceptance from parents, especially when signing the consent to enter the student into the learning difficulties programme" (LD Teacher 4).

"If the mother understands what I am talking about and what are the learning difficulties and accept the entry of their daughter to the programme of learning difficulties and confident in my ability to help their daughters then we can be in a working relationship" (LD Teacher 6).

"I think we do not have a good relationship because the mother is not understanding and receptive to the programme of learning difficulties" (Mainstream teacher 1).

5.2.6.4 Poor Communication Practices

Another theme repeatedly mentioned among parents and teachers regarding barriers to parental involvement practices was the lack of effective communications.

"Some teachers do not want to communicate with parents because parents often communicate with teachers by telephoning at inappropriate times and late at night…I think it is better to limit communication between parents and teachers on social media programmes" (*LD Teacher 1*).

"Currently, I have only one mother contact me and she is constantly questioning the level of her daughter' education, this is annoying knowing that I have nine other students and their parents do not communicate with me" (Learning Difficulties Teacher 2).

While most of the teachers accused parents of engaging in improper communication with teachers, one participant teacher located the problem of communication in the school.

"I think there is a problem in communication between the parents and the schools. I think we are deficient as a school…I think many teachers do not have patience when they communicate with parents… teachers want parents to listen to them but they don't listen to parents" (LD Teacher 3).

"I try to communicate through school letters, but I cannot reach some of the parents and they did not even respond to the school letters. What do you do in this case? These mothers are difficult to communicate with and involve in educating their daughters" (Mainstream Teacher 1).

A few parents brought up frustrations with being unable to speak to teachers on their children's performance.

"The biggest problem is, there is no communication from teachers to parents (Mother 4).

There is no contact between me and the teachers and the teachers do not try to involve mothers in educating their daughters" (Mother 6).

"Teachers are not interested in the mother's participation in her daughter's education so she does not communicate or respond to the mother's

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communication. When I call the teacher on mobile, she does not reply and send me a message "I hope you do not disturb me again" (Mother 7).

Some other parents noted that communication was strained because teachers often dominated the conversations, said negative things about their children.

"Teachers don't call me, they called me once for a school bus problem" (Mother1).

"Teachers always talk about academic or behavioural problems of my daughter they don't allow me to speak, and explain how I can help them solve these problems.

Is this good enough? No, I hope to hear good information about my daughter not bad information all the time" (Mother 9).

"Often they do not call unless my daughter is absent from school" (Mother 7).

"Teachers don't contact me, I do not know why. I tried to communicate with the teachers if they agree by WhattsApp, and sometimes they do not respond to me" (Mother 8).

The findings suggest that communication was also constrained by the attitude of teachers towards parents. It appears the most important issue for teachers on which they communicate to parents was academic scores as indicated by the following parent comment.

They wait until the end of the school year then they provide a report on the student results.

Is it enough? No, I tried to communicate with them but there was no response, I went to the school and they told me "all the teachers were busy and could not talk to you" (Mother 7).

Surprisingly, as suggested by parents' comments the teachers work in 'silos' to develop Individual Education Plans despite research suggesting a collaborative approach to IEP development (Barton et al., 2004; Goldman & Burke, 2017). *It is really bad, sometimes if I say my opinion, she says to me, " no I know what I put in the individual education plan, it is a very good plan based on your daughter' needs and we cannot listen to you and change it."* (Mother 9).

5.2.6.5 School-Related Factors

The study identified several school related factors that inhibit effective parental involvement practices. Of particular importance is the absence of school policy to guide parent teacher relationships, involvement and practice.

"We do not have policy in this area, I don't know if the Ministry of Education has parent participation policy" (Principal).

"I do not have any idea about parental involvement policy" (Educational supervisor).

"I have no knowledge of any policy of how to involve parents" (LD Teacher 1).

"I do not know, but as I mentioned there is a defect in the education system and I hope that the administration of education will care more about parental participation" (LD Teacher 3).

Some of the participant teachers were of the view that school administration is the same as policy on parental participation, while others think that these policies are the responsibility of the Saudi Ministry of Education, which has nothing to do with schools.

"I think parent participation policy is about school management" (LD Teacher 4).

"Maybe administrators and teachers may be unaware of the importance of parental participation that is why there is no policy but I think this is the issue for Ministry of education… the education system in Saudi Arabia does not allow parent participation in school and we do not have laws that stipulate the participation of mothers in school, there may be participation of mothers in their daughters' education in some private schools" (Mainstream teacher 2).

"No, there is no policy because of the lack of interest of the school administration and this is the role of the school administration" (LD Teacher 6).

"No, there is no policy, I hope so, but these are matters related to the Ministry of Education to make and we just have to implement" (Mainstream teacher 1).

Teachers also discussed in detail their heavy workloads, which prevented them from engaging with parents. Some of them refer to the daily administrative tasks as overwhelming, leaving them no time for parental engagement.

"I don't have time for parents because I am always busy with more administrative work" (LD Teacher 2).

"Yes, we are very busy with a lot of tasks and we do not have time to discuss things with each mother, it is better to choose the time determined by the school and not by parents" (Principal).

"The school principal is solely responsible for determining the time and place of school meetings and parents have to fit into it because of the busy schedules" (Educational supervisor).

"Of course, the teacher is very busy with a large number of students if the mother is not receptive to the teacher that will increase the burden of the teacher and affect their daughter' education" (Mainstream teacher 1).

In addition, one participant opined that "the use of scientific terms, in the school causes problem for the parents to participate in the learning difficulties program." Furthermore, the Educational supervisor claimed that, "one of the factors affecting parental involvement is the frequent absence of the teachers."

5.2.7   Theme 5: Building parental involvement

Another theme among parents and teachers was about articulating factors that would contribute to establishing a strong parental involvement practice. An important factor mentioned by a school leader was the use of special education terms.

"We need to use words that parents can understand when dealing with parents even in school letters because it affects the acceptance of parents and their participation. As well as patience and containment of parents and non-despair" (Principal).

The majority of teachers mentioned cultivating the value of patience in order to work with parents as indicated in the following comments:

"Patience and containment of parents and the delivery of information in a nice way" (LD Teacher 1).

"Patience and understanding and not surrender to difficulties" (LD Teacher 3).

"Patience and endurance are key to working with parents" (LD Teacher 4).

"Patience and non-surrender and self-development in the field of learning difficulties" (LD Teacher 5). "Patience and respect for parents no matter what caused them problems" (Mainstream teacher 1).

"Absorbing anger because most mothers visit the school only for a complaint or a problem, the teacher must show that she is with her and with her daughter and not against her" (Mainstream teacher 2).

Many parents also described several things that would help them feel comfortable in working with teachers and schools in the education of their daughters. Important issues discussed include developing their own level of knowledge, teacher tolerance, frequent and flexible communication and respect from teachers.

"The teacher must always stand with the parents and absorb their anger, even if it is wrong and this is beneficial to the student" (Mother 1).

"For me, if I knew how to read and write and learned the effective teaching methods for my daughter, I would do what I could to improve the academic level of my daughter.

I have a future plan to learn to read and write to help my daughter" (Mother 2).

"The mother should enrich the information to her daughter and put her tests at home so that she knows her daughter's level and weaknesses and is working to develop them" (Mother 5).

"Continuous communication with the teacher because the teacher can help the mother with the educational methods useful to the student" (Mother 7).

"As I mentioned the constant communication with teachers and the mother's reading of useful teaching methods" (Mother 8).

Some parents suggested:

"the most important thing that helps the mother to know how to support her daughter is the teacher's cooperation so the mother can understand the problem and help her daughter at home" (Mother 9)

"continuous communication between mother and teacher through email, mobile, meetings or letters will help the mother in how to support her daughter" (Mother 10).

Other parents suggested the following:

"There should be periodic meetings with the learning difficulties teacher at least once a month. I also wish the teachers respect the mothers' opinion and not neglect any information or opinion from the mother because the mother is the most important in her daughter's education" (Mother 1).

"The school should not give the learning difficulties teacher a large number of learning difficulties students, so that they can have time for each student and can communicate with their mothers" (Mother 2).

"The school should develop a caring attitude toward mothers" (Mother 3).

Some parents said that "*respect for parents and developing their awareness of the LD programmes for them is a propriety"* (Mother 7) and others detest the use of scientific terms saying: *"I wish teachers stay away from using scientific terminology, and I hope they will respect our vision"* (Mother 8) while another parent reiterated that "schools should welcome parents" (Mother 10).

5.3 Summary

This chapter has presented the quantitative and interview findings. Both the survey and interview findings provide insights into teachers' and parents' perspectives, experiences and practices of parental involvement. The study identified that generally, on the one hand, teachers have positive attitudes toward parental involvement at the home level. They perceived parents as important educators in helping children with learning difficulties' complete homework and develop positive behaviour dispositions. On the other hand, teachers resent parents' direct involvement in school activities. For example, teachers did not like the idea of parents contributing to their children's classroom work and contributing ideas to the development of Individualised Education Plans. This is because, the teachers regard parents as non-professionals or individuals lacking professional knowledgeable to contribute to teachers' work in school.

The findings suggest that parents enjoy supporting their children at home to complement the work the done at school as part of their contribution to their children's education. Many of the parents expressed that they would like to be involved in school matters such as attending school meetings, contributing to decision making of the schools with respect to their children's education and having good relationship with teachers. However, the majority felt disappointed as they were judged by teachers as bad mothers and troublemakers. The findings further indicate that because there were no policies on parental involvement to guide practices, parental involvement was in dissonance.

The study identified barriers such as ineffective communication, lack of trust and respectful relationship and parents, negative attitudes of teachers, lack

transportation for parents and parents' non-acceptance of learning difficulty label as factors working against effective parental involvement. Despite these challenges, both parents and teachers in this research favour parental involvement and suggested that by developing effective communication, respectful relationship and trust, and clear policies to guide practice, parental involvement can be made effective.

The next chapter of this study will discuss jointly the survey and interview findings and answer the research questions that were posed in the first chapter of this study.

6 Chapter Six: Discussion

6.1 Introduction

This mixed methods study of parental involvement in school for female students with learning difficulties (LDs) allowed me to explore different dimensions of parent involvement. Specifically, the study focused on concepts of parent involvement, practices, teachers' attitude to parent involvement, involvement experiences from the perspectives of teachers and parents, and barriers to parent involvement. This focus is important for identifying and responding to future risks of effective parental involvement in Saudi Arabian inclusive elementary schools that educate students with learning difficulties. One hundred and five parents and 110 teachers completed four-part questionnaires. Part 1 collected demographic data, Part 2 collected information about views on parent-teacher relationships, Part 3 about experiences on parent involvement practices and Part 4 about perceived barriers to parental involvement. In addition, 10 teachers and 10 parents participated in interviews that focused on involvement practices, experiences, benefits of involvement and barriers to involvement to complement the quantitative data. The discussions of the findings in this chapter are presented around each research question by integrating the survey and interview findings. Bronfenbrenner's bioecological systems theory and previous research are used to discuss the findings. Table 6.1 shows summary of the research findings with respect to each research question.

6.2 Summary of the findings

Research questions	Key findings
How do elementary school teachers and parents, and parents of students with learning difficulty conceptualise parental involvement with school?	Parental involvement is the connection between the members of the school's community. Parental involvement means the activities that teachers and parents participate in together. Parental involvement is a two-way communication that help to improve the education of students. Parental involvement is a contractual agreement between teachers and parents that involved trust, respectful relationship and positive cooperation.
What are Saudi elementary school teachers' and parents' attitudes towards parental involvement?	Some teachers had lower expectation of parents' involvement, were not comfortable involving some parents and perceived them as trouble makers Some parents and teachers indicated they were not knowledgeable to contribute to parental involvement with school. Teachers were generally comfortable with parents' assistance to their children at home but perceived parental involvement in school as an additional burden to their professional workload. Parents were generally positive about involving in their children's education at school but were not fully supported by teachers to do so.
What are the experiences and concerns of Saudi elementary school	Most teachers were concerned that parental involvement was low and some parents were involved than others.

teachers and parents regarding parental involvement?	. Dissonance in parental involvement due to lack of respect for parents, poor communication practices, lack of school policy on parental involvement, clarity of roles and expectations from teachers lack of training on how to work with parents, schools setting parent-teacher meeting without consulting parents, and time pressure on teachers.
	Parents believed teachers had adequate knowledge to teach their children with LD but their experiences were generally negative.
How do Saudi elementary school teachers and parents describe effective parental involvement?	When there is clear policy to guide parental involvement.
	When teachers have positive attitudes towards parents and parents are able to accept the LD label of their children.
	When there are clear, positive and effective communication practices.
	When both teachers and parents enact respectful relationships.

Table 6.1: Relationship between research questions and summary of findings.

As presented in Table 6.1, the summary of the findings to the research questions provide different views from teachers and parents regarding parental involvement in the education of female students with LD. The next section discusses these findings in relation to the research questions, previous literature and Bronfenbrenner's bioecological systems theory.

6.3 Research question one: How do elementary school teachers and parents, and parents of students with learning difficulty conceptualise parental involvement with school?

I asked this question in order to gain insights into participants' perspectives of how they understood parental involvement. The importance of this research is situated in previous literature which indicated that concepts are ways we represent mental pictures of what we know and understand, including how our abilities frame up the basic structure of thoughts and beliefs about something (Cain, 2002). Therefore, this question played an important role in uncovering the significance as well as the ways parental involvement is a valuable aspect in the education of students with LD for the participants in this study. The answers to this question were revealed through some items in the questionnaire and interviews with teachers and parents.

Generally, the participants' conceptions of parental involvement are complex and varied. Some of the participants defined parental involvement as the "*art of connectedness"* to the school's community. For example, one of the participants who was a School Principal opined that connectedness between the teacher and parents enable schools to address problems associated with the education of students with LD. According to previous research, schools which are open to communities encourage parents to be connected and highly engaged with school teachers and participate in their children's learning (Nistler & Maiers, 2000; Wherry, 2003). Conceptualising parental involvement as the 'art of connectedness' with the school's community by the participants is supported by the view that strong partnership in

which parents' contributions are celebrated by schools promotes their continuous involvement in school, activities (Cullingford & Morrison, 1999; Epstein & Sheldon, 2006; Johnson et al., 2004).

As explained in the theoretical section of this thesis in chapter 3, Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model situated the child at the centre of five layers of interacting systems namely, the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem systems (Seung Lam & Pollard, 2006). These nested systems provide conceptual understanding of parental involvement in school (Härkönen, 2007; Barton et al., 2004). The art of connectedness which is linked to the mesosystem, recognises that in any school family relations, parents become empowered to see themselves as key partners of schools when there is strong collaboration and working across stake-holder boundaries which significantly affect the nature of their involvement (Moore & Lasky, 1999). For example, the mesosystem refers to linkages and processes taking place between a child's home and school (Härkönen, 2007).

Teachers and parents play complementary roles within the mesosystem in supporting students' learning and development. Thus, conceptualising parental involvement as a connection between members of the school's community has implications for developing positive interpersonal relationships between teachers and parents to drive effective parental involvement (Britto, 2012). Positive teacher-school relationship is crucial for students' learning, particularly those with learning difficulties to thrive in school.

In addition, working across stakeholder boundaries or the nested system of micro- and mesosystems according to the bioecological systems theory requires a

continuous interrogation of the conceptual and structural factors of how parent-school relations are positioned within the educational practice context (Krishnan, 2010).

The findings also suggest that parental involvement was perceived by the participants as "*activities that teachers and parents participate in together.*" These include school meetings, discussing school activities with the child at home, being part of PTAs, monitoring students' progress and taking part in classroom activities with students. It can be argued that without a strong bond between teachers and parents the implementation of these various activities can be difficult to implement. The bioecological theory suggests that "a parent's and a teacher's involvement in the child's education, if mutual, will result in mesosystem functioning" (Krishnan, 2010, p. 8). Thus, a strong definition of parental involvement in students with learning difficulties considers schools in conjunction with other mesosystem factors such as time, peer relationships, parental status that impact on families' perspectives and practices (Daniel, 2011).

Both teachers and parents defined parental involvement as "*a two-way communication"* between teachers and parents. They stressed that communication is key to all definitions of parental involvement as it provides the platform by which both teachers and parents are informed of the involvement processes and practices. Previous studies support this view. It is stated that the quality of parental involvement in schools is depended on the quality and frequency of communication with teachers (Dearing et al., 2004; Dearing et al., 2006). Effective communication can enable teachers and parents to be aware of what is happening at school and in families. In terms of Bronfenbrenner's bioecological system theory, the mesosystem concept

places emphasis on teacher-parent collaboration because of their complementary roles in supporting students' learning and development (Britto, 2012). This positions the participants' "two-way communication" concept of parental involvement centrally in this research. The implications for communication are grounded in research that effective communication is key to developing a positive teacher-school relationship (Dearing et al., 2006). According to Daniel (2011), effective communication requires that teachers and parents become familiar with each other's work and include "socioculturally informed knowledge and ways of relating to the world within a child's schooling experience and engage these in supporting learning at home" (p. 168).

Parents and teachers equally used the benefits of parental involvement to describe their understanding of parental involvement concept. For these participants, it was not easy to separate the meaning of parental involvement from its benefits. Teachers in particular believed that parental involvement is about improving the education of students with LD, supporting them to behave well at school and enabling parents to confirm and extend what students learn at home. This confirms other previous studies which indicate that the term parental involvement is fluid and often used to connote activities that parents participate in to help their children at school or at home (Caplan, 2000; Epstein & Jansorn, 2004; El Nokali et al., 2010).

For some of the parents, parental involvement is a "*contractual agreement between teachers and parents*" that involved "*trust, respectful relationship and positive cooperation*". Parents' views on the meaning of parental involvement also included their respective roles in supporting their children with LD in doing homework teaching them behavioural skills. Important to the parents in their definition is value

accorded parents by schools as significant others in contributing to schools'

decision-making process about their children with LD. Resch et al. (2010) argue that

valuing parents and engaging them respectfully in conversations about their

children's education is the surest way to conceptualise and enhance their

participation. Alternatively, parents' discomforts, which come through lack of, trust

and disrespect, can be serious inhibitors of their participation (Hebel & Orly,

2011; Masoud, 2005). In summary, participants' perspectives of what parental

involvement is and how they perceived their role in this, reiterate previous definition

of parental involvement as "all home, school, and community-based activities

involving parents in supporting their children's educational development" (Daniel,

2011, p. 166). These configurations of conceptualisations can only make sense and

impact if there is strong positive collaboration and networking across stakeholder

boundaries.

In this regard, I advocate for parental involvement definition to include the

concept of engagement because of its deeper meaning as advocated for by Pushor

(2007, p. 3) who states:

> engagement implies enabling parents to take their place alongside
> educators in the schooling of their children, fitting together their
> knowledge of children, teaching and learning, with teachers' knowledge.
> With parent engagement, possibilities are created for the structure of
> schooling to be flattened, power and authority to be shared by educators
> and parents, and the agenda being served to be mutually determined and
> mutually beneficial.

It is when parental involvement embraces the notion of engagement that parents are

formalised as key partners in the education of their children. This is because

engagement engenders commitment and long-lasting relationships that promote mutual interaction and sharing of ideas.

In terms of their respective roles, teachers considered it their responsibility to develop effective Individualised Education Programmes that support students with LD to learn. For example, the majority of parents indicated that they were willing to volunteer and participate in their children's education by supporting their homework, attending meetings and taking part in classroom activities alongside their children if possible. However, presented that it is teachers' duty to provide school and classroom atmospheres where parents of students with LD can be involved. The participants' definitions and differentiation of roles pertaining to involvement in this study resonate with Epstein's (1995) theoretical typology of parental involvement into six different levels of involvement: (1) parenting, (2) communication, (3) volunteering, (4) learning at home, (5) decision-making, and (6) collaborating with community. This is illustrated in Table 6.2.

Epstein's typologies	Findings from this research
Parenting	Parents support their children with LD at home, provide behaviour modification lessons by showing them videos
Communication	Both teachers perceived parental involvement as a two-way communication" between teachers and parents. Parents communicate the challenges of their children with LD to teachers and teachers sent messages about students' academic performance and behaviour issues to parents.
Volunteering	Some parents volunteer to attend school meetings.
Learning at home	Most teachers conceptualised parental involvement as parents supporting their children to do homework. Parents provide tutoring for their students with LD at home. All teachers showed positive attitude towards

		parents' support for their children with LD to do their homework.
Decision-making		Most parents regard parental involvement as participating in schools decision-making process. They would like to be part of the school's decision-making process but were not given the opportunity to do so.
Collaborating	with	Parents regard parental involvement as the art of
community		connectedness.

Table 6.2: Epstein's family involvement typology and key findings.

The perspectives of acknowledging roles could have important implications for understanding parental involvement practices in the context of educating students with LD in Saudi elementary inclusive schools. To ensure that these roles are translated into real and effective parental involvement practices, schools may provide opportunities for networking to reduce conflicts with parents, which could also help to facilitate their involvement (Baker et al., 2016). According to findings from previous studies, when parents feel a sense of belonging to school their involvement and fulfilment of their respective roles deepens (Barton et al., 2004). On the contrary, as noted by Baker et al. (2016), "a major barrier to parent participation …was the level of comfort parents felt in coming to the school" (p. 172).

Clearly, the teachers and parents' understanding of parental involvement and their specific roles in school practices to support students with LD, are varied, sometimes sharing similarities, but in a somewhat conflicting position in relation to one another. That is, there is relatively little consistency about how issues of parental involvement are understood and represented by the teachers and parents in Saudi Arabia. While there is a lot of international literature on parental involvement, the literature on the same in the Saudi context is scarce. A recent study of parental involvement in the Riyadh in Saudi Arabia by Chatila (2018), the results which were

presented at the ICERI2018, 11th annual International Conference on Education and New Learning Technologies, Seville in Spain suggested that generally, Saudi parents whose children attend elementary schools were willing to be involved with schools. Communication, time, strong interpersonal relationship can be vital for enhancing parents' involvement. Arguably, the way in which parental involvement is conceptualised by the Saudi inclusive elementary teachers and parents in this study and their respective roles, reflect many of the key principles outlined by previous research in the international literature (Daniel, 2011; Epstein & Jansorn, 2004; Pushor, 2007). While it seems that the Saudi teachers and the parents have clearly identified their respective roles, moving forward to taking up these roles in a collaborative way appear to be the most important need that has to be vigorously pursued.

6.4 Research question two: What are Saudi elementary school teachers' and parents' attitudes toward parental involvement?

The framing of the second question of this thesis was to understand teachers' and parent's attitudes toward parental involvement. Teachers (N=110) completed a 12-item attitude questionnaire, and 10, teachers and 10 parents participated in a follow up interview. As described in the findings chapter, teachers were generally positive about teaching students with LD; however, some teachers had lower expectation of parents' involvement, were not comfortable involving some parents and perceived them as trouble makers. In addition, teachers were generally comfortable with parents' assistance to their children at home but perceived parental involvement in school as an additional burden frustrated them and contributed to

their professional workload. Some parents and teachers indicated that they were not knowledgeable to contribute to parental involvement with school. Parents were generally positive about involving in their children's education at school but felt they were not encouraged and fully supported by teachers to do so.

The findings are consistent with previous research from Saudi Arabia, which suggest that teachers often welcome parents' home support to their children by completing homework but have strong opposition to invite parents into classrooms (Aldabas, 2015; Shourbagi, 2017).

Another strong negative attitude that emerged from this study is that teachers perceived parental involvement as additional burden to their professional work. Perceiving parental involvement as an additional burden is likely to prevent teachers from creating a welcoming environment for parents to be involved. According to Walker and Hoover-Dempsey (2008) parents are more likely to be involved when the school community is welcoming, and they feel that they are needed and invited by teachers to be part of the school programme. Not all parents will be involved in the same type of school activity or at the same level. However, whatever level or activity parents may choose to be involved in, it is teachers' duty to make parents feel ownership of their involvement. It is argued that teacher professional learning and school leadership support can enable teachers to plan with parents to establish clear guidelines for parents to be involved in school programmes (Walker & Hoover-Dempsey, 2008).

Another interesting aspect of this study is that nearly half of the teachers had negative attitudes and lower expectations of parents' participation in classroom activities. The majority of the teachers expressed that parents' participation in

classroom activities is unnecessary and causes major disruptions to teachers' work. Some teachers even referred to parents as troublemakers. Some of the teachers believed that parents did not have the necessary qualification and knowledge to be involved in school matters.

These negative perceptions of parents' participation in school matters is corroborated by the survey data where most teachers perceived parental participation as adding to their professional workload. Constructing parents as difficult and troublemakers also appeared to inhibit parents' participation in school programmes for students with LD.

Most teachers also had negative attitudes towards parents' decision-making or contribution to school matters. Those teachers did not believe that parents had any knowledge or expertise to make decisions about their schools' academic programmes for students with LD. Teachers' rejection of parents' contribution in classroom activities might be based on the ways they view parents. It can be argued that teachers' previous experiences with parents could possibly contribute to constructing their thoughts and reactions to parental involvement. Some researchers agreed that teachers build their values and attitude toward parents based on their previous relationships with parents (Kurtines-Becker, 2008; Patte, 2011). Most importantly, some authors were of the view that there is emotional drain on teachers when they come into contact with parents bearing mind their negative perception of their contribution to school (Ratcliff & Hunt, 2009). This may possibly erode any gains that parental involvement can offer schools and students. As indicated earlier, the bioecological systems theory of Bronfenbrenner foregrounds the importance of collaboration between schools and families. As a nested system, any disruption

caused by negative attitudes in the mesosystem can possibly cause major disruptions in the microsystem. In other words, it may influence the ways parents see their roles and involve with schools (Härkönen, 2007). This provides implication for establishing mechanisms to enable positive first-time experiences in teacher parent relationships.

These findings are in opposition to what the literature advocates that teachers' willingness to work in partnership with parents is essential for effective education of students with special needs (Mahuro & Hungi, 2016; Murray et al., 2014). It is realised that teachers and parents are unique in their personal beliefs, dispositions and actions. While some teachers and parents may work well together in school-family collaborations, some teachers' personality, professional views and attitudes can threaten parents to work with teachers as a team (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). Therefore, it is important for teachers to value parents and meet regularly to discuss approaches and modalities of their contribution in schools (Baker et al., 2016). These findings are concerning when viewed in terms of Bronfenbrenner's bioecological systems theory which conceptualises parent involvement in school as the interaction between the home and school contexts (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994).

I found that although Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory provided a holistic view of exploring parental involvement in schools in this research, a deeper analysis of the findings demonstrates some limitations in terms of its practical implications. First, the theoretical framework helped to uncover several factors that are implicated in effective parent-teacher relationships in terms of parental involvement; however, the framework does not account for details of the number of factors that are

considered enough for determining the effectiveness of parental collaboration and relationships. Second, I encountered difficulty of balancing information related to the numerous factors that are uncovered within the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem and the chronosystems to make practical decisions on their hierarchical importance.

A critical consideration of the factors also shows difficulty of utilising Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory in implementation of practical strategies to enhance the quality of parental involvement because all the factors within the nested systems become mutually and systematically important (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). In view of its holistic orientation to child development, a reductionist's framework for enacting policy and practical implementation strategies for effective parental involvement will be a difficult undertaking.

Despite these challenges with this theory it has enabled deeper understanding of how parental involvement occurs within the mesosystem linked with interconnections between key microsystems. In this way, effective and positive interactions would be difficulty to establish between families and schools if teachers continue to have negative views about parents (Dearing et al., 2004; O'Toole et al., 2019).

Secondly, this study's findings are consistent with other studies which showed that teachers often blame parents for their limited participation or involvement in school matters by ignoring their own behaviours that hinder parental involvement (Baker et al., 2016; Mapp, 2003; McKenna & Millen, 2013). Previous researchers said that positive teacher attitudes about parents' contribution to school programmes often can lead to the formation of strong teacher-parent bonds, empowering both

teachers and parents to jointly contribute effectively to the school's decision-making process (Drake, 2000; Moorman, 2002). Alternatively, negative attitudes toward parents often can isolate as well as decrease parents' morale to be involved with teachers (Funkhouse & Gonzalez, 1997; Jafarov, 2015; Malik, 2012).

This study's findings emphasise the need to train teachers to understand the unique contributions parents can make to students' development beyond completing homework. In addition, teachers need to see parents as key stakeholders in the education of children with learning difficulties and to develop strategies to work across these stakeholder boundaries (Epstein, 2001). Doing so requires the development of attitudes and dispositions that value and celebrate parents as partners (Mapp & Kuttner, 2013).

The findings draw attention to the concept of parental engagement as powerful concept to improve upon parental involvement. This is in line with Ferlazzo's (2011), definition of family engagement as welcoming parents to become valuable partners with the school and attending to "what parents think, dream, and worry about" (p. 12). This contributes to a transparent and flexible stakeholder boundary spanning between teachers and families. As Redding, Langdon, Meyer, and Sheley (2004) have put it, "building a foundation of trust and respect, reaching out to parents beyond the school" (p. 1) can create a positive climate for teachers and parents to support one another in the education of students with LD.

Bronfenbrenner's bioecological framework reinforces the interconnection between child, family, teacher and community within the five layers of environmental systems (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994) that should form a key aspect of any

effective parental involvement practice in Saudi Arabia. This is highlighted in terms of the findings in Figure 3.
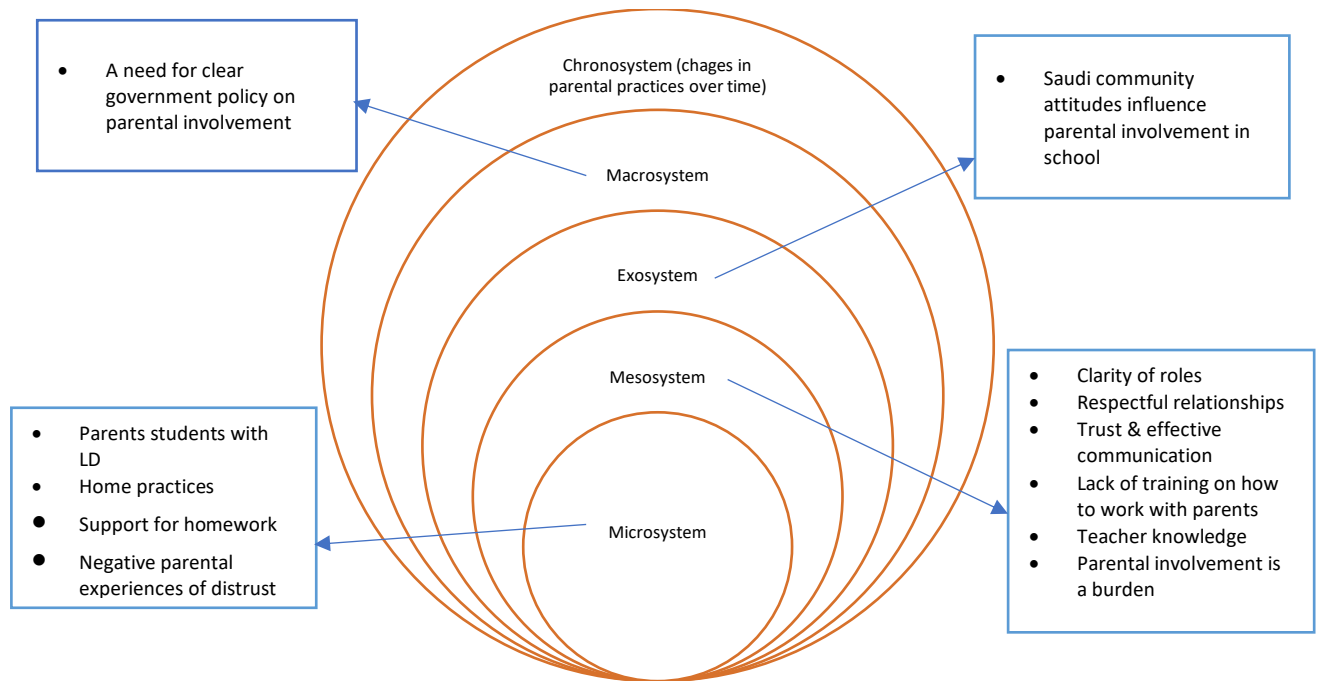
Figure 6.1: Key findings highlighted with Bronfenbrenner's bioecological system theory.

In terms of this study, the microsystem refers to Saudi Arabian children and families, and the mesosystem refers to teachers, and the dynamic interactions, relationship and communications between these stakeholders. This means families of students with LD in Saudi Arabia must be considered the key educators of children with LD. For example, parents are custodians of home traditions and practices that influence students with LD's learning style and their school experience (Funkhouse & Gonzalez, 1997). A student with LD's biological and behavioural attributes (dispositions), and the kind of support they receive can influence the interaction and communications between the mesosystem and other persons in the microsystem.

The findings also draw some implication for thinking about the exosystem, which represents the Saudi Arabian community, which is directly or indirectly influenced by the macrosystem (the government policies). The processes that occur in the Saudi community and its social settings can influence the education of female students with learning difficulty and their development. This calls for a greater coordination of policies, community programmes and school practices to enhance family involvement.

The macrosystem represents the Saudi cultural, social values, political and economic aspects which may influence parental involvement practices (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994). For example, in the macrosystem, the development of values and beliefs emanating from the societal experiences have several impacts on family practices, their work and time to commit to involvement in school matters. As societal experiences are a combination of factors emanating from a culture, type of government, socioeconomic circumstances or geographical contexts, some students with LD can de disadvantaged whilst others are favoured (O'Toole et al., 2019). Therefore, inclusive elementary schools in Saudi Arabia need to take urgent steps to facilitate deeper understandings of parental involvement and develop institutional structures to co-support all students with LD to thrive. By doing so, undesirable experiences of parental involvement resulting from negative attitudes of teachers toward parents can be minimised or completely avoided.

Also, the chronosystem in Bronfenbrenner's bioecological system theory (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994), reflects the ongoing change and continuity of the school, family environment and education policies over time in Saudi Arabia. These changes may have direct and indirect influence on how parents and teachers can

work together to improve the learning and development of students with LD. In this sense, the bioecological understanding of parental involvement in inclusive schools that support the education of females with LD should consider three bioecological domains such as ready teachers, ready families, and ready schools.

6.5 Research question Three: What are the experiences and concerns of Saudi primary teachers and parents regarding parental involvement?

All participants described different experiences and concerns regarding parental involvement in the education of students with LD. Most teachers were concerned that parental involvement was low and some parents were involved than others. Others described the dissonance in parental involvement due to lack of respect for parents, poor communication practices, lack of school policy on parental involvement, clarity of roles and expectations from teachers lack of training on how to work with parents, schools setting parent-teacher meeting without consulting parents, and time pressure on teachers. Parents generally believed teachers had adequate knowledge to teach their children with LD but their experiences were hardly positive.

One crucial area mentioned repeatedly in relation to experiences by both teachers and parents was communication. Both teachers and parents described communication as ineffective. WhatsApp, Internet, telephone and Facebook were mentioned during interviews as the various modes of communication channels for reaching out to parents or to teachers; however, more than half of the teachers agreed that they did not communicate regularly with parents about their students'

learning activities. Teachers often mentioned their busy work schedules as obstacles to effective communication with parents. The findings revealed that whenever the teachers communicated to the parents, they did so to inform them about their children's inappropriate behaviours. This does not constitute communication but a process of complaining to parents about their children. Communication is more than delivering message from one person to another. Parents consistently reported that attending and supporting their children with LD in the school settings was non-existent. This is because there was no proper communication from teachers nor clear guidelines that would make their experiences valuable, enjoyable, and independent in ways that made them feel welcome, relaxed and secure. The interviews in this study supported the quantitative evaluations of the teachers and parents' experiences and concerns regarding ineffective communication.

It is argued that "poor communication is a significant barrier that seems to make parents perceive a school to be less family-friendly" (Baker et al., 2016, p.170). Previous studies document similar findings related to lack of effective communication by teachers to parents and in particular, where communication exited it is often centred on things that students are not doing right (Baker et al., 2016; Tran, 2014).

Research advocates for responsive communication in connecting with families and parents as this promotes greater parent involvement and engagement (Iruka, Curenton & Eke, 2014; Tran, 2014). Teachers in this study claimed that their busy schedules left them with little or no time to be actively involved with parents. Baker et al. (2016) in their study found that when time conflicts with other events, teachers or parents often give priority to things they are accountable. For teachers, this may

be their teaching responsibility and administrative tasks. For parents, this may be their family or work responsibility.

One of the interesting findings in this research is that parents did not identify microsystem factors such as family or exosystem factors such as work responsibility as influencing their time to work with teachers. Thus, the issue of time to communicate remains a sole teacher issue. This challenge calls for the identification of the priority purpose that parental involvement serves Saudi Arabian inclusive elementary schools, which are involved in educating students with LD. Facilitating mutual, responsive and honest conversations between teachers and parents (Iruka et al., 2014) could be one way to minimise the issue of time and workload impact on effective communication.

Secondly, as the majority of the teachers in this study emphasised they did not involve parents in decisions making about their children's education the question arises regarding school level policy on parental involvement. In previous studies, it is suggested that building strong school-family partnerships depend on clear frameworks and policies (Epstein, 1995; Muller, 2009). Policies ensure that parent-family involvement and engagement are formally enshrined in school policy and integrated systemically into school strategic framework and practices. In this way, practices and experiences of family involvement become systematic, integrated and sustained within the school system (Weiss, Lopez & Rosenberg, 2010). Based on the findings of this study the practices of parental involvement reported by participants are ad-hoc and disjointed.

Despite the finding that teachers did not involve parents in decision making regarding their children's learning, parents generally trusted teachers as

knowledgeable professionals who can teach their students with learning difficulties and often communicated their children's needs to them. Yet, on the contrary, it appeared this trust was often broken by teachers' communicative behaviours, for example, the ways they constructed and relayed to parents, negative complaints about their daughters' behaviours and academic performance. This together with lack of involvement in decision making and clarity of parents' roles in school involvement contributed to parents' negative experiences.

In this way, parents' experiences and support for their daughters were restricted to home activities as indicated in previous studies (Harris & Goodall, 2007; Weiss et al., 2010). The emphasis on parents supporting their children's education at home in this study is consistent with what is in the literature regarding studies related to parental involvement in school (Epstein & Sheldon, 2006; Harris & Goodall, 2007). Some previous studies referred to the importance of parents' direct participation in classroom activities such as story-telling, reading programmes and crafts as this would help build confidence and reinforce key influences of parents in future growth opportunities of their children's learning (Harris & Goodall, 2007; Weiss et al.,2010).

This study's findings emphasise the importance for school leaders and parents to come together and develop policies around how to communicate their individual needs and ways parents can support teachers in schools. The findings also call for understanding parents' needs; for example, how they would want to be a part of the education process of their children in line with mutually established policy guidelines (Muller, 2009). With reference to bioecological systems theory, parents' involvement spans across home boundaries to the schools (Daniel, 2011). It is important for

inclusive elementary schools in Saudi Arabia to focus on practices that would serve as intrinsic motivators for parents and teachers to work together and shape mutual participation that engenders positive experiences rather than just restricting parents to home-based support for their children (Smit, Driessen, Sluiter & Sleegers, 2007).

Of particular importance, in this study is the ways most teachers viewed parents as troublemakers. Previous studies on parental involvement found that negative perception of parents often lead to poor engagement experiences in school-family relationships (Alqahtani, 2015; Epstein & Sheldon, 2006). As is noted previously with regard to Bronfenbrenner's bioecological system theory, teacher comments can either disrupt or build bridges between the microsystem and the mesosystem and consequently affect parental involvement (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). Similarly, parental behaviours can also instigate possibilities or challenges within the mesosystem and set boundaries between teachers and parents or create opportunities for engagement. Research suggest that when parents are not positioned as knowledgeable and capable individuals who have something valuable to contribute their personal beliefs about schools as hostile sites can increase (Smit et al., 2007). There were some examples in this study where participants and teachers blamed each other for limited collaboration and participation. This study is consistent with the literature that discusses the impact of blaming as unhelpful, which keeps teachers and parents apart in school-family partnerships fields (Epstein & Sheldon, 2006).

Other issues identified by this study that resulted in negative parental involvement experiences for parents are, parent-teacher meeting times were set without consulting parents and teachers being pressured with time and unable to

involve parents. It is the professional duty of teachers within educational institutions to listen to parents and support them to be part of the school community. Teachers can support parents by fostering social connections and identifying and building on their strengths, which can only happen through giving time and honest listening (Henderson & Mapp, 2002). Teachers need to demonstrate responsibility to lead parents in by developing interpersonal and communication skill, social-emotional insight, and understanding of all parents (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2016). While the experiences and concerns cited by participants in this study certainly connoted unhealthy relationships, there is hope that parental involvement education can help them move towards their mutual obligations of working together to enhance the educational achievements of students with learning difficulties.

6.6 Research question Four: How do Saudi elementary school teachers and parents describe effective parental involvement?

Perception of what constitutes effective parental involvement is necessary for providing future direction for teachers and parents to enact effective parental involvement. Parents and teachers described effective parental involvement in various ways that reinforced the bioecological systems theory although; their practices and experiences were not consistent with their descriptions. Teachers saw the availability of key policies guidelines as important for effective parental involvement practice. They suggested that clear policy guidelines provide the foundation for fostering an environment of how parents and teachers can work together (Weiss et al., 2010). Using Bronfenbrenner's bioecological systems theory perspective, it is possible to frame policy at the macrosystem and mesosytem levels.

At the macrosystem levels, Saudi government policy, if any, can guide schools to develop their own school level policies. This mesosystem-level polices can provide direction to teachers and parents parental involvement. This calls for effective training on how to build trust, respect, privacy and confidentiality when involving parents in policy making so that it can have positive effects on parental engagement and involvement (Goodall & Vorhaus, 2011). Trust, respect and effective communication depend on positive attitudes of teachers toward parents and vice versa (Hornby, 2011).

Parents should believe that teachers have their children's interests at heart and similarly, teachers need to position parents as valuable stakeholders who share in the education of their children with learning difficulties. This is being recognised in the policy shifts globally as argued by Brien and Stelmach that "the legal entrenchment of parent involvement though bodies such as school councils" (2009, p 2) is increasing and making impacts on students' learning. Nevertheless, it is important for policy making not to "ignore the complexity of relations between schools and family, teachers and parents" (Blackmore & Hutchison, 2010, p. 502). This means, in any policy making for parental involvement, the Saudi cultural context, families, work and religious patterns and practices must be considered for both teachers and parents.

The literature emphasises the importance of trust in the parent-teacher relationship regarding building school-family partnerships, particularly when related to parental involvement (Epstein, 2001). Studies on school-family involvement have consistently shown that effective parental involvement in school is influenced by respectful relationships, which are built on trust (Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003;

Deslandes et al., 2015). Yet, prejudice against parents as trouble makers continue to dominate findings in some studies that investigated parental involvement (Epstein, 2010). The participants in this study agreed that generally, adequate home support provided by parents to their children is a key aspect effective parental involvement. Therefore, parents perceive effective parental involvement practice as a process that have support from teachers, where parents are educated on ways to provide quality support to their children with learning difficulties at home and in school.

One of the most-cited aspect of effective parental involvement by the participants in this study is effective communication. The participants named many technological devices and media such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Internet, telephone and Instagram to facilitate communication and make parental involvement effective. Several studies reported on the efficacy of using technology to increase parental involvement in schools (Bouffard, 2008; Goodall, 2016; Lunts, 2003; Olmstead, 2011). Previous authors emphasised that respect, trust and effective communication are key to effective parental involvement (Epstein & Sheldon, 2006). In this regard, both parents and teachers need training on effective communication methods. Importantly, Apps that have been created for this purpose, for example, 'Class Dojo' can be used to facilitate communication.

Teachers mentioned that acceptance of children's LD label by parents is key to effective parental involvement. They presented that acceptance of the label enables parents to accept programme planning for their students with LD and eventually participate in these programmes.

This finding draws several implications as reported by previous studies. For example, Epstein (2010, p.38) argues that the factors that create effective parental involvement are:

knowledge of how to help their children at home, their belief that teachers want them to assist their children at home, and the degree of information and guidance from their children's teachers in how to help their children at home.

This means, teachers must be able to develop the ability and practices on sound principles of child and adolescent development and organisational effectiveness. They also need to develop the culture of responsibly to parents as individuals, and have positive beliefs about "the importance of parents' involvement and parents' receptivity to guidance from the school, and their ability to communicate with parents as partners in the children's education" (Epstein, 2010, p. 39).

Previous authors have argued that effective parental involvement depends on educating teachers on how to work and involve parents (Epstein, 2010; Walker & Hoover-Dempsey, 2008). Many teachers identify with the importance of parental involvement but may feel unprepared or uncertain about how to initiative and sustain the engagement process with different families who have varying beliefs, cultures, and practices. Teachers in this research also felt that parents should know how to teach and support their children with LD at home as well as make time to come to school to see their children. This contradicts other perspectives of the teachers who do not want to see parents in schools. The Saudi Arabian context is diverse in terms of culture and families. Epstein (2010) suggests that if educators are not trained to understand how they can develop and maintain partnership programmes, any initiate to develop parental involvement may not be effective. It is emphasised that in order

to prevent teachers from being "disconnected from opportunities that enrich their schoolwork and prepare them for the future" (Epstein, 2010, p. 5), professional learning must form a core component of parental involvement education for teachers. In my view, parents also need education and support to understand school practices and how to work with teachers.

Many parents also described several things that would help them feel comfortable in working with teachers and schools in the education of their daughters. Important issues discussed include developing their own level of knowledge, teacher tolerance, frequent and flexible communication and respect from teachers. Another theme among parents and teachers was about articulating factors that would contribute to establishing a strong parental involvement practices. Some of the teachers felt that the use of professional terms such as resource rooms, learning difficulty, IEP, were not well understood by parents or made parents uncomfortable.

Teachers also mention several other factors that constitute effective parental involvement including cultivating the value of patience in order to work with parents. These perspectives indicate that teachers usually gave up on parents when they were faced with challenges. Patience is important for teachers to work collaboratively with parents, even to absorb the anger of parents who will visit schools only to complain or pick up a problem with teachers. But more importantly, creating professional learning communities where teachers can learn with from and about parents can play an important role in the development of mutual understanding of teachers' work as well as parents' family practices and challenges (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2016). Reflecting on professional codes by teachers can also help teachers work according to their professional boundaries.

When the findings of this study are juxtaposed with the bioecological systems theory, a broader view of what constitute effective parental involvement emerges that extends beyond the particular skills and abilities of teachers and parents (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998; Bronfenbrenner, 2004). Effective parental involvement is that which recognises the influence of the children with LD themselves on families, schools, communities and the availability of appropriate services that assist both teachers and parents to craft mutually agreed goals to guide involvement practices (O'Toole et al., 2019). Families are children's first teachers and thus are powerful sources of information for teachers (Bronfenbrenner, 2004). In this way, they are best placed to be involved in the education of students with LD. Landry, Smith, and Swank (2006) described parents' role as cognitive agents in children's learning because, they provide opportunities for learning with appropriate modelling of language and engagement with family artefacts. In fact, some of the educational activities that many parents engage in with their children at home can be linked with school programmes to facilitate educational achievements of students with LD in Saudi Arabia. Effective parental involvement is that which parents and teachers co-construct activities that actively engage students with LD in school, social-ethnic and cultural activities that have a significant influence on their academic performance.

Arguably, the lack of parental involvement guidelines or policies in the school contexts researched for this study have probably contributed to these mixed messages about what constitutes effective parental involvement practice. In this study, few teachers have embraced parents as partners in the education of students with LD and have genuine urge to implement inclusion, but the majority are yet to

recognise parents' role in school decision making as part of effective parental involvement practice. Finally, there is evidence in this study that both teachers and parents are aware of the gains that can be derived from effective parental involvement but practice parental involvement is yet to take a strong root in the Saudi elementary schools researched for this study. I assert that if consistency exists in guidelines in relation to issues of parental involvement and parents are valued and respected, a strong foundation can be laid for effective parental involvement to support the education of female students with LD in Saudi Arabia. Finally, since parents are heterogeneous in nature, teachers should not expect all parents to be involved with schools at the same level. Expecting all parents to be involved at the same level can breed conflicts (Moore & Lasky, 1999). As Okeke, (2014) describe it, parental involvement requires a deeper understanding of parents' aspirations, home culture, work patterns, their aspirations for their children, their approach to parenting, their believes about teachers, and their concept of their roles and responsibilities.

6.7 Strengths of this Research

Before I discuss the limitations of my study, I highlighted the strengths of my research. Firstly, parental involvement in the education of female students with LD is relatively a new phenomenon in Saudi Arabia. While a number of researchers studied parental involvement in education in Saudi Arabia they focused mostly on male students with LD. My study focused on female students with LD as such, the amount of data and information gain from this research provide a snapshot into the issues that confront teachers and parents as they strive to work together to support

female students with LD improve their education and learning. This makes my research stand out more as original, providing some recommendations that can be implemented to improve practice. Secondly, the use of a pragmatic methodology, which allowed for the collection of both survey and interview data, coupled with Bronfenbrenner's bioecological systems theory provided richness and depth of interpretation of the findings. Finally, the strength of my study lies in the policy and practical recommendations I offered based on the data in order to translate this research' findings into impact for the wider society in Saudi Arabia.

6.8 Research limitations

In this study, many topical issues regarding parental involvement in the education of students with learning difficulties in inclusive elementary schools have been uncovered and discussed. As in any research, this study has some limitations. Theoretically, this study applied Bronfenbrenner's bioecological systems theory which has been widely used by other researchers to understand child development, school practices, transition practices and parental involvement. Despite its strengths in helping me identify the nested systems in which parental involvement operates, and the plural factors that are implicated in the microsystem, mesosytem, exosystem and the macrosystem that affect the quality of involvement, in this study, a critical limitation has been identified in relation to the practical application of this theory. For example, in view of the numerous factors that play a role in parental involvement with schools, it is difficult to identify in order of ascending order which factors need to be considered most when attempting to develop an effective parental involvement practice.

Also, the questions I asked did not cover all the dimensions of Bronfenbrenner's theory. For example, issues of the macrosystem and their relations to parental involvement were not sufficiently covered. Methodologically, this study is also limited to female teachers and parents of students with LD in Saudi Arabia mainstream primary schools that used LD programme in The Ministry of Education in Riyadh. Since the data collection was limited to particular schools in Riyadh, it cannot be seen as representative of all teachers in different geographical locations in Saudi Arabia or other national or international contexts. Further, a small number (three participants) of the participants did not allow recording of their voices. This means some valuable data might have been lost when writing manually the data generated from the semi-structured interviews with these participants. In addition, the research was limited to female pupils because, in the school system in Saudi Arabia, girls' schools were separated from boys' schools and all teachers at girls' schools were females. I also found that interviewing requires specific skills from the interviewer including the ability to think about questions during the interview, which she found confusing sometimes. This slowed down the interview process as well as limited expanding on certain issues during the interviews. There is much skill required during an interview process and having the slightest confusion or distraction means, some valuable data might have been missed.

In this study, another limitation I identified is associated with participant selection and researcher biases. The participant selection bias in this research occurred because, the selection was purposeful and non-random. It is possible that the participants responded to the questionnaires and the interview questions based on what they think is the right answer or what is socially acceptable in the Saudi

context rather than what they really feel about parental involvement. Secondly, I acknowledge that my own subjective beliefs and experiences as an insider researcher might biased the ways I conducted and interpretated the study findings unknowingly. For example, I might have asked some questions in an order that affected the participant's response to the follow-up questions. Despite these limitations, the findings of this study represent a snapshot of parental involvement in students with LD in the Saudi elementary inclusive school context.

The final chapter of this study presents the summary, implications and recommendations for improving parental involvement practices. Included also, are recommendations for future study in this area.

7 Chapter Seven: Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

The previous chapter of this study provided the discussion of the findings which centred on the research questions. This final chapter provides the summary of key findings, contribution to knowledge, recommendations and conclusion of the research.

7.2 Summary of the Study

This mixed methods study examined parental involvement in the education of elementary students with learning difficulties in Saudi Arabia. The study involved 105 parents and 110 teachers who completed four-parts questionnaires, and 10 teachers and 10 parents participated in interviews. Questionnaires and interviews provided data deepening insights into four research questions:

1. How do elementary school teachers of students with learning difficulty and parents conceptualise parental involvement and their respective roles?

2. What are teachers' attitudes toward parental involvement?

3. What are the experiences and concerns of Saudi elementary school teachers and parents regarding parental involvement?

4. How do teachers and parents describe effective parental involvement?

Answers to these questions could assist in developing systematic approach to effective parental involvement to enhance the learning and educational achievement

of students with LD in Saudi Arabia. Several studies provide the impetus for parental involvement as its effectiveness contributes to academic achievement of students (Baş et al., 2017; Hayes et al., 2017; Lagace-Seguin & Case, 2010). In my effort to find out more about teachers and parents' concepts, practices, attitudes and effective parental involvement, the following key findings were identified through the survey and interview data analysis.

Concerning the concepts of parental involvement, there was no universal definition put forward by parents and teachers. The findings show that parental involvement was conceptualised by the participants as the art of connectedness, activities that teachers and parents participate in together, a two-way communication between teachers and parents for improving the education of students, contractual agreement between teachers and parents, and trust, respectful relationship and positive cooperation between parents and teachers.

In terms of roles, some parents revealed that their roles are to support their children at home to do their homework, prepare them for school, teaching them about their culture and good behaviour as well as participating in school programmes. Most teachers conceptualised their roles in terms of their teaching responsibilities in the classroom and supporting parents to do their best for their children. These findings are significant as they provide conceptual basis for building a strong parental involvement practice.

The second focus of this study was to identify teachers' attitudes to parental involvement. The results show that generally, teachers had positive attitudes toward teaching students with LD. In addition, most teachers showed positive attitudes toward parents' home assistance to their children in completing homework; however,

they were negative to parental involvement in school activities within the schools. They perceived parental involvement in students' class activities as interrupting teachers' work. Some negative attitudes led to referring to some parents as troublemakers, who are not knowledgeable to contribute to school decision making. The findings also demonstrate that most teachers had lower expectations of parents' participation in school activities in addition to perceiving parental involvement as an additional burden to their professional workload.

Thirdly, the study focused on identifying teachers and parents' parental involvement experiences and concerns. Key findings identified include, teachers' concern that parental involvement was low and some parents were involved than others, that communication between teachers and parents was poor and ineffective, and that there is dissonance in parental involvement due to lack of respect for parents. The findings also demonstrate that most parents did not have opportunities to contribute to schools' decision-making process. Despite the majority of parents believing that, the teachers who taught their daughters with LD had adequate knowledge; most parents were generally concerned about their negative experiences because of lack of respect, and clarity of roles and expectations from teachers.

Likewise, all the teachers raised concerns of lack of training for teachers on how to work with parents, lack of school policy on parental involvement, setting parent-teacher meeting times without consulting parents, and teachers being under pressure for lack of time to involve parents. These experiences and concerns suggest that parental involvement in the education of students with LD is at its developing stage in Saudi Arabian elementary schools. It also provides many

opportunities for developing effective parental involvement as indicated by the participants in relation to the final focus of this study.

The fourth focus of this study relates to what the Saudi teachers and parents identify as effective parental involvement in the education of female students with LD. Most teachers mentioned that clear policy to guide parental involvement would make it effective. Besides, teachers added that when parents willingly accept those children who have been assessed and confirmed as having LD, it would help reduce tension between them and parents. This would also lead to effective planning with parents to improve the education of their students with LD.

Most parents on the other hand identified effective parental involvement as entailing positive teacher attitudes, clear, positive and effective communication, enactment of respectful relationships are the critical elements of effective parental involvement. Consistently, all the parents in this study demonstrate willingness to connect with teachers, which is evidenced in their repeated mention of effective communication. These findings support existing studies on parental involvement (Fan & Chen, 2001; LaRocque et al., 2011; Malik, 2012; Milad & Dabbagh, 2011).

7.3 Key contribution to knowledge, significance and recommendations

The findings of this study are significant in terms of its contribution to policy, practice and theory.

7.3.1 Policy Contribution and Recommendation

Concerns with lack of policy guidelines on parental involvement identified in this study provide insights into the relationship between school structures and everyday practice needs of parents. Effective parental involvement practices are embodied in the organisation of schools which are influenced by broader system of school or exosystemic and macrosystemic educational policies. School interpretations of parental involvement policies translate into everyday practices of how teachers and school leaders in inclusive schools involve parents in educating female students with LD.

It is therefore recommended that at least, elementary inclusive schools in Saudi Arabia that are educating female students with LD develop parental involvement policies in consultation with parents. If developed in appropriate ways, such policies will guide the conduct of communication, teaching and learning models that parents can participate in, approaches and choices of meeting times, and provision and access to opportunities that enable parents to involve more in their children's education. It is when the policy barriers to parental involvement, particularly being present at the school by parents which causes frustration to teachers are addressed, that working across stakeholder boundaries for the benefit of students with LD can be achieved. Johnson et al. (2004) found that supporting parents in ways that reduce stress and confusion can increase their involvement in school activities.

7.3.2 Recommendations for Enacting Impact on wider Policy in KSA

Policy process is complex; therefore, it is not possible for me to influence policy on my own. The way forward is to build relationships and networks with parents,

teachers and influential community leaders and share the key findings of this research in personal conversations and community forums and schools. Working together, building trust and developing a joint plan with these community members can be used to reach out to important policy makers.

In addition, a concise executive summary of the key findings of this research could be made available to the Ministry of Education of the KSA. Promoting the findings in areas such as social media platforms, press releases, public events, bilateral meetings, presentations or side events at summits, conferences and local Mosques can help boos public awareness of the findings and their importance to KSA.

7.3.3 Practice Contribution and Recommendation

The findings of this study contribute to knowledge in terms of the kinds of professional learning that can be provided to teachers and parents on effective practice in parental involvement in the education of female students with LD. The study foregrounds that effective practice of parental involvement depends on clear and effective communication, positive attitudes from teachers and parents, trust, and respectful relationship between teachers and parents. It considers how professional learning can bring about transformation in teacher and parental behaviours and practices of parent involvement as reported in numerous scholarly literature on parental involvement (Daniel, 2011; El Shourbagi, 2017; Perez, 2018). In practical terms, the study contributes knowledge about how to address concerns expressed by teachers and parents such as quality involvement and collaboration that focus on effective communication when involving parents in the education of their children with LD.

In view of addressing barriers to communication which is the major issue in this research, parents recommended frequent, positive and multiple forms of communication for school events and expectations of parents via WhatsApp, Instagram, email, text message, and telephone. The parents in this research strongly believed that teachers who communicated positive messages consistently were able to make them feel more positive about their involvement. It is also recommended that professional learning address cultural and language barrier of some parents particularly, when teachers are unsure that parents are following what is happening during school meetings. Making communication simple, clear and in the language that parents can understand will contribute to mutual understanding of what is happening the school as well as what is expected of parents (Henderson, Mapp, Johnson & Davies, 2006; Smith, Wohlstetter, Kuzin & De Pedro, 2011).

Working with parents is not a straightforward process because of different family structures, values, beliefs and practices (Baş et al., 2017; Hayes et al., 2017; Lagace-Seguin & Case, 2010). This study identified that teachers consider some parents as trouble makers, uncooperative and difficult. It is suggested that professional development of teachers that focuses on culturally responsive ways of communication can help in creating positive relationship with families and parents (Iruka et al., 2014).

This study also found that teachers complained about lack of time due to administrative and other professional tasks inhibiting their ability to involve with parents. In this sense, addressing the time barrier identified need to involve school leaders in planning and strategising what important paper work can be completed by teachers and freeing some of their working times to network with parents. It is

also important for school leaders and teachers to have honest conversations with parents about how the barrier of teacher time can be resolved. This may mean, mutually deciding on school meeting times with parents, specifying areas that the schools would like parents to contribute to beside home support for their students with LD.

This study also identified parents' concerns about the lack of opportunity to contribute to schools' decision making. Teachers viewed parents as having no knowledge to teachers' work hence, parents were at the receiving end of school practices. In this regard, schools can use focus groups to collect vital information from families about their needs, wishes and their ideas about how they would like to participate to improve parent involvement. Studies have shown that when needs assessments are conducted on parents and they are given opportunities to voice out their ability and priority areas, they are empowered to contribute to schools' decision-making process (Knopf & Swick, 2008).

The findings also showed that parents and teachers were able to identify factors that contribute to effective parental involvement. What is needed is how to translate these factors in to real practice to address the low participation rate of parents as reported by teachers in this study.

7.3.4 Theoretical Contribution and Recommendation

The study contributes to the knowledge and understanding of how the participants in this study conceptualised parental involvement as the art of connectedness, effective communication, trust and respectful relationship, and the activities in which teachers and parents participate in together. These perspectives

resonate with Bronfenbrenner's bioecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 2004). This understanding of parental involvement has promise for developing effective parental involvement to influence effective teacher-parent relationships.

There is real opportunity for transforming teachers' practice of parental involvement by developing and nurturing a culture or theory of "engagement" which is supported by Bronfenbrenner's bioecological system theory and its application to parental involvement in the education of female students with LD in Saudi Arabia. The bioecological systems theory positions parental involvement as a nested activity involving parents, schools and broader community (Härkönen, 2007; Hayes, et al., 2017). It is argued that if some members within the bioecological nested system are not valued it results in breakdown of the whole system (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). According to Ferlazzo (2011), when schools shift from parent involvement to engagement, there is sharp corresponding change in attitudes toward parents. This is because teachers come to view parents as partners who valuably contribute to the progress of students and schools.

It is recommended that in order for school leaders to enable swift transformation and address the barriers to low or lack of parental involvement, they should direct efforts at enculturating engagement where parents are seen not as objects to be invited to schools whenever problems occur, or decisions made and parents are invited to play a role in it. Rather, parents must be seen as having equal responsibility but differential roles in the education of students with LD. Indeed, the concepts that were gained from both teachers and parents in this study about meaning of parental involvement can help inclusive elementary schools to develop the concept of engagement. Moving from parent involvement to engagement will

position inclusive elementary schools educating female students with learning difficulties to embrace a more capacious and deeper view of the various contributions that parents can make and how they can be involved. The concept of engagement also acknowledges parents' strengths and weakness which are factored into their involvement practices (O'Toole et al., 2019). Moreover, teachers should take every opportunity to involve parents in their children education to develop the sense that everyone in the school community makes valuable contribution to education success (Gibson & Knowler, 2007). In doing so, teachers would get to better understand parents' contribution and avoid blaming them for lack of involvement (Peña, 2000).

7.4. Suggestion for Further Research

The findings of this research have provided a snapshot of female teachers and parents' perspectives on parental involvement in the education of female students with learning difficulties in Saudi Arabia. Suggestions for future research are given in light of the limitations of this research. Firstly, since the research concentrated only on the one major city of Saudi Arabia, further research may be done on a broader scale to cover other cities and rural areas of Saudi Arabia so that emerging findings could be replicated. Secondly, this research involved female teachers in inclusive elementary and parents of female students with LD; therefore, a further research could consider male teachers in inclusive elementary schools in Saudi Arabia where practices may be different. Thirdly, future research can utilise experimental method with control and research group to validate how parental involvement contributes to academic achievements of students with LD in Saudi

Arabia. Longitudinal research is also necessary to establish evidence of how parental engagement create opportunities for effective school outcomes for all students in inclusive schools.

7.5. Final Reflection and Concluding Remarks

Findings from this study provide some understanding of parental involvement practices and experiences in supporting inclusive elementary female students with LD in the Saudi Arabian context. It identifies the challenges that teachers and parents face in enacting effective parental involvement for supporting students with LD. Participant responses supported recent evidence of the benefits of parental involvement, barriers to involvement as well as key structures and strategies that can enable teachers and parents to work together support female students with LD in elementary inclusive schools. Evidence in this research was glean through questionnaire responses and interviews conducted with selected teachers and parents. Indeed, the participants' exposition of the concept of parental involvement as the art of connectedness is transformational and significant. This reinforces Bronfenbrenner's theory of parent involvement by interrogating conceptually and structurally how parent-school relations can be positioned within the educational transformation process (Bronfenbrenner, 1994; Burns, Warmbold-Brann et al., 2015).

In terms of reflecting on this study in relation to previous parental involvement research, it can be argued that parents and teachers value the contribution that parental involvement can make to students learning (Fan & Chen, 2001; LaRocque et al., 2011; Malik, 2012; Milad & Dabbagh, 2011). Yet, they were not up to the task

yet due to systemic, policy, practice, and attitudinal barriers. These are key considerations that need urgent attention.

In this regard, this study adds to the evidence that effective parental involvement built on the concept of engagement provides nurturing environments for establishing and enacting respectful relationship that influence parents and teacher interactions (Daniel, 2011; El Shourbagi, 2017; Perez, 2018). The act of engagement will afford support for, and empower parents who are isolated to connect with teachers (Baş et al., 2017; Lagace-Seguin & Case, 2010).

Although this doctoral research has provided me with some initial insights into parental involvement in the education of female students with LD, there is much work to be done by future researchers. The study has particularly caused me to reflect on what the ideal form of parental involvement should be like in Saudi Arabia. While treading my journey as a researcher, it became apparent that there could not be any universal form of or type of parental involvement. Parental involvement is a complex process with multifaceted practices. This complexity is the result of diversity in school practices, parents and family values and practices. Despite this acknowledgement, involving teachers and parents to respond to questionnaires and make their views heard through interviews is important deepening understanding into how parental involvement can be improved to enhance educational outcomes for students with LD. The Saudi government appeared to be moving swiftly towards inclusive education but from the findings of this study it appears more has to be done in terms of parental involvement.

In reality, this is not a randomised control trial, but a small-scale study and as such cannot provide definitive answers that can be generalised. Instead, it provided

some answers and raised more questions and recommendations for more uncomfortable work in particular for changing teacher attitudes towards parents. In a way, the study revealed a policy gap to develop and promote more inclusive parental involvement practices. Effective parental involvement can only be achieved in educational systems practices are supported by consistent and coherent policy messages which value parents and teachers. As Slee (2013) argues:

> We need a new way of identifying resources for inclusion. There are many parents with unique and extensive knowledge about disability and disablement, cultural and linguistic differences…who could join us to build educational learning communities" (p.906).

With this in mind, teachers together with parents have the capabilities to transform parental involvement when deficit views of parents are replaced with ideas that perceive parents as capable and valued partners in the education of their children.

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Appendix 1: Teacher's Questionnaire

Dear Participant,

This questionnaire aims to gain a better understanding of your views and current practices of parent involvement, to document and analyse teachers and parents' views about the importance of parental involvement, as well as roles and responsibilities and identify any obstacles to implementing effective parental involvement practices in Saudi inclusive primary schools with respect to supporting girls with learning difficulties. The questionnaire is divided into four parts:

 Part 1 collects personal information.

Part 2 collects information about your attitudes to parental involvement.

Part 3 collects information about your experiences of parental involvement practices.

Part 4 collects information about your perception of the barriers to parental involvement.

- ➢ **Can you please provide your name or email so I can identify the questionnaire if you wish to withdraw your data in the future.**
………………………………………………………………………………………

Part One: Personal Information

1. Age in years

20-29	
30-39	
40-49	
50+	

2. Years of teaching experience

Less than 5 years	
5-10 years	
11-15 years	

16-+ years	

3. Highest qualification (Please choose only one)

PhD	
Masters	
Bachelors	
Diploma	
Certificate	

4. Professional role

Administrator/principal	
Teacher	
Educational supervisor	
Learning difficulties teacher	

5. If you are learning difficulties teacher, how many number of students with learning difficulties you teach weekly?

1-5 Students	
6-10 Students	
11+ Students	

Part Two: Attitudes to parental involvement

No.	Items	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	I find teaching students with learning difficulties rewarding	1	2	3	4	5
2	It is teachers' duty to provide a classroom atmosphere where parents of students with learning difficulties can be involved	1	2	3	4	5
3	I have low expectations of parents' participation	1	2	3	4	5

No.	Items					
	in the education of their child					
4	I am comfortable with parents assistance in teaching their children	1	2	3	4	5
5	I am at ease around all parents	1	2	3	4	5
6	I provide an environment that accommodates all parents' participation	1	2	3	4	5
7	I feel that parents who don't make time to come to school don't really care about their child's education	1	2	3	4	5
8	Parents should know how to help their children with schoolwork at home	1	2	3	4	5
9	I view home-based involvement as an integral component of a student's education	1	2	3	4	5
10	Parental involvement adds to our professional workload	1	2	3	4	5

Part Three: Parental involvement practices

No.	Items	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	I have regular communication with parents about students' activities	1	2	3	4	5
2	Parents' involvement in school programmes is an important duty	1	2	3	4	5
3	Parental participation contributes to the academic achievement of students with learning difficulties	1	2	3	4	5
4	Teaching students with learning difficulties is	1	2	3	4	5

No.	Items					
	the sole responsibility of teachers					
5	Some parents of this school are more involved than others	1	2	3	4	5
6	Teachers in this school are welcoming to parents	1	2	3	4	5
7	I approach parents whenever they need help with their children	1	2	3	4	5
8	I collaborate with other staff to support parents	1	2	3	4	5
9	I involve parents in making decisions about their child's education	1	2	3	4	5
10	Teachers in this school are trained on how to work with parents	1	2	3	4	5
11	There is school-level policy on how to involve parents	1	2	3	4	5
12	I follow school policy when involving parents	1	2	3	4	5
13	Parents are allowed to freely share their views at school meetings	1	2	3	4	5
14	Parents share their opinions and questions about their daughter' education with me	1	2	3	4	5
15	I set the place and time of parents' meeting by agreement with them	1	2	3	4	5
16	Whenever problems arise between teachers and parents they are resolved quickly	1	2	3	4	5

Part Four: Barriers to Parental Involvement

No.	Items	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

1	There are adequate guidelines for how parents should be involved in school matters	1	2	3	4	5
2	Parents' attitudes towards me reduces their involvement in school programmes	1	2	3	4	5
3	Parents have limited knowledge of special education to be involved in school programmes	1	2	3	4	5
4	I have limited time to be involved with parents	1	2	3	4	5
5	I have a lot of responsibilities in the school that mean I am unable to involve parents	1	2	3	4	5
6	I find it is difficult to set a meeting time with parents	1	2	3	4	5
7	Failure to train teachers on how to deal with parents may lead to a lack of communication between teachers and parents	1	2	3	4	5
8	Lack of available place in the school for parent meeting reduces the parental participation	1	2	3	4	5
9	Lack of interest in the school administration to the parental involvement reduces my involvement	1	2	3	4	5
10	Using scientific terms (such as: Integrating and the resource room) with parents reduces their participation	1	2	3	4	5

Thank you so much for your time in completing this survey :)
Pleas tick the box if you agree to participate in an interview

If agree to participate in an interview, please provide your contact details:
Your name ………………………………
Phone number …………………………....
Email address ……………………………

If you give this information I will contact you with more details. You will have the right to withdraw from participation at any point.
If you have any questions about this study please contact me at:
Phone: 0559699099
 Email: sa594@exeter.ac.uk

Appendix 2: Teacher questionnaire (Arabic version)

استبيان المعلم

عزيزي المشارك،

يهدف هذا الاستبيان إلى الحصول على فهم أفضل لآرائك حول الممارسات الحالية لمشاركة أولياء أمور الطالبات ذوي صعوبات التعلم.

سيساعد توثيق وتحليل وجهات نظرك حول أهمية مشاركة الوالدين وأدوارهم ومسؤولياتهم في تحديد العوامل الرئيسية التي تدعم أو تثبط ممارسات المشاركة الأبوية الفعالة في المدارس الابتدائية الشاملة في المملكة العربية السعودية فيما يتعلق بدعم الفتيات الذين يعانون من صعوبات في التعلم. ينقسم هذا الاستبيان إلى أربعة أجزاء: الجزء الأول يجمع المعلومات الشخصية، ويجمع الجزء الثاني معلومات حول مواقفك تجاه مشاركة الوالدين، ويجمع الجزء 3 معلومات عن تجاربك الخاصة بممارسات مشاركة الوالدين. الجزء 4 يجمع معلومات حول مفهومك للحواجز التي تحول دون مشاركة الوالدين.

الجزء 1 يجمع المعلومات الشخصية.

الجزء 2 يجمع معلومات عن مواقفك تجاه مشاركة الوالدين.

الجزء 3 يجمع معلومات عن تجاربك في ممارسات مشاركة الوالدين.

الجزء 4 يجمع معلومات عن تصورك للعقبات التي تحول دون مشاركة الوالدين.

❖ **هل يمكن أن تقدم اسمك أو بريدك الإلكتروني حتى أتمكن من تحديد الاستبيان إذا كنت ترغب في سحب بياناتك في المستقبل.**

....

الجزء الاول: المعلومات الشخصية

1 . العمر

		٢٩-٢٠
		٣٩-٣٠

	٤٠-٤٩
	٥٠+

2 . سنوات الخبرة

	اقل من خمس سنوات
	٥-١٠ سنوات
	١١-١٥ سنوات
	١٦+سنوات

3 . المؤهلات

	دكتوراه
	ماجستير
	بكالوريس
	دبلوم
	شهادة أخرى

4 . الدور المهني

	مدير
	معلم تعليم عام
	مشرف تربوي
	معلم صعوبات التعلم

5 . اذا كنت معلم صعوبات تعلم, كم عدد طلاب صعوبات التعلم الذي تقوم بتدريسهم أسبوعيا؟

	١-٥ طلاب

					٦-١٠ طلاب	
					+١١ طلاب	

الجزء الثاني: المواقف اتجاه مشاركة الوالدين

موافق بشدة	موافق	محايد	غير موافق	غير موافق بشدة	الفقرة	الرقم
٥	٤	٣	٢	١	اجد ان تعليم الطلاب ذوي صعوبات التعلم مجزي	١
٥	٤	٣	٢	١	من واجب المعلمين توفير جو الفصل الدراسي حيث يمكن إشراك آباء الطلاب الذين يعانون من صعوبات في التعلم	٢
٥	٤	٣	٢	١	لدي توقعات قليلة لمشاركة الآباء في تعليم أبنائهم	٣
٥	٤	٣	٢	١	أنا مرتاح لمساعدة الوالدين لي في تدريس أبنائهم	٤
٥	٤	٣	٢	١	اشعر بالراحة في البقاء حول أولياء الامور	٥
٥	٤	٣	٢	١	اقدم بيئة تستوعب مشاركة جميع أولياء الامور	٦
٥	٤	٣	٢	١	أشعر أن أولياء الامور الذين لا يخصصون وقت للمجيء إلى المدرسة لا يهتمون حقًا بتعليم أطفالهم	٧

موافق بشدة	موافق	محايد	غير موافق	غير موافق بشدة		الرقم
٥	٤	٣	٢	١	يجب أن يعرف الآباء كيفية مساعدة أطفالهم في أداء الواجبات المدرسية في المنزل	٨
٥	٤	٣	٢	١	أنظر المشاركة المنزلية كعنصر أساسي في تعليم الطالب	٩
٥	٤	٣	٢	١	تضاف مشاركة الوالدين إلى أعباء العمل المهنية لدينا	١٠

الجزء الثالث: ممارسات المشاركة الاسرية

موافق بشدة	موافق	محايد	غير موافق	غير موافق بشدة	الفقرة	الرقم
٥	٤	٣	٢	١	اتواصل بشكل منتظم مع أولياء الأمور حول أنشطة الطلاب	١
٥	٤	٣	٢		مشاركة الوالدين في البرامج المدرسية واجب مهم	٢
٥	٤	٣	٢	١	تسهم مشاركة أولياء الأمور في التحصيل الأكاديمي للطلاب ذوي من صعوبات في التعلم	٣
٥	٤	٣	٢	١	تقع مسؤولية تدريس الطلاب الذين يواجهون صعوبات في التعلم على عاتق المعلمين وحدهم	٤
٥	٤	٣	٢	١	بعض الآباء في هذه المدرسة أكثر انخراطا من غيرهم	٥
٥	٤	٣	٢	١	المعلمون في هذه المدرسة يرحبون بالوالدين	٦
٥	٤	٣	٢	١	أساعد الوالدين كلما احتاجوا إلى مساعدة مع أطفالهم	٧
٥	٤	٣	٢	١	أتعاون مع موظفين آخرين لدعم أولياء الأمور	٨
٥	٤	٣	٢	١	أشرك أولياء الأمور في اتخاذ القرارات بشأن تعليم أطفالهم	٩

٥	٤	٣	٢	١	تم تدريب المعلمين في هذه المدرسة على كيفية العمل مع أولياء الأمور	١٠
٥	٤	٣	٢	١	توجد سياسة على مستوى المدرسة حول كيفية إشراك الوالدين	١١
٥	٤	٣	٢	١	أتبع سياسة المدرسة عند إشراك الوالدين	١٢
٥	٤	٣	٢	١	يُسمح للآباء بمشاركة وجهات نظرهم بحرية في الاجتماعات المدرسية	١٣
٥	٤	٣	٢	١	يشارك الآباء آراءهم وأسئلتهم حول تعليم ابنتهم	١٤
٥	٤	٣	٢	١	احدد مكان ووقت اجتماع الآباء بالاتفاق معهم	١٥
٥	٤	٣	٢	١	أي مشاكل تنشأ بين المعلمين وأولياء الأمور يتم حلها بسرعة	١٦

الجزء الرابع: معوقات مشاركة الوالدين

موافق بشدة	موافق	محايد	غير موافق	غير موافق بشدة	الفقرة	الرقم
٥	٤	٣	٢	١	هناك إرشادات كافية حول كيفية مشاركة أولياء الأمور في الأمور المدرسية	١
٥	٤	٣	٢	١	مواقف الأبوين اتجاهي تقلل من مشاركتهم في البرامج المدرسية	٢
٥	٤	٣	٢	١	لدى الآباء معرفة محدودة بالتربية الخاصة للمشاركة في البرامج المدرسية	٣

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٥	٤	٣	٢	١	لدي وقت محدود للمشاركة مع أولياء الأمور	٤
٥	٤	٣	٢	١	لدي الكثير من المسؤوليات في المدرسة التي تضعف مشاركتي للوالدين	٥
٥	٤	٣	٢	١	أجد أنه من الصعب تحديد موعد اجتماع مع الوالدين	٦
٥	٤	٣	٢	١	قد يؤدي عدم تدريب المعلم على كيفية التعامل مع أولياء الأمور إلى عدم التواصل بين المعلمين وأولياء الأمور	٧
٥	٤	٣	٢	١	عدم وجود مكان متاح في المدرسة لاجتماع الوالدين قد يقلل من مشاركة الوالدين	٨
٥	٤	٣	٢	١	نقص الاهتمام من إدارة المدرسة لمشاركة الوالدين يقلل من مشاركتي	٩
٥	٤	٣	٢	١	أستخدم المصطلحات العلمية الدقيقة مثل: غرفة المصادر ، والدمج ، والإلحاق وغيره مع ولي أمر الطالبة يقلل من المشاركة الاسرية	١٠

اشكرك على المشاركة في هذا الاستبيان، اذا كان لديك الرغبة للمشاركة في المقابلات الشخصية ارجو كتابة طريقة التواصل التي تفضلينها.

يرجى وضع علامة في الخانة إذا وافقت على المشاركة في مقابلة

إذا وافقت على المشاركة في مقابلة ، يرجى تقديم تفاصيل الاتصال الخاصة بك:

اسمك ....

رقم الهاتف ....

عنوان بريد الكتروني ....

إذا أعطيت هذه المعلومات، فسأتصل بك لمزيد من التفاصيل. سيكون لك الحق في الانسحاب من المشاركة في أي وقت.

إذا كان لديك أي أسئلة حول هذه الدراسة، يرجى الاتصال بي على:

هاتف: 0559699099

البريد الإلكتروني: sa594@exeter.ac.uk

Appendix 3: Parent's Questionnaire

Dear Participant,

this questionnaire aims to gain a better understanding of your views and current practices of parent involvement, to document and analyse teachers and parents' views about the importance of parental involvement, as well as roles and responsibilities and identify any obstacles to implementing effective parental involvement practices in Saudi inclusive primary schools with respect to supporting girls with learning difficulties. The questionnaire is divided into four parts:

Part 1 collects personal information.

Part 2 collects information about your view on parent-teacher relationships.

Part 3 collects information about your experiences on parent involvement practices.

Part 4 collects information about your perception of the barriers to parental involvement.

➢ **Can you please provide your name or email so I can identify the questionnaire if you wish to withdraw your data in the future.**
………………………………………………………………………………………

Part One: Personal Information
1. This questionnaire is being completed by:
1. ……………………………Mother
 2. …………………………Father
3…………………………….. Guardian
4…………………………I f other please specify
…………………………………………….

2. What is your age? ………………
3. What is your spouse's age? (If applicable) ………………….
4. How many hours per week do you work? …………………
5. How many hours per week does your spouse work? ……………………
6. Which of these statements best describes your marital status?
1.   Married and living with spouse in the same house as your child/children

2. Married and living apart from spouse (for example for work or any other circumstances)
3. Separated, widowed or divorced, etc.
   If separated, how much time does your child/children spend living with you?
   …………………………………………..

7. The highest amount of education that you have completed: (Please choose only one)
1. ………………………………. Elementary school
2.………………………………… Secondary school
3.…………………………………. High school Degree
4. ……………………………Bachelor Degree
5.………………………………Postgraduate Degree

8. How many children in your family?........................
9. How many of your children are identified as having learning difficulty?.............................

<u>**Part Two: Parent-Teacher Relationships**</u>

No.	Items	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	My daughter's teacher contacts me to say good things about my daughter	1	2	3	4	5
2	My daughter's teachers know about the learning difficulties of my daughter	1	2	3	4	5
3	My daughter's teachers support the learning difficulties of my daughter	1	2	3	4	5
4	My daughter's teachers care about my daughter as an individual	1	2	3	4	5
5	My daughter's teachers help my daughter feel good about her education	1	2	3	4	5
6	I am included in decisions affecting my daughter's education	1	2	3	4	5

7	My daughter's teachers invite me to visit the classroom during the day	1	2	3	4	5
8	My daughter's teachers value my efforts in school involvement	1	2	3	4	5
9	I have good relationship with my daughter's teachers	1	2	3	4	5
10	Teachers in my daughter's school know how to work with parents	1	2	3	4	5

Part Three: Parent Involvement practices

No.	Items	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	I fully participate in my daughter's classroom programmes (for example, participation in the individual education plan)	1	2	3	4	5
2	I fully participate in the non-classroom activities of my daughter's school (for example, participating in cultural, artistic and sports programs)	1	2	3	4	5
3	I understand what my daughter's school expects of me as a parent	1	2	3	4	5
4	I support my daughter's learning at home	1	2	3	4	5
5	I can contribute to decision making in the school	1	2	3	4	5
6	I do contribute to decision making in the school	1	2	3	4	5

No.	Items					
7	My daughter welcomes my involvement in her educational activities	1	2	3	4	5
8	I see my involvement in school programmes as an important duty	1	2	3	4	5
9	I communicate my daughter's needs to the school	1	2	3	4	5
10	Parental participation contributes to the academic achievement of students with learning difficulties	1	2	3	4	5
11	Teaching students with learning difficulties is the sole responsibility of teachers	1	2	3	4	5
12	I would like to participate more in my daughter's education at school.	1	2	3	4	5
13	It is easy for me to participate in my daughter's education at school	1	2	3	4	5
14	School meetings to discuss my daughter's progress are very helpful, (for example periodic meeting with special education teacher)	1	2	3	4	5
15	I feel comfortable being involved in the education of my daughter.	1	2	3	4	5
16	Teachers in this school are welcoming to parents.	1	2	3	4	5

Part Four: Barriers to Parental Involvement

No.	Items	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

1	There are adequate guidelines for how parents should be involved in school matters	1	2	3	4	5
2	Lack of transportation reduces my involvement in school matters	1	2	3	4	5
3	Lack of available time reduces my involvement in school matters	1	2	3	4	5
4	My work schedule makes it difficult for me to be involved in school programmes	1	2	3	4	5
5	A language barrier reduces my involvement in school programmes	1	2	3	4	5
6	Teachers' atttitudes toward me reduces my involvement in school programs	1	2	3	4	5
7	My opinions are not valued by teachers	1	2	3	4	5
8	I have limited knowledge of special education to be involved in school programmes	1	2	3	4	5
9	I do not know how to support the education of my daughter with learning difficulties	1	2	3	4	5
10	My social situation reduces my involvement in school programmes	1	2	3	4	5
11	My economic situation reduces my involvement in school programmes	1	2	3	4	5

***Some of the items for this questionnaire were adapted from Karen Shearer's (2006) study of Parental involvement: Teachers' and Parents'' voices in Florida county, USA.

Thank you so much for your time in completing this survey :)
Please tick the box if you agree to participate in an interview

If you agree to participate in an interview, please provide your contact details:
Your name ………………………………
Phone number …………………………....
Email address …………………………….

If you give this information I will contact you with more details. You will have the right to withdraw from participation at any point.
If you have any questions about this study please contact me at:
Phone: 0559699099
 Email: sa594@exeter.ac.uk

Appendix 4: parents' questionnaire (Arabic version)

استبيان الوالدين

عزيزي المشارك،

يهدف هذا الاستبيان إلى الحصول على فهم أفضل لآرائك والممارسات الحالية لإشراك أولياء الأمور لدعم الطلاب الذين يعانون من خلافات التعلم في المدارس الابتدائية في المملكة العربية السعودية. سيساعد توثيق وتحليل آراء الوالدين حول أهمية مشاركة الوالدين والأدوار والمسؤوليات في تحديد الحقائق التي تدعم أو تمنع تطبيق ممارسات المشاركة الاسرية الفعالة في المدارس الابتدائية الشاملة في المملكة العربية السعودية فيما يتعلق بدعم الفتيات اللواتي يعانين من صعوبات في التعلم. ينقسم هذا الاستبيان إلى أربعة أجزاء: الجزء الأول يجمع المعلومات الشخصية ، ويجمع الجزء الثاني معلومات عن وجهة نظرك حول العلاقات بين الوالدين والمعلمين ، والجزء 3 يجمع معلومات حول خبراتك حول مشاركة الوالدين ، ويجمع الجزء 4 معلومات حول إدراكك للحواجز التي تحول دون الوالدين مشاركة.

الجزء 1 يجمع المعلومات الشخصية.

الجزء 2 يجمع معلومات عن وجهة نظرك في العلاقات بين الوالدين والمعلمين.

الجزء 3 يجمع معلومات عن تجاربك في ممارسات مشاركة الوالدين.

الجزء 4 يجمع معلومات عن تصورك للعقبات التي تحول دون مشاركة الوالدين.

هل يمكن أن تقدم اسمك أو بريدك الإلكتروني حتى أتمكن من تحديد الاستبيان إذا كنت ترغب في سحب بياناتك في المستقبل.

....

الجزء الاول: المعلومات الشخصية الجزء الاول: المعلومات الشخصية

1 - الشخص الذي يقوم بملئ هذا الاستبيان هو:

(a) الام

(b) الاب

c) الجد او الجدة

d) اذا كان غير ذلك ارجو التوضيح ....

2 - ما هو عمرك؟ ....

3 - ما هو عمر زوجك؟ ....

4 - عدد ساعات عملك في الأسبوع ....

5 - عدد ساعات عمل زوجك في الأسبوع ....

6 - أي من العبارات التالية تصف أفضل لحالتك الزوجية؟

a) متزوج ويعيش مع زوج / زوجة في نفس المنزل مع طفلك / أطفالك.

b) متزوج ويعيش بعيدا عن الزوج (على سبيل المثال لظروف العمل أو في أي ظروف أخرى)

c) منفصلة أو أرملة أو مطلقة، إلخ.

في حالة الانفصال، كم من الوقت يقضيه طفلك / أطفالك في العيش معك؟ ....

7 - اعلى درجة علمية تم الحصول عليها:

a) ابتدائي

b) متوسط

c) ثانوي

d) بكالوريس

e) دراسات عليا

8 - كم عدد الأطفال في عائلتك؟ ....

9 - كم عدد الأطفال ذوي صعوبات التعلم في عائلتك؟ ....

الجزء الثاني: علاقة أولياء الامور والمعلمين

الرقم	الفقرة	غير موافق بشدة	غير موافق	محايد	موافق	موافق بشدة
١	يتصل مدرس ابنتي بي لقول أشياء جيدة عن ابنتي	١	٢	٣	٤	٥
٢	يعلم معلمو ابنتي عن صعوبات التعلم التي تواجه ابنتي	١	٢	٣	٤	٥
٣	يدعم معلمو ابنتي صعوبات التعلم التي تواجه ابنتي	١	٢	٣	٤	٥
٤	يهتم معلمو ابنتي بابنتي بشكل خاص	١	٢	٣	٤	٥
٥	يساعد المعلمون ابنتي في الشعور بالرضا عن تعليمها	١	٢	٣	٤	٥
٦	أشارك في القرارات التي تؤثر على تعليم ابنتي	١	٢	٣	٤	٥
٧	يدعوني معلمو ابنتي لزيارة الفصل خلال اليوم الدارسي	١	٢	٣	٤	٥
٨	يقدر معلمو ابنتي جهودي في المشاركة المدرسية	١	٢	٣	٤	٥
٩	لدي علاقة جيدة بمدرسي ابنتي	١	٢	٣	٤	٥

موافق بشدة	موافق	محايد	غير موافق	غير موافق بشدة	الفقرة	الرقم
٥	٤	٣	٢	١	يعلم المعلمون في مدرسة ابنتي كيفية العمل مع أولياء الأمور	١٠

الجزء الثالث: ممارسات المشاركة الاسرية

موافق بشدة	موافق	محايد	غير موافق	غير موافق بشدة	الفقرة	الرقم
٥	٤	٣	٢	١	أشارك بشكل كامل في البرامج المدرسية الصفية لابنتي ، (على سبيل المثال المشاركة في الخطة التربوية الفردية)	١
٥	٤	٣	٢	١	اشارك بشكل كامل في الانشطة المدرسية الغير صفية لابنتي ، (على سبيل المثال المشاركة في البرامج الثقافية والفنية والرياضية)	٢
٥	٤	٣	٢	١	أفهم ما تتوقعه مدرسة ابنتي مني بصفتي ولي أمر	٣
٥	٤	٣	٢	١	ادعم تعلم ابنتي في المنزل	٤
٥	٤	٣	٢	١	يمكنني المساهمة في صنع القرار في المدرسة	٥
٥	٤	٣	٢	١	اساهم في صنع القرار في المدرسة	٦

٥	٤	٣	٢	١	ترحب ابنتي بمشاركتي في أنشطتها التعليمية	٧
٥	٤	٣	٢	١	أرى أن مشاركتي في البرامج المدرسية واجب مهم	٨
٥	٤	٣	٢	١	اطلع المدرسة على احتياجات ابنتي	٩
٥	٤	٣	٢	١	تسهم مشاركة أولياء الأمور في التحصيل الأكاديمي للطلاب ذوي صعوبات في التعلم	١٠
٥	٤	٣	٢	١	تقع مسؤولية تدريس الطلاب ذوي صعوبات في التعلم على عاتق المعلمين وحدهم	١١
٥	٤	٣	٢	١	أود المشاركة أكثر في تعليم ابنتي في المدرسة	١٢
٥	٤	٣	٢	١	من السهل علي المشاركة في تعليم ابنتي في المدرسة	١٣
٥	٤	٣	٢	١	مفيدة الاجتماعات المدرسية للغاية لمناقشة تقدم ابنتي (على سبيل المثال الاجتماعات الدورية مع معلم صعوبات التعلم)	١٤
٥	٤	٣	٢	١	أشعر بالراحة للمشاركة في تعليم ابنتي	١٥
٥	٤	٣	٢	١	المعلمون في هذه المدرسة يرحبون بالوالدين	١٦

الجزء الرابع: معيقات المشاركة الاسرية

الرقم	الفقرة	غير موافق بشدة	غير موافق	محايد	موافق	موافق بشدة
١	هناك إرشادات كافية حول كيفية مشاركة أولياء الأمور في الأمور المدرسية	١	٢	٣	٤	٥
٢	نقص وسائل المواصلات تقلل من مشاركتي في الأمور المدرسية	١	٢	٣	٤	٥
٣	قلة الوقت المتاح تقلل من مشاركتي في الأمور المدرسية	١	٢	٣	٤	٥
٤	إن جدول عملي يجعل من الصعب علي المشاركة في البرامج المدرسية	١	٢	٣	٤	٥
٥	استخدام المعلمين اللغة الاكاديمية تقلل من مشاركتي في البرامج المدرسية	١	٢	٣	٤	٥
٦	مواقف المعلمين تجاهي تقلل من مشاركتي في البرامج المدرسية	١	٢	٣	٤	٥
٧	لا يحظى رأيي باي اهتمام و تقدير من قبل المعلمين	١	٢	٣	٤	٥

٥	٤	٣	٢	١	لدي معرفة محدودة بالتربية الخاصة للمشاركة في البرامج المدرسية	٨
٥	٤	٣	٢	١	لا أعرف كيف أؤيد تعليم ابنتي التي تعاني من صعوبات في التعلم	٩
٥	٤	٣	٢	١	وضعي الاجتماعي يقلل من مشاركتي في البرامج المدرسية	١٠
٥	٤	٣	٢	١	وضعي الاقتصادي يقلل من مشاركتي في البرامج المدرسية	١١

*** تم تعديل بعض العناصر الواردة في هذا الاستبيان من دراسة كارين شيرير (2006) حول مشاركة الوالدين:

أصوات المعلمين وأولياء الأمور في مقاطعة فلوريدا ، الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية.

اشكرك على المشاركة في هذا الاستبيان ،اذا كان لديك الرغبة للمشاركة في المقابلات الشخصية ارجو كتابة طريقة التواصل التي تفضلينها.

يرجى وضع علامة في الخانة إذا كنت توافق على المشاركة في مقابلة

إذا وافقت على المشاركة في مقابلة ، فيرجى تقديم تفاصيل الاتصال الخاصة بك:

اسمك ....

رقم الهاتف ....

عنوان بريد الكتروني ....

إذا أعطيت هذه المعلومات ، فسأتصل بك لمزيد من التفاصيل. سيكون لك الحق في الانسحاب من المشاركة في أي وقت.

إذا كان لديك أي أسئلة حول هذه الدراسة ، يرجى الاتصال بي على:

هاتف: 0559699099

البريد الإلكتروني:

sa594@exeter.ac.u

Appendix 5: Ethical Approval

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

St Luke's Campus
Heavitree Road
Exeter UK EX1 2LU

http://socialsciences.exeter.ac.uk/education/

CERTIFICATE OF ETHICAL APPROVAL

Title of Project: Parental Participation in the Education of Female Students with Learning Difficulties: The Views of Saudi Elementary Teachers and Parents

Researcher(s) name: Sarah Salem Alqahtani

Supervisor(s):   DR ALISON BLACK, DR Will Shield

This project has been approved for the period

From   **30/08/2018**
To: **30/05/2019**

Ethics Committee approval reference: D/17/18/44

Signature: Date: 08/05/2018
(Professor Dongbo Zhang, Graduate School of Education Ethics Officer)

Appendix 6: Saudi MoE Approval

المملكة العربية السعودية

وزارة التربية والتعليم

الإدارة العامة للتربية والتعليم بمنطقة الرياض

Planning & Development
إدارة التخطيط والتطوير

" تسهيل مهمة بحث "

الاسم	سارة بنت سالم سعد القحطاني		
السجل المدني	١٠٨٦٨٣٥١٧٨	العام الدراسي	١٤٣٨–١٤٣٩هـ
الجامعة	Exeter	التخصص	————
الدرجة العلمية	دكتوراه	عينة الدراسة	معلمات + اولياء امور
عنوان الدراسة	دراسة وجهات نظر معلمات واولياء أمور طالبات صعوبات التعلم اتجاه المشاركة الاسرية.		
نوع التسهيل	تطبيق اداة الدراسة (استبيان) على عينة الدراسة معلمات واولياء أمور طالبات صعوبات التعلم		

المكرمة / قائدة المدرسة ....

حفظها الله

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته   وبعد،

بناءً على قرار سعادة مدير عام التعليم بمنطقة الرياض رقم ٣٨٩٢٠٧٩٣ وتاريخ ١٤٣٨/٦/٢٣هـ بشأن تفويض الصلاحية لإدارة التخطيط والمعلومات لتسهيل مهمة الباحثين والباحثات.وحيث تقدم إلينا الباحثة (الموضحة بياناتها أعلاه) بطلب إجراء دراستها، ونظراً لاكتمال الأوراق المطلوبة نأمل تسهيل مهمتها مع ملاحظة أن الباحثة تتحمل كامل المسؤولية المتعلقة بمختلف جوانب البحث، ولا يعني سماح الإدارة العامة للتعليم، موافقتها بالضرورة على مشكلة البحث أو على الطرق والأساليب المستخدمة في دراستها ومعالجتها.

شاكرين لكم حسن تعاونكم

مدير إدارة التخطيط والمعلومات
المساعدة / بدرية المصدق   ٩/٨
سعود بن راشد آل عبد اللطيف

ص/ للمدرسة
ص / قسم الدراسات والبحوث
ل / العراك

ن٦

Appendix 7: Consent Form for Teachers and Parents

Parental Participation in the Education of Female Students with Learning Difficulties: The Views of Saudi Elementary Teachers and Parents

I have been fully informed about the aims and purposes of the project.

I agree to participate in the following activities:
- Participate in a questionnaire ☐

- Participate in an interview ☐

- Allow the interview to be audio-recorded ☐

I understand that:

- There is no compulsion for me to participate in this research project and, if I do choose to participate, I may at any stage withdraw my participation.

- I have the right to refuse permission for the publication of any information about me.

- Any information, which I give, will be used solely for the purposes of this research project, which may include publications.

- All information I give will be treated as confidential.

- The researcher will make every effort to preserve my anonymity.

...............................…………………..
....
(Signature of participant)   (Date)

……………………
(Printed name of participant)

If you have any concerns about the project that you would like to discuss, please contact:
Sarah Alqahtani:(0559699099) / (sa594@exeter.ac.uk).
DR Alison Black (A.E.Black@exeter.ac.uk).
DR Will Shield (W.Shield@exeter.ac.uk).

Appendix 8: Consent form (Arabic version)

استمارة موافقة للمعلمين وأولياء الأمور

مشاركة أولياء الأمور في تعليم الطالبات ذوي صعوبات التعلم: آراء معلمي المدارس الابتدائية وأولياء الأمور السعوديين

انا على علم تام بأهداف ومقاصد هذا المشروع البحثي.

أوافق على المشاركة في الانشطة التالية:

* المشاركة في الاستبانة.
* المشاركة في المقابلة.
* السماح بالتسجيل الصوتي للمقابلة.

انا افهم ان:

* لست مكرها للمشاركة في هذا المشروع البحثي وفي حالة اختيار المشاركة يجوز لي ان انسحب عن المشاركة في أي مرحلة.

* لدي الحق في رفض السماح بنشر أي معلومات عني.

* سيتم استخدام أي معلومات أعطيها فقط لأغراض هذا المشروع البحثي والتي قد تشمل النشر العلمي.

* سيتم التعامل مع جميع المعلومات التي أقدمها على أنها سرية.

* سوف تبذل الباحثة قصارى جهدها للحفاظ على سرية هويتي.

توقيع المشارك ....

التاريخ ....
٥١٤٤٤/٤/٦

إذا كانت لديك أية مخاوف بشأن المشروع البحثي وترغب في مناقشته يرجى الاتصال بـ:

سارة سالم القحطاني / ٠٥٥٩٦٩٩٠٩٩

sa594@exeter.ac.uk

دكتور اليسون بلاك/

A.E.Black@exeter.ac.uk

دكتور ويل شيلد/

W.Shield@exeter.ac.uk

Appendix 9: Participant information sheet

Parental Participation in the Education of Female Students with Learning Difficulties: The Views of Saudi Elementary Teachers and Parents

INFORMATION SHEET FOR TEACHERS AND PARENTS

You are invited to participate in a study to explore parental involvement in the education of female students with learning difficulties in inclusive elementary schools in Saudi Arabia. This study is being conducted in partial fulfilment of a degree of Doctor of Education (EdD) under the supervision of Dr. Alison Black and Dr. Will Shield at the University of Exeter.

What is the purpose of the study?
To obtain teachers' views on their understandings and current practices of parent involvement**,** document and analyse teachers and parents' views about the importance of parental involvement, roles, and responsibilities and identify the obstacles to implementing effective parental involvement practices.

Why have I been invited?
You have been selected to participate in this study because you are currently teaching in elementary schools that have female students with learning difficulties attending, and have the experience to be able to talk about the teaching decisions that you make in the classroom to support parental participation.
Parents are invited to participate because they have a student with a learning difficulty attending the inclusive elementary schools.

What is do I have to do?
If you consent to participate in this study as a teacher you will be invited to contribute data in the following ways:
- Completing a questionnaire that will take up to 20 minutes
- You may then agree to participate in audio-recorded/or non-recorded a follow-up interviews for up to 20 minutes. You may choose for the interview to be audio-recorded. In case you choose not to have the interview recorded, the researcher will take hand written notes.

As a parent, you will be asked to:

- Complete a questionnaire that will take up to 20 minutes
- You may then agree to participate in audio-recorded/or non-recorded follow-up interviews for up to 20 minutes.

Do I have to take part?
You are not obliged to participate. It is entirely up to you to decide whether or not to take part in the questionnaire and interview. If you do decide to take part in the interviews, you will be asked to sign a consent form. You will still be free to

withdraw at any time without giving a reason. A decision to withdraw or not to take part will not affect you in any way.

What will happen to me if I take part?
If you decide you would like to take part, the researcher will contact you by telephone or by email. Your involvement in the study would end after which aspect of the project you decide to participate in.

What information do you need from me?
If you agree to take part in the study, firstly you will give data by responding to a questionnaire that will take approximately 20 minutes to complete. If you wish to take part in a follow-up interview you will indicate this on the questionnaire by ticking the box at the bottom of the questionnaire and leave your contact details on the questionnaire so that the researcher can contact you. In signing the consent form, please indicate whether you would like to participate in either activities or just one. If selected for the interview you will answer questions about what your understandings are regarding parental involvement in schools supporting students with learning difficulties, effectiveness and your role in this process.

Will I have to do anything differently?
Yes, if you agree to participate in an interview, you would need to find a suitable time to meet with me at a safe public space for the interview.

Are there any side effects, disadvantages and risks of taking part?
There are no disadvantages or risks to you of taking part in this research apart from the time you have to make available to fill the questionnaire and participate in a follow-up interview as indicated on the consent form.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?
 Your perspectives will contribute valuable information on how to improve parental involvement to support the education of students with learning difficulties.

What happens when the research study stops?
The data will be used to prepare a doctoral thesis. The researcher may use the results to develop a seminar program to develop teachers' capacity to better involve parents in school practices.

Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?
All information you will provide during this research will be kept strictly confidential. Your contact details will be kept on a secure database at the University of Exeter and we will adhere to data protection laws by following a confidentiality protocol. Data will not include your name and data will be shredded and destroyed after 5 years using confidential waste disposal systems at the University.

What will happen to the results of the research study?
The results of the study will be used to produce a thesis and journal articles. Some of the results will be presented at conferences and seminars. You will not be personally identified in any publications from this study or presentations.

What if something goes wrong or I have a complaint?
The research does not expect this research to cause any harm to you, however, if you are concerned you can contact the researcher by email (sa594@exeter.ac.uk). Alternatively you can contact my supervisors – Dr. Alison Black (a.e.black@exeter.ac.uk) or Dr Will Shield (W.Shield@exeter.ac.uk)

Who is organising and funding the research?
I am a doctoral student with a scholarship from the Saudi government. It is not a commercially funded study. This means, there is no financial benefit to the researcher and participants.

Who has reviewed the study?
All research in University of Exeter is reviewed by an independent Research Ethics Committee to protect your safety, rights wellbeing and dignity. This study has also been reviewed by my doctoral advisors.

Further Information
Please take time to read the consent form and indicate whether you consent to each part of the study by ticking the box next to each item. Please sign and date the form and post it in the self-addressed envelope or if this is not possible, I will come to collect it myself. If you need further information to help you decide, please contact me or my advisors through the contact details below. Thank you for reading this and for considering taking part in this study.

Contact for Further Information
If you need further information about this study please contact:
Sarah Alqahtani:(0559699099) / (sa594@exeter.ac.uk).
DR Alison Black (A.E.Black@exeter.ac.uk).
DR Will Shield (W.Shield@exeter.ac.uk).

Appendix 10: Participant information sheet (Arabic version)

مشاركة أولياء الأمور في تعليم الطالبات ذوي صعوبات التعلم: آراء معلمي المدارس الابتدائية وأولياء الأمور

السعوديين

(ورقة معلومات للمعلمين وأولياء الأمور)

أنت مدعو للمشاركة في دراسة لاستكشاف مشاركة الوالدين في تعليم الطالبات ذوي صعوبات التعلم في المدارس الابتدائية الشاملة في المملكة العربية السعودية. تجري هذه الدراسة بشكل جزئي للحصول على درجة الدكتوراه في التربية (EdD). تحت إشراف الدكتورة أليسون بلاك والدكتور ويل شيلد في جامعة إكسيتر.

ما هو الغرض من الدراسة؟
الحصول على آراء المعلمين حول فهمهم والممارسات الحالية لإشراك الوالدين وتوثيق وتحليل آراء المعلمين والآباء حول أهمية مشاركة الوالدين والأدوار والمسؤوليات وتحديد العقبات التي تحول دون تنفيذ ممارسات المشاركة الأبوية الفعالة.

لماذا دعيت؟
لقد تم اختيارك للمشاركة في هذه الدراسة لأنك تقوم حاليًا بالتدريس في مدارس ابتدائية لديها طالبات ذوي صعوبات في التعلم ولديكن الخبرة حتى نتمكن من التحدث عن قرارات التدريس التي تقوم بها في الفصل الدراسي لدعم مشاركة الوالدين.
يتم دعوة أولياء الأمور للمشاركة لأن لديهم طالبة تعاني من صعوبة في التعلم في المدارس الابتدائية الشاملة.

ما الذي يجب علي فعله؟
إذا وافقت على المشاركة في هذه الدراسة كمعلم فستتم دعوتك للمساهمة بالبيانات بالطرق التالية:
* إكمال استبيان يستغرق 20 دقيقة.
* قد توافق بعد ذلك على المشاركة في المقابلات الصوتية المسجلة / أو غير المسجلة لمدة تصل إلى 20 دقيقة. يمكنك اختيار المقابلة الصوتية وفي حال اخترت عدم تسجيل المقابلة سيأخذ الباحث ملاحظات مكتوبة بخط اليد.
بصفتك ولي أمر سيُطلب منك:
* إكمال الاستبيان الذي سيستغرق 20 دقيقة.
• * قد توافق بعد ذلك على المشاركة في المقابلات الصوتية المسجلة / أو غير المسجلة للمتابعة لمدة تصل إلى 20 دقيقة

هل يجب علي المشاركة؟
لست مجبرا على المشاركة الأمر متروك لك تمامًا لتقرر ما إذا كنت ستشارك في الاستبيان والمقابلة أم لا. إذا قررت المشاركة في المقابلات سيُطلب منك التوقيع على نموذج موافقة. ستظل لديك الحرية في الانسحاب في أي وقت دون إبداء سبب. إن قرار الانسحاب أو عدم المشاركة لن يؤثر عليك بأي شكل من الأشكال.

ماذا سيحدث لي إذا شاركت؟
إذا قررت أنك ترغب في المشاركة سيقوم الباحث بالاتصال بك عن طريق الهاتف أو البريد الإلكتروني. تنتهي مشاركتك في الدراسة بعد أي جانب من المشروع الذي تقرر المشاركة فيه.

ما المعلومات التي تحتاجها مني؟
إذا وافقت على المشاركة في الدراسة فأنت أولاً ستعطي البيانات عن طريق الإجابة على استبيان يستغرق 20 دقيقة تقريبًا لإكماله. إذا كنت ترغب في المشاركة في مقابلة التابعة فستوضح هذا في الاستبيان بوضع علامة في المربع الموجود أسفل الاستبيان وترك بيانات الاتصال الخاصة بك على الاستبيان حتى يتمكن الباحث من الاتصال بك. عند التوقيع على استمارة الموافقة يرجى الإشارة إلى ما إذا كنت ترغب في المشاركة في أي من الأنشطة أو في نشاط

واحد فقط. إذا اخترت للمقابلة فسوف تجيب عن أسئلة حول ماهية فهمك فيما يتعلق بمشاركة الوالدين في المدارس التي تدعم الطلاب الذين يعانون من صعوبات التعلم والفعالية ودورك في هذه العملية.

هل يجب علي فعل أي شيء مختلف؟
نعم، إذا وافقت على المشاركة في مقابلة فستحتاج إلى إيجاد وقت مناسب للالتقاء بي في مكان عام آمن للمقابلة.

هل هناك أي آثار جانبية أو عيوب ومخاطر للمشاركة؟
لا توجد مساوئ أو مخاطر عليك للمشاركة في هذا البحث، باستثناء الوقت المتاح لديك لملء الاستبيان والمشاركة في مقابلة التابعة كما هو موضح في نموذج الموافقة.

ما هي فوائد ممكنة من المشاركة؟
سوف تساهم وجهة نظرك بمعلومات قيمة عن كيفية تحسين مشاركة الوالدين لدعم تعليم طلاب صعوبات في التعلم.

ماذا يحدث عند توقف الدراسة البحثية؟
سيتم استخدام البيانات لإعداد أطروحة الدكتوراه. يمكن للباحث استخدام النتائج لتطوير برنامج ندوة لتطوير قدرة المعلمين على إشراك الآباء بشكل أفضل في الممارسات المدرسية.

هل ستظل مشاركتي في هذه الدراسة سرية؟
سيتم الاحتفاظ بسرية تامة لجميع المعلومات التي ستقدمها خلال هذا البحث. سيتم الاحتفاظ بتفاصيل الاتصال الخاصة بك في قاعدة بيانات آمنة في جامعة إكستر وسنلتزم بقوانين حماية البيانات من خلال اتباع بروتوكول السرية. لن تشمل البيانات اسمك وبياناتك وسيتم تدميرها وتدميرها بعد 5 سنوات باستخدام أنظمة التخلص من النفايات السرية في الجامعة.

ماذا سيحدث لنتائج الدراسة البحثية؟
سيتم استخدام نتائج الدراسة لإنتاج أطروحة ومقالات صحفية وسيتم عرض بعض النتائج في المؤتمرات والندوات. لن يتم التعرف عليك شخصيًا في أي منشورات من هذه الدراسة أو العروض التقديمية.

ماذا لو حدث خطأ ما أو لدي شكوى؟
لا يتوقع أن يتسبب هذا البحث في أي ضرر لك ولكن إذا كنت مهتمًا يمكنك الاتصال بالباحث عن طريق البريد الإلكتروني:
(sa594@exeter.ac.uk)
او الاتصال بالمشرف /دكتور اليسون بلاك (a.e.black@exeter.ac.uk)
او الاتصال بالمشرف/ دكتور ويل شيلد (W.Shield@exeter.ac.uk)

من يقوم بتنظيم وتمويل البحث؟
أنا طالب دكتوراه بمنحة دراسية من الحكومة السعودية إنها ليست دراسة ممولة تجاريًا هذا يعني أنه لا توجد فائدة مالية للباحث والمشاركين.

من قيم هذه الدراسة؟
تتم مراجعة جميع الأبحاث في جامعة إكستر من قبل لجنة أخلاقيات البحوث المستقلة لحماية سلامتك وحماية حقوقك وكرامتك وقد تمت مراجعة هذه الدراسة من قبل مشرفين الدكتوراه.

مزيد من المعلومات:
يُرجى تخصيص بعض الوقت لقراءة نموذج الموافقة وتحديد ما إذا كنت توافق على كل جزء من الدراسة بوضع علامة في المربع بجوار كل عنصر. يرجى التوقيع وكتابة التاريخ في النموذج واعادته في الضرف ووضعه في البريد الخاص بك وإذا لم يكن ذلك ممكناً سوف أقوم بأخذه بنفسي. إذا كنت بحاجة إلى مزيد من المعلومات لمساعدتك على اتخاذ القرار يرجى الاتصال بي أو بالمشرفين من خلال تفاصيل الاتصال أدناه. نشكرك على قراءتك لهذه الورقة وعلى تفكيرك في المشاركة في هذه الدراسة.

الاتصال للحصول على مزيد من المعلومات:

إذا كنت بحاجة إلى مزيد من المعلومات حول هذه الدراسة ، يرجى الاتصال ب:

سارة سالم القحطاني/ ٠٥٥٩٦٩٩٠٩٩

(sa594@exeter.ac.uk)

دكتور اليسون بلاك (A.E.Black@exeter.ac.uk)

دكتور ويل شيلد (W.Shield@exeter.ac.uk)

Appendix 11: Sample coding of teacher interviews

Coding labels	Verbatim transcripts: (Learning difficulties teacher):	Notes and ideas
Communication	**Q1. What does parental involvement mean to you?** It is two-way communication between the parents and teacher of learning difficulties and the teacher	Effective communication ensures team work
Teamwork/collaboration	of the classroom and working as a team because it is one of the important thing in participation" It is a key element in the success of the learning difficulties program because	Teamwork requires engagement
Act of connectedness	family participation is a link between the teacher and the parents by supporting the child's education at home.	Link between teachers and parents support children's education
Communication	**Q2. How would you describe effective parental involvement?** Effective participation should keep the mother and teachers in constant contact even if it is by the social media programs.	Social media as flexible modes of contacting parents
Barrier 1: Poor communication Inappropriate communication	**Q3. What factors affect parental involvement at school?** Poor communication, there are some teachers who do not want to communicate with parents. **Why?** Because parents often communicate with teachers by telephoning at inappropriate times and late at night, and in turn these parents do not attend the school meetings to discuss the academic status of their daughters and compensate for this	Teachers differ in terms of their communicative behaviours Allegations against parents' communication at inappropriate times
Barrier 2: Time	by telephone connections. We are busy with other commitments and we do not have enough time for that. It is also important to attend periodic school meetings, which in fact are	Professional demands place time limitations on teachers to

Barrier 3. Lack of parents presence at school meetings Facilitator 1. Social media/Technology	<mark>not attended by many parents</mark>, so I think it is better to limit communication between parents and teachers on <mark>social media programs</mark>.	communicate with parents Social media to aid communication and reduce time pressure, non-attendance at school meetings by parents
Negative atttitudes	Do you think this is enough? No but the <mark>parents do not appreciate our efforts</mark>. I think parents need training courses on the importance of the job of the learning diffuclties teachers.	Parents are seen as not appreciating the work of teachers Creating awareness among parents on teachers' work can improve parental involvement
Quality of experience	**Q4. Describe your experiences with regard to parental involvement in their daughters' education?** parental <mark>participation is very weak</mark>, often limited to the beginning of the school year and the end of the year for the near-test dates. Currently, I have <mark>only one mother contact me and she is constantly questioning the level of her daughter' education</mark>, knowing that I have nine other students and their parents do not communicate with me.	Participation is traditional and limited to 2 times a year Teachers' perceive frequent contact by parents as unecsaary disrruption
	Why don't you communicate with them? I start the year by meeting the mothers and explain the objectives of the program and there is a notebook for each student so they can see them.	Participant misunderstoon the question as how?

Knowledge Trust	**Q5. What things make you feel more comfortable with parents' assistance in teaching their children?** When the mother is ==aware of the strengths and weaknesses of her daughter== as well as ==confidence in working with learning difficulties teacher== very important.	Understanding students creates trust
Practices	**Q6. How do parents involve in their children's education at home and school?** Parents should follow-up the student at home and ==help the student in the study and homework==, as well as ==communicate with the teacher== and attend school meetings and respond to letters.	Involvement practices include home support Attending meetings and esponding to letters
Variable practices	**Q7. What do you think makes some parents more involved than others?** When parents are ==aware of the importance of parents participation==.	Teachers judge parents' participation on awareness of importance of parent involvement
Assessment	**Q8. What kind of needs do parents have that the school usually tries to help with?** Some parents ask for ==diagnostic tests for their daughters== and the school provides them.	Assessment to support labels of LD
Communication-Facilitators	**Q9. How do you communicate with parents about students' activities? Why?** By the WhatsApp programme, because it is the easiest way to reach the parents.	Modes of communication.
Practices	**Q10. Do teachers provide an environment that accommodate all parents' participation in classroom? Why?** There may be some schools offering this service but we are ==not in favour==	Teachers' perception of parents limit

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	of parents coming to the school, they can work with their children at home. Some parents come to the school to cause trouble.	their involvement
Attitudinal Bariers		Home support is encouraged
	Why don't you have it in this school? I hope that we can do it in the future but now, I don't' know.	
	Q11. Are parents allowed to freely share their views or opinions at school meetings or in school activities? Why?	
	I do not think so, parents don't have the knowledge to change the decisions of teachers.	Parents are constructed as ignorant and ecluded from decision making
Attitudinal barriers linked to knowledge		
	Q12. Do teachers involve the parents in making decisions about their daughters' education? Why?	
	We are satisfied with school letters and this is the school system, but if the mother can do that I have no objection but unfortunately, they are not professionals to make decision for teachers. It will only bring confusion	Parents are seen just as child bearers with no stake in school's decision making process
Attitudinal barriers		
	Q13. Do you think it is difficult to set parents' meeting time and place by agreement with parents? Why?	
	yes، because parents do not respond to us.	Parents and teachers are not engaged. Lack of collaboration
Dissonance in practice		
	Q14. What kind of training do you need in relating to parental involvement?	Training to deal with negative perception of parents
Peofessional learning	I think we need training like training to absorb the mother's anger and shame.	
	Q15. What do you feel is the most important or biggest barrier that affect the parental involvement? Why?	
Attitudinal barriers	Ignorance of parents. Because if the mother is ignorant of the importance of what family participation can not help the teacher or her daughter.	Parents are constructed as ignorant. Narrow view of parents' involvement
	Q16. Are there adequate guidelines and policy for how	

Lack of policy	**parents should be involved in school matters? Why?** In my <mark>school there is no such policy</mark>. I am not <mark>aware of any national policy</mark> on this.	Parental involvment practices are not guided by policies
Lack of trust	**Q17. How do parents' attitudes toward teachers reduce their involvement in school programs?** She is sure to be affected and be <mark>more cautious in dealing</mark> with this parent.	There is weak relationship between teachers and parents due to lack of trust
School-related factors	**Q18. Do you think the school administration lack interest in parental involvement? Why? And how does this effect parental involvement?** I see that <mark>educating students with LD is the responsibility of the teacher</mark> and <mark>this culture is prevalent here</mark>.	School culture does not support parental involvement
Facilitators	**Q19. What advice or suggestions do you have for new teachers who want to work well with parents and encourage parent involvement?** <mark>Patience and containment of parents</mark> and the <mark>delivery of information in a nice way.</mark> Do you like to add anything? No, thank you.	Working across stake-holder boundaries

Appendix 12: Sample Coding of Parent Interviews

Coding labels	Verbatim transcripts	Notes
Importance of PI.	**What does parental involvement mean to you?** I know that participating in my daughter's education is important, but I am illiterate, so I can not read or write and this prevents me from participating. The questionnaire I asked my oldest daughter to read it to me.	Does not fully understood the question definition of involvement.
Awareness Respectful relationship Knowledge	**How would you describe effective parental involvement?** When the mother is familiar with how to share with the teacher in her daughter's education and her friendly relationship with her daughter's teachers, as well as when the mother knows how to help her daughter at home.	Being aware of guidelines and processes of involvement can make it effective Knowledge of key roles to play in the process
Partnership/engagement Awareness	**What factors affect your involvement in your daughter's education at school and home?** If the teacher is interested in sharing with the mother in teaching her daughter, if the mother has sufficient awareness of the importance of participation.	Consideration of mothers as important partners/working across stakeholder boundaries Establishes a link between knowledge of importance of PI and level of involvement
	How do you view your relationship with the staff	

Respectful relationship	**of the school that your daughter attends?** Good relationship all good.	Positive feeling about the school
Positive feeling	**How comfortable and welcome do you feel at the school?** I am very satisfied with my daughter's school.	Self-reported satisfaction encourages participation.
Limited involvement	**What are some ways that the teachers or the school has tried to involve you in your daughter's education at home and school?** Through school meetings, there is a first-year meeting and another end-of-year meeting to discuss the academic level of the students.	Participation is limited to school's open days.
Homebase support Knowledge barrier	Often the teachers ask me to teach my daughter at home but as I mentioned I can not read and write.	Teachers encourage home support in the form of supporting students with homework. This is difficult for those who have no knowledge of the subject matter.
Microsystem support	**Do they have brothers or sisters who can help you teach at home?** All her brothers and sisters are married, she is my youngest.	Limited support within the microsystem
Improved academic achievements	**How can parental participation contribute to achievement of students with LD?** Certainly teaching the mother to her daughter at home and its continuous follow-up will help the teacher to develop the academic level of the students, so the student will not fail in the academic year.	Importance of PI linked to academic achievement

Communication	**For what kind of reason did your daughter' teachers contact you and how often?** Do not call me, they call me once for a school bus problem or if there is a meeting so they send a letter with my daughter.	Communication if through formal letters Lack of verbal communication
Communication	**What kind of information does teacher and school provide for you? Do you think is this enough?** Teachers always provide information for academic or behavioural problems for my daughter and ask me to help them solve these problems. **Is this enough?** No, I hope to hear good information about my daughter not bad information.	Communication is limited to negative comments about their children's academic and behavioural challenges Parents expect some positive comments
Barrier-decision-making	**Do you think you are included in decisions or programs that affecting your daughter's education? if yes give me example?** No, some of the teachers communicate with mothers through WhatsApp and I do not have a smart mobile device.	Personal experience indicate no involvement in school decision-making.
Barrier- (Personal/systemic)	**What are the reasons you do not participate more in your daughter's education?** I do not know, may be because my low educational level the teacher is not interested in my involvement in my daughter's education. Do you like to participate more in your daughter education?	Self-perceived barrier of teacher attitudes
Facilitator/Barrier	Definitely, if I would like to be involved if that will help my daughter but nobody tells me	Willingness to participate yet there is lack of engagement

Barrier (distrust/negative feeling)	how or invite me to be part of the process. **Does your daughter's teacher invite you to the classroom? Why?** No, I do not know why, I hope that I can visit my daughter' classroom, may be the teacher do not like me to come to the classroom.	Feeling of rejection
Curricular and extra-curricular activities	**In what school activities or programs you like to participate more? Why?** Non-classroom activities are very fun, such as arts and other activities, if my participation will help my daughter develop her academic level.	Parent is comfortable being involved in activities that meet their ability level.
Strong relationships	**What do you think will help parents to understand more about what their daughters' school expects of them as parents?** There should be continuity and periodic meetings between the mother and teachers, especially the learning difficulties teacher.	Creating positive link between teachers and parents can lead to better understanding of expectations
Quality of involvement	**What do you feel is the most important or biggest barrier that effect the parental involvement? Why?** The school's lack of interest in parents participation. For example, sometimes I go to school to ask about my daughter and I was refused to enter the teachers' room.	Lack of school's interest affect parental involvement Negative experience reduces parents' interest in involvement
Quality of involvement (Knowledge)	**What do you think can help parents to improve their knowledge of special education?** Family guidance from school or induction lectures in effective teaching methods	Creating awareness improves parents' involvement

Quality of involvement	for people with learning difficulties.

What do you think can help parents to know how to support their daughters' education?
For me, if I knew how to read and write and learned the effective teaching methods for my daughter, I would do what I could to improve the level of my academic daughter.
I have a future plan to learn to read and write to help my daughter. | Promoting parent's knowledge on school practices and how they can be involved will contribute to quality of involvement |
| Quality of involvement

Respectful relationships | **Do you have any suggestions that schools could use to be more comfortable for parents? Or how the schools could be more helpful to parents to get involve?**
I hope that there will be periodic meetings with the learning difficulties teacher at least once a month. I also wish the teacher respect the mother's opinion and not neglect any information or opinion from the mother because the mother is the most important in her daughter education.
Do you like to add anything?
No, thank you. | Parents prefer frequent contact with teachers who teach their daughters. Parents want teachers to be welcoming and respectful

Parents recognise their unique role in the micro and mesosystem activities related to their children's education |

Appendix 13: Data charting (Complex concepts of Parental involvement (PI)

	Contractual agreement	Act of connectedness	Two-way Communication	Teamwork/collaboration	Activities that parents are involved in to support their children's education	Benefits and purpose of involvement
Principal	Contract between teachers and parents.	Connectedness to complement the work of teachers in schools.	Communication between parents and teachers at least once a week even by the mobile phone to check their daughters' education.	If there is no collaborative between parents and teachers, teachers cannot work without families and the student will not improve in their education as well.	Being a recognised member of a Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs).	It is the most important thing to reduce the learning difficulties in the student.
Educational supervisor					Activities that parents and teachers participate in together. Mothers should help the teacher by follow up the student at home .	Is very important in teaching a student with learning difficulties because if mother participates, she will understand more about the difficulties of learning so that she can help her daughter in her education.

LDTeacher1		Link between the teacher and the parents by supporting the child's education at home.	Two-way communication between the parents and teacher of learning difficulties.	Mothers and teachers of the classroom should working as a team because it is one of the important thing in participation.	It is also important to attend periodic school meetings.	It is a key element in the success of the learning difficulties program.
LDTeacher2	Confidence in working with learning difficulties teacher very important.	It is a key element in the success of the learning difficulties program because family participation is a link between the teacher and parents by supporting the child's education at home.	It is Two-way communication between the parents and teacher of learning difficulties and the teacher of the classroom. Effective participation should keep the mother and teachers in constant contact even if it is by the social media programs.	Working as a team because it is one of the important thing in participation.	Discussing school activities with the child.	
LDTeacher3		Keeping the mother and teachers in constant contact.			Supporting students in the classroom.	I believed that parents participate in their daughter's education to fill a big gap in the education of their students with LD

LDTeacher4				When the multidisciplinary team sets up the individual educational plan for the student, the parents should review this plan and make sure that their daughters achieve the educational goals in this plan.	Attend meetings with the learning difficulties teacher.	
LDTeacher5	Acceptance of parents and culture of parental participation		Communicating with learning difficulties teacher and mainstream teacher.	Collaboration between teacher and parents.	Mothers should teaching the students every day. Parents participate in non-class activities	
LDTeacher6	Agreement between teachers and parents" that involved "trust, respectful relationship and positive cooperation.		Continuous communication between the mother and the teacher.			By participating in schools, parents will become aware of the level of their daughter's academic level or any other academic or behavioural problems.
M Teacher1		When parents are connect to teachers to improve their children's education.	The mother should communicate with the teacher. Continue constant parenting with teachers.		So what student learns in school must be confirmed at home.	Participation helps the mother to check with the teacher especially the student with learning difficulties, what the

						student learns in school is confirmed at home.
M. Teacher 2		Continuing to parent with the teacher.		It is the core in the education of the student, teaching in the classroom and supporting parents.	monitoring child's school progress. applying the educational plan at home.	It is the core in the education of the student.
Housewife1	Friendly relationship with my daughter's teachers.				Supporting children at home to do their homework, preparing them for school, teaching them about their culture and good behaviour. Attending parent-teacher meetings.	
Housewife2			Good interaction with the teacher of learning difficulties.		Volunteering in school programmes.	
Housewife3			Timely and respectful communication with the teacher to hear good news about my daughter. Communication between the mother and the teacher relating to the student	Working together with schools.	Helping with children's homework.	
Housewife4		Connectedness with teachers.	Mother should making continuous visits to the school and asking about		Mother's follow-up of her daughter at home.	

			the academic level of her daughter. Communication more with teachers especially with learning difficulties teacher.			
Housewife5					The mother should enrich the information to her daughter and put her tests at home so that she knows her daughter's level and weaknesses and is working to develop them.	
Housewife6		Making a link with teachers and the school				Developed the academic level of my daughter.
Housewife7		Connectedness between parents and teachers.	Essential part of the development of students' education, which must be built on communication with the school.		Attending school meetings	
Housewife8			communication with the school will develops the level of the academic child more. Continuous communication between the parents and the school and between parents and teachers.		Periodic meetings are important to discuss the development of the academic level of the student.	Positive cooperation between the mother and the teacher will help to achieve educational goals for children quickly.

Wokingmother1			relationship between the mother and the school is very important as they complement the work of each other. the constant communication with teachers and the mother's reading of useful teaching methods.		Teaching them at home and helping with their behaviours.	
Wokingmother2	Respect between teacher and mother, cooperation and trust between them.		Continuous communication between mother and teacher through email, mobile, meetings or letters will help the mother in how to support her daughter.		I believe that the mother must participate in the education of her daughter in the classroom and non-class activities. Supporting children's home work.	Participation is important to develop the academic level of student.